

Thomas Aquinas and the Resurrection of the (Disabled) Body

Michael M. Waddell

Saint Mary's College (Notre Dame, IN)

Introduction

Thomas Aquinas's teaching on the resurrection of the body is as much "of the moment" today as it was when Thomas first wrote it. By virtue of working to incorporate an Aristotelian respect for the body and for the hylomorphic unity of the human person into a Christian worldview that had been articulated primarily in neo-Platonic terms for several centuries, Aquinas was on the cutting edge of philosophical and theological anthropology in the 13th century. And Thomas's view of the resurrection and the unity of the human person is no less timely in the 21st century. It figures prominently in the so-called "gappy existence" debate, which hangs on the question of whether the separated soul constitutes a human person between the time of death and the resurrection of the body.¹ And though it might be less well known in Thomistic circles, Thomas's teaching on the human person and the resurrection of the body is also playing a role in a current debate about disability. This debate is focused on the question of whether human disabilities will exist after the resurrection. Some people have argued that disabilities are imperfections—e.g., privations—and that they will therefore be healed in the perfection of the resurrected body.² Others, however, regard disabilities not as imperfections but rather as part of a person's identity, and believe that identity must be maintained between the living human being and the resurrected one.³ For these

¹ Some scholars—including, most notably, Eleonore Stump—argue that the human person does continue to exist during this time. The majority of scholars who have weighed in on this debate, though, including Christina Van Dyke, Patrick Toner, and Turner Nevitt, contend that Thomas's own writings clearly state that a human person must be comprised of both body and soul, which implies that a separated soul is not a human person. For more on this debate, see Eleonore Stump, *Aquinas* (London: Routledge, 2003), 51–54. Jason Eberl, "Aquinas on the Nature of Human Beings," *Review of Metaphysics* 58.2 (2004): 333–365. Christopher Brown, *Aquinas and the Ship of Theseus: Solving Puzzles about Material Objects* (London: Continuum, 2005), esp. 76–9. Christopher Martin, "Is There Identity of Person Between a Human Being and a Separated Soul?" *Studia Theologica* 6 (2008): 249–53. Christina Van Dyke, "Human identity, immanent causal relations, and the principle of non-repeatability: Thomas Aquinas on the bodily resurrection," *Religious Studies* 43.4 (2004): 373–394. Patrick Toner, "Personhood and Death in St. Thomas Aquinas," *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 26.2 (2009): 121–38. Patrick Toner, "St. Thomas Aquinas on Death and the Separated Soul," *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 91 (2010): 587–599. Patrick Toner, "St. Thomas Aquinas on Punishing Souls," *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 71 (2012): 103–116. Patrick Toner, "Hylemorphism, remnant persons and personhood," *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 44.1 (2014): 76–96. Turner Nevitt, "Survivalism, Corruptionism, and Intermittent Existence in Aquinas," *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 31.1 (January 2014): 1–19. Turner Nevitt, "Aquinas on the Death of Christ: A New Argument for Corruptionism," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* (2016): 77–99. Turner Nevitt, "Annihilation, Re-creation, and Intermittent Existence in Aquinas," *The Metaphysics of Personal Identity, Proceedings of the Society for Medieval Logic and Metaphysics Volume 13* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016).

² See, for example, Terrence Ehrmann, CSC, "Disability and Resurrection Identity," *New Blackfriars* 96 (2015): 723–38.

³ See, for example, John Swinton, Harriet Mowat, and Susannah Baines, "Whose Story Am I? Redescribing Profound Intellectual Disability in the Kingdom of God," *Journal of Religion, Disability and Health* 15 (2011): 5–19, esp. 8–9. Nancy Eiesland, "Liberation, Inclusion, and Justice: A Faith Response to Persons with Disabilities," *Impact* 14.3 (2001/2), 2 (retrieved on 2 June 2016 from <https://ici.umn.edu/products/impact/143/143.pdf>). Amos Yong, *Theology and Down Syndrome: Reimagining Disability in Late Modernity* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2007), 269. Stanley

individuals, preservation of personal identity demands that disabilities continue to exist in the resurrected body.

The question of what it is that constitutes the human person is at the center of both of these contemporary debates. And the notion of the “personal” is also a recurring motif in Montague Brown’s discussion of the resurrection. As he states in the introduction of his paper:

As Jesus is fully human and fully divine, our redemption must also be fully human, that is *personal*; and that would seem to include the redemption of our bodily life as well as our souls.⁴ (Emphasis mine.)

What precisely does it mean, though—in Thomistic terms—for redemption to be “personal”? And what, in particular, would it mean for redemption to be “personal” *for a person with disabilities*?

In what remains of this paper, I want to explore these questions by thinking through the implications of Professor Brown’s claim that redemption must be personal in dialogue with Aquinas’s teaching on resurrection of the body and the contemporary debate about disability and resurrection. I will begin (in part one) by examining Thomas’s view of the human person, and teasing out some questions about the implications of this view for the resurrection of persons as such. Then (in part two), I will turn to some of Thomas’s explicit remarks about the resurrected body to explore his understanding of the resurrection and the healing of disabilities. Finally (in part three), I will consider a tension between Thomas’s view of the human person and his understanding of healing in the resurrection, examining this tension in particular in light of some concerns that have been raised by disability theorists, and showing how Thomas seems to resolve this tension.

1. The Person as *This* Body and *This* Soul

We should begin, then, by examining what Aquinas thinks the human person is. Thomas follows Boethius in defining “person” as “an individual substance of a rational nature” (*persona est rationalis naturae individua substantia*).⁵ By “substance,” Aquinas here means a “suppositum,” that is, a thing that exists individually (or “subsists”) without depending on another to be the subject of its existence.⁶ With respect to the second part of the definition, Thomas indicates that

Hauerwas, “Marginalizing the ‘Retarded,’” in *The Deprived, the Disabled, and the Fullness of Life*, ed., Flavian Dougherty (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1984), 69.

⁴ Montague Brown, “Philosophical and Theological Perspectives on the Resurrection of the Body in Aquinas,” *The Saint Anselm Journal* 12.2 (2017), 1. See also 9 and 14-17.

⁵ See, for example, *Summa theologiae* (hereafter, *ST*) 1.29.1, 1.29.3, and 3.2.2. Cf. *De potentia* 9.1. Aquinas appropriates this definition from Boethius’s *Liber de persona et de duabus naturis contra Eutychem et Nestorium*, ch. 2.

⁶ In *ST* 1.29.2 c., Thomas explains that the term “substance” has two basic meanings: in one sense, it can mean the quiddity of a thing, or what is signified by its definition, and thus be a synonym of the term essence; in the other sense, “substance” means a subject or suppositum that subsists in the genus of substance. The definition of person as an “individual substance” takes the term in the second sense. Unless otherwise noted, English translations of the *ST* are

the term “nature” is here taken in the sense of “essence,” or what is signified by the definition (*quiddity*).⁷ Accordingly, every individual substance that contains rationality as part of its essence (or whose nature has rationality as part of its quiddity) will be a person. Since Thomas takes the essence (or quiddity) of “human being” (*homo*) to be “rational animal,”⁸ it follows that every individual possessing human nature—which is to say, every human being—is a person.⁹

taken from *Summa Theologica* (New York: Benziger Bros., 1947). Latin texts of Aquinas’s works are taken from the Busa edition. Cf. *De potentia* 9.2 co.

Boethius seems to have intended to employ the same meaning of the term “substance” in his definition of “person,” for he states: “Again, some substances are universal, others are particular. Universals are those which are predicated of individuals, as man, animal, stone, plank and other things of this kind which are either genera or species; for man is predicated of individual men just as animal is of individual animals, and stone and plank of individual stones and planks. But particulars are those which are never predicated of other things, as Cicero, Plato, this stone from which this statue of Achilles was hewn, this plank out of which this table was made. But in all these things person cannot anywhere be predicated of universals, but only of particulars and individuals; for there is no person of man as animal or a genus; only of Cicero, Plato, or other single individuals are single persons named” (Boethius, “A Treatise Against Eutyches and Nestorius,” in *Theological Tractates. The Consolation of Philosophy*, trans. Stewart and Rand [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973], ch. 2, ll. 38–52).

⁷ See *ST* 1.29.1 ad 4: “According to the Philosopher (Metaph. v, 5), the word ‘nature’ was first used to signify the generation of living things, which is called nativity. And because this kind of generation comes from an intrinsic principle, this term is extended to signify the intrinsic principle of any kind of movement. In this sense he defines ‘nature’ (Phys. ii, 3). And since this kind of principle is either formal or material, both matter and form are commonly called nature. And as the essence of anything is completed by the form; so the essence of anything, signified by the definition, is commonly called nature. And here nature is taken in that sense. Hence Boethius says (De Duab. Nat.) that, ‘nature is the specific difference giving its form to each thing,’ for the specific difference completes the definition, and is derived from the special form of a thing. So in the definition of ‘person,’ which means the singular in a determined ‘genus,’ it is more correct to use the term ‘nature’ than ‘essence,’ because the latter is taken from being, which is most common. / Ad quartum dicendum quod, secundum philosophum, in V Metaphys., nomen naturae primo impositum est ad significandam generationem viventium, quae dicitur nativitas. Et quia huiusmodi generatio est a principio intrinseco, extensum est hoc nomen ad significandum principium intrinsecum cuiuscumque motus. Et sic definitur natura in II Physic. Et quia huiusmodi principium est formale vel materiale, communiter tam materia quam forma dicitur natura. Et quia per formam completur essentia uniuscuiusque rei, communiter essentia uniuscuiusque rei, quam significat eius definitio, vocatur natura. Et sic accipitur hic natura. Unde Boetius in eodem libro dicit quod natura est unumquodque informans specifica differentia, specifica enim differentia est quae complet definitionem, et sumitur a propria forma rei. Et ideo convenientius fuit quod in definitione personae, quae est singulare alicuius generis determinati, uteretur nomine naturae, quam essentiae, quae sumitur ab esse, quod est communissimum.” Cf. *De ente et essentia* (hereafter, *De ente*), par. 9.

