SOME THEMES IN SUÁREZ'S ACCOUNT OF THE SEPARATED SOUL*

JAMES B. SOUTH
Marquette University
Milwaukee, WI (USA)

ABSTRACT: In this article, I focus on three issues in Francisco Suárez's account of the separated soul: the status of the separated soul as a person, the separated soul's knowledge of itself, and the question of the soul's nature both as form of the body and as existing outside the body. I place his discussion in dialogue with St. Thomas Aquinas and Cajetan (Thomas de Vio) and show the ways he departs from those two thinkers. Finally, I show that his account of these problems makes for a philosophically probable account of the resurrection of the body.

KEY WORDS: Francisco Suárez; Thomas Aquinas; Cajetan; separated soul; resurrection of the body; immortality of the soul; sensory knowledge.

Algunos temas en la teoría de Suárez del alma separada

RESUMEN: En este artículo, me enfoco en las tres cuestiones de la teoría de Suárez del alma separada: el estatus del alma separada como persona, el conocimiento de sí por parte del alma separada, y la cuestión de la naturaleza del alma tanto como forma del cuerpo y como existiendo fuera del cuerpo. Sitúo su discusión en diálogo con Santo Tomás de Aquino y Cayetano (Thomas de Vio) y expongo los aspectos en que Suárez se diferencia de esos dos pensadores. Finalmente, demuestro cómo su presentación de estos problemas da lugar a una versión filosóficamente probable de la resurrección del cuerpo.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Francisco Suárez; Tomás de Aquino; Cayetano; alma separada; resurrección del cuerpo; inmortalidad del alma; conocimiento sensible.

Every Scholastic philosopher must at some point come to terms with issues surrounding the status of the human soul at death. Francisco Suárez, the famous Renaissance Jesuit philosopher, is no exception. Early in his career, he wrote, but never published, a long *Commentary on the De anima*[1]. Here, I

* Este artículo se enmarca dentro del Proyecto I+D+I «Pensamiento y tradición jesuita y su influencia en la Modernidad desde las perspectivas de la Historia, la Traductología y la Filosofía Jurídica, Moral y Política» (PEMOSJ), financiado por el Ministerio de Economía y Competitividad del Gobierno de España y el Fondo Europeo de Desarrollo Regional (MINECO/FEDER) (referencia FFI2015-64451-R), y cuyo investigador principal es el Prof. Dr. Juan Antonio Senent de Frutos

[1] Suárez's *Commentaria una cum questionibus in libros Aristotelis De anima* is the result of his early teaching assignment at Segovia in 1572. It was never published in his lifetime, although he did undertake revising it late in his life. The printed edition in his *Opera Omnia*, reflects some of his revisions, but also the heavy editorial hand of Baltasar Alvarez. More recently, Salvador Castellote has published a critical edition of the early, unrevised, manuscripts of the *Commentary*. It is this work that I cite below. The publishing history of Suárez's works is usefully surveyed in Solana, M., *Historia de la filosofia española, época del Renacimiento,* Madrid, Real Academia de Ciencias Exactas, 1941, vol. 3, pp. 333-340. The *Commentary* text I use is that edited by Salvador Castellote, 3 vols, Madrid, Sociedad de Estudios y Publicationes [vols. 1 and 2] and Madrid, Fundación Xavier Zubiri [vol. 3], 1978-1991. The discussion of the separated soul occurs in volume 3. I will abbreviate this work as *CDA* and will refer to it by disputation, question, and section number.

doi: pen.v74.i279.y2018.003

want to consider this early work as providing an opportunity to watch Suárez, in the role of philosopher, discuss the difficulties inherent in the status of the separated soul. As part of a much longer work, his *Disputation* dedicated to treating the separated, soul is best seen as continuous with the broader context of his development of an account of human nature. Of course, I cannot treat all the issues that arise in the discussion of the separated soul, but instead I will focus on three particularly acute problems for a Scholastic philosopher: the status of the separated soul as a person, the separated soul's knowledge of itself, and the question of the soul's nature relative to its status in the body and outside the body. I will conclude the paper by arguing that these three features of his account cohere and provide the foundation for a philosophical, not theological, understanding of the resurrection of the body.

