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Habits, Potencies, and Obedience: Experiential Evidence for Thomistic Hylomorphism

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Abstract: Thomistic hylomorphism holds that human persons are composed of matter and a form that is also a subsistent entity. Some object that nothing can be both a form and a subsistent entity, and some proponents of Thomistic hylomorphism respond that our experience, as described by phenomenology, provides us with evidence that this theory is true. Some might object that that would be more easily seen to be a good way to defend Thomistic hylomorphism if the scholastics themselves had provided such evidence. I show how some scholastics do give evidence for Thomistic hylomorphism from their descriptions of our experience of forming and using habits. I consider their account of experiences of different acts of habit formation and exercise, and of experiences founded upon different kinds of potencies and obedience to reason that underlie their habits. Then I show that these experiences, when reasoned about in an effect to cause manner, provide evidence for Thomistic hylomorphism, and that the objection fails.

Thomistic hylomorphism (TH), which was formulated by Thomas Aquinas following Aristotle, and was subsequently developed by members of the scholastic tradition, has come to be seen in recent years as a "middle way" between dualistic and materialistic theories of the nature of the human person. While TH is a theory about all material things, I am interested in this paper in TH as a theory of metaphysical structure of the human person. TH holds that the human person is a substance composed of matter and an intellectual soul. The soul is the form of the human substance, that is, it causes the substance to be a unified substance with a range of powers that fits with the world cognitively and appetitively. The matter is the potentiality actualized by this form, and it accounts for the ability of the substance to change. All of our vegetative, locomotive, and sensitive powers arise from the soul, but are exercised through material organs. The soul, like any form, is the "manner" in which the substance exists—that is, that in virtue of which the substance has its kind or way or being. But, because it has the powers of intellect (that is, the power to know universals) and will (that is, the power to perform free acts), it is a subsistent entity in its own right, able to act and exist apart from the body.[1]

Many philosophers have raised objections to TH, two of which I consider below, after which I turn to a contemporary response to these two: that some phenomenological descriptions of our experiences of ourselves are evidence for TH and against these objections. ('Experience' here refers to any conscious act, event, or state that befalls us of which we are conscious inasmuch as we are conscious of it, or an event or state that impinges upon our consciousness inasmuch as it so impinges; an experience of a habit is a conscious act or state affected by a habit.) In this paper, I support this response, and show how similar evidence to some phenomenological evidence is found in the scholastic TH tradition itself, in accounts of experiences of forming and exercising habits. I first briefly consider how one phenomenologist, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, describes our basic experiences of ourselves. Then, I give the contemporary TH argument for how this description is evidence for TH, if we reason about it in an effect-to-cause manner, a style of argumentation I shall consider below. After that, I raise some worries about drawing on phenomenology in this way, which can be alleviated by drawing on another description of our experiences than a phenomenological description. To this end, I show how descriptions of experiences of ourselves that can be used as evidence for TH are found in scholastic accounts of our experiences of habits. I focus here on those in the TH tradition who considered such experiences, especially Thomas Aquinas and Francisco Suárez. Finally, I argue that these descriptions are good evidence for TH and against the objections.[2]

A first objection to TH claims that the human soul cannot be both a form and a subsistent entity. A form is the manner of a substance, and so is, on the view of the objectors, a property, that is, something that belongs to another, albeit a property that essentially constitutes the substance as the kind of substance that it is, rather than an accidental property. A subsistent entity, by contrast, is a concrete thing capable of acting, causing, and existing on its own. They hold that if something is a property, then, necessarily, it is not a concrete thing, nor vice versa. If forms are properties of substances, even in the sense defined, then the only plausible hylomorphism is a non-Thomistic hylomorphism similar to a non-reductive materialism that attributes our intellectual powers to the composite person, never to the form itself. If the soul is subsistent, then substance dualism is true. Either way, TH cannot be correct in its account of our form.[3] A second objection to TH says that, on TH, matter is capable of qualitative experiences, that is, being in a first-person, conscious state, since some conscious powers are exercised in material organs. But we have reasons from accounts of qualia as entirely irreducible to matter, and inexplicable in material terms, to think that experience is separate from matter, so TH is wrong in its account of matter.[4]

A response to these objections must show that there is evidence for the claims that the human form is also a subsistent entity, without compromising the unity of the person, and that qualitative experiences can occur in matter. Such a response need not defend each aspect of TH, but must provide evidence for the unity and hierarchy of the structure of the human person in TH. Such a response would not contradict traditional arguments for TH, but would provide evidence for those unconvinced by those traditional arguments. Some proponents of TH, such as

John Haldane and David Braine, hold that our experiences of ourselves, especially as described by phenomenologists like Maurice Merleau-Ponty, are evidence for TH and against these objections, that is, these experiences are best explained by TH, rather than by other theories.[5] On the style of argumentation in this response, which I call hylomorphic-phenomenological effect-to-cause arguments, we experience all creatures as composed of kinds of actuality and potentiality, which fit (*convenit*) with and resemble one another; this is a kind of argument from fittingness, rather than a strict deductive argument. A substance's acts and passions fit with its powers, which they actualize; powers fit with the substance, which they actualize. By observing or experiencing acts and passions, we can reason, in an effect-to-cause manner, to what the powers and substance are like in order to be actualized in those ways. This style of argumentation is especially powerful for first-person experiences.[6] It should not be thought that this style of argumentation assumes the very hylomorphism it purports to show; rather, what is taken as evidence is the experience of actuality and potentiality, and what is concluded to is a metaphysical view about real principles of actuality and potentiality. Holistic or aesthetic experiences of the structure of things are examined in order to determine what their underlying real causes are.