⁸ See, for example, *Commentary on the Metaphysics* (hereafter, *In MP*), bk. 7, lect. 3, par. 1326: “For ‘animal’ is predicated of man essentially and in a similar way ‘rational.’ Hence the expression ‘rational animal’ is the definition of man. / Animal vero praedicatur de homine per se, et similiter rationale de animali. Et ideo hoc quod dico, animal rationale, definitio est hominis.” English translation taken from *Commentary on the Metaphysics of Aristotle*, trans. Rowan (Chicago: H. Regnery Co., 1961). See also *De ente*, ch. 2, par. 9; *ST* 1.29.4 ad 2; *ST* 2-2.34.5 c.; *ST* 2-2.180.7 c.; *De malo* 12.3 ad 9; *Commentary on the Nicomachean Ethics* (hereafter, *In NE*) bk. 5, lect. 12, par. 1019; *De veritate* (hereafter, *DV*) 11.12 c.; *DV* 21.1 c.; *DV* 22.11 c.; *De potentia* 9.1 ad 1; *De malo* 4.2 ad sc 1; *De spūtualibus creaturis* a.3; *Compendium*, part 1, ch. 10; *Compendium*, part 1, ch. 90; *Compendium*, part 1, ch. 2; *Compendium*, part 1, ch. 148; *Commentary on the Posterior Analytics* (hereafter, *In Post. Anal.*), bk. 1, lect. 22; *Commentary on Aristotle’s De Anima* (hereafter, *In DA*), bk. 3, lect. 4, par. 631; *In MP*, bk. 7, lect. 3, par. 1317; *In MP* bk. 7, lect. 4, par. 1344; *In MP* bk. 7, lect. 5, par. 1378; *In MP* bk. 7, lect. 9, par. 1462; *In MP* bk. 8, lect. 3, par. 1722; *In MP* bk. 8, lect. 3, par. 1724.

⁹ Sadly, not everyone recognizes that every human being is a person. See, e.g., Peter Singer, “Speciesism and Moral Status,” in *Cognitive Disability and its Challenge to Moral Philosophy*, ed. Kittay and Carlson (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 331–44, esp. 343–44. Cf. Jeff McMahan, “Cognitive Disability and Cognitive Enhancement,” in *Cognitive Disability and its Challenge to Moral Philosophy*, ed. Kittay and Carlson (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 345–67, esp. 347.

Now, of course, Thomas regards reason as a power of the human soul.¹⁰ And given Thomas's definition of a person as being an "individual substance of a rational nature," one might be tempted to infer that, on Thomas's account, what makes human beings to be "persons" is the soul, and not the body, so that, say, a human soul separated from the body would satisfy the conditions for human personhood.¹¹

But this would be a mistake. In *Summa Theologiae* 1.75.4 ad 2, Thomas states that "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 And again at *De potentia* 9.2 ad 14, Thomas writes: "The separated soul is a part of a rational nature . . . and not a whole rational human nature: wherefore it is not a person."¹³ These texts indicate clearly that, for Thomas, the human soul alone does not constitute a human person. Why not? The reason is that, in Thomas's mind, "human nature is constituted of body *and* soul."¹⁴ And therefore, to be an individual substance of

¹⁰ See, for example, *ST* 1.79.1 c. and 1.79.8 c.

¹¹ In fact, in one place, Thomas even states that "the distinctive form of man is that which makes him a rational animal / *propria autem forma hominis est secundum quam est animal rationale*" (*In NE*, bk. 2, lect. 2, par. 257). English translation taken from *Commentary on the Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. Litzinger (Chicago: H. Regnery Co., 1964). See also *ST* 3.50.4 obj. 2: "Further, the Philosopher says (*Ethic.* ix) that 'each man is his intellect'; consequently, when we address the soul of Peter after his death we say: 'Saint Peter, pray for us.' But the Son of God after death was not separated from His intellectual soul. Therefore, during those three days the Son of God was a man. / Praeterea, philosophus dicit, in IX *Ethic.*, quod unusquisque homo est suus intellectus. Unde et, post mortem animam Petri alloquentes, dicimus, sancte Petre, ora pro nobis. Sed post mortem filius Dei non fuit separatus ab anima intellectuali. Ergo in illo triduo filius Dei fuit homo." In *ST* 3.50.4 c., Thomas states that Hugh of St. Victor, without intending to err against the faith, maintained that Christ continued to be a human being (*homo*) during the three days that followed his death because Hugh believed that the soul alone is a human being ("*dicebat anima esse hominem*"). He claims that Peter Lombard also believed Christ continued to be a human being during this period, but for a slightly different reason: Lombard thought being a human required both soul and body, but did not think it was essential that they be united, so that having a separate soul and body sufficed to make one human. Aquinas, of course, rejects both of these views in *ST* 3.50.4. See also *Compendium*, part 1, ch. 229.

¹² *ST* 1.75.4 ad 2: "non quaelibet substantia particularis est hypostasis vel persona, sed quae habet completam naturam speciei. Unde manus vel pes non potest dici hypostasis vel persona. Et similiter nec anima, cum sit pars speciei humanae." See also *ST* 3.2.2 ad 3: "Yet we must bear in mind that not every individual in the genus of substance, even in rational nature, is a person, but that alone which exists by itself, and not that which exists in some more perfect thing. Hence the hand of Socrates, although it is a kind of individual, is not a person, because it does not exist by itself, but in something more perfect, viz. in the whole. And hence, too, this is signified by a 'person' being defined as 'an individual substance,' for the hand is not a complete substance, but part of a substance. / Sciendum est tamen quod non quodlibet individuum in genere substantiae, etiam in rationali natura, habet rationem personae, sed solum illud quod per se existit, non autem illud quod existit in alio perfectiori. Unde manus Socratis, quamvis sit quoddam individuum, non est tamen persona, quia non per se existit, sed in quodam perfectiori, scilicet in suo toto. Et hoc etiam potest significari in hoc quod persona dicitur substantia individua, non enim manus est substantia completa, sed pars substantiae." Cf. *Quaestiones disputatae de anima*, art. 1 c., art. 1 ad 3, and art. 1 ad 4; *Compendium*, part 1, ch. 229; *ST* 3.50.4; *Commentary on the Sentences* (hereafter, *In sent.*), bk. 4, d. 43, q. 1, a. 1, qc. 1 ad 2.

¹³ *De potentia* 9.2 ad 14: "anima separata est pars rationalis naturae, scilicet humanae, et non tota natura rationalis humana, et ideo non est persona."

¹⁴ *Summa contra Gentiles* (hereafter, *ScG*) 4.35.14: "humana natura ex anima et corpore constituatur." See also *ScG* 4.35.3, *ScG* 4.37, *ScG* 4.40, *ScG* 4.41; *ST* 1.19.1 co., *ST* 3.2.5 ad 2, *ST* 3.2.10 ad 2, *ST* 3.5.3 c., *ST* 3.6.5 c., *ST* 3.50.3 ad 2, *ST* 3.52.3 ad 2; *De potentia* 3.10 c.; *Compendium*, part 1, ch. 204, *Compendium* part 1, ch. 209, *Compendium*

this particular rational nature—in other words, to be a *human person*—is to be comprised of both body and soul. So, if we think of a human soul as separate from its body—as it could be in the time between death and the resurrection—the soul might continue to be an individual and to have the faculty of reason, but it is not a human *person*.¹⁵ A *part* of a human person, perhaps; but not a human person as such. As Thomas puts it so poetically in his commentary on First Corinthians: “*anima mea non est ego . . . my soul is not me.*”¹⁶

In a striking passage from his second *Quodlibet*, Thomas goes even further with this holistic understanding of the human person, asserting that,

While it pertains to the *ratio* of the human species that it be composed of soul and body, the determination of body and soul is beyond the *ratio* of the species, and it is accidental to a human being, inasmuch as it is a human being, that it be [composed] out of *this* soul and *this* body; but it belongs *per se* to *this* human being that, if he were defined, it would pertain to his *ratio* that it be [composed] out of *this* soul and *this* body, just as it pertains to the *ratio* of human being in general that it be [composed] out of soul and body.¹⁷ (My translation.)

part 1, ch. 211, *Compendium* part 1, ch. 229; *Commentary on the Gospel of St. John*, ch. 3, lect. 1, par. 443 and ch. 3, lect. 2, par. 467; and *Quaestiones disputatae de anima*, a. 2 ad 11.

¹⁵ In question 71, article 12 of the *supplementum* to the *Summa*, one finds the term “persons” used to describe separated souls. But this usage is not authoritative since Thomas did not write the *supplementum* himself.

¹⁶ *Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (hereafter, *In I Cor*), ch. 15, lect. 2, par. 924: “but the soul, since it is part of man’s body, is not an entire man, and my soul is not I. / Anima autem cum sit pars corporis hominis, non est totus homo, et anima mea non est ego.” English translation taken from *Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, trans. Larcher (retrieved on 11 May 2017 from <http://dhsprory.org/thomas/SS1Cor.htm>).

¹⁷ *Quodlibet* 2, q. 2, a. 2 ad 1: “Cum enim de ratione speciei humanae sit quod componatur ex anima et corpore, determinatio corporis et animae est praeter rationem speciei, et accidit homini in quantum est homo, quod sit ex hac anima et ex hoc corpore; sed convenit per se huic homini, de cuius ratione esset, si definiretur, quod esset ex hac anima et ex hoc corpore; sicut de ratione hominis communis est quod sit ex anima et corpore.” (Note: what is operative here seems to be the first mode of perseity, not the second: that is, the attributes in question belong to the subject according to its definition [the first mode of perseity] and not just according to its material cause or “subject” [the second mode of perseity]. See *In Post. Anal.*, bk. 1, ch. 4, l. 10.) See also, *De ente*, par 23: “We should notice, therefore, that the principle of individuation is not matter taken in just any way whatever, but only designated matter. And I call that matter designated which is considered under determined dimensions. Such matter is not placed in the definition of man as man, *but it would be placed in the definition of Socrates, if Socrates had a definition.* Rather, it is non-designated matter which is placed in the definition of man; for *this* bone and *this* flesh are not placed in the definition of man, but bone and flesh absolutely. These latter are man’s non-designated matter. / Et ideo sciendum est quod materia non quolibet modo accepta est individuationis principium, sed solum materia signata. Et dico materiam signatam, quae sub determinatis dimensionibus consideratur. Haec autem materia in diffinitione hominis, in quantum est homo, non ponitur, sed poneretur in diffinitione Socratis, si Socrates diffinitionem haberet. In diffinitione autem hominis ponitur materia non signata; non enim in diffinitione hominis ponitur hoc os et haec caro, sed os et caro absolute, quae sunt materia hominis non signata.” English translation taken from *Aquinas on Being and Essence*, trans. Bobik (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1965). Or, *ST* 1.75.4 c: “For as it belongs to the notion of this particular man to be composed of *this* soul, of *this* flesh, and of *these* bones; so it belongs to the notion of man to be composed of soul, flesh, and bones / Sicut enim de ratione huius hominis est quod sit ex hac anima et his carnibus et his ossibus; ita de ratione hominis est quod sit ex anima et carnibus et ossibus.” (Emphasis mine.) And again, *Compendium*, part 1, ch. 154, par. 5: “The term ‘man’ signifies man’s essential principles, but not to the exclusion of other factors, even though these other factors are not actually, but only potentially, contained in the notion of man. Hence ‘man’ signifies as a whole, per modum totius, whereas ‘humanity’ signifies as a part, per modum partis, and is

Aquinas here states not only that the *individual* human being, i.e., the human *person*, is comprised out of soul and body, but that it belongs *per se* to this person as such to be comprised out of *this* soul and *this* body.