As we shall see, Suárez is not afraid to deviate from his precursors on important issues, but his discussion always tries to make sense of the motivations of the tradition of Scholastic thought. Most notable for the topic at hand is his attempt to inscribe a kind of personhood, or personality, within the soul alone. This is a significant departure from Thomas Aquinas, and once he makes this move, the other traditional topics he addresses take on new dimensions. Also important will be the way that his contributions to the topic are shaped decisively by other philosophical commitments he has, especially those related to intellectual cognition.

1. The Separated Soul as Semi-person

Suárez holds that at death the destruction of the «real union» (*realis unio*) of body and soul occurs[2]. Despite the rather ominous overtones of that claim, it is important to note that this is all he thinks happens to the soul at death. In fact, this claim is provided in the context of an objection to the effect that on his account nothing is corrupted at the death of a human being. What is it about his account of the relation between soul and body that makes it necessary for Suárez to reply that there is some corruption or destruction of the human being at death? Although I do not have space to set forth in any detail Suárez's account of the relation between soul and body, both separately and as really united, in a prelude to his discussion of the separated soul he helpfully provides us with a précis. It begins: «Even when it is united to the body, the human soul subsists with a partial spiritual subsistence, which is identified with the soul; the matter subsists partially as well»[3].

Here Suárez commits himself to the position that the human being consists of two partially subsistent existents: a soul and a body. For our purposes, it will

[2] Suárez, *CDA*, d. XIV, q. 1, n. 6, vol. 3: p. 452.

[3] Suárez, *CDA*, d. XIV, q. 1, n. 2, vol. 3: p. 446: «Suppono primo quod anima nostra etiam in corpore subsistit partiali subsistentia spirituali, quae illi identificatur; et etiam material partialiter subsistit».

be sufficient to discuss the status of the partially subsistent soul. Suárez sets forth his view as an alternative to one supported by Cajetan. Cajetan holds that the soul after death can be called a «semi-person» while before death it cannot be so described[4]. According to Cajetan, a full account of human nature includes «personality» by which he means that which provides a human being with their subsistent nature. Since a human being is one, the soul cannot be said to subsist when it is united to the body. That is, Cajetan's primary concern is to preserve the unity of the human person by de-emphasizing the subsistent status of the soul when it is united to the body[5]. However, that rejection of the soul's subsistent status raises a problem for him in reference to the separated soul insofar as its subsistence is precisely what would make it capable of continuing existence after death. He finds an answer to this problem in asserting that at death the human soul begins to subsist. Indeed, a proper entity results at death, and this entity, although not a complete nature, can be described nonetheless as a «person», or, more accurately, a «semi-person». Of course, submerged in the background of this entire discussion is a definition of «person» with deep medieval roots, which Suárez defines, paraphrasing Boethius, as «an individual substance of an entire rational nature»[6]. For Cajetan, then, the soul by itself when united to a body cannot be considered a person because it is not an individual substance, but once separated it takes on a new sort of identity in becoming a «semi-person».

Suárez finds Cajetan's discussion «displeasing in many ways». It is in spelling out this displeasure that Suárez provides us with his account of the subsistence of the soul. The central point that Suárez wants to make is that death has no effect on the essence of the soul, but only changes its mode of existence[7]. While we will consider some of the effects that result from this change in mode of existence soon, for now I want to focus on the lack of change that occurs. What stays the same in the transition from one mode of existence to another? The answer, of course, is the subsistent soul. The soul, even when it exists in the body exists essentially (*per se*). Or, putting the point another way, the soul existing in the body does not receive support (*substentata*) from another. In fact, this is precisely the distinguishing feature of humans from all other living things:

---

[4] Cajetan's (Thomas De Vio) discussion occurs in his commentary on Thomas Aquinas's *Summa theologiae* at q. 88, a. 2 of the *prima pars*. This work can be found in the Leonine edition of Aquinas's *Summa theologiae*. I use this edition for the text of Aquinas, as well. I abbreviate references to the *Summa theologiae* as *STh*, followed by part, question, and article.