Nearly every properly human act could be used as evidence for the unity and hierarchy of the structure of the person as presented by TH.[7] Various proponents of TH have reasoned in this manner on different bases. For example, Aquinas appeals to experiences of universals, of complete intellectual self-awareness, and of being able to understand anything intellectually as evidence of the intellect's immateriality. By contrast, we experience only partial self-awareness and awareness of exterior things through our senses; this shows their materiality. Material things seem to operate through one material thing acting on another; sensory self-awareness seems to involve one part or power becoming aware of others. Intellectual self-awareness, by contrast, is completely reflexive, and so seems to require a non-material explanation. Furthermore, we experience ourselves as unified wholes in a world of unified wholes both through internal sense powers (especially through the common sense, by which we consider all the forms received through the five external senses together, and the cogitative power, by which we consider aspects of sensible things and those things insofar as they are relevant to our bodily lives) and through our intellectual powers.[8] Furthermore, our experiences of bodily passions hindering our ability to perform intellectual acts, and of both sorts of experiences as our own, are given as evidence for the unified basis of these acts in one form.[9] Francisco Suárez appeals to experiences of ourselves as generable and corruptible like other animals as evidence that, like them, we are composed of form and matter. He also appeals to experiences of our own powers as superior to those of animals as evidence for the claim that our soul exceeds being just something that informs matter.[10]

Merleau-Ponty seems to describe our experience in a way that fits well with the structure of the human substance as described by TH, and in a way that could be the basis for a hylomorphic-phenomenological effect-to-cause argument that concludes to the truth of TH, even though he was not a proponent of TH. On his view, all things are fundamentally experienced as wholes (*Gestalten*) in the midst

of a world of wholes. All sensory experiences are accompanied by an experience of my body as a unified, self-organized whole, organized around cognitive, appetitive, and motile powers. I experience my own corporeality, but I cannot experience all aspects of my body. For example, when I touch my right hand to my left hand, my right hand feels bones inside my left hand, which my left hand cannot feel within itself, and I experience my hands as a material "weight" that resists my efforts to move them. In the act of touching my hands together, I experience my hands as corporeal structures organized around and unified by sensory and motile powers. I experience my corporeality and my powers as different from one another, yet also as intertwined with and affecting one another. I also sense my body as fitting together with the world around me, affected by and affecting it, and engaging as a unity in intentional (that is, object-directed) acts toward it. My sense of my unified natural "style" or "manner" both of being a unified body and of fitting into the world is furthered by developing habits. These are acquired bodily tendencies that direct my natural unity of style, powers, and corporeality, so that I better fit into the world and am able to act in a more unified manner. For example, in acquiring a habitual ability to dance, I take on a new awareness of my body's unity, powers, corporeality, and of ways in which my body can move in and intend the world. Similarly, I can develop my experience of fitting into the world through the use of artifacts, such as when I use a pen to write; in such cases, I experience myself as intending and acting in the world through those artifacts. I also experience intellectual acts in myself. I experience these as both unified with my body, insofar as they arise on the basis of sensations and are articulated through sensible speech, and as separated from bodily experiences, forming their own unity. Just as with my body, I can develop these acts through habits, such as learning a language. In developing any habit, I must overcome internal resistance.[11]

If reasoned about in the effect-to-cause manner elaborated above, these experiences are evidence that I am material, but that my matter is organized around my sensitive, appetitive, and motile powers, and interconnected with my intellectual powers, which transcend matter and are a unity of their own; all of these things are unified, and this unity engages in intentional acts as a whole. This is quite similar to TH! Contrary to the objections, we seem to experience our matter as capable of qualitative experience, some powers as or as rooted in the "manner" or way of being of our bodily substance, other powers as forming a unity separate from the body, and all these powers as unified with one another—that is, we seem to experience ourselves in a way that fits well with the unity and hierarchy of the structure of the person described by TH. But, even allowing for the cursory nature of my presentation, one might worry that these descriptions do not fit with TH, but rather are evidence for a non-reductive materialism[12] or for substance dualism.[13] One might furthermore object that drawing on Merleau-Ponty in this way could be more easily seen to be a good way to defend TH if experiential evidence like that found in Merleau-Ponty were also found in the TH tradition.

I do not wish to deny the potential value of phenomenology for supporting TH, but I grant that the proponent of TH has legitimate worries about drawing

on phenomenology to defend TH. Accordingly, I contend that, under another description, our experience is more readily seen to be evidence for TH than is seen from Merleau-Ponty's account. Evidence of this sort *is* found in the TH tradition. Experiences that are particularly helpful here are our experiences of forming and exercising habits, which some scholastics described in detail, though they did not use these descriptions as evidence for TH. To the ends of corroborating the claim that accounts of experience are useful in defending TH, and of showing that such accounts are to be found in the scholastics, I shall now consider those scholastic descriptions. First, I consider a basic scholastic account of what habits are. This is meant to provide background for their descriptions; the real evidence for TH is not the description itself, but the experience to which the description points. Next, I consider some scholastic accounts of our experience of habits, and of how the scholastics explain these habits and experiences by different sorts of potencies. Here, I present a range of kinds of habits described by the scholastics, and their account of our experience of these kinds of habits; the purpose of this is to show the various ways in which our bodies and bodily powers relate to reason, which in turn will allow us to reason, in an effect-to-cause manner, to our underlying substantial structure, which is the structure described by TH. Finally, I show how these experiences, under these descriptions, are evidence for TH and against objections.

Following Aristotle, the scholastics generally held habits to be a kind of quality. Qualities are a kind of accident that belong to substances in themselves, not in relation to others, and that follow upon the substance's form (rather than its matter as quantities, such as sizes, do), and perfect and beautify the substance.[14] Qualities include dispositions, powers, the sensible features of substances, and the accidental arrangements of parts of substances.[15] Habits are a kind of disposition, which are qualities that make a substance capable of readily acting better or worse, and in a more or less prompt, stable, and focused manner, through its powers, than it would do naturally. Habits are distinct from non-habitual dispositions in that they are stable and difficult to alter, while non-habitual dispositions are easily altered.[16]

Habits are not experienced directly in themselves, but acts that are ordered by habits are experienced—that is, we experience habits inasmuch as they affect our experiences of our acts. We know what powers and habits are in our soul by experiencing signs or actualities of them in our acts, and insofar as through our acts we experience or reason to their causes. When I experience myself acting easily in some way, or having a feeling in a stable manner, then I know that my act has been ordered by a habit.[17] This sort of reasoning is based in my first-person self-experience; the exact same reasoning cannot be used on the basis of my observations of others. Habits develop from experience, in the sense of "being experienced in life," where one has performed many acts of the same kind, and so has developed a stable tendency to act in that way. Following customs, stable manners of action that belong to an individual or group, leads to being experienced, and so to habits. On Suárez's view, we know about habits primarily from the experience of custom leading to ease in acting in some manner.[18]