Elsewhere, Thomas also suggests that the human person is the whole or complete (*totum*) subsisting being, a *hoc aliquid*, such that the person comprises the entirety of the subsisting being's parts, including not only matter but also accidents and individuating principles. For example, in *Quodlibet* 2, q. 2, a. 2, Thomas states:

In the signification of the term “nature,” there is included only that which pertains to the notion of the species; the *suppositum*, however, has not only those things that pertain to the notion of the species but also other things that befall it as accidents; and therefore the term “suppositum” is said with respect to the whole (*totum*), but “nature” or “quiddity” [is said] as the formal part.¹⁸ (My translation.)

not predicated of man. In Socrates, then, or in Plato, this determinate matter and this particular form are included. Just as the notion of man implies composition of matter and form, so if Socrates were to be defined, the notion of him would imply that he is composed of *this* flesh and *these* bones and *this* soul. / Hoc nomen homo significat sua essentialia principia, non tamen cum praecisione aliorum, licet alia non includantur actu in eius ratione, sed potentia tantum: unde homo significat per modum totius, humanitas vero per modum partis, nec de homine praedicatur. In Socrate vero aut Platone includitur haec materia et haec forma, ut sicut est ratio hominis ex hoc quod componitur ex anima et corpore, ita si Socrates definiretur, ratio eius esset quod esset compositus ex iis carnibus et iis ossibus et hac anima.” (Emphasis mine.) English translation taken from *Compendium of Theology*, trans. Vollert (St. Louis, MO: B. Herder Book Co., 1947).

¹⁸ *Quodlibet* 2, q. 2, a. 2 c.: “Nam in significatione naturae includitur solum id quod est de ratione speciei; suppositum autem non solum habet haec quae ad rationem speciei pertinent, sed etiam alia quae ei accident; et ideo suppositum signatur per totum, natura autem, sive quidditas, ut pars formalis.” My use of square brackets in another author's translation indicates that I have emended or made an interpolation in the translation. See also *ST* 3.2.2 c.: “Person has a different meaning from ‘nature.’ For nature, as has been said, designates the specific essence which is signified by the definition. And if nothing was found to be added to what belongs to the notion of the species, there would be no need to distinguish the nature from the suppositum of the nature (which is the individual subsisting in this nature), because every individual subsisting in a nature would be altogether one with its nature. Now in certain subsisting things we happen to find what does not belong to the notion of the species, viz. accidents and individuating principles, which appears chiefly in such as are composed of matter and form. Hence in such as these the nature and the suppositum really differ; not indeed as if they were wholly separate, but because the suppositum includes the nature, and in addition certain other things outside the notion of the species. Hence the suppositum is taken to be a whole (*totum*) which has the nature as its formal part to perfect it; and consequently in such as are composed of matter and form the nature is not predicated of the suppositum, for we do not say that this man is his manhood. But if there is a thing in which there is nothing outside the species or its nature (as in God), the suppositum and the nature are not really distinct in it, but only in our way of thinking, inasmuch [as] it is called ‘nature’ as it is an essence, and a ‘suppositum’ as it is subsisting. And what is said of a suppositum is to be applied to a person in rational or intellectual creatures; for a person is nothing else than ‘an individual substance of rational nature,’ according to Boethius. / Persona aliud significat quam natura. Natura enim significat essentiam speciei, quam significat definitio. Et si quidem his quae ad rationem speciei pertinent nihil aliud adiunctum inveniri posset, nulla necessitas esset distinguendi naturam a supposito naturae, quod est individuum subsistens in natura illa, quia unumquodque individuum subsistens in natura aliqua esset omnino idem cum sua natura. Contingit autem in quibusdam rebus subsistentibus inveniri aliquid quod non pertinet ad rationem speciei, scilicet accidentia et principia individuantia, sicut maxime apparet in his quae sunt ex materia et forma composita. Et ideo in talibus etiam secundum rem differt natura et suppositum, non quasi omnino aliqua separata, sed quia in supposito includitur ipsa natura speciei, et superadduntur quaedam alia quae sunt praeter

I suspect that this holistic understanding of the *suppositum*, or the individual that subsists in a nature, originates, at least in part, from Thomas's sense that a single act of existence (*esse*) runs through the entirety of the subsisting being.¹⁹ In any case, the implications are clear enough, namely, that the *suppositum* contains all components of the individually subsisting thing: form and matter, essence and individual accidents. And since, as Thomas states elsewhere, "what is said of a *suppositum* is to be applied to a person in rational or intellectual creatures," what is meant by "person" must also contain not just form but matter too, and not just essence but also individuating accidents.²⁰

This helps us to flesh out—with apologies for the pun—Professor Brown's claim that redemption must be personal. For the resurrection to be a resurrection of human *persons*, it must include both body and soul. More than this, though: it must include *this* body and *this* soul, the *particular* flesh and bones and soul that make an individual to be who she is.

rationem speciei. Unde suppositum significatur ut totum, habens naturam sicut partem formalem et perfectivam sui. Et propter hoc in compositis ex materia et forma natura non praedicatur de supposito, non enim dicimus quod hic homo sit sua humanitas. Si qua vero res est in qua omnino nihil est aliud praeter rationem speciei vel naturae suae, sicut est in Deo, ibi non est aliud secundum rem suppositum et natura, sed solum secundum rationem intelligendi, quia natura dicitur secundum quod est essentia quaedam; eadem vero dicitur suppositum secundum quod est subsistens. Et quod est dictum de supposito, intelligendum est de persona in creatura rationali vel intellectuali, quia nihil aliud est persona quam rationalis naturae individua substantia, secundum Boetium." And again, *In sent.*, bk. 3, d. 5, q. 1, a. 3: "For nature, as we are using the term here, is the quiddity of the thing that is signified by its definition. Person, however, is the thing that subsists in that nature. . . . Human being, though, signifies both essential things and individuating things, albeit in different ways, since it signifies essential things determinately, but individuating things indeterminately, whether they be these or those. And therefore human being, since it is a whole, can be predicated of Socrates, whereas he is said to *have* humanity. / Natura enim, secundum quod hic loquimur, est quidditas rei quam significat sua definitio. Persona autem est hoc aliquid quod subsistit in natura illa. . . . Homo autem significat utrumque, et essentialia et individuantia, sed diversimode; quia essentialia significat determinate, individuantia vero indeterminate, vel haec vel illa. Et ideo homo, cum sit totum, potest praedicari de Socrate et dicitur habens humanitatem." (Translation mine.) Cf. *De spiritualibus creaturis*, a. 5, ad 9: "it must be said that in things composed of matter and form, the individual adds, beyond the nature of the species, a designation of matter and individual accidents / dicendum quod in compositis ex materia et forma, individuum addit supra naturam speciei designationem materiae et accidentia individualia." English translation taken from *Disputed Questions on Spiritual Creatures*, trans. Fitzpatrick and Wellmuth (Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Press, 1949). See also Wippel, *The Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas: From Finite Being to Uncreated Being* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2000), 240–41.

¹⁹ See *De ente*, par. 86: "And because it has more potency than other intellectual substances, the human soul is so close to material things that a material thing is drawn to share its existence, in such a way, to wit, that from soul and body there results one existence in one composite thing, though this existence, inasmuch as it belongs to the soul, is not dependent on the body. / Et propter hoc quod inter alias substantias intellectuales plus habet de potentia, ideo efficitur in tantum propinqua rebus materialibus, ut res materialis trahatur ad participandum esse suum, ita scilicet quod ex anima et corpore resultat unum esse in uno composito, quamvis illud esse, prout est animae, non sit dependens a corpore."

²⁰ *ST* 3.2.2 c.: "And what is said of a *suppositum* is to be applied to a person in rational or intellectual creatures; for a person is nothing else than 'an individual substance of rational nature,' according to Boethius. / Et quod est dictum de supposito, intelligendum est de persona in creatura rationali vel intellectuali, quia nihil aliud est persona quam rationalis naturae individua substantia, secundum Boetium."

This robust conception of the particularity and integrity of the human person helps to make sense of a striking feature of Thomas's understanding of the identity of the resurrected person. Aquinas states:

For a man to rise with numerical identity (*idem numero*) there must also be numerical identity in his essential parts. Therefore, if the body of the man who rises [will not be from] [*this*] flesh and [*these*] bones [out of which it is now composed], the man who rises will not be numerically the same.²¹

Thomas implies here that the numerical identity of the risen person requires continuity of flesh and bones. And while there are notable passages in which Thomas appears to make numerical identity of the human person dependent primarily on the individuating act of *esse* of the rational soul,²² there are other passages in which he claims that numerical identity demands that the very same “dust” from which the living body was composed be gathered together by angels so that God might use it to reconstitute a numerically identical resurrected body.²³ It's hard to think of a stronger commitment to material identity than that!

