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Is the Human Soul Sexed? In Search for the Truth on Human Sexuality

The increasing popularity of the ideology based on the concept of gender—together with the entire set of issues related to sexual identity of people referred to by the acronym “LGBT+”¹—seems to be a sufficient reason to raise, within the metaphysics of the human being (philosophical anthropology), the question about the ontic foundations of the

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¹ At first “LGB,” then “LGBT” (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons), then “LGBTQ” (where the “Q” was for “queer”), and today the number of these identities exceeds 70, and more and more often the four-letter acronym is accompanied by the plus sign, representing all other sexual and gender minorities. Gender in this case is understood as performative social construct, first introduced by Judith Butler, and having its background in her theory of gender performativity. This theory was meant to replace all philosophical (and scientific) statements on human nature, sex differentiation, and the biological determination of the human being. In the context of this theory, gender identity can only be performed, which means that gender as such must be fluid. Holding fast to one’s own biological sex (i.e., being a cisgender person) is in total opposition to the endless performance that should have been taking place instead. And what is supposed to be performed is insubordination toward the truth, the nature, and facts. The cultural and ideological project that underpins the theory and notion of gender performativity is to destabilize all identities and categories related to sex and human sexuality.

sexual determination of a person.² Is this determination something of the category of accident? Or, is it an indispensable element of being human? Is it something acquired with time, as life goes by? Or, is it something set before human beings as a challenge, something through which the entire life of a person is being actualized? Is sexual identity linked only to our corporeal (biological) life or also to the spiritual one? Does it pertain to the fullness of being human or is it just an element of our cultural diversity?

Although these issues are investigated in psychology, medical sciences, biology, neurology, ethnology, and cultural studies, the search for the answer to the question regarding the existential foundations of sexuality falls, by far, within the competence of one discipline: philosophical anthropology, that is, the metaphysics of the human being. It is according to this anthropology that whatever constitutes the human being (i.e., its very existence, followed by what this being actually is) has been lodged in the first and basic principle of existence of any human being: the human soul. It not only organizes the human body but is also the first act of existence of any human being—an act that permeates and actualizes everything that is human.

We will try to answer the aforementioned questions, using the medieval form of *quaestio disputata* (disputed question), the structure of which is capable of containing the objections, that is, allegations, and the proposed solution of the problem, together with the replies to all

² See Gabriele Kubly, *Die Gender-Revolution: Relativismus in Aktion* (KlBlegg: Fe-Medienverlags GmbH, 2006); Marguerite A. Peeters, *Le gender: une norme politique et culturelle mondiale. Outil de discernement* (Paris: Éditions Mame, 2013); Gabriele Kubly, *The Global Sexual Revolution: The Destruction of Freedom in the Name of Freedom*, trans. James Patrick Kirchner (KlBlegg: Fe-Medienverlags GmbH, 2013); *Rewolucja genderowa [Gender Revolution]*, ed. Zdzisław Kłafka (Toruń: Wyższa Szkoła Kultury Społecznej i Medialnej, 2014); Paweł Bortkiewicz, *Historia jednego wykładu czyli gender zdemaskowany [The History of One Lecture, or Gender Unmasked]* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Prohibita, 2014); Marek Czachorowski, *Genderomania* (Szczecinek: Fundacja “Nasza Przyszłość,” 2013).

objections. In the explanation, we will refer to the method of metaphysical explanation which consists in pointing out the objective (object-related) and necessary factors that make it feasible to explain the investigated fact in a justified manner—factors the rejection of which would entail the negation of the investigated fact. We will endeavor to complement these explanations with theological ones as set out by St. Thomas Aquinas (known for providing his theology with deep philosophical insights), as well as the explanations provided by natural and medical sciences (mainly biology and neurology) focused on the architecture of the human brain. Overall, these analyses will serve one purpose, namely to present a strong case for the validity of the thesis that “the human soul is sexed by its very nature,” the consequence of which is that the sexual character, or, in other words, being a man or being a woman, is the only mode of existence of the human being.

Videtur Quod Non: Objections

Is the human soul sexed? It seems that the human soul is not sexed. The following arguments are in favor of this thesis:

Objection 1. It seems that sexuality is linked to the body and the corporeal dimension of the human being. The soul, however, is not of the body. Therefore, the soul belongs to no sex.

Objection 2. It also seems that sexuality serves the purpose of human reproduction, just as it occurs in the animal kingdom. And reproduction belongs to the corporeal (biological) life. The soul, on the other hand, is the source of a superior, spiritual life. Therefore, the soul cannot be of a particular sex.

Objection 3. The division into the sexes seems to be linked to the sexual drive. And this drive affiliates itself with the body, not the soul. Therefore, the soul cannot be sexual.

Objection 4. We also encounter facts of hermaphroditism. Thus, if we bind biological sex with the soul, it would mean that in such cases a human being has either two souls or one soul that belongs to both sexes. Therefore, the soul cannot belong to a particular sex.

Objection 5. There are groups of people who go by names of lesbians, gays, bisexuals, and transsexual (transgender) people. If we bind biological sex with the soul, there should be a lesbian soul, a gay soul, a bisexual soul, and a transsexual soul in existence. Therefore, the soul cannot be sexual, and sexual character applies only to the body.

Objection 6. Furthermore, on the basis of the distinction made between the human body and the human organism,³ we may assume that the organism is the way in which the matter of the body is arranged on a purely biological level, and as such, it is bound with sexuality. And this organized order of the body, the status of which is accidental, undergoes disorganization at the moment of death, which results in the destruction of the organism and its sexual character. In such a case, the necessary link between the body and the soul would remain intact, with the body being organized in a different way after death. For every orderly arrangement of the human being occurs in human life for a purpose, and since after death all sexual functions cease, there is no need to be of a particular sex any longer (assuming that sexuality serves biological life only). And therefore the soul cannot be sexed.

Objection 7. That which is the organizing principle, just like the soul is, need not be identical with that which is organized. Just like a carpenter, who organizes wooden material into a table, and is not the same with the wood that makes up the table, or with the table itself, the soul, which organizes a human being into a man or a woman, may not

³ See Zbigniew Pańpuch, *Spór o cielesność [Dispute about Corporeity]* (Lublin: Polskie Towarzystwo Tomasza z Akwinu, Wydawnictwo KUL, 2015), 190–199.

be identical with, or may not bear any similarity to either of them. Therefore, the human soul need not be sexed.

Objection 8. As a result of medical procedures, transitions between sexes are being carried out. Thus, following the transition from a man to a woman, the soul should undergo the same change. But the soul is immaterial and is not subject to change. For this reason, sexual character seems to be linked to the bodily side of the human being, and the soul should remain asexual.

Objection 9. Some argue that the human soul is spiritual and for this reason is a spirit. And spirits are immaterial and asexual, as what is of spirit cannot be of a particular sex, for it is not subject to reproduction. And therefore the human soul cannot be sexed.

Objection 10. The proponents of theories behind the concept of gender maintain that sexuality is a matter of choice and cultural influence. For, according to Simone de Beauvoir, a feminist and one of the first proponents of these concepts, a human being is never born a man or a woman. It is the culture that makes them such. Human nature is asexual (or gender-neutral). Therefore, the human soul—the source of human nature—must also be asexual.

Objection 11. Moreover, from the Holy Scripture we learn that after the resurrection we will be “like the angels in heaven” (Mt. 22:30). Angels are of no sex. Therefore, the soul, which will govern the resurrected body completely, need not be of a particular sex.

Sed Contra: Counter-Objections

The above, however, seems to be contradicted by the following arguments:

Counter-Objection 1. The human soul, in its essence, is the first act of a human being and the only form of that being. And the human being exists in two ways, or modes: as a man or as a woman. It is in the

soul, then, that the forming power must dwell that shapes either a woman or a man. For there are no human beings devoid of their sex, and the principle of existence and individuation of every human being is his or her, singular and individual, soul. Therefore, the soul must also be of a particular sex.

Counter-Objection 2. The fact that proper human shape, sex, and sexual organs appear only at a certain stage of human development does not necessarily mean that they were not laid down beforehand, in potency.

For that which is posterior in the order of development—as Aristotle explains—is antecedent in the order of nature, and that is genetically last which in nature is first. That this is so is manifest by induction; for a house does not exist for the sake of bricks and stones, but these materials for the sake of the house; and the same is the case with the materials of other bodies.⁴

Counter-Objection 3. Moreover, as St. Thomas Aquinas taught, the soul is an incomplete substance, as it is necessarily bound to the appropriate body which it organizes for itself. It is the body, therefore, that renders the soul as the one belonging to a particular species: it is thanks to the body that the soul is a human soul, and not a spirit. The soul, on the other hand—by virtue of possessing its own, individual act of existence, with which it endows the body—makes the human being a singular (individual) man or a singular (individual) woman. Therefore, this principle of individuation (i.e., the soul) must belong to a particular sex.⁵

⁴ Aristotle, *On the Parts of Animals*, II, 1, trans. William Ogle. Available online—see the section *References* for details.

⁵ It is worth quoting how the individual singularity of the human being was understood by St. Thomas Aquinas. When explaining how he understands a person, he writes that it is a singular substance, and this individual singularity manifests itself the most in action: “Further still, in a more special and perfect way [than is the case with non-rational substances], the particular and the individual are found in the rational substances which have dominion over their own actions; and which are not only made to act, like others;

Counter-Objection 4. Neurologists have proven that the architecture of the brain is different between men and women, and that applies also to the brain centers linked to sexual life. The brain is an organ through which the soul acts within a human body. Therefore, if human brains are sexed, the source of this diversification must be the soul. And consequently, the soul must be sexed.

Counter-Objection 5. The neurosciences also refer to the brain sex. The brain, however, is an organ of the soul, like other organs. And therefore the soul must be sexed.