Suárez argues that the ability to develop habits presupposes that I have powers that fulfill three conditions; only these powers can be disposed by a habit to act stably in some manner.[19] We can interpret his claims experientially, as claims about the ability to develop habits as I experience them. These conditions help to make sense of our experience of habits. The ability to develop habits presupposes, first, that I have powers that are not determined to one act by nature, but are open to multiple sorts of acts, unlike, for example, the powers of plants and non-living things, and our vegetative powers, that can only act in one determined, natural way.[20] Since some powers are not determined to act in one way by nature, they can be developed by habituation to act stably in one of the ways naturally available to them.

Second, it presupposes that I have powers by which I can perform immanent acts. These are acts that remain in and perfect their power, and are, in contrast to transeunt acts, which are ways of affecting things other than the power; for example, seeing, willing, and understanding are immanent acts. We experience the exercise of powers to perform immanent acts as involving both acts and receptivity to intentional forms, which are forms of things insofar as they can be the object of a cognitive or appetitive power. For example, in seeing, I both receive intentional forms from visible things, and I perform the act of seeing, which is the actualization of my visual power, and which does not affect the thing seen; in willing, I am both affected by the intentional command of the intellect, and I perform the act of willing, which, while it can affect things outside of me, is also the actualization and perfecting of my will.[21] To have a habitual disposition is to be disposed both to receive and to act well. Powers for transeunt actions, such as our locomotive powers to move our bodies, are not receptive, but only active, on Suárez's view.[22]

Third, only those powers to act immanently that are not determined by the intentions that they receive to one act, and that either are the power of intellect or can participate in intellect through the command of intellect, can be determined by habits. Vision, for example, is determined by the seen object to its act of seeing: if a visible object is presented to my eyes, they are working, and lighting conditions are right, then I necessarily see that object. Since they just do one thing, vision cannot be habitually formed: I cannot, through experience, make it the case that I see better or worse (though I can make it the case that I attend to or interpret what I see better or worse, though these are acts of the cogitative power.)[23] But my sensory appetites, for example, are not determined by their objects to one immanent act of feeling. If a known desirable object is presented to my appetites and those appetites are working properly, they will still not necessarily desire that object. Rather, my appetites can respond in multiple ways to that object; for example, they can obey or disobey the command of reason regarding that object. Through experience and repeatedly making myself act and feel in one way, I can develop habits in my appetites such that I have a stable tendency to act and feel in accord with or against reason.[24] On Suárez's view, in addition to sensory appetitive powers, the human powers that can have habits are intellect, will, imagination, memory, and the cogitative power. I experience these powers as under the command or influence of rational thinking

and willing, though in different ways, and these differing experiences will reveal that the substantial structure of the human person is that described by TH.[25]

I now turn to some experiences of habit formation and exercise as described by the scholastics. Aquinas gives experiential evidence that rational habits can develop with just a single act. For example, if I consider a self-evident proposition just once, then I immediately acquire a stable tendency to know that proposition; no repetition of the act of consideration is necessary to form this habit. But other cognitive habits require repetition of experience. For example, taking on an intellectual opinion or forming a sensory memory requires repeated experience of, or reflection or meditation upon, the subject matter. Likewise, appetitive habits require repetition of experience to be formed.[26] Our appetites are "politically" disposed toward reason, and "participate" in and "obey" it, that is, they have their own experienced tendencies, and so reason must "persuade" them to act in a certain way, by guiding them to act in a way such that, over time, we take on a stable tendency to feel and act in one way rather another. Reason cannot directly force our appetites, by a single act of command, to feel some way. We experience our appetites as capable of both resisting reason and being guided by reason.[27]

Our appetites are primarily conscious powers, but experience reveals that they also have a material component. Aquinas and other scholastics note that we feel material changes in ourselves when we experience appetites, such as the increased heart rate we feel when we are angry, and the reality of these changes can be confirmed medically. In forming an appetitive habit, our matter changes: it, following the experienced power, takes on the stable tendency and adaptation to reason that is the habit. Aquinas and Cajetan hold that, in forming appetitive habits, we experience ourselves, including our bodies, as developing an "intimacy" (*assuetudine*) or "connaturality" (*connaturalitas*) with, or an inclination toward, certain objects, such that we can know and respond to them better or worse in being habitually directed toward them.[28] Aquinas appeals to a range of evidence that the matter of our bodies is adapted to reason by nature too, prior to any habit formation: for example, our hands and our vocal cords are specially structured to be able to express the infinitely open-ended scope of what we know and plan rationally.[29] But in the experience of appetitive habit formation, we find that our matter can be habituated and participate in reason in a higher way.

The unity and hierarchy among reason, our other powers, and our matter, will be better seen by considering some other dispositions and qualities that our bodies can take on, some of which we experience. The disagreement among scholastics on the right way to account for these dispositions actually helps flesh out what the experiences in question are like. A first kind of these habit-like qualities are dispositions in our locomotive powers, such as the abilities to dance, to write, or to play a musical instrument, which Merleau-Ponty called habits. A second kind are attributes of our bodies that have to do with the arrangement of body parts, such as health and disease, beauty and ugliness, strength and weakness, agility and clumsiness.