²¹ *ScG* 4.84.7: “Ad hoc quod homo idem numero resurgat, necessarium est quod partes eius essentialia sint eadem numero. Si igitur corpus hominis resurgentis non erit ex his carnibus et his ossibus ex quibus nunc componitur, non erit homo resurgens idem numero.” English translation taken from *On the Truth of the Catholic Faith* (New York: Hanover House, 1955–57).

²² See, for example, *ScG* 4.81.10–81.11. See also *De ente*, par. 93, “And, therefore, there is not found among such substances a multitude of individuals in one species, as has been said, with the exception of the human soul on account of the body to which it is united. And although its individuation depends on the body as upon the occasion for its beginning because it does not acquire its individuated existence except in the body of which it is the actuality, it is not necessary that its individuation be lost when the body is taken away because that existence, since it is absolute, always remains individuated once the soul acquires it by being made the form of this individual body. And this is why Avicenna says that the individuation or multiplication of souls depends on the body as regards its beginning, but not as regards its end. / Et ideo in talibus substantiis [i.e., created intellectual substances] non invenitur multitudo individuorum in una specie, ut dictum est, nisi in anima humana propter corpus, cui unitur. Et licet individuatō eius ex corpore occasionaliter dependeat quantum ad sui inchoationem, quia non acquiritur sibi esse individuatū nisi in corpore, cuius est actus, non tamen oportet ut subtracto corpore individuatō pereat, quia cum habeat esse absolutum, ex quo acquisitum est sibi esse individuatū ex hoc quod facta est forma huius corporis, illud esse semper remanet individuatū. Et ideo dicit Avicenna quod individuatō animarum vel multiplicatō dependet ex corpore quantum ad sui principium, sed non quantum ad sui finem.”

²³ See, for example, *In I Cor* 15, lect. 9, par. 1015: “But since the renewal and the resurrection, as was said, will occur by divine power, we say that bodies will be the same numerically, since the individual principles of that man are nothing other than this soul and this body. In the resurrection the soul too will return the same numerically, since it is incorruptible, and this body will be the same numerically from the same dust from which it was dissolved, restored by divine power; thus it will be the same numerical man who rises. / Sed cum reintegratio et resurrectio, sicut dictum est, fiant virtute divina, dicimus quod corpora erunt eadem numero, cum neque principia individuantia huius hominis sint aliud, quam haec anima, et hoc corpus. In resurrectione autem redibit et anima eadem numero, cum sit incorruptibilis, et hoc corpus idem numero ex eisdem pulveribus, in quibus resolutum fuit, ex virtute divina reparatum, sic erit idem homo numero resurgens.” See also *In I Cor* 15, lect. 5, par. 969: “For the resolution of human bodies into elements happens in the same way as other mixed bodies; hence, the dust into which human bodies are resolved has no other active power than other dust, in which there is no evidence of any active power to constitute a human body, but only in man's seed. However, the dusts into which human bodies are reduced differ from other dust only according to God's plan, inasmuch as these dusts are ordained by divine wisdom that human bodies be formed from them again. Hence the active cause of the resurrection is God alone, even though for this he uses the service of angels to collect the dust. / Fit enim resolutio corporis humani in elementa, sicut et aliorum mixtorum corporum, unde pulveres in quos humana corpora resolvuntur, nullam aliam habent virtutem activam quam alii pulveres, in quibus constat non esse

And, just to be clear, Thomas explicitly states that the resurrected person *is* to be numerically identical with the living person:

It should be noted that [St. Paul] compares incorruption itself or immortality to a garment, when he says, “put on.” For a garment is present to the one having vested, and absent, [with the substance of the one having put on the garment remaining the same in number], so that by this he shows that the same numerical bodies will rise and the same men will be the same numerically in the state of incorruption and immortality, in which they are now. Thus by this the error is excluded that says that the same numerical body will not rise. Hence he says expressly, this corruptible, namely the body, must put on incorruption, for the soul is not corruptible. Likewise, the error is excluded that says that glorified bodies will not be the same as these, but will be heavenly . . .²⁴

We might infer from this quotation that Thomas thinks the resurrected body not only is numerically identical with the living body, but must be so for the meaning of Scripture to be preserved. And we might infer from other statements that he also thinks the resurrected person must be numerically identical with the living person for the basic demands of justice to be met. For example, Thomas states:

For both the good and the evil will rise for this: that in their very own bodies they may receive their reward or their punishment for the deeds they performed while they lived in the body.²⁵

aliam virtutem activam ad corporis humani constitutionem, sed solum in semine hominis; differunt autem pulveres in quos humana corpora resolvuntur, ab aliis pulveribus solum secundum ordinationem divinam, prout huiusmodi pulveres sunt ex divina sapientia ordinati, ut iterum ex eis humana corpora reintegrentur. Unde resurrectionis activa causa solus Deus erit, etsi ad hoc utatur ministerio Angelorum, quantum ad pulverum collectionem.” Or, *In I Cor* 15, lect. 8, par. 1007: “Because if we refer this to the gathering of dust (which will be done by the ministry of the angels), then a ‘moment’ is taken for an imperceptible time. For since in the gathering of that dust there is a change from place to place, it is necessary that there be a certain time. If we refer it to the reuniting of bodies and for their union with souls, all of which will be done by God, then a ‘moment’ is taken for an instant of time, because God in an instant unites the soul to the body, and vivifies the body. / Quia si nos referamus hoc ad collectionem pulverum (quae fiet ministerio Angelorum), tunc momentum accipitur pro tempore imperceptibili. Cum enim in collectione illorum pulverum sit mutatio de loco ad locum, oportet quod sit ibi tempus aliquod. Si autem referamus ad reunionem corporum et pro unione animae, quae omnia fiet a Deo, tunc momentum accipitur pro instanti temporis, quia Deus in instanti unit animam corpori et vivificat corpus.”

²⁴ *In I Cor* 15, lect. 9, par. 1014: “Notandum autem quod ipsam incorruptionem seu immortalitatem assimilat vestimento, cum dicit induere. Vestimentum enim adest vestito et abest, manente eadem numero substantia vestiti, ut per hoc ostendat quod corpora eadem numero resurgant et iidem homines iidem numero erunt in statu incorruptionis et immortalitatis, in quo sunt modo. Unde ex hoc excluditur error dicentium quod corpora non resurgent eadem numero. Unde signanter dicit oportet corruptibile hoc, scilicet corpus, nam anima non est corruptibilis. Excluditur etiam error dicentium quod corpora glorificata non erunt eadem cum istis, sed caelestia . . .”

²⁵ *ScG* 4.85.4: “Ad hoc enim resurgent tam boni quam mali, ut etiam in propriis corporibus praemium consequantur vel poenam pro his quae gesserunt dum vixerunt in corpore.” See also *ScG* 4.79.12.

So, Thomas believes that the resurrected person will be—maybe even *must* be—numerically identical with the living person. As we saw above, he also believes that the numerical identity of the person requires the numerical identity of the essential parts of the person, namely, the soul and the body. And the numerical identity of the body requires not just that flesh and bones be resurrected, but, as Thomas puts it, that *this* flesh and *these* bones—i.e., the very same flesh and bones of the living person—be resurrected.

What, then, if the flesh and bones of a particular person contain a disability? Would it pertain *per se* to her *ratio* as *this* person to have this disability? If it were possible to define this person, would this disability then be a defining characteristic (not the *only* defining characteristic, to be sure, but a defining characteristic nonetheless)? And would it then follow that this disability must continue on in the resurrection for personal identity to be preserved, i.e., for *this* person to be rewarded or punished for the life she lived?

2. Aquinas on the Perfection of the Resurrected Body

Thomas seems to think not. Throughout his various discussions of the resurrection, Aquinas maintains that the resurrected body must be perfect: “Since the resurrection is to restore the deficiencies of nature, nothing that belongs to the perfection of nature will be denied to the bodies of the risen.”²⁶

²⁶ *ScG* 4.88.1: “Quia, cum per resurrectionem sint reparandi defectus naturae, nihil eorum quae ad perfectionem naturae pertinent, a corporibus resurgentium auferetur.” See also *Compendium*, part 1, ch. 160: “For the same reason that God, in restoring the risen body, does not reclaim all the material elements once possessed by man’s body, He will supply whatever is wanting to the proper amount of matter. Nature itself has such power. In infancy we do not as yet possess our full quantity; but by assimilating food and drink we receive enough matter from outside sources to round out our perfect quantity; nor on this account does a man cease to be the same individual he was before. Surely, then, divine power can do the same thing much more easily, so that those who do not have sufficient quantity may be supplied from outside matter with whatever was lacking to them in this life as regards integrity of natural members or suitable size. Consequently, although some may have lacked certain of their members during this life, or may not have attained to perfect size, the amount of quantity possessed at the moment of death makes no difference; at the resurrection they will receive, through God’s power, the due complement of members and quantity. / Sicut autem non totum quod materialiter fuit in corpore hominis, ad reparationem corporis resurgentis Deus resumet, ita etiam si quid materialiter defuit, Deus supplebit. Si enim hoc officio naturae fieri potest ut puero qui non habet debitam quantitatem, ex aliena materia per assumptionem cibi et potus tantum addatur quod ei sufficiat ad perfectam quantitatem habendam, nec propter hoc desinit esse idem numero qui fuit, multo magis hoc virtute divina fieri potest ut suppleatur minus habentibus de extrinseca materia, quod eis in hac vita defuit ad integritatem membrorum naturalium, vel debitae quantitatis. Sic igitur licet aliqui in hac vita aliquibus membris caruerint, vel perfectam quantitatem nondum attigerint, in quantacumque quantitate defuncti, virtute divina in resurrectione perfectionem debitam consequentur et membrorum et quantitatis.” Or again *ScG* 4.81.12: “It is also like this in the human body, for the form and species of its single parts remain continuously through a whole life; the matter of the parts is not only resolved by the action of the natural heat, but is replenished anew by nourishment. Man is not, therefore, numerically different according to his different ages, although not everything which is in him materially in one state is also there in another. In this way, then, this is not a requirement of man’s arising with numerical identity: that he should assume again whatever has been in him during the whole time of his life; but he need assume from that matter only what suffices to complete the quantity due, and that especially must be resumed which was more perfectly consistent with the form and species of humanity. But, if something was wanting to the fulfillment of the quantity due, either because one was overtaken by death before nature could bring him to the quantity due or because mutilation perhaps deprived him of some member, the divine power will supply this from another source. This, however, will be no obstacle to the unity of the body of the one rising, for even the work of nature adds to what a boy has from some other source to bring him to his perfect