[5] Of course, Cajetan's position conflicts with that of Thomas Aquinas on this issue. The latter held that the human soul was subsistent even when united to the body. For Thomas Aquinas's account, see, *STh*, I, q. 75, a. 2. Cajetan's rejection of the subsistence of the soul perhaps speaks to the influence of various Italian Renaissance philosophers.

[6] Suárez, *CDA*, d. XIV, q. 1, n. 5, vol. 3: 450. For the Boethian background, see the helpful overview provided by J. Marenbon, *Boethius*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2003, pp. 70-76

[7] This position is, of course, that of Thomas Aquinas. See, for example, *STh* I, q. 89, a. 1.

> …in other living things, their souls do not subsist, but they are certain dispositions (*affectiones*) attached to (*affixae*) matter. Their subsistence is grounded and begun chiefly (*potissime*) in matter, but it is completed through the action of form. However, in human beings, even though a human being is what especially (*praecipue*) subsists, nonetheless this subsistence is due especially to the soul, which is united to a body not as if it were receiving support from the body, but rather as using it as a conjoined instrument. For to subsist is only to exist essentially (*per se*), independent of receiving support from another. For this reason, the subsistence of a human being is more perfect than that of other composite beings, for a human being is completed from two subsistent parts, while others are not[8].

It follows from this view of the soul as subsistent even when united to the body that there is no reason to suppose, contrary to Cajetan, that the soul undergoes any essential change at death. The soul does not become a semi-person because, in effect, it was already a semi-person when united to the body as part of the whole subsistent person. It might be asked why Suárez rejects calling the human soul itself a person. If it is subsistent and has some degree of personality, why can one not simply say it is a person? One feature of personality, he reminds us, is that it is incommunicable. However, the personality of the soul is clearly communicable to a body, so it remains more precise to call the soul a semi-person, no matter how problematic that appears at first[9]. We can say, then, that Suárez agrees with Thomas Aquinas and Cajetan that while united to the body, «I am not my soul»[10]. However, he could not say that without qualification. In fact, part of me is my soul and that part of me clearly survives its separation from the body.

While calling the soul a «semi-person» may sound a bit problematic, it actually does quite a bit of philosophical work for Suárez. I suspect that part of his motivation must lie in the worry that the separated soul must be in some sense continuous in self-knowledge as the soul united to the body. After all, if the only substance that can be called a person is the subsistent individual constituted by the formal unity of soul and body, then it is not the case that the

---

[8] Suárez, *CDA*, d. XIV, q. 1, n. 2, vol. 3: p.446: «…in aliis eorum animae non subsistent, sed sunt affectiones quaedam materiae affixae et subsistentia illorum viventium in materia potissime fundatur et inchoatur, completur vero per actuationem formae. At in homine, licet quod praecipue subsistit, sit homo, tamen haec subsistentia praecipue est ratione animae, quae unitur corpori, non ut substentetur ab illo, sed potius ut utatur illo ut instrumento coniuncto. Subsistere enim tantum est per se esse independens ab alio substentante. Et hinc est quod subsistentia hominis est perfectior quam aliorum compositorum. Haec enim completur ex duabus partibus subsistentibus, illa vero non».

[9] Suárez, *CDA*, d. XIV, q. 1, n. 5, vol. 3: p. 450.

[10] The famous passage in Aquinas occurs at *In I Cor.*, ch, 15, lectio 2. Perhaps Thomas's most radical statement on this topic occurs at *STh* I, q. 75, a. 4, ad 2 where he states that the soul is no more a person than a hand or foot. For a helpful overview, see Still, C. N.,«Do We Know All After Death? Thomas Aquinas on the Disembodied Soul's Knowledge,» in Bauer, M. (ed.), *Person, Soul, and Immortality*, New York: American Catholic Philosophical Association, 2002, pp. 107-119.

person survives death, even if the soul does. Suárez's recognition that the soul of itself is a semi-person allows him to reject the apparently Thomistic position that there is no middle ground between my existing and my not existing. Indeed, there is a middle ground: the semi-personhood of the soul exhibiting continuity before and after death[11].