Some scholastics, like Suárez, deny that any of these are genuine habits. With regard to the first kind, Suárez opposes the view of John Duns Scotus, who holds

that they are habits. Scotus says that he experiences himself as having the stable ability to write and draw, but not to play the harp, and that the stable abilities that he has have been developed by repeated experience under the command of reason and reason's universal artistic knowledge. Thus, these abilities are both formed and experienced as habits. Cajetan likewise holds that our bodily members, insofar as they have been trained by reason, have habits in a secondary sense, while habits in a primary sense are those that directly share in reason, such as appetitive habits.[30] Suárez, by contrast, as well as Aquinas and John of St. Thomas, holds that our bodily organs, apart from the organs directly involved in appetitive powers, are naturally directed to one end, and so cannot be habituated, even when they change in such a way that we take on a stable tendency to be able to dance or write. We can modify these organs by repeated action, as when we practice dancing, but this is a physical alteration of the structure of our bodies, even though it does lead to more prompt action under the command of reason. It is similar to the way in which we modify matter outside of ourselves when we make artifacts; it is not a participation of our organs in the activity of reason, though we can bring about these changes just by repeated action, without externally manipulating the structure of our bodies. Activities like dancing and writing involve habits in our intellects, which control our bodily motions, not in our matter; what some call "muscle memory," on this view, is an aggregation of an intellectual habit, and a modification to the physical tendencies of our bodies. On some scholastic views, our appetitive habits sometimes require changes to our bodies of this non-habitual sort, as in the virtue of moderation, which requires changes to our nutritive powers, such as no longer physically needing as much food as we needed previously. Suárez concedes to Scotus that we experience these changes, but he holds that does not make them habits. On Suárez's view, as well as on the view of other Jesuits, we experience ourselves making similar physical changes when we make artifacts. Both the altered body and artifacts can facilitate the exercise of habits, but habits are in powers of the soul for immanent acts, not in matter.[31] With regard to the second kind of habit-like qualities, such as bodily health and beauty, Suárez holds that these are not habits or even single qualities; rather, they are arrangements of bodily parts and qualities, which we can modify, again like artifacts. They affect our self-experience, but are not habits.[32]

Aquinas, Cajetan, and John of St. Thomas, hold that the second kind of habit-like qualities, such as beauty and health, are habits in the body, but do not directly participate in reason. Reason can neither directly command changes to them, nor do these habits directly give rise to actions as do habits that participate in reason and will, and so they are not "perfect" habits, like the habits of powers for immanent acts. They agree with Suárez that we can form them only by modifying the body as we would an artifact, and that they involve arrangements of body parts. But, since they contend that health and beauty orient the body to behave in one way rather than another, they hold that they are habits. They also hold that we can make changes to these bodily habits by applying to our bodies artifacts which alter the way in which we relate to the world. Some artifact use, such as taking medicine, can alter our bodily habits. Other artifact use, such as using a tool or makeup, does

not change the body itself, and so such use is not a genuine habit, but the accident of using these tools belongs to a category other than quality, *habitus*, that is, the category of "having" or "possession." In such cases, the artifact causes us to intend and engage with the world rationally through that artifact, as on Merleau-Ponty's view, and reason's potentially infinitely open-ended range of ways in which it can engage with the world is focused to a particular way of engaging with the world. Like Suárez, these scholastics also think that forming appetitive habits sometimes requires bodily changes like these. For example, the virtue of modesty requires that our experience of the way in which our bodily organs act and the way in which our bodies are decorated changes, and that our tendencies to act and decorate ourselves change. We can affect our experience of ourselves through the changes that we make to our bodies and by the artifacts that we apply to our bodies.[33]

I do not intend to consider who is correct on each of these kinds of habit or habit-like dispositions; indeed, the differences among these views are small. Rather, I shall consider the experiences that they analyze, since that experience is what I take to be evidence for TH, and they agree on what the relevant experiences are like. Clarifying exactly how they understand our experience of habits requires further background. Following Aquinas and Scotus, in sixteenth and seventeenth-century scholasticism, kinds of potencies and obediences were distinguished. There was disagreement about how to understand and name each of these; I do not consider that disagreement here, but I consider those ideas about potencies necessary for clarifying the experience of habits.

Some potencies are purely "natural": they can be fulfilled by something that is of the same natural order of perfection as the potency, and fulfilling these potencies results in their substance being naturally fulfilled. For example, the nutritive power is fulfilled by food, the human intellect by knowledge of material essences, and matter by substantial form.[34] Other potencies are "obediential." Though a substance has them by nature, they are fulfilled by something greater than that nature, and do not need to be fulfilled for the substance to be naturally fulfilled, but rather their actualization raises the substance to a way of being and acting greater than that of which it is naturally capable, such that the potency "obeys" something greater than itself. (Some scholastics distinguish at least three other kinds of potencies—violent, neutral, and objective—but these are not important here.[35]) Some obediential potencies, such as the potency to receive the habit of charity, can only be fulfilled by something supernatural, and so their actualizations, including infused habits, must be given by God. Yet we experience the acts that proceed from these habits, such as the certainty that comes from acts of the habit of faith, or the loving acts that come from the habit of charity, and so we have evidence that we have these habits and obediential potencies.[36] Other obediential potencies are within the realm of nature. For example, material things not only have natural potencies to be fulfilled by natural things, but also can be formed into artifacts by the direction of human reason. This is a way in which material things can be actualized that is higher than the natural fulfillment to which they are oriented.[37]

Matter and material things are in obediential potency to human reason in at least three ways, and this distinction shows us one way to understand the habit-like properties mentioned above, and our experience of them. First, some material things, such as the organs in which our appetites and our imagination are exercised, are able to obey reason "politically," in the manner already described, and so directly share in reason, and its universal scope of action. Second, other organs, such as our limbs, can obey reason "despotically": when reason commands these, they immediately obey, unless there is some defect in them. I do not have to "persuade" them to move, as I have to do with my appetites. Third, other material things, such as my body insofar as it is not under my conscious control or insofar as I don't have first-person interior awareness of it, and material things that I can form into artifacts, are able to obey reason "artifactually." I can modify my body like an artifact, as when I take medicine for health.[38] Each of these kinds of potency is found within the human person, and each gives rise to a different kind of habit-like quality, a different experience of my matter, and a different experience of the relation among my matter, reason, and non-rational powers, as we have seen.