Even the bodies of the damned, Thomas believes, will rise with a kind of integrity and incorruptibility:

For those bodies, too, must be proportioned to the souls of those to be damned. Of course, the souls of the wicked have a good nature, indeed, since it is created by God, but they will have a disordered will which will be failing its very own end. Their bodies, then, so far as nature is concerned, will be restored to integrity; because, as one can see, they will rise in the perfection of age, without any members diminished, without any deficiency or corruption which the error or the weakness of nature has introduced. Hence, the Apostle says: “The dead shall rise again incorruptible” (1 Cor. 15-52); and clearly this ought to be understood of all, both the good and the evil, according to what precedes and follows in his text.²⁷

In fact, Thomas makes a highly unusual move when he states his own personal belief about the bodies of the damned. Commenting on St. Paul’s First Letter to the Corinthians, Thomas writes:

He [Paul] establishes however two effects. One is common, because the dead will be raised imperishable, i.e., renewed without any diminution of their members. That indeed is common to all, because in the resurrection the reparation of nature pertains to all, because all have communion with Christ in nature. And although Augustine [Enchir. 92] leaves open a doubt whether deformities will remain among the damned, *I believe (ego credo)* that whatever pertains to the reparation of nature is conferred entirely on them; but what pertains to grace is conferred only on the elect. And therefore all will rise incorruptible, i.e., renewed, even the damned.²⁸ (Emphasis mine.)

quantity. And this addition does not make him numerically other, for the man is the same in number whether he is boy or adult. / Sic etiam est in humano corpore. Nam forma et species singularium partium eius continue manet per totam vitam: sed materia partium et resolvitur per actionem caloris naturalis, et de novo adgeneratur per alimentum. Non est igitur alius numero homo secundum diversas aetates, quamvis non quicquid materialiter est in homine secundum unum statum sit in eo secundum alium. Sic igitur non requiritur ad hoc quod resurgat homo numero idem, quod quicquid fuit materialiter in eo secundum totum tempus vitae suae resumatur: sed tantum ex eo quantum sufficit ad complementum debitae quantitatis; et praecipue illud resumendum videtur quod perfectius fuit sub forma et specie humanitatis consistens. Si quid vero defuit ad complementum debitae quantitatis, vel quia aliquis praeventus est morte antequam natura ipsum ad perfectam quantitatem deduceret, vel quia forte aliquis mutilatus est membro; aliunde hoc divina supplebit potentia. Nec tamen hoc impedit resurgentis corporis unitatem: quia etiam opere naturae super id quod puer habet, aliquid additur aliunde, ut ad perfectam perveniat quantitatem, nec talis additio facit alium numero; idem enim numero est homo et puer et adultus.”

²⁷ *ScG* 4.89.2: “Oportet enim et illa corpora animabus damnandorum proportionata esse. Animae autem malorum naturam quidem bonam habent, utpote a Deo creatam: sed voluntatem habebunt inordinatam, et a fine proprio deficientem. Corpora igitur eorum, quantum ad id quod naturae est, integra reparabuntur: quia videlicet in aetate perfecta resurgent, absque omni diminutione membrorum, et absque omni defectu et corruptione quam error naturae aut infirmitas introduxit. Unde apostolus dicit I Cor. 15-52: mortui resurgent incorrupti: quod manifestum est de omnibus debere intelligi, tam bonis quam malis, ex his quae praecedunt et sequuntur in littera.”

²⁸ *In I Cor* 15, lect. 8, par. 1010: “Ponit autem duplicem effectum. Unus est communis, quia mortui resurgent incorrupti, id est integri, sine aliqua diminutione membrorum. Quod quidem est commune omnibus, quia in resurrectione est commune omne quod pertinet ad reparationem naturae, quia omnes habent communionem cum

Here we have a rare “ego statement”—and one that risks parting ways with St. Augustine at that!

Of course, while Thomas believes that the bodies of the damned will be incorruptible and without deformity or defect, he also believes that the bodies of the blessed will be elevated even more, receiving what he calls the “marks of glorified bodies”:

These marks are four which the Apostle touches on here. First, he touches on the mark of incapacity of suffering, when he says: what is sown is perishable. . . . What is raised is imperishable. Here he says imperishable not only to exclude separation of the soul and the body, because even the bodies of the damned will have this imperishability, but to exclude both death or any harmful suffering either from within or from without. And in regard to this is the imperishability of the glorified understood: “They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more” (Rev. 7:16).

Secondly, he touches on the mark of clarity, when he says: It is sown in dishonor, i.e., the body, which before death was subject to many deformities and miseries. . . . But it is raised in glory, which signifies clarity, as Augustine says (On John). For the bodies of the saints will be clear and shining: “The righteous will shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father” (Matt. 14:43).

Thirdly, he touches on the mark of agility, when he says, It is sown in weakness, i.e. the animal body, which before death is weak and slow and not easily moved by the soul: “A perishable body weighs down the soul” (Wis. 9:15). It is raised in strength, namely, because it will come to pass that from such strength it can be moved by the soul and in no case will it show difficulty being moved, which pertains to the mark of agility. For there will be as much facility as felicity, as Augustine says. Hence it says in Wisdom (3:7): “The just will shine forth and will run like sparks through the stubble”; and in Isaiah (40:31): “They who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.”

Fourthly, he touches on the mark of subtlety, when he says, It is sown a physical body, it is raised a spiritual body.²⁹

Christo in natura. Et licet Augustinus relinquat sub dubio, utrum deformitates remaneant in damnatis, ego tamen credo quod quidquid pertinet ad reparationem naturae, totum confertur eis: sed quod pertinet ad gratiam, solum electis confertur. Et ideo omnes resurgent incorrupti, id est, integri, etiam damnati.”

²⁹ *In I Cor* 15, lect. 6, par. 980–983: “Et agit hic de corpore resurgente glorioso, cuius propriae qualitates dotes corporis gloriosi dicuntur. Quae quidem sunt quatuor, quas hic apostolus tangit. Primo enim tangit dotem impassibilitatis, cum dicit seminatur in corruptione, et cetera. . . . Sed resurget in incorruptione. Dicitur autem hic incorruptio, non solum ad excludendum separationem animae a corpore, quia hanc incorruptionem et corpora damnatorum habebunt, sed ad excludendum tam mortem quam quamlibet noxiam passionem, sive ab interiori, sive ab exteriori. Et quantum ad hoc intelligitur impassibilitas corporis gloriosi, secundum illud Apoc. VII, 16: non esurient, neque sitient amplius, et cetera.

Secundo tangit dotem claritatis, cum dicit seminatur in ignobilitate, id est corpus quod ante mortem, et in morte est deformitatibus et miseriis multis subiectum. . . . Sed resurget in gloria, quae claritatem significat, ut Augustinus dicit super Ioannem. Erunt enim corpora sanctorum clara et fulgentia, secundum illud Matth. XIII, v. 43: fulgebunt iusti, sicut sol, et cetera.

In a sense, then, we might say that Thomas regards the resurrection of the body as bringing perfection at more than one level. There is what we might regard as the perfection of nature, which is apparent even in his description of the resurrected bodies of the damned. And there is the perfection of glory, which is apparent only in his description of the resurrected bodies of the blessed. But in Thomas's descriptions of each of these modes of perfection, we see evidence of things we might nowadays regard as disabilities being healed: "deficiencies" are restored; diminished members are rendered whole and bodily integrity is made complete; deformities are healed; bodies are made incorruptible, and all forms of harmful suffering are excluded; and weakness, slowness, and difficulty of movement are transformed into strength, speed, and agility. Indeed, Thomas reminds us, "The just will shine forth and will run like sparks through the stubble" (Wisdom 3.7); and "They who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint" (Isaiah 40.3).

3. Objections from Disability Theorists

At this point, we can begin to see a tension emerging in Thomas's account of the resurrection of human persons, a tension between what John Swinton calls continuity and discontinuity.³⁰ On one hand, Thomas believes that the numerical identity of the living person must be preserved in the resurrected person and that this identity requires that the person be resurrected, not only with a body and a soul, but with the numerically same body and soul—to the point that he expects angels to collect the dust into which our bodies decompose after death. On the other hand, Thomas also believes that our bodies will be different in the resurrection: some will be made agile and incapable of suffering; all will be made incorruptible and will be healed of every natural defect and deformity.

This tension, and especially the element of discontinuity, troubles some disability theorists. For example, Nancy Eiesland, who has been disabled since birth, believes that she would be "unknown to [herself] and perhaps to God" if she were no longer disabled in heaven.³¹ And John Swinton wonders why, if there is to be both continuity and discontinuity in the resurrection, we assume that disabilities should provide a point of discontinuity rather than continuity.³² I think Thomas has something to say to each of these concerns.

Tertio tangit dotem agilitatis, cum dicit seminatur in infirmitate, id est, corpus animale, quod ante mortem est infirmum et tardum, et ab anima non facile mobile, secundum illud Sap. IX, 15: corpus quod corrumpitur aggravat animam. Sed surget in virtute, quia scilicet fiet ut ex tanta virtute ab anima moveri possit, ut in nullo difficultatem ad motum exhibeat, quod ad dotem agilitatis pertinet. Tanta enim erit ibi facilitas, quanta felicitas, ut Augustinus dicit. Unde dicitur Sap. III, 7 de iustis: fulgebunt iusti, et tamquam scintillae in arundineto discurrunt. Et Is. XL, 31: qui sperant in domino habebunt fortitudinem, assument pennas, et cetera.

Quarto tangit dotem subtilitatis, cum dicit seminatur corpus animale, et cetera." See also *ScG* 4.86.1–4.86.2.

³⁰ Swinton regards this tension as being present already in Paul's account of the resurrection in I Corinthians 15; he does not think it is peculiar to Aquinas's theology. See Swinton et al., "Whose Story Am I?," 9.

³¹ Eiesland, "Liberation, Inclusion, and Justice," 2.

³² Swinton et al., "Whose Story Am I?," 9.