Counter-Objection 6. In theological terms, it is worth noting that, according to the teaching of the Church, we retain our biological sex after our death. For the resurrection concerns bodies and these bodies—which have always been bound with what is human—will be male or female bodies, the ones that are defined in terms of their sex. And therefore the soul, being the principle of the existence and life of the body, must be sexed.

Counter-Objection 7. Moreover, we venerate and pray for the intercession of holy men and women who retain their sexual identity after death. Therefore, even after death people remain male or female. And because only the soul is immortal, sexual character must pertain not only to the body but to the human being as a whole, and that includes the soul, maybe even first and foremost.

Respondeo: In Search for the Solution

Considering this problem from the philosophical standpoint, attention should be given to two issues. The first of them concerns com-

but which can act of themselves; for actions belong to singulars. Therefore also the individuals of the rational nature have a special name even among other substances; and this name is *person*.” (Thomas Aquinas, *The Summa Theologiae*, I, 29, 1, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province [Second and Revised Edition, 1920]. Available online—see the section *References* for details).

pliance with the basic principles of metaphysical explanation to which we should refer. And the first of these principles says that *agere sequitur esse*—the mode of action is the consequence of the mode of existence. Therefore, if a human being acts as a man or a woman, this being must also exist in such a mode. And that which is the source and foundation of human existence is the rational, human soul. The second important principle of metaphysical explanation is the rule of non-contradiction which says that “being cannot be explained through non-being,” that is, no quality can exist without some previous grounds in the source of its existence. Other principles of metaphysical explanation that should be taken into account are: “every being has its own, individual essence,” as indicated by the metaphysical law of identity; “every being is a single one, that is, is not divided into being and non-being,” as indicated by the law of non-contradiction; “every being exists as something separate,” namely it is not some transitional state, as indicated by the law of excluded middle. Moreover, being is governed by principles of the reason of being, finality, and integrity.

The second issue to be taken into consideration in our analyses is that, in philosophy, we encounter various concepts of the human soul, and therefore of the human being, and that remains not without consequences to our understanding of human sexuality. For this reason, the explanation concerning sexuality must refer to a particular concept of the soul, and, consequently, a concept of the human being. Let us then recall four concepts of the human soul that played a prominent role in philosophical anthropology.

The Soul as a Particle or a Thinking Organ

In antiquity, those who philosophized on nature (physicists) identified the soul not so much with the general principle of life but with some rational particle (*nous*), having nonetheless a material character. Modern and contemporary naturalists and materialists identify the soul

with the brain to which the function of thinking is ascribed. For, like other individuals, the human being is an aggregate entity made up of an original material particle (or a set of such particles). Everything that exists is alive by virtue of the original particle's nature which is itself endowed with life. Only the outer form of these particles (their arrangement, proportion and rhythm) is what distinguishes the human being among other individuals. Although the first philosophers were already aware of the concept of the soul, they conceived of it as some property of the original particle (or a set of such particles). It was therefore nothing peculiar, nor proper to the human being. For Thales, for example, the soul is "a motive force," and based on this he argued that "the magnet has a soul in it because it moves the iron."⁶

Such properties as immortality, incorruptibility and eternity, that can be ascribed to the soul, do not result from its nature, but from the nature of the primordial element (first principle) from which they are adopted by the soul.⁷

Leucippus, but also Democritus, argue that the human being is a miniature world (a microcosm). Like other things, the human body is made up of atoms with the difference that "those of atoms that are shaped like spheres, constitute the soul, because such forms are able to go through anything with ease, and their own motion moves anything else."⁸

The atoms of the soul spread throughout the body and that is how the body is animated. Little wonder, therefore, that "sensations and

⁶ Aristotle, *On the Soul*, I, 2, trans. J. A. Smith. Available online—see the section *References* for details.

⁷ Cf. Giovanni Reale, *A History of Ancient Philosophy*, Vol. 1: From the Origins to Socrates, ed. and trans. John R. Catani (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1987), 37.

⁸ Herman Diels, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, ed. Walther Kranz (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1957), 68 A 28, B 34, trans. mine.

thoughts are changes of the body.”⁹ Furthermore, Heraclitus identified the nature of the soul with the nature of the original particle (which was fire), arguing that “death for the soul is to become water, death for water is to become earth, however, from the earth rises water, and from water rises the soul.”¹⁰

Although we may come across some more profound views on the soul in general in Heraclitus, his depiction of the human being is subsumed into his overall vision of the world.¹¹ All beings—as Heraclitus reminds us—have reason (λόγος) in common, the majority of people, however, “live as though they had only the reason of their own.”¹²

In the monistic interpretation of reality, the individual character of the human being will be further reduced to something merely phenomenal and superficial. What is alive and spiritual within the human being will be treated as a manifestation of this particular set of the original particles. And then, what could possibly constitute the essence of being human will be identified with what is accidental and not necessary.

In this type of interpretation of the soul, and the human being as a whole, one can hardly speak of the sexual character of the soul. Whatever margin is left, it allows only for a sexuality that is based on thought, instead of a sexuality that is grounded in a really existing being. And this is precisely the approach we see in modern natural sciences and neurosciences, permeated with naturalism and materialism, which is indicated by Anne Moir and David Jessle in their book under the telling title: *Brain Sex* (1989).¹³

⁹ *Ibid.*, A 30, trans. mine.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 22 B 36, trans. mine.

¹¹ Cf. Reale, *A History of Ancient Philosophy*, 53–54.

¹² Diels, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, 22 B 2, B 113, trans. mine.

¹³ Anne Moir, David Jessle, *Brain Sex. The Real Difference Between Men and Women* (London: Michael Joseph, 1989).

The Soul as a Wandering Spirit

The second interpretation was initiated by Plato. Influenced by orphic religious beliefs, he conceived of the soul as a “wandering spirit” and identified the human being with it. According to Plato, the soul is a perfect being, a fully complete one. It is fully a substance, as Aristotle would say, as it exists in itself and is the subject and the source of determined actions. The Platonic soul is in its nature sexually undetermined and indefinite—it is asexual, we could say. Sexuality comes down from the matter, that is, the body, which is the prison for the soul-spirit. It therefore comes as no surprise that this asexual soul seeks to get out of its prison and regain freedom as soon as possible. Both sexuality and the entire corporeality are for the soul an unnatural state of existence. It is a burden, some kind of limitation, humiliation, oppression, and, ultimately, a punishment. What is more, the human soul may take on (be incarnated in) different bodies: male or female bodies. Even bodies other than human are not excluded—animal bodies are also available. Just like the entire corporeal reality, sexuality linked with the body is nothing more than an epiphenomenon—since the human being is a spirit, corporeity cannot be part of the structure of the human being. For this reason, being in a body and having a particular body is not the natural state (or mode) of human existence.

This current of interpretation was taken up, in a modified version, in the modern era by Descartes. He referred to the dualistic vision of Plato, according to which the body is excluded from the structure of the human being. For Descartes, the body is merely a lump of matter that can be wielded at will by the spirit-soul. The soul, in turn, is a *res cogitans* (a thinking thing), a mind. But the soul (*res cogitans*) as such, just like in Plato, is asexual. Sexuality and its division into male and female sexes are a derivative of the matter-body, or, strictly speaking, of the brain which governs and coordinates the functioning of other

organs. In this vein (today supported by the neurosciences), one can speak about “brain sex” indicated in the differences between the architecture of male and female brains. As a consequence, sexuality does not encompass the human being as a whole. It is, as it were, rooted in the brain as its subject, or, to be more precise: in a particular mind. The body, conceived of as a system of matter, is governed according to the laws of mechanics and can be shaped freely, being just a corporeal “machine” owned by a human being who can modify it in various ways.

The interpretation of this type is the most fitting one for what is preached today by the proponents of gender ideology. According to them, sexuality is a choice to be made by the “human spirit,” one of the ways of living in this world and society, a result of cultural influences which, once overcome, open the way to self-determination and self-identification, but never an essential part of being human.

The Soul as the Form of the Body and the Principle of Life

The third concept of the soul (and of the human being) was presented by Aristotle. According to him, the soul is the constitutive element of the human being and the form of the human body. And this means that there cannot be a body without a soul or a soul without a body. Being a general form, however, the soul is individuated by the body and brought forth from the potency of the matter by a causal factor. This means that the soul has its original source in the potency of the matter that is capable of living, and is determined by a causal factor (a cause capable of actualizing it) to become a vegetative, animal, or human soul. The newness brought into the understanding of the sexuality of the human being by Aristotle is that, although it still does not pertain to the soul (because the soul, like any other form, is general), sexuality (as it falls under the category of quality) directly modifies the human

being (i.e., the substance) as a whole. Thus, the human being exists either as a man or as a woman. Let us pause for a while at Aristotle's explanation, as it exerts an impact on the modern understanding of sexuality, not only within naturalistic approaches, but also within philosophy (Thomism).