Despite the philosophical advantage provided by introducing semi-personhood into the discussion of the soul, it raises more strongly another problem. If the soul, even when united to a body, has semi-personhood in addition to subsistence, it renders even more forceful a worry about why the soul is embodied in the first place. In other words, it is legitimate to ask whether it is more natural for the soul to exist outside the body than in the body, and the introduction of semi-personhood complicates the answer to that question. Indeed, answering this question turns out to be quite difficult for both a methodological reason and substantive reasons. The methodological reason involves what a philosopher can assert about this issue. As noted above, Suárez is quite careful throughout his discussion to demarcate clearly the answers to questions that we know through faith alone and not through unaided reason. So, in this case, Suárez is careful to answer primarily in terms that would make sense to an Aristotelian philosopher. The substantive reasons are doctrinal and depend upon commitments he has to particular issues, most notably concerning the separated soul's knowledge of itself. Accordingly, before we can be in a position to grasp his answer to the naturalness of the soul's status outside the body, we have to grasp first what he says about the activities of the separated soul.

2. The Separated Soul's Knowledge of Itself

St. Thomas Aquinas asserted that the separated soul knows itself through itself: «But when it is separated from the body, it no longer understands by conversion to phantasms, but by turning to things that are intelligible in themselves. So, in that state, it understands itself through itself»[12]. This statement is not transparent, since many commentators take the «intelligible in itself» to refer to intelligible species, infused by God into the separated soul. Strikingly, this is not how Suárez reads the passage. Suárez takes the «intelligible in itself» to refer to the soul. As this is not a paper on Thomas Aquinas, I will avoid taking a stand on whether Suárez reads Aquinas correctly.

[11] Robert Pasnau states the problem in this way. He argues that Aquinas needs such a middle ground, even if he does not himself recognize such a middle ground. One way to read Suárez's account of semi-personhood is to recognize that it is filling this alleged gap in Aquinas's position. See Pasnau, R., *Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002, pp. 387-388.

[12] *STh* 1, q. 89, a. 2: «Sed cum fuerit a corpore separata, intelliget non convertendo se ad phantasmata, sed ad ea quae sunt secundum se intelligibilia, unde seipsam per seipsam intelligent».

In what follows, I will identify the view that the soul knows itself through itself without a species as that of Aquinas in order to render clearer the dialogic nature of Suárez's response.

Suárez begins by noting that St. Thomas's position is «difficult» (*difficilis*) since our intellect exists in pure potency and is not raised to the first level of act by itself. In other words, for the intellect to know anything, something other than itself must actualize it. Of course, this is quite standard Aristotelianism and is affirmed by Thomas Aquinas[13]. So, the difficulty is the fact that there must be some sort of mechanism, some sort of actuality, which moves the purely potential intellect to first act. That suggests that some sort of intelligible species is needed to do that job[14].

Suárez proceeds to provide additional arguments that a species is needed for the separated soul to know itself. We have already seen that the essence of the soul does not change when it is separated, only its mode of being changes. That being the case, Suárez argues that if the soul is constituted to know itself without a species when it is separated, it is also thus constituted when united to a body. After all, when in the body, the intellect only needs the cooperation of the senses to render it actual so that it can know. If it is already rendered actual to know itself, it ought to be able to know itself while in the body. Moreover, one cannot have recourse to the fact that by being separated from the body, the intellect is thereby constituted in first act to know itself, since the mere fact that the soul is separated from the body does not mean that it can understand something that it could not understand while united to a body. Even if one said that the status of the separated soul removed some impediment from the intellect, Suárez can find no suitable candidate for such an impediment. After all, if the soul could know itself through itself, it could do so in the body as well, especially given that being united to a body is its natural state[15].

In short, then, Suárez is pressing the following objection: if the separated soul could know itself through itself when separated, it would be able to know itself through itself when united to the body. However, it does not know itself through itself when united to a body; therefore, it needs to be raised to first act by something other than itself in order to know itself, both when united to the body and when separated from it. The key point of support has already been mentioned: the soul remains essentially the same whether it is united to a body or separated from it. Moreover, that means that the intelligibility intrinsic to the soul is the same whether it is united to a body of separated from it, since intelligibility follows nature. A mere change in the mode of existence will have no effect on intelligibility[16].