3.1. Interestingly, Thomas seems to have thought that St. Paul was concerned with precisely the sort of objection that Eiesland raises when Paul wrote chapter 15 of the First Letter to the Corinthians. Commenting on this text, Aquinas states:

Since someone could say “how is it possible that the dead re-assume body and flesh if they are not going to have the same quality of body?”, in order to exclude this, [Paul] introduces diverse qualities of body and flesh so that it will be clear that it is not necessary that, if the quality be not the same, the same body or the same flesh be not re-assumed. Therefore, he first says that not all flesh is the same flesh according to form, but [there is one kind] for humans, another for animals, another for birds, and another for fish, and so forth. Similarly, [there is one kind] for those dying and another for those rising. . . . But the flesh of a rising man is the same in species as the flesh of a dying man, though it will be different in quality. “For it will be of the same nature but of a different glory,” as Gregory says of the body of Christ.³³ (My translation.)

Thomas seems to regard St. Paul as responding to an objection that is, broadly speaking, similar to the one raised by Eiesland: how can we say that the same body is taken up again at the resurrection if the resurrected body is qualitatively different from the living body? And the answer Thomas finds in the text is that the mere fact that these bodies have different qualities does not mean they are different in every way. As Thomas states in the *Summa contra Gentiles*, although they have different dispositions, “the bodies of the risen are to be the same in species as our bodies are now.”³⁴ And, indeed, Thomas maintains that the bodies of those rising will also be numerically identical with their living bodies:

Hence, it is clear that man returns numerically the same both by reason of the permanence of the rational soul and by reason of the unity of matter.

However, what is said in the third argument—that being is not one because it is not continuous—rests on a false foundation. For, clearly, the being (*esse*) of matter and form is one; matter has no actual being except by form. Nonetheless, in this respect the rational soul differs from other forms. For there is no being of other forms except in their concrete union with matter, since they exceed matter neither in being nor in operation. But the rational soul plainly exceeds matter in its operation, for it has an operation in which no bodily organ takes part; namely, the act of understanding. Hence, its being, also, is not merely in its concrete union with matter. Its being (*esse*), therefore, which is that of the composite, remains in the

³³ *In I Cor* 15, lect. 6, par. 976: “Quia posset aliquis dicere: quomodo est possibile quod mortui resumant corpus et carnem, si non sint habituri eandem corporis qualitatem? Ideo ad hoc excludendum introducit diversas qualitates corporis et carnis, ut sic manifestum sit quod non oportet, si non erit eadem qualitas, quod non resumatur idem corpus, vel eadem caro. Dicit ergo primo quod non omnis caro est eadem caro, secundum formam, sed alia est caro hominum, alia piscium, alia pecorum, alia volucrum, et cetera. Et similiter est alia morientis, et alia resurgentis. . . . Sed caro hominis resurgentis est eadem secundum speciem cum carne morientis, sed tamen erit alia secundum qualitatem. Erit enim eiusdem naturae, sed alterius gloriae, ut Gregorius de corpore Christi dicit.”

³⁴ *ScG* 4.85.1: “Corpora resurgentium sint futura eiusdem speciei cuius nunc sunt corpora nostra.”

soul itself (*ipsa*) even when the body is dissolved; and when the body is restored in the resurrection, it is returned to the same being (*idem esse*) which persisted in the soul.³⁵

So, Thomas believes that while the resurrected body will have different dispositions and qualities from the living body—including especially incorruptibility—the resurrected body will nevertheless be specifically and numerically identical with the living body because it subsists in the same individual act of *esse*.³⁶ Thus, Thomas is able to maintain that:

When a human being rises she will be immortal, not because she has assumed another body that is incorruptible . . . but because this same body that is now corruptible will become incorruptible.³⁷ (My translation.)

In other words, Thomas believes that the living body can undergo changes that will make it become immortal without losing its numerical identity. And, presumably, as long as the same individual act of being that now actualizes the living human person continues to exist, the body could also undergo changes that would heal disabilities of various sorts without losing its numerical identity. This, I think, would be Thomas's way of understanding *how* a resurrected person could be healed of disabilities without ceasing to be the same person.

³⁵ *ScG* 4.81.10–4.81.11: “Unde patet quod et homo redit idem numero in resurrectione, et humanitas eadem numero, propter animae rationalis permanentiam et materiae unitatem.

Quod vero tertio obiicitur, quod esse non est unum quia non est continuum: falso innititur fundamento. Manifestum est enim quod materiae et formae unum est esse: non enim materia habet esse in actu nisi per formam. Differt tamen quantum ad hoc anima rationalis ab aliis formis. Nam esse aliarum formarum non est nisi in concrectione ad materiam: non enim excedunt materiam neque in esse, neque in operari. Anima vero rationalis, manifestum est quod excedit materiam in operari: habet enim aliquam operationem absque participatione organi corporalis, scilicet intelligere. Unde et esse suum non est solum in concrectione ad materiam. Esse igitur eius, quod erat compositi, manet in ipsa corpore dissoluto: et reparato corpore in resurrectione, in idem esse reducitur quod remansit in anima.” See also *ScG* 4.81.6–4.81.7.

³⁶ See also *De ente*, par. 89: “the quiddity or nature of a genus or species, in the case of those things that have a genus or species, is not multiplied according to the notion of the nature; rather, the existence is diverse in these diverse things / quidditas vel natura generis aut speciei non distinguatur secundum rationem naturae in illis, quorum est genus vel species, sed esse est diversum in diversis.” Or again, *De ente*, par. 93, “And, therefore, there is not found among such substances a multitude of individuals in one species, as has been said, with the exception of the human soul on account of the body to which it is united. And although its individuation depends on the body as upon the occasion for its beginning because it does not acquire its individuated existence except in the body of which it is the actuality, it is not necessary that its individuation be lost when the body is taken away because that existence, since it is absolute, always remains individuated once the soul acquires it by being made the form of this individual body. And this is why Avicenna says that the individuation or multiplication of souls depends on the body as regards its beginning, but not as regards its end. / Et ideo in talibus substantiis [i.e., created intellectual substances] non invenitur multitudo individuorum in una specie, ut dictum est, nisi in anima humana propter corpus, cui unitur. Et licet individuatio eius ex corpore occasionaliter dependeat quantum ad sui inchoationem, quia non acquiritur sibi esse individuatam nisi in corpore, cuius est actus, non tamen oportet ut subtracto corpore individuatio pereat, quia cum habeat esse absolutum, ex quo acquisitum est sibi esse individuatam ex hoc quod facta est forma huius corporis, illud esse semper remanet individuatam. Et ideo dicit Avicenna quod individuatio animarum vel multiplicatio dependet ex corpore quantum ad sui principium, sed non quantum ad sui finem.”

³⁷ *ScG* 4.85.8: “Non igitur per hoc homo resurgens immortalis erit quod aliud corpus incorruptibile resumat . . . sed quia hoc ipsum corpus quod nunc est corruptibile, incorruptibile fiet.”

3.2. This still leaves us, though, with the question of *why* Thomas might think that defects and deformities would not exist in the resurrected body. And I gather that this is the kind of question that John Swinton means to raise when he asks why we assume that the absence of disabilities is one of the ways in which the resurrected body will be discontinuous with the living body.³⁸ Swinton concedes that this assumption makes sense in light of certain cultural assumptions about beauty and perfection, but he clearly intends to raise questions about whether Christian theology should accept these assumptions or contest them.³⁹ And I think these are good questions to be raised.

For his part, Aquinas offers a number of arguments aimed at proving that the resurrected body must be perfect. In fact, I find as many as ten different arguments for this conclusion in Aquinas's writings.⁴⁰ And while I will not be able to discuss each of these arguments here, I would like to look briefly at a few of the more important ones, considering, among other things, whether they reveal the same cultural assumptions about beauty and perfection against which Swinton cautions or whether they are founded on more substantive principles.

Let us begin with an intriguing argument Thomas makes about the absence of defects in the resurrected body:

In like manner, it is fitting that all natural defects should be corrected in the risen body . . . these defects arose from a deficiency in the natural power which is the principle of human generation. But in the resurrection there will be no active causality other than the divine, which does not admit of deficiency. Therefore such defects as are found in men naturally begotten, will have no place in men restored by the resurrection.⁴¹

One matter disability theorists would undoubtedly want to draw our attention to here is the notion of “defect”: the logic of the argument excludes natural defects from the effects of divine causality, but it does not determine for us precisely what counts as a “defect.” And questioning whether something traditionally regarded as a “disability” is really a “defect” is precisely what, for example, some autistic self-advocates are doing today when they describe autism as an “identity” or a different way of being human rather than a “disability” (and perhaps what some members of the Deaf community have been doing for quite a long time).⁴² So, one could accept the premises

³⁸ See Swinton et al., “Whose Story Am I?,” 8–9.

³⁹ See Swinton et al., “Whose Story Am I?,” 9.

⁴⁰ In addition to the arguments I discuss in the text above, see those contained in the following passages: *ScG* 4.81.12, *ScG* 4.86, *ScG* 4.88.1, *ScG* 4.89.2, *ST* 1-2.3.3, *ST* 1-2.4.5, *ST* 1-2.4.6, *Compendium*, part 1, ch. 167, *Compendium*, part 1, ch. 168, *Compendium*, part 1, ch. 176, *In I Cor* 15, lect. 6, par. 988, *In I Cor* 15, lect. 5, and *In I Cor* 15, lect. 8.

⁴¹ *Compendium*, part 1, ch. 158, par. 1–2: “Similiter autem conveniens est ut omnes naturales defectus a corporibus resurgendum auferantur. . . . Huiusmodi defectus ex defectu virtutis naturalis, quae fuit generationis humanae principium, provenerunt. In resurrectione autem non erit virtus agens nisi divina, in quam defectus non cadit. Non igitur huiusmodi defectus, qui sunt in hominibus generatis, erunt in hominibus per resurrectionem reparatis.”

⁴² The claim that autism is an identity, or a distinctive way of being human, rather than a disability has been made by many in the autism community. See, for example, the following. Emine Saner, “It is not a disease, it is a way of life,” *The Guardian* (July 8, 2007), retrieved on 16 April 2016 from

and the logical validity of Thomas's argument, but still dispute whether an individual "disability" counts as a "defect" and, therefore, whether the argument requires that this "disability" be changed or cured in the resurrection.