It should be noted that Aristotle includes his considerations on human sexuality into the general explanation of biological sexes of the blooded animals. But first let us recall his definition of sex. From his written works, we learn that "by a 'male' animal we mean one which generates in another, by 'female' one which generates in itself. . . . [T]hey are distinguished in respect of their faculty, and this entails a certain function."¹⁴ What determines differences in their proper faculties is the matter-organizing principle, namely the soul. Moreover, Aristotle emphasizes that "the same semen is able to be formed into either male or female (implying that the sexual part is not present in the semen)."¹⁵ According to him, the male and female sexes

are "principles" of all animals and all plants alike (the only difference being that in some these "principles" are inseparable while in others they are separate), we must deal with the formation of these first of all, for male and female become distinct while animals are still imperfect in kind. It is however not agreed whether one is male and another female even before the difference is plain to our senses, the difference being acquired by them either within the mother or earlier.¹⁶

Note that Aristotle follows the rule that

the order of actual development and the order of logical existence are always the inverse of each other. For that which is posterior in the order of development is antecedent in the order of nature,

¹⁴ Aristotle, *Generation of Animals*, 716 a, trans. A. L. Peck (London: William Heinemann LTD; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1943), 11–13.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 723 a, 65–67.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 763 b, 371.

and that is genetically last which in nature is first. . . . Nor is induction required to show this, it is included in our conception of generation.¹⁷

Aristotle takes the view that the division of sexes does not come from body parts or some external circumstance, e.g., the placement of semen. The descriptions he authored reveal him as a genuine natural scientist: he seeks the explanation of sexuality in the deeper structure of the very nature of living beings. And they are organized as such by the soul which is also the source of their movement. The soul (as the source of movement) has its own source in the potency of the matter capable of living. But what kind of matter is capable of living? Aristotle sees the factor responsible for generating movement and life in semen. Together with semen, then, the soul is transferred to the uterus and organizes there a new being, male or female. Aristotle holds that semen “is not drawn from the whole body and that the secretion from the male provides no material at all for the creatures which get formed.”¹⁸ For this reason, Aristotle has to oppose Empedocles and Democritus, and all who would approve of what they hold.

What is Aristotle’s solution, then? He insists on binding the process of generation of sexes with semen, because, as he explains,

the male and the female are distinguished by a certain ability and inability. Male is that which is able to concoct, to cause to take

¹⁷ Aristotle, *On the Parts of Animals*, II, 1. Further on, Aristotle discusses the views of Anaxagoras, Empedocles, and also Democritus, on the formation of the sexes. And thus, according to Anaxagoras, the sex of the offspring depends on the placement of semen in the uterus: the right-hand side results in a male, and the left-hand side in a female child. According to Empedocles, the sex of the offspring depends on the level of heat or coldness of the uterus. Heat turns semen into males, while cold produces females. Democritus, in turn, argues “that the difference of male and female is produced in the womb . . . but denies that it is on account of heat and cold that one becomes male and another female” (Aristotle, *Generation of Animals*, 764 a, 373). Aristotle rejects all these answers (although he admits that he is closest to the views of Democritus) because autopsies he carried out failed to confirm whatever these philosophers proposed.

¹⁸ Aristotle, *Generation of Animals*, 764 b, 377.

shape, and to discharge, semen possessing the “principle” of the “form”; and by “principle” I do not mean that sort of principle [i.e., the soul (A.M.)] out of which, as out of matter, an offspring is formed belonging to the same kind as its parent, but I mean the *first motive principle*, whether it is able to act thus in itself or in something else. Female is that which receives the semen, but is unable to cause semen to take shape or to discharge it.¹⁹

Thus, it seems that semen carries within itself some kind of ability, some power, due to which the actualization of the form of a species will take place (for, until then, it lies within the potency of the matter capable of living). Because, as Aristotle further explains,

nature [i.e., the soul (A.M.)] gives each one its instrument simultaneously with its ability, since it is *better* done thus. Hence each of these regions of the body gets formed simultaneously with the corresponding secretions and abilities, just as the ability to see does not get perfected without eyes, nor the eye without the ability to see, and just as the gut and the bladder are perfected simultaneously with the ability to form the residues. Now as the stuff out of which the parts are formed is the same as that from which they derive their growth, namely the nourishment, we should expect each of the parts to be formed out of that sort of material and that sort of residue which it is fitted to receive. Secondly, and on the contrary, it is, as we hold, formed in a way out of its opposite. Thirdly, in addition, it must be laid down that, assuming the extinction of a thing means its passing into its opposite condition, then also that which does not get mastered by the agent which is fashioning it must of necessity change over into its opposite condition. With these as our premisses it may perhaps be clearer why and by what cause one offspring becomes male and another female. It is this. When the “principle” [i.e., semen (A.M.)] is failing to gain the mastery and is unable to effect concoction owing to deficiency of heat, and does not succeed in reducing the material into its own proper form, but instead is worsted in the at-

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 765 b, 385–387.

tempt, then of necessity the material must change over into its opposite condition. Now the opposite of the male is the female, and it is opposite in respect of that whereby one is male and the other female.²⁰

Thus, Aristotle (still, in purely biological terms) explains the generation of the sexes through the principle of opposites: male–female and ability–inability. Sexuality as such would therefore be based on the organization (modification) of the animal (including human) body. No wonder that Aristotle would name females as “deformed males.”²¹ Here is how he summarizes his explanation:

Let us assume then (1) that “the male” is a principle and is causal in its nature; (2) that a male is male in virtue of a particular ability, and a female is female in virtue of a particular inability; (3) that the line of determination between the ability and the inability is whether a thing effects or does not effect concoction of the ultimate nourishment (in blooded animals this is known as blood, in the bloodless ones it is the counterpart of blood); (4) that the reason for this lies in the “principle,” i.e., in the part of the body which possesses the principle of the natural heat. From this it follows of necessity that, in the blooded animals, a heart must take shape and that the creature formed is to be either male or female, and, in the other kinds which have male and female sexes, the counterpart of the heart. As far, then, as the principle and the cause of male and female is concerned, this is what it is and where it is situated; a creature, however, really is male or female only from the time when it has got the parts by which female differs from male . . .

To resume then: We repeat that semen has been posited to be the ultimate residue of the nourishment. (By “ultimate” I mean that which gets carried to each part of the body—and that too is why the offspring begotten takes after the parent which has begotten it, since it comes to exactly the same thing whether we speak of

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 766 a, 389–391.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 737 a, 175.

being drawn from every one of the parts or passing into every one of the parts, though the latter is more correct.) The semen of the male, however, exhibits a difference, inasmuch as the male possesses in itself a principle of such a kind as to set up movement [in the animal as well] and thoroughly to concoct the ultimate nourishment, whereas the female's semen contains material only. If (the male semen) gains the mastery, it brings (the material) over to itself; but if it gets mastered, it changes over either into its opposite or else into extinction. And the opposite of the male is the female.²²

According to Aristotle, the differentiation of sexes takes place at the stage of individuation of animals, and not at the species-differentiation stage. The principle of "individuation by sex" is therefore semen. And as a consequence, the form of species (the soul) cannot be the principle and the source of differences between sexes. This would apply to all the blooded animals, including human beings. In their case, however, there is something more that is added to the living being from the outside, something that makes it human (*animal rationale*), namely the acting intellect (Reason).

[T]he semen is a residue of the nourishment that is undergoing change. It remains, then, that Reason alone (i.e. the rational soul) enters in, as an additional factor, from outside, and that it alone is divine, because physical activity has nothing whatever to do with the activity of Reason.²³

Thus, Aristotle's explanation of human sexuality stays entirely at the biological level and follows the principles of biological sex differentiation of animals. It follows that, at the level of species-differentiation, that is, with regard to the human form, the differentiation of sexes is absent. It occurs only at the level of "individuation by sex," where the principle of individuation is not the soul but, as Aristotle believes,

²² *Ibid.*, 766 a–766 b, 391–395.

²³ *Ibid.*, 736 b, 169–171.

the matter that makes up semen. Still, however, the very reason of sex differentiation manifests itself as an opposition: power–powerlessness. This is why male and female are related to one another as ability and inability, or perfection and imperfection. Female sex, thus, would be the result of some lack in male sex. But, in order to distinguish this process of sex differentiation from chance, Aristotle refers to the principle of proportionality:

Male and female, then, differ generally with regard to each other in respect of the generation of male and female offspring on account of the causes which have been stated. At the same time, they must stand in a right proportional relationship to one another, since everything that is formed either by art or by nature exists in virtue of some due proportion. Now if “the hot” is too powerful it dries up fluid things; if it is very deficient it fails to make them “set”; what it must have in relation to the object which is being fashioned, is the mean proportional, and unless it has that, the case will be the same as what happens when you are cooking: if there is too much fire it burns up your meat, if there is too little it will not cook it—either way what you are trying to produce fails to reach completion. The same applies to the mixture of the male and the female: they require the right proportional relationship . . .²⁴

The established principle of sex differentiation is still, however, the principle of opposition. The sexes arise as opposites: female is the opposite of male, and male is the opposite of female. The underpinning rule of this opposition is based on deficit: the female sex is but a deficit of the male one. Aristotle seems to suggest that the female sex can even be a deviation from the norm. As he himself explains, “The first beginning of this deviation is when a female is formed instead of a male, though this indeed is a necessity required by Nature, since the race of

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 767 a, 399.

creatures which are separated into male and female has got to be kept in being.”²⁵

The cause of the emergence of the sexes was placed by Aristotle in the source of movement, the causal factor; although it is not entirely clear whether he meant the soul or the sex-individuation factor, that is, the matter of semen. For he explained that,

If the seminal residue in the menstrual fluid is wellconcocted, the movement derived from the male will make the shape after its own pattern. (It comes to the same thing whether we say “the semen” or “the movement which makes each of the parts grow”; or whether we say “makes them grow” or “constitutes and ‘sets’ them from the beginning”—because the *logos* of the movement is the same either way.) So that if this movement gains the mastery it will make a male and not a female, and a male which takes after its father, not after its mother; if however it fails to gain the mastery, whatever be the “faculty” in respect of which it has not gained the mastery, in that “faculty” it makes the offspring deficient. “Faculty,” as applied to each instance, I use in the following sense. The generative parent is not merely male, but in addition a male with certain characteristics, *e.g.*, Coriscus or Socrates; and it is not merely Coriscus, but in addition a human being. And it is of course in this sense that, of the characteristics belonging to the generating parent, some are more closely, some more remotely his, *qua* procreator (not *qua* anything else he may be *per accidens*, *e.g.*, supposing he were a good scholar or somebody’s next-door neighbour); and where generation is concerned, it is always the peculiar and individual characteristic that exerts the stronger influence. Thus: Coriscus is both a human being and an animal; but the former characteristic stands closer to what is peculiar to him than the latter does. Now both the individual and the *genus* to which it belongs are at work in the act of generation; but of the two the individual takes the leading part, because this is the really existent thing; the offspring also which is formed,

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 767 b, 401.

though of course it is formed so as to possess the generic characteristics, at the same time comes to be a particular individual—and this, again, is the really existent thing.²⁶

So, although he binds sexuality with the function performed by semen, Aristotle intuitively links whatever semen accomplishes with the function of the soul. The latter, although representing species, takes part in the generation of human beings together with the principle of individuation. Thus, the soul participates, albeit indirectly, in sex determination.