At this point, Suárez raises one more argument in support of the soul's knowledge of itself through itself. And, in fact, this argument complicates his

---

13 See, for example, *STh* I, q. 79, a. 2 and *STh* I, q. 87. a. 1.

14 Suárez, *CDA*, d. XIV, q. 5, n. 2: vol. 3: 480.

15 *Ibid*.

16 Suárez, *CDA*, d. XIV, q. 5, n. 3, vol. 3: p. 482.

story enormously. The argument to be considered involves another paradigm instance of a separated substance, namely, angels. An angel knows itself through its substance and does not need a species. Since a human soul shares with an angel both intelligibility and subsistence, it ought to be able to know itself in the same way an angel does[17]. It might be thought that to respond to this objection adequately, Suárez must reject the basic analogy between angels and human beings as intelligible and subsistent. However, his strategy is rather different and involves distinguishing two ways in which an angel might be said to know itself through itself.

It might be that an angel acts on its intellect through its substance and concurs with the intellect in order to produce the act of intellection. However, it might also be that an angel's intellect flows from (*dimanet*) its essence as constituted in first act in such a way that it can understand itself through itself. Whichever way one might want to understand angelic self-cognition, neither of these ways is suitable to the separated *human* soul due to its status as the lowest of spiritual beings. That is, Suárez rejects the ontological similarity that would have to exist if human self-cognition occurred as angelic self-cognition does. So, even though the human soul is both subsistent and separate, it is still a human soul and its activities must be those that are suitable to humans, not other types of separate and subsistent substances. As a result, even if an angelic soul can concur with its intellect to directly produce an act of intellection, the human soul cannot. The support for this claim is significant: the human soul is imperfect to the degree that it is a true form of a body and does not have the necessary immateriality to supply the nature (*rationem*) of an intelligible species. That just means that the human soul is intelligible only potentially, not actually, due to its low degree of immateriality, and thus something in addition to the potential intelligibility of the soul is required for the soul to be intelligible to its intellect. Moreover, it cannot be the case that the human soul is such that its intellect flows from it constituted in first act. Now, Suárez does not want to downplay the relation between the soul and its intellect—in the case of the separated soul he admits that they are as conjoined as possible. However, he compares this conjunction to the way in which light exists within vision yet is not itself seen except reflectively and also to the way in which heat is present within the organ of touch but is not itself sensed. In both cases, what is missing is intentional presence, that is, the kind of presence that can be known. The soul and its intellect may be conjoined, but however closely that may be, it will never be an intentional conjunction[18].

Suárez does make one significant concession in is discussion. The topic of the soul's self-knowledge is an obscure one. Hence, although the preceding arguments are indeed probable, they are not evident. Accordingly, the opposite position is probable as well, that is, the position advanced by St. Thomas Aquinas

[17] Suárez, *CDA*, d. XIV, q. 5, n. 4, vol. 3: p. 484.
[18] Suárez, *CDA*, d. XIV, q. 5, n. 6, vol. 3: p. 486.

that the separated soul knows itself through itself. In fact, given the weight of authority behind it, one might want to believe this position instead[19]. At this point, Suárez's reader might be forgiven a bit of exasperation. I think, however, that there is something a bit more subtle going on than mere deference to authority. First, it is noteworthy that Suárez states that Aquinas's position can be believed (*credi*). That is simply not the kind of language he uses when stating his own preferred option. Now, whether that is a rhetorical move to show us that we should be proceeding with caution is unclear. What is clear, though, is the way he describes the problem that Aquinas's position must solve: the difficulty of this opinion lies in explaining why it does not understand itself when in the body or in explaining what separation confers on it to give it the ability to know itself[20]. Accordingly, he points out that the issue is structurally similar to the way that an angel knows itself through itself. That is, either the soul itself concurs in the production of its knowledge of itself by actualizing the intellect, or the intellect is just so constituted as to be able to produce this knowledge from itself. Considering the first way, Suárez says it must be something about the status of the soul when it is in the body that prevents it from doing the work necessary to produce self-knowledge from itself. That is, there must be something about the way that it informs the body. Suárez suggests that perhaps the soul informs the body in the way that a material form does, not the way that a substantial form does. Considering the second way, he states that it would be the case that the intellect is constituted in first act for knowing the soul, but that its connection with sense prevents it from actually knowing, that is, proceeding to second act. Thus, while in the body, the intellect depends on sense in order to have any cognition, and sense can never provide the necessary information to intellect that would allow it to have distinct knowledge of the soul through a proper concept. Suárez states an explicit preference for the second view, that is, the one that holds that the intellect is constituted in first act for knowing the soul, but is prevented from obtaining such knowledge as long as it must rely on sense. His reason for this preference is that it coheres nicely with his own views on the relation of sense to intellect and intellect's dependence on sense, although it raises an important issue (to be discussed in due time) concerning why the intellect is impeded by the body[21].