Now that we have seen how the scholastics describe and account for our experiences of habit formation and exercise, we can consider how these experiences as such, under these descriptions, are evidence for the unity and hierarchy of the person as presented by TH and evidence against objections. We experience our matter and material organs in two ways. First, they are where many of our powers are exercised naturally; second, they are capable of obeying reason and being habituated by reason politically, despotically, or artifactually, and so raised above their natural activity by reason. We experience reason in at least three ways: first, as a power with its own natural acts; second, as the power through which we command our other powers; third, as capable of being habituated in a way unique among our powers, by being immediately habituated by one act. We experience reason as having a potentially infinitely open-ended range of objects that it can consider and command, and we experience the obedience of the body to reason as an expression of that range of reason's power. Finally, all of the matter and the powers presented in these experiences are experienced as our own.

So, we are presented to ourselves as material and rational, where that matter is both naturally organized by certain powers, and capable of obeying reason and so rising above its natural potency; this is very similar experiential evidence to that found in Merleau-Ponty. The "manner" in which we experience ourselves acting and existing includes both the ability to obey reason, and the rational ability to command this obedience. On the basis of hylomorphic-phenomenological effect-to-cause reasoning about these experiences (that is, if we consider what I am like such that I can give rise to experiences like this), it seems that my substantial form or "manner" is not just the way in which my matter is naturally structured—that is, it is not just a property of my matter or substance. Rather, in order to be the potency that is actualized by the range of experiences described by the scholastics, it must exceed that structuring both in being capable of obedience, and in being the source of commands. As in Merleau-Ponty's account, experiences of habits as described by

the scholastics indicate both the transcendence of reason over matter, and the unity of reason with our matter and with our materially-exercised powers, a unity that is shown especially in the experience of obedience and command. Contrary to the first objection, my form must be both the way of being of my body, and a source of action, obedience, and command in its own right—that is, a subsistent thing.

Furthermore, my matter, contrary to the second objection, can share in experience, both through naturally sharing in bodily powers, and through sharing in reason through obedience. The ways in which my body's matter can obey reason indicates that matter must be understood differently than it is understood by the objection: it can participate in first-person, qualitative experience and experiential powers in a range of ways. My matter exists in such a way that it is not experienced directly, but can be formed artifactually; it exists in such a way that it immediately obeys my commands, in its despotically obedient form; and it exists in such a way that it implements conscious, non-rational powers, and can obey reason in a higher way, in its politically obedient form. Our experience gives evidence that matter is a more complex thing than the objection allows. Likewise, the correct account of our substance must be more complex than either of the objections, which assume a non-reductive materialism or a substance dualism, allows. That by which we have our conscious powers, our form, must both structure our matter, and exceed our matter in being an agent and thing in itself.

If the scholastics have accurately described our experiences of habits, and if we reason from this description in an effect-to-cause manner, then we seem to be the sorts of beings described by TH. As many contemporary proponents of TH claim, an examination of our experiences is indeed a fruitful source of evidence for what we substantially are. Good descriptions of these experiences are found not only in the phenomenologists, but, perhaps even more fruitfully for the proponent of TH, in the scholastics themselves.[39]

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Notes

1. TH has been discussed by a range of thinkers, and so any citation of texts on this view is partial. For claims about scholastic views, I will cite a few paradigmatic texts that support the claims I make; it is beyond the scope of this paper to cite every text from every author that supports a given claim. Important primary sources for TH include: Thomas Aquinas (all citations from Thomas Aquinas are taken from www.corpusthomisticum.org [Narrava: Fundación Tomás de Aquino, 2011]), *Quaestio disputata de anima* (hereafter *QDA*) a1&2; *Quaestio disputata de spiritualibus creaturis* a2–4, 11; *Sentencia libri de anima* (hereafter *In DA*) bk2 lect1–5; *Summa contra gentiles* (hereafter *SCG*) II c56–72; *Summa theologiae* (hereafter *ST*) I q75–77; Francisco Suárez, *Commentaria una cum quaestionibus in libros Aristotelis de anima* (hereafter *In DA*) (Salvador Castellote, ed.), d1 q3–4; John of St. Thomas, *Cursus philosophicus thomisticus* (hereafter *CP*) (Paris: Vives, 1883), bk3, *In tres libros de anima*, q1–2, 9, p179–248, 425–443. Contemporary sources on TH include: Bernardo Carlos Bazan, "The

Human Soul: Form and Substance? Thomas Aquinas' Critique of Eclectic Aristotelianism," *Archives d'historie doctrinale et littéraire du moyen age* 64 (1997): 95–126; David Braine, *The Human Person. Animal and Spirit* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1992); Jason T. Eberl, "Aquinas on the Nature of Human Beings," *Review of Metaphysics* 58 (2004): 333–367; John Haldane, "The Breakdown of Contemporary Philosophy of Mind," in *Mind, Metaphysics, and Value in the Aristotelian Tradition*, ed. John Haldane (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2002), 54–75; Gyula Klima, "Aquinas on the Materiality of the Human Soul and the Immateriality of the Human Intellect," *Philosophical Investigations* 32 (2009): 163–182; David S. Oderberg, "Hylemorphic Dualism," *Social Philosophy and Policy* 22 (2005): 70–99; Robert Pasnau, *Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Eleonore Stump, "Non-Cartesian Substance Dualism and Materialism without Reductionism," *Faith and Philosophy* 12 (1995); Stump, *Aquinas* (London: Routledge, 2003).

2. I do not consider controversies among historical versions of TH, such as over the relation between essence and existence, or over the nature of prime matter, nor do I consider directly rival theories to TH. The claim that our experience of habit formation points to the Aristotelian hylomorphic view of the person is made by Hans Urs Von Balthasar, *Theo-Drama: Theological Dramatic Theory*, v2, *Dramatis Personae: Man in God*, ed. Graham Harrison (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1990), 363.