It should be kept in mind, however, that Aristotle positioned sexuality within the category of accident (and in this case it is the one that modifies the substance in a direct and total manner). Sexuality is then a derivative of the material (corporeal) determinants. It is, as it were, the inheritance of being “an animal” that exists as a male or a female. By no means, however, has it taken root in the structure of the soul, even the human one. For what makes the animal a human being is first of all the capability of rational thinking. And this capability does not stem from the structure of the soul nor is it a derivative of the potency of matter. It is a certain “power,” or “faculty,” that comes down from beyond biology and matter. For this reason, this capability of rational thinking is not determined by sex in any way. Therefore, according to Aristotle, sexuality belongs to the order of nature and is, as it were, nature’s working principle that is directed to generation, reproduction, and preservation of the species. In other words, sexual character does not concern humanity as such which is defined by the capability of rational thinking. Rather, it concerns the human *animalitas* (animality). Therefore, in the anthropology of Aristotle, the issue of sexuality is excluded from the nature of the soul and brought down to the ways in which nature works; it is placed on the side of corporeity considered as

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 767 b, 403–405.

the reason (cause) of the individuation of beings. According to Aristotle, as Gilson explains this, “the individuals are distinguished from each other only by accidental differences,” and, for Aristotle, the cause of it is that

the individuals exist only for the sake of the species, and that in the long run the individuals, as individuals, do not count. But further: these individuals cannot be made to count as individuals without ruining the unity of the species itself. If an individual difference is introduced into the form of each individual, that individual at once becomes a species, and henceforth irreducible to any other species. Socrates will be as different from Callias as both Socrates and Callias actually are from an animal or a tree. In short, in order the better to safeguard the originality of the individual we should have destroyed the unity of the species, without taking account of the fact that in order to have men we must first of all have humanity.²⁷

It is therefore no surprise that, according to Aristotle, the soul cannot be sexed. It is not, after all, the reason of the individual character and of “becoming particular” (i.e., individuation). And these are the properties that result in being of a particular sex.

The Soul as the Medium of an Individual Existence and the Principle of Sexuality

The fourth concept of the human soul was authored by St. Thomas Aquinas. It is a synthesis of the great Greek tradition: Plato and Aristotle, and the Bible-based tradition of the Fathers of the Church. The human soul, endowed with the individual act of existence, and being the organizing and authoring principle of the body, must be, by necessity, a sexed soul, a soul of a woman or a soul of a man. What arguments are there in favor of such a concept?

²⁷ Étienne Gilson, *The Spirit of Mediaeval Philosophy*, trans. H. G. Downes (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1944), 195.

1. PHILOSOPHICAL ARGUMENTS. According to Thomas Aquinas, the soul is not a being nor a perfect spirit that travels from one body to another, as Plato taught. It is also not only a constitutive element of being, placed in the potency of matter and organizing the matter that is capable of living, as Aristotle maintained. The soul, according to Thomas, is the first (but not the ultimate) source of personal existence and life. It is a substance (a subject) that exists in itself, albeit incomplete (*substantia incompleta*), as it needs the body for the completeness of its existence and performance. It does not originate from transformations of matter but is directly called into existence by the Creator. The soul forms a particular body for itself and endows it with existence, and thus creates not only an organic whole, but a monolith of sorts: the human being.²⁸ For, as Thomas explains, “the act of being [esse] of a composite substance is neither of the form alone, nor of matter alone, but of the composite itself.”²⁹ Only such an understanding of the soul provides a basis for the recognition of it as not only the general principle of human existence but also the principle of existence of that particular human being: John, Eve, Adam, etc. And this means being the principle of their sexuality.³⁰ Brian J. Shanley explains:

²⁸ Cf. *ibid.*, 168: “One of the surprises in store for the historian of Christian thought lies in its insistence on the value, dignity and perpetuity of the human body.”

²⁹ Thomas Aquinas, “On Being and Essence,” in *Medieval Philosophy: Essential Readings with Commentary*, ed. Gyula Klima with Fritz Allhoff and Anand Jayprakash Vaidya (Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 230.

³⁰ Gilson notes that the issue of individuation of the soul by the matter, as presented by Aristotle, was questioned by Christian philosophers. Already Albert the Great formulated the difficulties that arise from this doctrine. A similar position was taken by Bonaventure. On the other hand, Duns Scotus binds the individuation very clearly with the form. According to him, if the form of the human being was not individual *per se*, there would not be a single human being in existence. The soul, according to Duns Scotus, is always ‘this particular soul’, and, having individual character by nature, it individualizes human body together with the matter. Gilson points out, however, that Duns Scotus assumed the existence of two substantial forms in the human being: the rational soul and the form of corporeity (Cf. Gilson, *The Spirit of Mediaeval Philosophy*, 195–197).

Even though Aquinas accepts the reigning language of dualism and talks about the relationship of the soul to the body, strictly speaking the two are not correlative because bodiliness is something that belongs to matter precisely because of soul as substantial form; there can be no body independent of soul as substantial form because the latter is the cause of the former. This means that human corporeity is caused by the soul. The soul is the causal explanation for why the matter that we have is organized into the kind of body that we have. Indeed the body that we have is such as it is precisely for the sake of the soul, so that the soul can achieve its end through its proper activity.³¹

Thus, the soul confers sexual character upon the body and determines it to act in a particular way. On top of that, it is a substance that exists in itself. This means that it has to have a particular, defined profile. It might be worth quoting the fragment of *Summa Theologiae* of St. Thomas, where we read the following: “Since the form is not for the matter, but rather the matter for the form, we must gather from the form the reason why the matter is such as it is; and not conversely.”³² Moreover, it is important to keep in mind the metaphysical principle to which St. Thomas often refers while explaining the nature of beings: “to operate *per se* belongs to what exists *per se*” (*agere sequitur esse*).³³ And since the human being exists and acts as a woman or a man, the principle of existence and actions of the human subject (the soul) must exist in the same way, i.e., as a female soul or a male soul. Here we can quote St. Thomas again, this time with regard to the principle of individuation, since, in the metaphysics of Aristotle, this principle was not the form but the matter, meaning not the soul but the body. That which was individual was accidental. By contrast, the anthropology of St. Thomas holds that

³¹ Brian J. Shanley, O.P., *The Thomist Tradition* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 2002), 154.

³² Thomas Aquinas, *The Summa Theologiae*, I, 76, 5.

³³ *Ibid.*, I, 75, 2.

The act of existing (*esse*) and individuation (*individuatō*) of a thing are always found together. . . . Therefore, although the soul receives its act of existing from God as from an active principle, and exists in the body as in matter, nevertheless the soul's act of existing does not cease when the body corrupts, nor does the soul's individuation cease when the body corrupts, even though it has a relationship to the body.³⁴

Hence, we can see that the individual character of a human person is rooted in his or her individual *esse*, the subject of which is the soul.

As receiving and communicating *esse* to the body—Shanley explains—the soul makes the body to be *this* body. When the soul is separated from the body it retains its individuality through its *esse*. When the soul receives a body again at the resurrection of the dead, it will cause matter to be its *own* body as it did before death. According to this way of thinking, the identity of the person before and after death does not depend upon strict identity of matter in the sense that the same atoms that made up my body before my death must also be in my resurrected body. My resurrected body will be my body because it will be caused and individuated by the same subsisting soul that animates and individuates me now.³⁵

Although the above characteristic of the nature of the soul includes a theological element (i.e., resurrection), this element is of a quasi-historical character, as it concerns the future of human beings and is based on the philosophical rationale: the identity and individuality of the human person is built upon the foundation of the identity and individuality of the soul, upon an individual *esse personale* which individuates the entire human being, determining thus the female or male mode of existence. This explanation may be considered the highest praise of

³⁴ Thomas Aquinas, *The Soul*, trans. John Patrick Rowan (St. Louis & London: B. Herder Book Co., 1949), 1, ad 2. Available online—see the section *References* for details.

³⁵ Shanley, *The Thomist Tradition*, 161.

the human body, the body without which a human being could not achieve happiness after his or her death.³⁶

Thus, the soul, having the individual act of existence of a human being, is individualized. As Gilson says, “the principle of individuality and the principle of personality come back in the end to the same thing. The actuality of the reasonable soul, in communicating itself to the body, determines the existence of an individual who is a person, so that the individual soul possesses personality as by definition.”³⁷ This particular and individual character permeates the entire body that the soul creates for itself.³⁸ What is more, being endowed with a particular and individualizing act of existence of a human being, the soul is first in the temporal and existential order.³⁹ For this reason, the human soul, while

³⁶ Cf. Bernardo C. Bazan, “The Highest Encomium of Human Body,” in *Littera, sensus, sentential*, ed. Abelardo Lobato (Milano: Massimo, 1991), 99–116.

³⁷ Gilson, *The Spirit of Mediaeval Philosophy*, 202.