Now, Suárez's treatment of Aquinas's position accomplishes a couple of tasks for him. First, it effectively eliminates the first reading that would make the soul directly responsible for the intellect's cognition. The crucial point is that if this account were true, the soul would have to possess a different status when informing the body (a material form) than when outside the body (a substantial form). Now, in his discussion of the immortality of the soul, Suárez comes close to claiming that, in effect, Aquinas is committed to the view that

[19] Suárez, *CDA*, d. XIV, q. 5, n. 6, vol. 3: p. 486.
[20] Suárez, *CDA*, d. XIV, q. 5, n. 7, vol. 3: p. 486.
[21] Suárez, *CDA*, d. XIV, q. 5, n. 7, vol. 3: p. 488.

the soul is a material form[22]. By contrast, the lesson to be drawn from the second more acceptable way of defending self-knowledge through itself alone is that the relation between sense and intellect is a more complicated one than is present in the Thomistic account. In both cases, the tasks accomplished by the concession to Aquinas's view are ones to which he has already drawn the reader's attention in this work. Moreover, for Aquinas's position to be acceptable, other portions of his thought will have to be jettisoned in favor of Suárezian alternatives.

3. The Naturalness of the Separated Soul

Suárez rejects another pivotal position in Aquinas's account of the separated soul, namely, that while it is more perfect in itself to know by turning to higher intelligibles rather than through phantasms, nonetheless, it is more perfect for the human soul to know through phantasms. Aquinas arrives at this conclusion by stressing the proportionality between the intellect and the essences of material things and adds that knowledge acquired other than by turning to phantasms will be necessarily more confused insofar as it is disproportionate to the cognitive powers of the human soul[23]. Suárez argues against this claim in several ways. First, he maintains that the separated soul knows things that the soul united to the body does not, e.g., itself in a direct way; second, it even understands singular material things more fully than the soul that relies on phantasms can. Moreover, in the case of knowledge acquired before death, the separated soul understands better through it than it did when united to the body. In the case of knowledge acquired after separation through infused intelligible species, such species are themselves more proportioned to the soul and more perfect. Finally, Suárez points out that it simply makes sense that turning to what is more proportioned and more perfect will produce superior understanding. In summary, Suárez appeals to the status of the separated soul as freer (*liberior*) and existing without impediment (*expeditius*)[24].

At first glance, it appears that Suárez is not really providing an argument here, but simply a set of counter-assertions. What is missing is some central claim or claims that would provide evidence for his positions. I think he believes that he has such support in his more general account of intellectual cognition, which he exhaustively discussed earlier in his *Commentary*. Two features of his treatment on intellectual cognition make his argument here

[22] Suárez discuses the topic of immortality at *CDA*, d. 2, q. 3 (vol. 1: 162-247). I have discussed the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Century background to Suárez's discussion of immortality in South, J., «Suarez, Immortality, and the Soul's Dependence on the Body,» in Hill, B. and Lagerlund, H. (eds.), *The Philosophy of Francisco Suárez*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2012, pp. 121-136.

[23] *STh* I, q. 89, a. 1.