A second argument Thomas offers is also worth noting because it runs so close to the nerve of Thomas's conception of beatitude as the complete fulfillment of desire:

The soul which will enjoy the divine vision, united to its ultimate end, will in all matters experience the fulfillment of desire. And since it is out of the soul's desire that the body is moved, the consequence will be the body's utter obedience to the spirit's slightest wish. Hence, the bodies of the blessed when they rise are going to have agility. This is what the Apostle says in the same place: "It is sown in weakness, it shall rise in power." For weakness is what we experience in a body found wanting in the strength to satisfy the desire of the soul in the movements and actions which the soul commands, and this weakness will be entirely taken away then, when power is overflowing into the body from a soul united to God. For this reason, also, Wisdom (3:7) says that the just "shall run to and fro like sparks among the reeds"; this is not said because there is motion in them by reason of necessity—since they who have God want nothing—but as an indication of their power.⁴³

This argument, it seems to me, is also vulnerable to objections that might be raised by disability theorists. For example, such a person might wonder: what if a particular blessed soul does not have a desire to move from one place to another with agility? Thomas himself appears to recognize that there is something problematic about the notion that someone in heaven should want to run to and

<http://www.theguardian.com/society/2007/aug/07/health.medicineandhealth>. Steve Silberman, *NeuroTribes: the Legacy of Autism and the Future of Neurodiversity* (New York: Avery, 2015), 430. Paul Heilker and Jason King, "The Rhetorics of Online Autism Advocacy: A Case for Rhetorical Listening," in *Rhetorics and Technologies: New Directions in Writing and Communication*, ed. Stuart Selber (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2010), 113–33, esp. 122. Lydia Brown, "Identity-First Language," retrieved on 3 March 2016 from <http://autisticadvocacy.org/home/about-ASAN/identity-first-language/>. The Autistic Self Advocacy Network, "Position Statement on Autistic Identity" and "Position Statement on Respectful Use of Therapies," both retrieved on 26 April 2016 from <http://autisticadvocacy.org/policy-advocacy/position-statements/>. And Barry Prizant, *Uniquely Human: A Different Way of Seeing Autism* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2015), 1 and 4.

Some people have also claimed that disability in general is an identity. See, for example, the following. Dana Dunn and Erin Andrews, "Person-First and Identity-First Language: Developing Psychologists' Cultural Competence Using Disability Language," *American Psychologist* (April 2015): 255–64, esp. 257 and 259. Carol Gill, "Four types of integration in disability identity development," *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation* 9 (1997): 39–46, esp. 41 ff. And Simi Linton, "Reassigning Meaning," in *The disability studies reader* (3rd ed.), ed. Lennard Davis (New York: Routledge, 2010), 223–36, esp. 225.

⁴³ *ScG* 4.86.3: "Anima etiam quae divina visione fruatur, ultimo fini coniuncta, in omnibus experietur suum desiderium adimpletum. Et quia ex desiderio animae movetur corpus, consequens erit ut corpus omnino spiritui ad nutum obediatur. Unde corpora resurgentium beatorum futura erunt agilia. Et hoc est quod apostolus dicit ibidem: seminatur in infirmitate, surget in virtute. Infirmitatem enim experimur in corpore quia invalidum invenitur ad satisfaciendum desiderio animae in motibus et actionibus quas anima imperat: quae infirmitas totaliter tunc tolletur, virtute redundante in corpus ex anima Deo coniuncta. Propter quod etiam Sap. 3-7, dicitur de iustis, quod tanquam scintillae in arundinetis discurrent: non quod motus sit in eis propter necessitatem, cum nullo indigeant qui Deum habent, sed ad virtutis demonstrationem."

fro because he hastens to add that there is no necessity of locomotion in heaven since the blessed who see God can want for nothing, and thus they only move as an indication of their power. But what if they feel no desire to show their power either? Would their bodies still need to be made agile? More to the point at hand: what if a particular person actively wishes *not* to be healed of a trait some regard as a disability?⁴⁴ Would not-being-cured of that disability count precisely as the fulfillment of desire for that individual, and being-cured count precisely as the frustration of desire?

Thomas does not seem to ask these questions. And, in a way, this is not surprising since the notion that disability could be part of an individual's identity—and that to be healed of a disability might therefore be regarded as a threat to one's existence—appears to be an idea that has arisen only relatively recently. It is worth mentioning, though, that it is not only modern disability theorists who have posed questions like these. Consider this passage from the Gospel of John:

There was a festival of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate there is a pool, called in Hebrew Beth-zatha, which has five porticoes. In these lay many invalids—blind, lame, and paralyzed. One man was there who had been ill for thirty-eight years.

When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had been there a long time, he said to him, “*Do you want to be made well?*” The sick man answered him, “Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; and while I am making my way, someone else steps down ahead of me.” Jesus said to him, “Stand up, take your mat and walk.” At once the man was made well, and he took up his mat and began to walk.

Now that day was a sabbath. So the Jews said to the man who had been cured, “It is the sabbath; it is not lawful for you to carry your mat.” But he answered them, “The man who made me well said to me, ‘Take up your mat and walk.’” They asked him, “Who is the man who said to you, ‘Take it up and walk?’” Now the man who had been healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had disappeared in the crowd that was there. Later Jesus found him in the temple and said to him, “See, you have been made well! Do not sin any more, so that nothing worse happens to you.” The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well. Therefore the Jews started persecuting Jesus, because he was doing such things on the sabbath.⁴⁵ (Emphasis mine.)

What is usually noted about this passage, of course, is the misplaced indignation of those who object to Jesus's healing on the Sabbath. What is more important to note for our purposes, though, is that Jesus asks the man whether he *wants* to be healed before healing him.⁴⁶ By posing this

⁴⁴ I am grateful to Montague Brown for helping me to reflect on the role the individual's wishes might play in determining whether or not her body will be healed of disabilities in the resurrection.

⁴⁵ John 5:1–16 (NRSV).

⁴⁶ Even when Thomas comments on this passage, it is not clear whether he seriously entertains the possibility that the man in this story might actually not want to be healed: Thomas simply asserts that “it was evident enough that the

question, Jesus raises the possibility that the man might *not* want to be healed. And if it is possible that a person might not want to be healed of a disability in this life, might it also be possible that a person might not want to be healed of that disability in the resurrection? The extent to which we are willing to entertain this possibility—a possibility not only raised by modern disability theorists but at least implied by Scripture itself—is the extent to which we must also question whether bodies must be healed of disabilities in the resurrection in order for the desires of the soul to be fulfilled.

Finally, what is perhaps the most common argument that Thomas offers for the perfection of the resurrected body proceeds along the following lines:

We must say that perfect disposition of the body is necessary, both antecedently and consequently, for that Happiness which is in all ways perfect [It is necessary] Consequently, because from the Happiness of the soul there will be an overflow (*redundantia*) on to the body, so that this too will obtain its perfection. Hence Augustine says (Ep. ad Dioscor.⁴⁷) that “God gave the soul such a powerful nature that from its exceeding fullness of happiness the vigor of incorruption overflows (*redundet*) into the lower nature.”⁴⁸

I should note that while Thomas is here describing how the perfection of the body arises out of the perfection of the soul in the state of happiness, the same basic logic seems to apply to his thinking about the incorruptibility and integrity of the bodies of the damned.⁴⁹ What is different in the case of the souls of the blessed is that the glory of the soul—i.e., the soul’s participation in the light of glory that makes the beatific vision possible—overflows into the glory of the resurrected body,

man did want to be healed” (*nam satis constare poterat quod sanus fieri volebat*), and explains that Jesus asked the man whether he wished to be healed in order to “excite the man’s desire” (*excitet desiderium*) to be healed rather than to learn the man’s wishes. But perhaps Thomas thought it was sufficiently clear that the man wanted to be healed because he had been lying by the well for a long time, so that Thomas’s assertion would not betray a biased assumption that a person would necessarily want to be healed of a disability. See Thomas’s *Commentary on the Gospel of St. John*, ch. 5, lect. 1, par. 713.

⁴⁷ “Now, perfect health of body shall be the consummation of the immortality of the whole man. For God has endowed the soul with a nature so powerful, that from that consummate fullness of joy which is promised to the saints in the end of time, some portion overflows also upon the lower part of our nature, the body—not the blessedness which is proper to the part which enjoys and understands, but the plenitude of health, that is, the vigour of incorruption. Men who, as I have said, do not see this war with each other in unsatisfactory debates, each maintaining the view which may please his own fancy, but all placing the supreme good of man in the body, and so stir up crowds of disorderly carnal minds, of whom the Epicureans have flourished in pre-eminent estimation with the unlearned multitude.” Augustine, *Letter 118: from Augustine to Dioscorus*, trans. by J.G. Cunningham, in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, First Series, Vol. 1, ed. Schaff (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1887). Retrieved on 2 June 2016 from <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1102118.htm>.

⁴⁸ *ST* 1-2.4.6 c.: “Et ideo dicendum est quod ad beatitudinem omnibus modis perfectam, requiritur perfecta dispositio corporis et antecedenter et consequenter Consequenter vero, quia ex beatitudine animae fiet redundantia ad corpus, ut et ipsum sua perfectione potiatur. Unde Augustinus dicit, in Epist. ad Dioscorum, tam potenti natura Deus fecit animam, ut ex eius plenissima beatitudine redundet in inferiorem naturam incorruptionis vigor.”

⁴⁹ See *In I Cor* 15, lect. 8, par. 1010.

giving it the “marks of the glorified body”: the incapacity for suffering, clarity, agility and subtlety.⁵⁰

It is precisely here that I think we must ask Swinton’s question: does the litany of properties Thomas thinks glorified bodies will possess *merely* reflect cultural assumptions about beauty and perfection—and therefore reveal biases about the undesirability of disabilities that affect sense perception, physical movement, health or appearance? To this question, I think the answer is a qualified “no.”