³⁸ Gilson emphasizes the need to distinguish between the concepts of individuality (in-divisible-ness) and individuation. “The principle of individuation is matter, and it is therefore certainly matter that causes individuality; but it is not in his matter that the individuality of the individual consists; on the contrary, he is only individual, that is to say undivided in himself and divided from all else, because he is a concrete substance taken as a whole. In this sense, the individuating matter is such only in virtue of its integration with the being of the total substance, and, since the being of the substance is that of its form, individuality must of necessity be a property of the form as much as of the matter. Indeed, it belongs to the form even much more than to the matter, since, like matter, the form partakes of the individuality of the substance, and since further, in this substance, it is the form and not the matter which is the source of the substantiality. To express the same idea in another way, we might say that it is indeed matter that individualizes the form, but that, once individualized, it is the form which is individual. In short, the soul is an individual form, although not precisely as form, and it is the subsistence of this individual form which, investing matter with its own proper existence, permits the individual to subsist. In what, for the rest, this individuality of the soul consists we shall understand fully only when we rise from the plane of individuality to that of personality. Every human person is, in the first place, an individual; but also much more than an individual.” (Gilson, *The Spirit of Mediaeval Philosophy*, 200–201).

³⁹ Cf. Joseph Owens, “Thomas Aquinas,” in *Individuation in Scholasticism. The Later Middle Ages and Counter-Reformation (1150–1650)*, ed. Jorge Garcia (Albany: SUNY Press, 1994), 173–194.

being in a necessary relationship with the body (creating the body for itself), actually creates a particular man or woman and determines their sexuality. For the human being exists in no other way than as a woman or as a man. The soul, therefore, being the principle of existing as a female or male human being, must be sexed itself. What is more, the soul, being endowed with the individual act of existence, permeates the entirety of being and determines it in every possible way, so it also forms the body in an appropriate manner and makes the whole being a man or a woman.⁴⁰

Among philosophical arguments for the soul as the medium of an individual existence and the principle of sexuality, we can point to the following:

1.1. *The Argument from the Uniqueness of the Form (the Soul) in Being.* When we separate the sex from the soul, we face the problem of two forms (souls) in the human being. One is the form/soul that organizes the biological sex of the body; the other is the form/soul that bestows existence (*esse personale*) upon the body. But the adoption of two organizing forms of the human being leads to a contradiction. Then, the human being would be divided into a sexed and non-sexed one, a corporeal and non-corporeal human being (the latter could be, e.g., the “human idea” of Plato or *res cogitans* of Descartes). We will not avoid this contradiction even if we considered one of the forms (e.g., the one that organizes the body) accidental, as human sexuality is linked to the mode of existence of the human being as being. For there is no other way (or mode) of human existence than that of a man or a woman.

It will be therefore necessary to adopt, as Thomas explains, that “since the form of a higher grade of being [which is the intellectual soul

⁴⁰ Cf. David Braine, *The Human Person. Animal and Spirit* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1992), 480–531.

(A.M.]) comprises within itself all the perfections of a lower grade . . . there need not be in man a sensitive soul distinct from the intellectual soul.”⁴¹ Therefore, the being of the human soul, contrary to that of the angel’s substance, is the being of a sexed soul that bestows existence upon a concrete and corporeal man or woman.

To complete this argument—or, to be more exact, to corroborate it in an ultimate fashion—reference should be made to the truth about the creation of the world (including the human being) *ex nihilo*. The first human beings were called into existence *ex nihilo* as sexed entities. Their procreation, however, was excluded from the laws of generation governing the natural world (of other living creatures), and reserved exclusively for the Creator. For He calls into existence each and every human soul (the whole human being, actually) through a separate act of creation. In this act, the human soul, endowed with an individual act of existence, organizes the matter derived from the father and the mother (a man and a woman) into the body of a new human being: a new man or a new woman. This is why the act of creating a new human being is called “pro-creation,” or “co-creation,” in which God and parents partake equally. For this reason, just like a new human soul does not come into existence by chance, human sexuality does not result from chance either (and thus, its character is also not accidental). Sexuality, then, does not derive from biological processes that take place in human procreation, but these processes occur as a result of the work of a male or female principle of existence: the soul.

1.2. *The Argument from Indestructibility and Immortality of the Soul.* When referring to the philosophical-anthropological arguments in favor of the indestructible character (incorruptibility) and immortality of the human soul (actually, of the entire human being!), we indirectly

⁴¹ Thomas Aquinas, *Compendium of Theology*, trans. Cyril Vollert, S.J. (St. Louis & London: B. Herder Book Co., 1947), ch. 92. Available online—see the section *References* for details.

make the case for the indestructibility and immortality of the sexual character of the human being, as sexuality belongs to the essence of being human (being bound with the human being's natural mode of existence as a woman or a man). Thus, the female or male soul, being the principle of existence as a woman or a man, organizes the body in accordance with its own sexual status, which contains all faculties and organs, including the faculty of thinking and the brain itself. Moreover, sexuality is a property that is inseparable from the way of living of the human being as a person—it is bound with the human person in a necessary manner at the level of his or her existence, action, and cognition.

The fact of being of a particular sex permeates the entire organism of an individual—Krapiec explains—and should not be regarded as accidental. Indeed, in the history of philosophy it was deemed to be the so-called *proprium*, which is an essential property of being human: *quo convenit omni, soli, semper* (that which applies to all, applies to this particular one, and applies always), that is, an indispensable property of a human being. . . . The nature of a concrete human being is therefore sexual: a human being is constituted in its humanity also by this natural element which is sex. Thus, if this concrete nature of a human being is the source of all human actions, the first and basic natural action being precisely «birthing» as giving life, then, by virtue of the natural (ontic) structure of the human being, one should expect sexual elements to permeate (to some degree which we are unable to specify theoretically [*sic!*]) all human, concrete, «natural» actions, coming from the psychosomatic structure of the human being.⁴²

From the explanation given by Krapiec we can infer that sexuality determines first of all the nature of the human being. Now, Krapiec

⁴² Mieczysław A. Krapiec, *Ja – człowiek [I–man]* (Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL, 2005), 168.

relates nature to birthing as giving life.⁴³ The nature, in turn, is determined by the mode of existence, and therefore is something substantial, or, to be more exact, it is a substance grasped in terms of its constant and necessary modes of action. But the following problem arises: since it is a particular type of action wherein the functions performed by men differ from those performed by women, then, in accordance with the principle *agere sequitur esse*, life-giving must be coming from the substantial mode of existence, i.e., it must be rooted deeper than what is indicated by the biological functions of the organism. Therefore, it reaches down to the soul which is the first principle of birthing as giving life and—endowed with the individual act of existence—individuates and determines the human being to act in a particular manner. This is why Krapiec continues with the following:

There is no and can be no human action (action of a man or a woman) that is detached from sex, because it would be a detachment from the foundation of human nature. . . . Sex differentiation is not limited to the mutual self-giving of man and woman for the purpose of procreation. This «self-giving» in a selfless act of love is a telling sign, a beginning, and a confirmation, of the specific structure of the human being as a person who develops in a community of other persons existing «for one another».⁴⁴

In the life of a person, his or her sex is therefore irreducible to the functions and requirements of procreation only. It permeates every person and constitutes the reason of mutual recognition, perfection, and actualization—which is something we cannot come across in the natural world. For the human soul “cannot exist in other way than in the body; it cannot acquire its own, personal expression unless it is in the body; it cannot even be aware of itself in other way than in the body and

⁴³ The term *nature* comes from the words *nascor, nasci, natus sum; naturus, -a, -um* means “that which is to be born.”

⁴⁴ Krapiec, *Ja – człowiek [I–man]*, 169.

through the body.”⁴⁵ And that body is always of a particular sex, which means that it is organized by a sexed soul and bestowed with the (act of) existence of a female human being or a male human being.

At this point, we may also quote Gilson who notes, quoting Athenagoras on the resurrection of the dead, that God created human beings and not just souls

so that in reality we cannot properly speak of the end of the soul, but only of an end of the man. That the end of the man may be identical with that of his soul, the body must necessarily be called to participate it: “If men have been gifted with mind and reason, that they may know things apprehensible by reason, and not only their substance but also the goodness, wisdom and justice of Him who gave them substance. It must needs be that since those things on account of which this rationality has been granted remain the same, the power of judging, which is inseparable from it, must subsist. Now it could not subsist if the nature which has received it and in which it resides, did not subsist. But that which has received mind and reason is the man, and not the soul by itself. Therefore the man, a composite of body and soul, must always subsist, and this could not be if he does not rise again.”⁴⁶

What is more, it is impossible for him or her to continue, unless they rise again as a man and a woman.

1.3. *The Argument from Sexuality as a Property of the Human Person.* Another set of arguments can be found in the anthropology of Karol Wojtyła. In his book *Love and Responsibility*, in the chapter “Interpretation of the Sexual Urge,” he underlines the need to approach sexuality as a property of the human person, a property having its subject is the soul. Thus, he explains:

Since the mode of action throws light on the origin of the action we must acknowledge that there is in man an innate principle

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 177.

⁴⁶ Gilson, *The Spirit of Mediaeval Philosophy*, 192–193.

which makes him capable of considered behaviour, of self-determination. *Man is by nature capable of rising above instinct in his actions.* And he is capable of such action in the sexual sphere as elsewhere. If it were otherwise, morality would have no meaning in this context, would simply not exist, but sexual morality as everyone knows is a universal phenomenon, something common to all humanity. It is, then, difficult to speak of the sexual instinct in man as though it meant the same as it does in animals, difficult to accept it as the sole and ultimate source of actions in the sexual sphere.⁴⁷

If it is not the urge, what is it then? The answer is obvious: the soul which—being the substantial form of the human being and the proper subject of human existence and actions—decides on the existence and actions of a human being as a man or a woman, and that includes sexuality.