3. Versions of this objection are given by the following texts, some of which also offer responses: Donald Abel, "Intellectual Substance as Form of the Body in Aquinas," *Proceedings of the ACPA* 69 (1995): 233; Gordon Barnes, "The Paradoxes of Hylomorphism," *The Review of Metaphysics* 56 (2003): 501–523; Braine, *Human Person*, 504–506; Brian Davies, *The Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 208–209; William Hasker, *The Emergent Self* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999), 167–170; Anthony Kenny, *Aquinas on Mind* (London: Routledge, 1993), 28, 136; Klima, "Man = Body + Soul," in *Thomas Aquinas: Contemporary Philosophical Perspectives*, ed. Brian Davies (Oxford: OUP, 2002), 258–259; Klima, "Materiality and Immateriality," 163; Brian Leftow, "Souls Dipped in Dust," in *Soul, Body, and Survival*, ed. Kevin Corcoran (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001), 123–127; Pasnau, *Human Nature*, 133–136; Bernard Williams, "Hylomorphism," in *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*, v.4, *A Festschrift for J. L. Ackril*, ed. M. J. Woods (Oxford: OUP, 1986), 197.

4. Versions of this objection are given by: Miles Burnyeat, "Is Aristotelian Philosophy of Mind Still Credible?," in *Essays on Aristotle's "De Anima,"* ed. Martha Nussbaum and Amélie Rorty (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 18, 24–26; Peter King, "Scholasticism and the Philosophy of Mind," in *Scientific Failure*, ed. Tamara Horowitz (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 1993). Reasons to think that qualia or qualitative experience cannot be in matter are given, for example, by Frank Jackson's famous Mary thought experiment.

5. Versions of this line of reasoning are given by: Braine, *Human Person*, 70–73, 283–286, 309; Haldane, "Breakdown," 57–58, 68; John Deely, "The Immateriality of the Intentional as Such," *New Scholasticism* 42 (1968): 295; John Haldane, "Insight, Inference and Intellection," *Proceedings of the ACPA*, 73 (1999), 42; Patrick Lee and Robert George, *Body-Self Dualism in Contemporary Ethics and Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 15; Ian Leask, *Being Reconfigured* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2011), 5, 80–121; John Milbank, "The Soul of Reciprocity Part One: Reciprocity Refused," *Modern Theology* 17 (2001): 335–342, 349–350, 357–359, 365; John Milbank, "The Soul of Reciprocity Part Two: Reciprocity Regained," *Modern Theology* 17 (2001): 490, 501, 504–505;

Martha Nussbaum and Hilary Putnam, "Changing Aristotle's Mind," in Nussbaum and Rorty, *Essays on Aristotle's "De Anima,"* 46–56; Eleonore Stump, *Wandering in Darkness* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 49–60, 75–81, 505; Charles Taliaferro, *Consciousness and the Mind of God* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 15–17, 31–32, 48–51, 115–122. See also two recent dissertations that defend versions of this line of argumentation: Joshua Miller, *On Whether or not Merleau-Ponty's Phenomenology of Lived Body Experience Can Enrich St. Thomas Aquinas's Integral Anthropology* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University, 2009), and my own *Thomistic Hylomorphism and the Phenomenology of Self-Sensing* (Buffalo: SUNY Buffalo, 2012). Most of these texts consider how experiences as described by Merleau-Ponty can be used as evidence for TH, but some of them consider phenomenological accounts of our experience from Stein, Heidegger, Levinas, Henry, and Marion as evidence for TH.

6. This methodology is presented, in various forms, at: Aquinas, *Super Boetium De Trinitate* q5 a4 & q6 a1; *De operantibus occultis*; *QDA* a13; *Quaestiones quodlibitales* VII q1 a4; *In III DA*, lect15; *SCG* II, c.68, 73, 77, 81; *ST* I q78 a1, q80 a1, q85 a1; I-II q112 a5 ad1; Jan Aertsen, *Medieval Philosophy and the Transcendentals* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 130–135; William Jaworski, "Hylomorphism and the Mind-Body Problem," *Proceedings of the ACPA* 78 (2004): 184–187; Gilbert Narcisse, *Les Raisons de Dieu* (Fribourg: Editions Universitaires Fribourg Suisse, 1997); Pasnau, *Human Nature*, 336–340; Taki Suto, "Virtue and Knowledge: Connatural Knowledge According to Thomas Aquinas," *The Review of Metaphysics* 58 (2004): 65; Edith Stein, *Finite and Eternal Being*, trans. Kurt Reinhardt (Washington: ICS, 2002); John Wippel, *The Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 2000), 42–43.

7. For example, the expressivity of the human face or of human actions could be used as evidence for TH; in this, the methodology of this paper follows that of other Thomistic personalists, such as Karol Wojtyła and Edith Stein. I am grateful to John Crosby for emphasizing the importance of this point to me.

8. Aquinas, *Quaestiones disputatae de veritatae* (hereafter *DV*), q10 a8, especially *resp*, ad2, ad8sc; *In III DA* lect2&3; *SCG* II c66, 75; *ST* I, q78 a4 ad 2, q87 a1 cf. Daniel DeHaan, "Perception and the Vis Cogitativa: A Thomistic Analysis of Aspectual, Actional, and Affectional Percepts," *ACPQ* forthcoming; Pasnau, *Human Nature*, 338.

9. Aquinas, *DV*, q13 a3; *SCG*, II c55, 58, 76.

10. Francisco Suárez, *Disputationes metaphysicae* (hereafter *DM*) (Castellote, ed., available at salvadorcastellote.com, 2003–2007) d15 s1 n7. I am grateful to Tom Sullivan for calling this text to my attention.

11. These themes are developed throughout Merleau-Ponty's entire corpus. For the experience of one hand touching the other see Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith (London: Routledge, 2002), 106–107; Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Evanston: NWU Press, 1969), 9, 133–134, 147–148, 155. For the account of habits see *Perception*, 95, 116, 164–166, 513. On the use of artifacts, see ibid., 158–164, 300–303, 339, 342, 511. On intellectual experience see *Visible*, 125–126, 153–155, 180, 204. Other phenomenologists, such as Max Scheler, Michel Henry, and Jean-Luc Maion, describe similar experiences of our bodies as material things organized around natural powers, and further organizable by habits that give us stable way of relating to the world, all of which we sense in ourselves, where that self-sensing is our most fundamental experience of ourselves, and where some of our experiences, especially our intellectual experiences, transcend bodily self-sensing.

12. This is the view that Merleau-Ponty seems to take in *The Structure of Behavior*, trans. Alden Fischer (Pittsburgh: Duquesne, 1983). Later, in *Visible*, he adopted a "wild ontology," the view that the world is one "flesh," one stuff that is intertwined materiality and experience.