[24] Suárez, *CDA*, d. XIV, q. 8, nn. 2-3, vol. 3: pp. 520-522.

more plausible. First, he rejects Aquinas's account of the proper object of the human intellect. In place of the essence of material things abstracted from phantasms, Suárez holds that the proper objects of the human intellect are material singulars. That means that the intelligible species by which we know do not represent some universal cognitional content, but a singular one[25]. So, by acquiring new intelligible species, we would not be receiving species that are too universal and disproportionate to the intellect. Those species would be just like those we are used to from this life, representing singulars. Second, the account of the relation between sense and intellect is quite different in the two thinkers. While for Aquinas it might make perfect sense to say that the soul is not freer or impeded when working with phantasms, such is not the case for Suárez. He explicitly states that the body is an impediment to various cognitive activities in this life, such as knowing clearly and distinctly the soul itself, its operations, higher intellective substances, and God[26]. In addition, Suárez goes to great lengths to show that the reliance on phantasms for the production of intelligible species is not a causal one, but instead a merely concurrent one[27]. Thus there is no reason, in principle, why intellectual knowledge cannot be had just as well without phantasms; or, stated more strongly, Suárez thinks there is good reason to hold that our knowledge of spiritual realities such as the soul, angels, and God will be clearer and more distinct when the soul is separated and is no longer bound by sense for the determination of cognitive content. Given these considerations, Suárez's position here amounts to a rejection of Aquinas's assertion that the separated soul's mode of existence is «preternatural» (*praeternaturalis*) or better, contrary to nature[28].

Considerations of this sort, however, lead to a problem for Suárez. It now looks like the soul united to the body is in worse shape than the separated soul. That is, it might be thought that the state of the soul united to a body is actually its «preternatural» state, that is, excessively imperfect and saturated with impediments of various sorts. Suárez must tread carefully here, since he rejects explicitly an account, which he traces back to Plato, holding that human souls are not natural forms[29]. However, given the naturalness of the soul's state when separated from the body, it is hard to see how Suárez can consistently hold that the mode of existence the soul has united to the body is a natural one.

Suárez's response is quite nuanced. First, he in no way denies that the union of soul and body is natural. After all, the soul is essentially a form and every form

---

[25] Suárez argues for the direct and proper intellectual cognition of singulars at *CDA*, d. IX, q. 3, vol. 3: pp. 106-152. I have discussed his arguments on behalf of direct and proper cognition of singulars in «Singular and Universal in Suárez's Account of Cognition,» *The Review of Metaphysics* 55 (2002), pp. 785-823.

[26] Suárez, *CDA*, d. IX, q. 5, n. 9, vol. 3: p. 176). The words «clearly (*clare*) and distinctly (*distincte*)» are Suárez's.

[27] I discuss this issue in some detail in «Suárez on Imagination,» *Vivarium* 39 (2001), pp. 119-158.

[28] *STh* I, q. 89, a. 1.

[29] Suárez, *CDA*, d. XIV, q. 9, n. 1, vol. 3: p. 524.

naturally informs. Thus, the soul's union with the body does not render the soul imperfect, but rather the soul exhibits (*explicat*) its perfection by perfecting the body[30]. In order to make his point, Suárez distinguishes between the extent of the soul's activities and the perfection of the soul's activities. Clearly, the soul performs a wider array of activities in the body than when separated. Yet, when separated, it performs more perfect activities. Despite the more perfect activities available to the separated soul, though, Suárez does not want to say that the separated soul has a more natural status outside the soul. Instead, he invokes the natural imperfection (*imperfectio naturalis*) of the soul, and couples that with the claim that the natural end of the soul is to constitute the most perfect composite creature among all creatures. It follows that the impediments that hinder the soul while united to the body are indeed impediments, but are natural impediments, not ones that are unnatural to it or that violate its nature[31]. In short, Suárez displaces the locus of imperfection. Since he is unwilling to say that the soul's state apart from the body is contrary to nature, he builds the imperfection that results from being united to a body into the very nature of the soul.