Moreover, in connection with his analysis of the urge, Wojtyła explains that

[w]hen we speak of the sexual urge in man we have in mind not an interior source of specific actions somehow ‘imposed in advance’, but a certain orientation, a certain direction in man’s life implicit in his very nature. The sexual urge in this conception is a *natural drive born in all human beings, a vector of aspiration* along which their whole existence develops and perfects itself from within.⁴⁸

Therefore, bearing in mind the principle *agere sequitur esse*, the entirety of actions and the development toward perfection in being a woman or a man comes down from *esse*, and the medium of this *esse* is precisely the human soul, bestowing existence upon the body.

⁴⁷ Karol Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, trans. H. T. Willetts (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1981), 46.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

The case for the sexuality of the soul is also supported by the fact that (in Wojtyła's words) "[t]he sexual urge in man is not a source of self-contained actions but it is a particular property of human existence which is reflected and finds its expression in action."⁴⁹ Therefore, the source of human actions in the sexual sphere is not the urge alone as it is the case in the animal kingdom. Human sexual urge is "a particular property of human existence which is reflected and finds its expression in action." Furthermore, sexual urge belongs to the human nature which is determined by the human soul (and not some asexual, angelic one!) and is "something fully developed"⁵⁰—something not acquired but constant and necessary. Something like this can only have the soul as its subject which, for this reason, must be sexed, as it is the source and the principle of actions of the human subject and also, in consequence, a determinant of actions in the sexual sphere.

Moreover, as Wojtyła explains,

[t]he fact that the sexual urge is the source of what happens in a man, of the various events which occur in his sensual and emotional life independently of his will, shows that this urge is a property of the *whole* of human existence and not just of one of its spheres or functions. This property permeating the whole existence of man is a force which manifests itself not only in what 'happens' involuntarily in the human body, the senses and the emotions, but also in that which takes shapes with the aid of the will.⁵¹

The human being as the subject, the author of his or her sexual acts (the power of instinct is *not* the author of them as it is in animals), must be properly skilled to perform such acts, and this skill comes from the soul. Therefore, the soul must be sexed. What is more, human life and

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 47.

actions in terms of sex differentiation encompass the human being as a whole, not only the body but also the intellect and the will. The source and principle of these actions is a sexed soul.

1.4. *The Argument from the Natural Way of Being Human.* It should be noted, Wojtyła says, that

[e]very human being is by nature a sexual being, and belongs from birth to one of the two sexes. This fact is not contradicted by the phenomenon of so-called hermaphroditism – any more than any other sickness or deformity militates against the fact that there is such a thing as human nature and that every human being, even the deformed or sick human being, has the same nature and is a human being precisely because of it. In the same way every human being is a sexual being, and membership of one of the two sexes means that a person’s whole existence has a particular orientation which shows itself in his or her actual internal development.⁵²

While this development is actually more visible on the outside, it is anchored in the nature and the structure of being. And the nature of the human being is constituted by the soul which, endowed with the individual act of human existence and as the organizing principle of the body, determines the human being to be a man or a woman. For this reason, the soul itself must be determined in terms of its sex.

1.5. *The Argument from the Nature of the Personal Act of Love.* Karol Wojtyła notes that the sexual urge (bound with the biological existence of animals), in the case of the human being, must be connected with love, and the latter—with the life of the entire human person whose source and principle of existence is the soul. Therefore, in the individual life of a human being,

[t]he sexual urge is something even more basic than the psychological and physiological attributes of man and woman in them-

⁵² *Ibid.*

selves, though it does not manifest itself or function without them. Moreover, the sexual urge in man and woman is not fully defined as an orientation towards the psychological and physiological attributes of the other sex as such. . . . The sexual urge in man has a natural tendency to develop into love simply because the two objects affected, with their different sexual attributes, physical and psychological, are both people. Love is a phenomenon peculiar to the world of human beings. In the animal world only the sexual instinct is at work.⁵³

For this reason, neither can sexuality be reduced to the sexual urge alone, nor can the urge be reduced to the corporeal life. In human life, the sexual urge is only one of many expressions of sexuality as such, mostly directed toward the preservation of the species. Human sexuality, however, is the reason for loving another person—the “loving” which is the peak manifestation of a person’s sexuality. For this reason, sexuality must be rooted in the deepest existential structure of human persons, and should be indicated as the reason of interpersonal love. Without sexuality, such love would not be feasible and, more importantly, the human being would not be able to actualize himself or herself fully as a man or a woman. Their love would never be fully actualizable, never be able to come to fruition in the form of creating a new life.

1.6. *The Argument from the Analysis of the Reason of Being of the Human Person.*⁵⁴ In addition, Wojtyła emphasizes that the importance of the sexual urge is not only something biological and purely “procreative” but, in case of the human being, also existential. For this

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 49.

⁵⁴ “[T]he person—as Emery explains Thomas’s understanding of it—is defined by its existing through itself (subsistence), in an irreducible and entirely singular way (individuality), with a freedom of action which is drawn from its essence (intellectual nature). All of these character traits ground the dignity of the person.” (Gilles Emery, O.P., *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, trans. Francesca Aran Murphy [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007], 106).

urge is linked with the existence of a human being as a person. “But if the sexual urge has an existential character, if it is bound up with the very existence of the human person – that first and most basic good – then it must be subject to the principles which are binding in respect of the person.”⁵⁵ And since the principle of existence of a person is to be *of a rational nature and an individual subject*, this principle should be supplemented by stating that to be a person means to be *an individual and undivided subject (substance) of rational and sexual nature*. For the human person realizes itself as a man and woman. No other possibility is given. And since the principle of existence of the human person is the soul, the soul must determine a person to exist as a man or a woman.

It would be appropriate to reiterate, however, that it is more adequate to speak about the sexuality of the human being than that of the human soul or the human body, as there is no human being in existence as a soul alone or as a body alone. A man and a woman are human beings characterized by a specific psychosomatic unity. Moreover, the individual human soul (as a *total* principle of the human being) is the principle of existence from which all essential (i.e., decisive as to its constitutive properties) determination of that being must come. The arguments here presented indicate that sexuality is by no means reducible to the accidental elements only. On the contrary, it is a constitutive element of the human being and as such must be ultimately rooted in the soul itself.

In conclusion of this philosophical explanation, we should take into account the fact of creation (*ex nihilo*) through which whole beings, just as they are: matter and form, substance and accidents, are called into existence. And because each single fact of creation occurs due to the act of the intellect and will of the Absolute, every being is

⁵⁵ Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, 52.

determined by the Creator as to its essence and marked by Him with the end-purpose of its existence. This is the proper way of looking at the beginning of the human being which is created as a man or a woman. And this is an adequate form of the principle of the human being's existence (the soul) which determines it to be a man or a woman. For a human being is not an asexual soul confined to a sexual body. What we are dealing here with is the ontic, psychological and physical unity.

2. THEOLOGICAL-PHILOSOPHICAL ARGUMENTS. The above philosophical argumentation can be complemented by theological-philosophical arguments concerning life after death (resurrection) as presented by St. Thomas Aquinas. On their basis, St. Thomas endeavors to "reconstruct" the existential status of the human being after death, using intellectual tools provided by metaphysics and philosophical anthropology.

2.1. *The Argument from the Inseparableness of the Body and the Soul.* The problem highlighted by St. Thomas Aquinas in the context of the issue of the sexuality of the soul, applies to the necessary, enduring link between the body and the soul, and their inseparableness. Thus, it also pertains to the enduring link between the human being and its sexuality after death. Thomas poses the question: In what sense is the separation of the body and the soul in conformity with nature? And in what sense is it not? In response, he recalls the original state of the human being and the state of the human being after sin. In the original state, the corporeal indestructibility of the human being was established as natural, but this order of things was ruined by original sin, which brought about the necessity of agony and death.

And in the same way that this form [i.e., the soul (A.M.)] itself receives existence from God alone through creation, that disposition, transcending as it does corporeal nature, was conferred on the human body by God alone for the purpose of preserving the body itself in a state of incorruption so that it might match the

soul's perpetual existence. This disposition remained in man's body as long as man's soul cleaved to God.⁵⁶

The body was steadfastly subordinate to the soul, and, because of that, human sexuality was granted for eternity. After original sin, however, the existential status of the human being has changed, manifesting itself in the necessity of death. So, when we consider the nature of the body *after* the original sin, death will be a natural occurrence.

But if we regard the nature of the soul and the disposition with which the human body was supernaturally endowed in the beginning for the sake of the soul, death is *per accidens* and contrary to nature, inasmuch as union with the body is natural for the soul.⁵⁷

Therefore, it is in the nature of the human being that the relationship between the body and the soul is imperishable, which consequently means that sexuality also is imperishable, as part and parcel of being human.

2.2. *The Argument from the Identity of the Body after the Resurrection.* The second question posed by Thomas with regard to sexuality is about the specific body that will be adopted by the soul after the resurrection. His answer is that the soul will adopt entirely "the same body." This is supported, first of all, by the fact that

soul is united to the body as its form, and since each form has the right matter corresponding to it, the body to which the soul will be reunited must be of the same nature and species as was the body laid down by the soul at death . . . a human body made up of flesh and bones, and equipped with the same organs it now possesses.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Thomas Aquinas, *Aquinas's Shorter Summa*, 152, trans. Cyril Vollert (Manchester, New Hampshire: Sophia Institute Press, 2002), 171.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 153, 171–172.

Identity pertains to a concrete John or Eve, and therefore encompasses also their particular sex. The foundation of the human being is the soul (not the body), and therefore the soul must be sexed in order to determine the sexual identity of the body of a concrete human being.

2.3. *The Argument from the Integrity of the Human Being*. Thomas observes that, since our bodily organs are sex-differentiated, even after death the human being retains its sexual character because of the soul that organizes the whole of that being. Thomas states:

Just as the same specific form ought to have the same specific matter, so the same numerical form ought to have the same numerical matter. The soul of an ox cannot be the soul of a horse's body, nor can the soul of this ox be the soul of any other ox. Therefore, since the rational soul that survives remains numerically the same, at the resurrection it must be reunited to numerically the same body.⁵⁹

Numerically, the human soul is identical with the soul of a man or a woman whose body it organizes. Of course, this identity is not the work of nature but most of all the work of God's power.