13. This is the view to which the phenomenologist Max Scheler concluded, based on accounts of our self-experience, and the dichotomy between our bodily and intellectual self-experiences; cf. Max Scheler, *Man's Place in Nature*, trans. Hans Meyerhoff (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Cudahy, 1961), 65–68, 92–93.

14. Aquinas, *Commentaria in octo libros physicorum*, bk3 lect5; *ST* I-II q49 a1–2; Suárez, *DM* d42 s1 n5–7

15. Aquinas, *ST* I-II q49 a2; Suárez *DM* d42 s3; John of St. Thomas, *CP*, v1, *Logica* pt2 q18 a3, p533–539.

16. Aquinas, *Sentencia libri metaphysicae* (hereafter *In Met*), V lect16&20; *In VII Phys* lect5; *ST* I-II q49 a2 ad3; Suárez, *In DA*, d2 q8 n15; *DM* d42 s2–5, d44 s1 n4–8.

17. Aquinas, *In V Met* lect16; *Quaestio disputata de virtutibus in communi* (hereafter *QDVC*). a10 ad 14&15; Suárez, *DM* d44 s1 n6–7. cf. Aquinas, *Quaestio disputata de charitate* a1 ad7; *ST* I-II q112 a5 ad1&5; Suárez, *In DA*, d1 q2 n1.

18. Suárez, *DM* d44 s1 n2&6–7, s3 n1; Aquinas, *ST* I-II q51 a2–4, q56 a5; Thomas de Vio Cajetan, *Expositio super summam theologiam sancti Thomae Aquinatis*, in *Opera omnia Thomae Aquinatis* (hereafte *In ST*), v6 (Rome: S.C. de Propaganda Fide [Leonine ed.], 1881), I-II q50 a3, p320; John of St. Thomas, *Cursus theologicus*, *In I-II ST*, *De habitibus*, (Quebec: Laval, 1949), d13 a2 n204, p51. cf. Aquinas, I-II q97 a3.

19. These conditions are presented at Suárez, *DM* d44 s1 n6–10; John of St. Thomas gives a similar account, but with less emphasis on experience, at *In I-II ST*, d13 a1 n133–140, p31–33. Aquinas, at *ST* I-II q49 a4 gives Suárez's first condition as his second condition for habit; his first condition is that the power being formed must be ordered not just toward itself but to an act distinct from itself. This is to exclude the possibility of there being habits in God, since in God, the power to act and the act itself are identical. Aquinas's third condition for habit is related to the second: it is that the subject of the habit have several parts or aspects that can be more or less coordinated together by the habit, so as to act better or worse.

20. Suárez, *DM* d44 s1 n15. cf. Aquinas, *ST* I-II q50 a3 ad1; Cajetan, *In I-II ST*, v6, q50 a1–2; John of St. Thomas, *In I-II ST*, d13 a2 n207, p52.

21. Suárez, *DM* d44 s1 n3&9, s2 n3. cf. John of St. Thomas, *CP*, v2, *Nat.Phil.* pt1 q14 a4, p273. On these kinds of immanent acts of living things, which are called "vital acts," see Suárez, *In DA* d1 q2 n4; John of St. Thomas, *CP*, v3, *Nat.Phil.* q4 a1, p268.

22. Suárez, *DM* d44 s2 n3.

23. Aquinas, *ST* I-II q50 a3 ad3; Suárez, *DM* d44 s1 n15.

24. Aquinas, *ST* I-II q56 a4 ad3; III q15 a2 ad1; Suárez, *DM* d44 s1 n13.

25. Suárez, *DM* d44 s1 n11–14, s3 n7. Beings without reason and will, such as non-human animals, cannot have genuine habits, since they act either in a determinate way by nature, or under the command of human reason and will when we use them and instill in them a custom of acting in one way. cf. Aquinas, *ST* I-II q50 a3 ad2; Suárez, *DM* d44 s3 n1–5; John of St. Thomas, *In I-II ST*, d13 a2 n242–260, p61–66.

26. Aquinas, *ST* I-II q51 a3.

27. Aquinas, *ST* I-II q56 a4 ad3; III q15 a2 ad1; Suárez, *DM* d44 s1 n13. cf. John Capreolus, *Defensiones theologiae divi Thomae Aquinatis* (hereafter *In Sent*), v5, III d33 q1 a3 ad2–3Scoti, p398–399; Cajetan, *In I-II ST*, q50 a1–2, p320. Persuasion of sensory appetites also involves the will "using" the appetites in various ways: the free act of the will can be used as evidence for the immateriality of the will, and the way in which it uses the appetites can be used as evidence for the hierarchy and unity between the will and the appetites. However, following the scholastics, I focus on the intellect's relation to bodily powers, rather than the will's relation to them.

28. Aquinas, *ST* I-II q22 a2 ad3; q50 a1; II-II q45 a2; Cajetan, *In I-II ST*, v6, q50 a1–3, p320. cf. Taki Suto, "Virtue and Knowledge: Connatural Knowledge According to Thomas Aquinas," *Review of Metaphysics* 58 (2004): 61–79.

29. Aquinas, *Expositio libri Peryermeneias*, I lect6 n8; *ST* I q76 a5 ad2; q91 a3.

30. John Duns Scotus, *Quaesiones in librum sententiarum*, *Opera omnia*, v14, (Paris: Vives, 1894), III d33 q.un. n19 ad3, p433; Cajetan, *In I-II ST* q50 a1–3, p320.

31. Aquinas, *ST* I-II q50 a3 ad3; Suárez, *DM* d39 s2 n37; d44 s2 n1–4; d53 s2 n3 John of St. Thomas, *In I-II ST*, d13 a2 n223–228, p55–58. For examples of other Jesuit views of the period see: Pedro da Fonseca, *In libros metaphysicorum Aristotelis stagirita* (hereafter *In Met*) (Frankfurt: Impensis Ioannis Theobaldi Schonuvetteri, 1599), v1, bk2 c3 q5 s4, p404–406; Conimbricenses, *Commentaria in octo libros physicorum Aristotelis stagirita* (hereafter *In Phys*) (Cologne: Zeztneri, 1609), v1, c1 q5 a1, p272; c1 q6 a2, p275; Antonio Rubio, *Logica mexicana* (Lugduni: Ioannes Pillehotte, 1625), c10, q.un., p450.