To begin with, there is a kind of neo-Platonic logic that leads Thomas to conclude *that* the resurrected body must be perfected. The terms “*redundantia*” and “*redundet*,” translated respectively as “overflowing” and “overflows” above, hint at the neo-Platonic roots of Thomas’s thinking here.⁵¹ And these roots are laid bare more clearly in other passages in which Thomas presents versions of this same argument using the term “*participabit*”—“participates”—to describe how the glorified body comes to share in the perfection of the glorified soul. For example, in *Summa contra Gentiles* 4.86.5, Thomas states:

Furthermore, the soul which is enjoying God will cleave to Him most perfectly, and will in its own fashion share in (*participabit*) His goodness to the highest degree; and thus will the body be perfectly within the soul’s dominion, and will share in (*participabit*) what is the soul’s very own characteristics so far as possible, in the perspicuity of [the senses], in the ordering of bodily appetite, and in the all-round perfection of nature; [for inasmuch as a thing is more perfect in nature, so much shall its matter be more perfectly subordinate to its form]. And for this reason the Apostle says: ‘It is sown a natural body, it shall rise a spiritual body’ (1 Cor. 15:44).⁵²

I take the language of participation to be clear evidence that in these passages and in others like them, Thomas does seem to be making a kind of neo-Platonic argument that the perfection of the glorified soul will necessarily overflow into the perfection of the body. Inasmuch as Thomas is following the logic of neo-Platonic metaphysics to the conclusion that the body, as well as the soul, must be made perfect in the resurrection, I do not think we can accuse him of *merely* succumbing to cultural assumptions about beauty and perfection.

⁵⁰ As noted above, see *In I Cor* 15, lect. 5, par. 980–983. See also *ScG* 4.86.1–4.86.2.

⁵¹ For more on Thomas’s account of the light of glory and its neo-Platonic overtones, see Michael Waddell, “Aquinas on the Light of Glory,” *Tópicos: Revista de Filosofía* 40 (2011): 105–32. See also Michael Waddell, “The Importance of Rapture in the Thought of Aquinas,” *Nova et Vetera*, English Edition, 12.1 (2014): 255–85, esp. 258–9 and 283–4.

⁵² *ScG* 4.86.5: “Rursus, anima Deo fruens ipsi perfectissime adhaerebit, et eius bonitatem participabit in summo, secundum suum modum: sic igitur et corpus perfecte subdetur animae, et eius proprietates participabit quantum possibile est, in perspicuitate sensuum, in ordinatione corporei appetitus, et in omnimoda perfectione naturae: tanto enim aliquid perfectius est in natura, quanto eius materia perfectius subditur formae. Et propter hoc dicit apostolus: seminatur corpus animale, surget corpus spirituale.”

And yet, I do think that questions could be raised about the basic neo-Platonic logic that would seem to require perfection to overflow into perfection in the state of glory. Aquinas believes that Christ's human soul enjoyed the beatific vision throughout his earthly life, and that this required the light of glory; but Aquinas also holds that the perfection of Christ's glorified soul did not overflow into the perfection of a glorified body until the Passion.⁵³ Similarly, Aquinas believes that both Moses and Paul enjoyed the gift of rapture, which entailed a participation in the light of glory in this life; but Thomas explicitly says that the glory enjoyed in rapture does not overflow into the body.⁵⁴ So, it does not seem to be *necessary*—even on Aquinas's own terms—that a glorified soul overflow into a glorified body. And we might, then, ask why (beyond the need for incorruptibility) Aquinas thinks the body must participate in the perfection of the soul in the first place, setting in motion the logic that justifies his attribution of sense perspicuity, agility, and beauty to the glorified body. Now, it is possible that Aquinas believes that Scripture makes these attributions, and that he merely intends to defend what is revealed. It is also possible he thinks the *complete* perfection of happiness in the resurrection requires the perfection of the entire human being in ways that were not required for Christ's earthly participation in the beatific vision or for the state of rapture. In light of these other instances in which Aquinas concedes that the glory of the soul does not overflow into the glorified perfection of the body, though, one might reasonably wonder with Swinton whether there is a bias toward perfection and beauty at work here even if that bias is not the only factor that leads Thomas to represent the resurrected body in the way he does.

It is also worth noting that Thomas does not only maintain *that* the resurrected body must be perfect; he also claims, in various places, that the perfection of the resurrected body entails certain specific characteristics: incorruption⁵⁵; perspicuity of the senses⁵⁶; health, beauty, and agility of movement.⁵⁷ And one might ask whether these various specifications of bodily perfection reflect the kind of cultural assumptions regarding beauty and perfection against which Swinton cautions. It seems to me that the logic behind Thomas's claims is less explicit here. I do think, though, that there are arguments that can be brought forward. To begin with, Thomas argues that incorruptibility is required in the resurrected body so that happiness (or, for that matter, punishment) might be permanent.⁵⁸ Health, considered as the *well*-functioning of the body, seems

⁵³ On the claim that Christ enjoyed the beatific vision during his lifetime, see *ST* 3.9.2. On the claim that Christ must have participated in the light of glory in order to enjoy the beatific vision during his lifetime, see *ST* 2-2.175.4 ad 2. And on the claim that the light of glory did not overflow to Christ's body until the Passion, see *ST* 3.34.4 (esp. ad 1 and ad 2). For an excellent treatment of all of these issues, see Simon Gainé, *Did the Saviour See the Father? Christ, Salvation and the Vision of God* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), esp. 5, 77–8, 81, and 91–2.

⁵⁴ See, for example, *DV* 13.2 co. See also Michael Waddell, "The Importance of Rapture in the Thought of Aquinas," n. 9.

⁵⁵ *ST* 1-2.4.6 c.

⁵⁶ *ScG* 4.86.5.

⁵⁷ *In I Cor* 15, lect. 6, par. 988.

⁵⁸ See, for example, *ScG* 4.85.4: "One reason is taken from the very purpose of the resurrection. For both the good and the evil will rise for this: that in their very own bodies they may receive their reward or their punishment for the deeds they performed while they lived in the body. But the reward of the good, felicity, that is, will be everlasting; in like fashion, too, everlasting punishment is due to mortal sin. Each of these points was established in Book III. Necessarily, then, in each case an incorruptible body must be assumed. / una quidem sumitur ex fine resurrectionis. Ad hoc enim resurgunt tam boni quam mali, ut etiam in propriis corporibus praemium consequantur vel poenam pro

by definition to be a good or perfection.⁵⁹ And while Thomas does merely seem to assume that perspicuity of the senses is a perfection without arguing for it, it stands to reason that insofar as the human soul has sense faculties whose operations are naturally carried out through bodily organs, the well-functioning of the senses (in their biological and psychological entirety) would constitute a human good. In addition, Thomas describes “agility” merely as the power for mobility, and, once again, inasmuch as the human soul has a faculty of movement (i.e., locomotion), it is not unreasonable to regard the power that allows that faculty to act as a perfection. Finally, inasmuch as Thomas regards beauty as a transcendental, and construes perfection as the highest level of being, it simply follows that he would take perfection to entail beauty (though one might still ask what counts as beautiful).⁶⁰ In ways like these, it seems that principles of Thomas’s metaphysics and anthropology at least imply that the perfection of the glorified body would include properties such as incorruption, perspicuity of the senses, health, beauty and agility. Accordingly, I do not think we can conclude that Thomas’s ascription of these properties to the glorified body is merely an effect of cultural assumptions about beauty or perfection—even if I agree that such assumptions need to be scrutinized.

4. Conclusion

So, to return to the questions with which I began this paper, questions prompted, in part, by Professor Brown’s essay: what would it mean—in Thomistic terms—for redemption to be *personal*? And what, in particular, would it mean for redemption to be personal *for a person with disabilities*?

It seems clear that for resurrection to be *personal*, it must be resurrection of numerically the same person, which entails having numerically the same essential parts, including the same soul and the same body . . . *this* flesh and *these* bones. For Thomas, though, having numerically the same soul and numerically the same body does not preclude the possibility of change. As long as the same individual act of being abides, corruptible bodies can become incorruptible. Senses can be sharpened. Incomplete bodies can be made complete. Powers of movement can be increased or even restored. And deficiencies, deformities, and imperfections of all sorts can be healed. Here,

his quae gesserunt dum vixerunt in corpore. Praemium autem bonorum, quod est felicitas, erit perpetuum; similiter etiam peccato mortali debetur poena perpetua: quorum utrumque patet ex his quae in tertio determinata sunt. Oportet igitur quod utrumque corpus incorruptibile recipiatur.”

⁵⁹ See, for example, *In MP* bk. 3, lect. 4, par. 374; *In NE* bk. 7, lect. 13, par. 1507; *DV* 26.8 ad 2; *ScG* 3.71.8; and *ST* 1-2.2.4 c.

⁶⁰ There is, of course, debate about whether Thomas regards beauty as a transcendental. See Michael Waddell, “Integrating Beauty: Reflections on the Psychology, Ontology and Etiology of Thomas Aquinas’s *Summa Theologiae* 1.5.4,” *The Saint Anselm Journal* 8.1 (2012): 1–18. Jan Aertsen, “Beauty in the Middle Ages: A Forgotten Transcendental?,” *Medieval Philosophy and Theology* 1 (1991): 68–97. Jan Aertsen, *Medieval Philosophy and the Transcendentals: the Case of Thomas Aquinas* (Köln: Brill, 1996). Umberto Eco, *The Aesthetics of Thomas Aquinas*, trans. Bredin (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988). Armand Maurer, *About Beauty: A Thomistic Interpretation* (Houston: Center for Thomistic Studies, 1983). Jacques Maritain, *Art and Scholasticism*, in *Art and Scholasticism and the Frontiers of Poetry*, trans. J. Evans (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1974) (originally published as *Art et Scolastique* [Paris: Art Catholique, 1920]).

though, we must be careful not merely to buy into ableist assumptions about beauty and perfection that are deeply embedded in our culture. And I think there is reason for us Thomists to be cautious about this because there are places in Thomas's discussions of the perfection of the glorified body at which one might reasonably wonder whether Thomas's teaching has been affected by these assumptions. But the fact that Thomas has a robust metaphysics of human flourishing—an account of what precisely it would mean for the human soul and the human body to be perfected, and why—provides Thomists with resources for thinking about disabilities and the healing of disabilities that are simply not available to schools that have eschewed metaphysical anthropology. And for those of us Thomists who are interested in disability, the task, moving forward, is to avail ourselves of those resources in a way that also takes seriously and respectfully the legitimate questions, concerns, desires and insights of those who live with disabilities.