Since all things, even the very least, are included under Divine Providence . . . the matter composing this human body of ours, whatever form it may take after man's death, evidently does not elude the power or the knowledge of God. Such matter remains numerically the same, in the sense that it exists under quantitative dimensions, by reason of which it can be said to be this particular matter, and is the principle of individuation. If then, this matter remains the same, and if the human body is again fashioned from it by divine power, and if also the rational soul which remains the same in its incorruptibility is united to the same body, the result is that identically the same man [and the same woman (A.M.)] is restored to life.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 153, 172.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 154, 173.

The content of being human (of humanity) contains both the body and the soul, “since humanity is not some third form in addition to soul and body, but is composed of both, we see clearly that, if the same body is restored and if the same soul remains, the humanity will be numerically the same,”⁶¹ that is, this humanity will be either male or female: it will be John or Mary.

Thomas, while adopting sex differentiation after the resurrection and the existence of all bodily organs previously possessed, rules out the possibility of the same functions to be continuously performed. Thomas explains that

there will be no consumption of food or drink after the resurrection. Nor will there be any need of clothing. Clothes are necessary for man so that the body may not suffer harm from heat or cold, which beset him from outside. Likewise, exercise of the reproductive functions, which is designed for the generation of animals, must cease. Generation serves the ends of mortal life, so that what cannot be preserved in the individual may be preserved at least in the species. Since the same individual men will continue in eternal existence, generation will have no place among them; nor, consequently, will the exercise of reproductive power.⁶²

Sex and human sexuality, however, do not cease to be. Only their functional, performative part is gone, as the pursued end of that activity is no more present. Just like nutrition is no longer functioning but the mouth and other organs designed to this end are there. This applies to all bodily organs of the human being.

They [i.e., human beings (A.M.)] will not lack the organs requisite for such functions. Without these organs the risen body would not be complete. . . . Therefore all the members of the body will have their place in the risen, for the preservation of na-

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 154, 174.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 156, 177–178.

ture in its entirety rather than for the exercise of their normal functions.⁶³

Moreover, Thomas adds, “it is no more than right that men should keep the organs with which they served the reign of sin or of justice during the present life, so that they may be punished or rewarded in the members they employed for sin or for merit.”⁶⁴ In the case where natural processes have been disrupted and various shortcomings took hold, including the sexual sphere, after the resurrection “human nature is to be completely renewed,” and all its defects will be rectified by God. What will be risen will only be that which “pertains to the true state of human nature.” And that is because, as Thomas continues,

The proper condition of any nature is regulated by its species and form. Accordingly, all the parts that are consonant with the human species and form will be integrally present in risen man (i.e., not only organic parts, but other parts of like nature, such as flesh and sinews, which enter into the composition of the various organs). Of course, not all the matter that was ever contained in those parts during man’s natural life will again be taken up, but only so much as will be enough to constitute the species of the parts in integrity.⁶⁵

It means that the matter of the body undergoes constant transformations and we cannot conceive of it as something permanently fixed and unchanging. It is well proved by the process of our development, coming of age, achieving maturity, and getting old. For what is material in the human being does not stay always the same and in the same manner. The matter of the body “undergoes gradual flux and reflux, in somewhat the way that the same fire is kept up although some logs are consumed and others are fed to the blaze. Man is whole when

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 157, 178–179.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 157, 179.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 159, 180.

his species and the quantity due to his species are preserved intact.”⁶⁶ Such transformations of the matter, however, do not infringe the numerical identity of the human being, or, in other words, do not undermine the fact that, having risen from the dead, the human being remains John who identifies himself with his own male body, or Eve who identifies herself with her own female body. In addition, God will remedy, with his own power, all shortcomings of the corporeal nature, whatever they would be.⁶⁷

2.4. *The Argument from the Substantial Form of Corporeity.* Another argument in favor of the sexual character of the soul is based on the way in which corporeity is understood. St. Thomas argues that

if by corporeity is meant the substantial form by which a thing is classified in the genus of corporeal substance, such corporeity is nothing else than the soul, seeing that there is but one substantial form for each thing. In virtue of this particular soul, this animal is not only *animal*, but is *animated body*, and *body*, and also *this thing existing in the genus of substance*. Otherwise the soul would come to a body already existing in act, and so would be an accidental form. The subject of a substantial form is something existing only in potency, not in act. When it receives the substantial form it is not said to be generated merely in this or that respect, as is the case with accidental forms, but is said to be generated simply, as simply receiving existence. And therefore the corporeity that is received remains numerically the same, since the same rational soul continues to exist.⁶⁸

And since sexuality is linked to corporeity in the most obvious manner, it is therefore the soul that determines that corporeity to exist as the substance of a man or a woman.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ Cf. *ibid.*, 159, 180–181.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 154, 175.

2.5. *The Argument from the Eternal Duration of the Human Being.* Thomas notes that the eternal duration applies to the human being (and not just the soul), which means it applies to men and women. For this reason, Thomas explains,

mortality is not overcome by taking away man's proper matter. For the soul will not resume a celestial or ethereal body . . . it will resume a human body made up of contrary elements. Incorruptibility will come as an effect of divine power, whereby the soul will gain dominion over the body to the point that the body cannot corrupt. For a thing continues in being as long as form [the soul (A.M.)] has dominion over matter.⁶⁹

Therefore, eternity also applies to human sexuality. As Ratzinger notes,

Theology lists among the properties of the resurrected bodies their spiritual character (1 Cor 15:44), immortality (15:53), imperishability (15:42, 53), freedom from suffering (Rev 7:16f; 21:4), subtlety (Mt 28:2f; J 20:19; Phil 3:21), agility and glorious appearance (1 Cor 15:43). The bodies of the damned will have share only in the immortality and imperishability, and surely, they will lack freedom from suffering. The resurrected body will remain, regardless of its profound transformation . . . a truly human body. Its sex differentiation will be also retained.⁷⁰

Pointing to one more, strictly theological argument, it should be noted that, in the calendar of saints, those who were recognized as such, are venerated after their deaths as men and women. This confirms the preservation of the human, individual sexuality also after a person's death. This individual character is upheld by the individual soul which is none other than the individual act of existence of the human being as a man or a woman.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 155, 177.

⁷⁰ Josef Ratzinger, *Zmartwychwstanie i życie wieczne [Resurrection and Eternal Life]*, trans. Joachim Kobienia (Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL, 2014), 269. Cf. Hans-Eduard Hengstenberg, *Der Leib und die letzten Dinge* (Dettelbach: Röhl, 1996), II 3b.

3. ARGUMENTS FROM NEUROSCIENCES. A sort of evidence, complementing the arguments in favor of the sexual character of the human soul are analyses of empirical research on “brain sex,” conducted in contemporary neurosciences.⁷¹ It should be noted, however, that such investigations are not concerned with the soul being of a particular sex, but exclusively with the human brain. But from the point of view of philosophical anthropology, investigations of this kind confirm—albeit indirectly—that the soul is sexed. For the brain is the organ of rational thinking, used by the soul. For this reason, in line with the principle of philosophical explanation that says *agere sequitur esse* (i.e., doing follows being, or the mode of action is the consequence of the mode of existence), it should be pointed out that the principle that determines “brain sex” is the soul.

3.1. *The Argument from Structural Differences between Male and Female Brain.* Natural scientists and neurologists, as the authors of the book *Brain Sex* note, prove that

the sexes are different because their brains are different. The brain, the chief administrative and emotional organ of life, is differently constructed in men and in women; it processes information in a different way, which results in different perceptions, priorities and behavior.

In the past ten years [i.e., in 1980s (A.M.)] there has been an explosion of scientific research into what makes the sexes different. Doctors, scientists, psychologists and sociologists, working apart, have produced a body of findings which, taken together, paints a

⁷¹ See Moir, Jessel, *Brain Sex*; Michael Gazzaniga, *Nature's Mind: Biological Roots of Thinking, Emotions, Sexuality, Language, and Intelligence* (New York: Basic Books, 1992); James W. Kalat, *Biological Psychology* (Vancouver, British Columbia: Langara College, 2012); Anna Czarnicka, “Czy mózg ma płeć? Różnice płciowe w budowie ludzkiego mózgu [Does the Brain Have a Sex? Sex Differences in the Construction of the Human Brain],” *Kosmos* 52, no. 1 (2003): 21–27.

remarkably consistent picture. And the picture is one of startling sexual asymmetry.⁷²

Moreover, what demonstrates sex differences most profoundly is not only the shape of the male and female bodies and their different functioning in life processes but the differences that appear in the construction of the brains, and therefore: the difference between the brain of a woman and the brain of a man.⁷³

Sex differences were sometimes explained through social conditioning and cultural influences, thus negating biological differences as it is in the case of ideologies of the gender type. But since sociological explanation seemed inadequate, biochemical reasons were taken into consideration. According to this reasoning, hormones determine our stereotypical male and female behavior but, then again, as the authors of *Brain Sex* argue, “Hormones alone do not provide the whole answer; what makes the difference is the interplay between those hormones and the male or female brains, pre-wired specifically to react with them.”⁷⁴

The main basis for distinguishing brain sex, however, is seen by the scientists in the anatomical (neurochemical, neurodevelopmental, and structural) differences between the brains of both sexes.⁷⁵ Based on this, they prove empirically that, for example, the female brain is usually smaller. It is also characterized by a radically different architecture of neuronal connections.⁷⁶ The cerebral cortex of the right hemisphere

⁷² Moir, Jessel, *Brain Sex*, 5.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 20.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁷⁵ Cf., for example, Daniah Trabzuni et al., “Widespread Sex Differences in Gene Expression and Splicing in the Adult Human Brain,” *Nature Communications* 4, no. 2771 (November 22, 2013): 1–7; Glenda E. Gillies et al., “Sex-Dependent Diversity in Ventral Tegmental Dopaminergic Neurons and Developmental Programing: A Molecular, Cellular and Behavioral Analysis,” *Neuroscience* 282 (2014): 69–85; Madhura Ingahalikar et al., “Sex Differences in the Structural Connectome of the Human Brain,” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 111 (January 14, 2014): 823–828.