32. Suárez, *DM* d42 s4 n20–22; d44 s1 n15.

33. On the category of *habitus* see especially my "The Category of *Habitus*: Artifacts, Accidents, and Human Nature," *The Thomist*, forthcoming. For primary source material on the category see: Aquinas, *In I Sent* d39 q2 a1; *In III Sent* d33 q3 a2 qq3 *In III Phys* lect5; *In I Peri Herm.* lect2 n2; *ST* I q93 a2 ad2; I-II q50 a1, a3 ad2; q51 a3; II-II q145 a2; q168 a1 ad3, q169 a1; *Super I epistolam beati Pauli ad Corinthos lectura* c11 v5 lect2 n598; Cajetan, *In I-II ST*, v6, q50 a1–3, p320; *In II-II ST*, v10, q169 a2 n2–3, p169–72; John of St. Thomas, *CP*, v1, Logic pt2 q18 a3, p534; q19 a4, p555; *In I-II ST* d13 a1 n98–99&182–183, p23&45; d13 a2, n210–228, p53–58. cf. Charles de Koninck, "Prolégomènes à la Dixième Catégorie," *Philosophia Perennis* 3 (1996): 5–23. At *ST* I-II q49 a4, Aquinas gives as the third condition for a quality being a genuine habit that the subject of habit must have several aspects that can be more or less harmoniously coordinated together so as to act better or worse; health and beauty fulfill this condition.

34. Aquinas, *In II Phys* lect1; Scotus, *In I Sent*, prologue q1, p67; Paul Soncinias, *Quaestiones metaphysicales Aristotelis* (Lugundi: Carolum Pesnot, 1579), bk7 q27, p142–143; Pedro da Fonseca, *In IX Met*, v3, c1 q4 sD, p607; Conimbricenses, *In II Phys*, v1, c1 q5 a1, p270–272; Suárez, *DM* d43 s4 n1–5; John of St. Thomas, *CP*, v1, *Nat.Phil.*, bk2 q9 a1, p148–149.

35. Violent potencies receive determinations contrary to the nature of what has the potency. For example, most scholastics held that stones are naturally inclined to the center of the earth, so anytime a stone is kept away from the center of the earth, this is contrary to its nature, and so one of its violent potencies is being actualized. Neutral potencies can be determined in multiple ways, where the potency is not perfected by any one determination, but is indifferent to them all. For example, air can receive light, and so is in potency to receiving it, but it is indifferent to receiving it, or any color of light. Objective potencies belong to a

non-existing essence considered in itself that is capable of being actualized. For example, the essences of all things that now exist were in objective potency before they actually existed. Some, such as Scotus and Suárez affirmed that there are real potencies of these sorts; others, such as John of St. Thomas, held that the former two are just logical claims about things. See: Scotus, *In I Sent*, prologue q1; Cajetan, *De potentia neutra*, *Opuscula omnia*, v3 (Lyon: Iacobi Iuntae, 1562), p206–207; da Fonseca, *In IX Met*, v3, c1 q3–4, p602–608; Suárez, *DM* d43 s4 n6–24; John of St. Thomas, *CP*, v1, *Nat.Phil.*, q4 a2, p81–84; Salmanticenses, *Cursus theologicus* (hereafter *In ST*) (Paris: Victor Palme, 1877), v1, I, *De scientia dei*, t3 d7 d3 s3 n39, p483.

36. Aquinas, *ST* I-II q112 a5 ad2; Scotus, *In I Sent*, v1, prologue q1, p68; Cajetan, *De potentia neutra*, *Opuscula omnia*, v3 (Lyon: Iacobi Iuntae, 1562), p206–207; da Fonseca, *In IX Met*, v3, c1 q4 s3–4, p608–613; Suárez, *DM* d43 s4 n6&16; John of St. Thomas, *CP*, v1, *Nat.Phil.*, q4 a2, p81–82. cf. Lawrence Feingold, *The Natural Desire to See God According to St. Thomas and His Interpreters* (Naples: Sapientia Press, 2010); Steven Long, *Natura Pura* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2010).

37. Some, like da Fonseca, say that this is not properly speaking an obediential potency, because it does not involve anything supernatural, and so it is a kind of natural potency that requires obedience to reason; others, like Suárez, call it a kind of obediential potency—either way, the language of obedience is generally used for the relation between matter and human reason. cf. Aquinas, *QDP* q3 a8 ad5; *Compendium theologiae*, I c104; Cajetan, *De potentia neutra et de natura potentiae receptivae*, t3 in *Opuscula omnia*, v3 (Lyon: Apud haeredos Iacobi Iuntae, 1562), q1 n1, p206; q2 n3, p207; *In I ST*, v5, q106 a1 n5–6, p483; q111 a3, p518; da Fonseca, *In IX Met* c1 q4 sD, p607; Suárez, *DM* d16 s2 n17–8; d43 s4 n17; John of St. Thomas, *CP* Nat. Phil. pt1 q4 a2, p81–4. Feingold, *Natural Desire*, 107 calls this kind of potency, along with violent potencies, "middle potencies."

38. Aquinas, *ST* I-II q56 a4 ad3; *QDVC* a4; Suárez, *DM* d44 s1 n13, s2 n3.

39. Versions of portions of this paper previously appeared in my 2012 University at Buffalo dissertation *Thomistic Hylomorphism and the Phenomenology of Self-Sensing*; I am grateful to many people for their assistance with that work, especially Jorge Gracia, David Hershenov, and Richard Cohen. I am grateful to Mathew Lu for his comments on an earlier draft of this paper, and to Joshua Stuchlick and John Crosby for conversations that greatly aided the writing of this paper. I am also grateful to the attendees of the 2014 ACPA meeting at which this paper was presented, and especially to Marie George, who commented on this paper at that conference.