Suárez recognizes, though, that a bit more must be said. After all, it could easily be objected that this natural state of affairs means that the soul is the unhappiest of all forms informing bodies. Its potential is so great, yet its natural function prohibits it from realizing that potential. It is worth considering, however, that in fact the soul may be the happiest of forms that inform bodies since it both performs more perfect operations while united to the body (e.g., intellection) and yet when separated it has another mode of activity[32]. This strikes me a very nice way of dealing with the problem given Suárez's other philosophical commitments. In its embodied knowing, the intellective soul is doing what any form would do, as it were: constituting a composite along with its matter. At the same time, given the fact that the separated soul can know just fine without recourse to phantasms, it can still function in an intellectual way. Again, nothing changes in the essence of the soul, but its different modes of existing complement one another in such a way that the intellective soul is never frustrated.

4. Conclusion—The Resurrection of the Body

To conclude this paper, I want to pull all the pieces together and show how they are used in Suárez's discussion of the resurrection of the body. He begins with what can only be considered a philosophical fantasy: the assumption that the resurrection of the body is perfectly natural:

> For it could be said that our soul advances from being imperfect to being perfect. First, it would be natural for it to exist in a body in which for some

[30] Suárez, *CDA*, d. XIV, q. 9, nn. 2-3, vol. 3: p. 526.
[31] Suárez, *CDA*, d. XIV, q. 9, n. 4, vol. 3: p. 528-530.
[32] Suárez, *CDA*, d. XIV, q. 9, n. 4, vol. 3: p. 530.

> time it would not use reason. Next, gradually it would acquire a body in which it could use reason. By this it already would be more perfect, but still imperfect and on its way, as it were, to a more perfect state, After a while, it would be separated from the body so that it might move to its proper nature, acquire a greater perfection of the intellect, and experience every mode of being. However, afterwards, God would unite it to a body so that it might have every perfection there[33].

Alas, such a philosophical fantasy cannot hold since the resurrection is a gratuitous gift of God, not something we are due by nature. Thus, our intellect does not rest in its worry about the state of the soul after death.

Yet all philosophical hope is not lost. Staying only within the perspective of the laws of nature, the natural condition of the soul is to seek some perpetual end not only for the soul, but also for the composite. The soul's natural condition also desires some recompense (*retributio*) for good and evil acts—for the composite, not just the soul[34]. Suárez's appeal here to the natural sense that good people should be rewarded and bad people punished can hardly be called demonstrative, but like the natural desire to reunite with a body, it is psychologically acute. The question to ask now is where can we find some support for these bare assertions. The answer to this question takes us back to Suárez's initial break with the tradition in ascribing semi-personhood to the soul itself. The philosophical defense of resurrection would have to be located in the need to complete the semi-person that exists separated from the soul. Such completion, though, would be impossible to a separated soul that had no continuity of personhood. For such a separated soul, being reunited to a body would constitute a bestowal of personhood, not a completion of personhood. There seems no compelling reason (as opposed to faith) to hope for a bestowal of personhood, but the completion of a person seems like exactly the sort of hope a philosopher as a philosopher might have. By advocating the naturalness of the soul's existence both as informing a body and as separate from it, and by recognizing that the soul is a locus, if not the unique or complete locus, of personal identity, Suárez has gone a long way to defusing a philosophical despair over the prospect of the resurrection of the body.

JAMES B. SOUTH

Marquette University
Milwaukee, WI (USA)
james.south@marguette.edu

[Artículo aprobado para publicación en enero de 2018]

[33] SUÁREZ, *CDA*, d. XIV, q. 9. n. 6, vol. 3: pp. 532-534: «Diceretur enim animam nostram quasi ab imperfecto ad perfectum procedere; et primum, naturale ei esset ut esset in corpore, in quo, pro aliquo tempore, non uteretur ratione; deinde [ut] paulatim acquirat corpus in quo uti possit ratione, in quo iam perfectior est, sed adhuc imperfecta et quasi in via ad statum perfectiorem; postmodum vero a corpore separatur ut naturalem conditionem subeat et maiorem intellectus perfectionem acquirat et omnem essendi modum experiatur; postmodum vero corpori unitur a Deo ut ibi habeat omnem perfectionem suam».

[34] SUÁREZ, *CDA*, d. XIV, q. 9, n. 6, vol. 3: p. 534.