⁷⁶ See the ground-breaking research: Ingahalikar et al., “Sex differences . . .”

is thicker in the case of men, while it is thicker in the left hemisphere of women. The male brain is more specialized (but not in every case as H. Lansdell demonstrated in his research); language centers are grouped predominantly in the frontal part of the left hemisphere in the case of women, while men have them more scattered and present both at the front and back of their left hemisphere. The corpus callosum is larger and thicker in the case of women.

Many more anatomical differences are empirically confirmed. The male sexually dimorphic nucleus of the preoptic area (SDN-POA) is twice as large as the female one (but its size changes with time). Heterosexual men have the third interstitial nucleus of the anterior hypothalamus (INAH3) on average 2.5 times larger than women. And male “darkly staining posteromedial” component of the bed nucleus of the stria terminalis (BNST-dspm) is almost 50 percent larger than that of women and transsexual men.

Other anatomical differences between female and male brain are visible in the cortical curvature of the brain, the volume of which is highly correlated with intelligence. It applies to frontal, temporal, parietal, and occipital regions. The right middle temporal gyrus of the female brain contains significantly more of the white matter and less of the grey. There are also differences in the size of parietal lobes. Women have their right parietal lobe larger than the left one, while men have this difference inverted. Such empirical data could be multiplied, but this is not the point.

3.2. *The Argument from the Genetically Determined Differences in Body Structure.* The authors of *Brain Sex* prove that

genes, carrying the coded blueprint of our unique characteristics, make us either male or female. In every microscopic cell of our bodies, men and women are different from each other; because every fibre of our being has a different set of chromosomes within it, depending on whether we are male or female.

Our identity blueprints come in the form of forty-six chromosomes, half contributed by the mother, half by the father. The first forty-four team up with one another, forming pairs of chromosomes which determine certain bodily features of the eventual individual, such as the colour of the eyes, the length and shape of the nose. But the last pair are different.

The mother contributes an 'X' chromosome to the egg (the 'X' describes the rough shape of the chromosome). If the father's contribution on fertilisation of the egg is another 'X' chromosome, the outcome will—normally—be the formation of a girl baby. If the father's sperm contains a Y chromosome, normally a baby boy will be born.

But the genes alone do not guarantee the sex of a child. That depends on the intervention, or the absence, of the other factor in sex determination—the hormones. Whatever the genetic make-up of the embryo, the fetus will only develop as a male if male hormones are present, and it will only develop as a female if male hormones are absent.⁷⁷

For this reason, the role of hormones is emphasized. There are many different hormones. The main male hormone is testosterone, while women mainly feature estrogen, progesterone, and oxytocin. It even appears that testosterone is indispensable for the development of a male brain, as the operational programs of the hypothalamic-pituitary system differ between women and men. It is also pointed out that males tend toward homeostasis while women feature positive feedback loops and, as a consequence, high fluctuations of their hormone levels.

3.3. *The Argument from Differences in Perception and Behavior.*

The authors of *Brain Sex* note that there is a significant difference between men and women with regard to perception and behavior, which manifests itself in expressing emotions, reception of visual stimuli, per-

⁷⁷ Moir, Jessel, *Brain Sex*, 20–21.

ception of smells and tastes, experiencing sensations, and levels of aggression (in typical situations).

The analysis of the empirical material gathered by the authors leads to two separate conclusions. One is purely biological, and states that the sex is rooted not only in biological organs but most of all in the brain itself. Our behavior is “largely dictated by the messages that mould and inform our brains.”⁷⁸ This, however, brings about an even more far-reaching question: Who or what informs and shapes the sex of the brain? What decides on its structural differentiation? Are chemical processes related to hormones exclusively responsible? Or is it something more fundamental like, for instance, the organizing principle of the human body, including the brain?

The second conclusion is of a metaphysical nature and states that since the brains of man and woman are shaped differently, and they are the organs of thinking and cognitive approach to the entire reality, this shaping of the brain comes down from the source of the being that uses such an organ. And this source is the human soul, endowed with the autonomous, individual, and singular (act of) existence according to which the soul’s own body is formed and organized. If it forms and organizes this body to be a woman, such must be the nature of that soul. Empirical research just confirms it all.

This explanation is concerned with the formation of brain sex from a purely biological point of view. It confirms, first, essential differences that are present in the body (and the brain) between male and female sexes. But referring only to biological causes of sex differentiation—where male sex is caused by male hormones, that is, androgens, among which the most important would be testosterone, and female sex is caused by gonads not producing enough of the male hormone—cannot and does not constitute an explanation that is sufficiently com-

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 8.

prehensive. It leaves the questions “Why is that?” and “What is the ultimate source and principle of sexual determination?” unanswered. What we are given instead is an explanation, or rather a description, of how it happens.

Moreover, such a purely biological explanation indicates the existence of a genetically coded blueprint of our individual features that includes our particular sex. Therefore, some other, more profound source responsible for such coding and such a design of all personal properties of a human being (including sexuality) has to be found. This, however, cannot be grasped within the field of biological and neurological investigations. To get to it, we must move to metaphysical reasoning and recall the principle *agere sequitur esse*, which states that the mode of our existence and actions (including the way in which our cells are organized) is a consequence of the principle (cause) of that existence, i.e., the human soul which—being a singular and individualized act endowed with existence—is the soul of a woman or a man, as this is the only way in which human beings may exist and act as humans.

It should be also pointed out that there is a particular fact that lies beyond the grasp of the biologists and neurologists who scientifically analyze the development of human fetuses. It is the fact of the determination *in potentia* of the structure of the fetus, from the moment of its (or rather his or her) conception, a determination which will only be visible within the first (usually six) weeks after fertilization. What determines this potency is precisely the act of existence that was first established there: the soul. Otherwise, being of a particular sex would be an inadvertent and inexplicable occurrence, as something definite would emerge from something that is not definite, i.e., from an undetermined fetus a male or female one would emerge by chance. Following this line, we would make the most basic mistake in metaphysical explanation: being would be explained with non-being, or that which is determined—with that which is not.

Thus, all the above arguments, varied as they are, allow a statement to be made that the human soul, which is an individual act endowed with existence, must be sexed. This way we also arrive at the conclusion that sexuality belongs to human nature, and is rooted in the very principle of human existence: the soul.

Ad Obiectiones Dicendum: Responses to the Objections

In response to the issues raised, the following should be pointed out:

Response to Objection 1. Addressing the first difficulty, it should be emphasized that being of a particular sex is linked not so much to the body and the corporeal dimension of the human being as with the human being as a whole. As Aristotle puts it, “It is clear, then, that ‘the male’ and ‘the female’ are a principle [of generation (A.M.)].”⁷⁹ The entire human being is organized by its form, which is a singular, rational, and self-sustained soul. The individual soul, being the first act of existence of a human being, bestows existence upon this being and individualizes it. Singularity and individuality of the human being are manifested in its existence as a particular man or woman. Such beings are established by their soul, because, as Aristotle argues, “there is no such thing as face, or flesh either, without Soul in it.”⁸⁰ And therefore the soul must be sexed.

Response to Objection 2. Human sexuality serves not only generation and procreation. Being a man or a woman are two correlates of being human which supplement, complement, and perfect each other. What is more, it is due to our sexuality that we recognize our individual identity. Otherwise this recognition would concern our species identity. Sexuality, therefore, reaches deeper layers of the human being than

⁷⁹ Aristotle, *Generation of Animals*, 716 b, 15.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 734 b, 153.

mere corporeity, as it belongs to the realm of the individual identity. Furthermore, it is true that the soul is also the source of more sublime, spiritual life, but this life concerns each individual human being and permeates this being as a whole. It is therefore the soul that determines the sex of a human being, which means that the soul must be sexed.

Response to Objection 3. Indeed, human sexuality is related to the sexual urge and this urge in the animal kingdom belongs to what is corporeal. But even among animals the subject of this drive is the “corporeal” (not self-sustained) soul which organizes everything for the preservation of the species in the process of generation. Thus, even here sexuality seems to be linked to the soul, or the so-called causal factor of movement. In the human being, on the other hand, sexual urge belongs to that which is corporeal, but is directed not so much toward generation as toward love, the fruit of which is generation. The subject of (the act of) love is the human person who is by nature and essence either a woman or a man. Therefore, the soul as the principle of existence of women and men must be sexed.

Response to Objection 4. The fact of hermaphroditism means no more than “any other sickness or deformity [that] militates against the fact that there is such a thing as human nature and that every human being, even the deformed or sick human being, has the same nature and is a human being precisely because of it.”⁸¹ To possess human nature means to exist in the way that is either male or female, and to act accordingly. This sexual character permeates the entire human being both on the outside and deep down inside. That which permeates the human being is the soul, which is an individual act of (human) existence.

Response to Objection 5. In response to the objection raised that sex as such serves reproductive purposes only and belongs to that which is corporeal in the human being, it should be stated that such is

⁸¹ Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, 47.

the case within the animal kingdom. In the case of human beings, however, being of a particular sex is linked not only to the reproduction but to the entire life of a person. For this reason, sex as a property of a person participates indispensably in initiating (the act of) love.⁸² And the latter is a personal act the subject of which is the self-sustained soul that individuates a human person to be a man or a woman, as this is the way in which human beings exist.⁸³ Both acting and the mode of acting is a consequence of the mode of existence (*agere sequitur esse*). Therefore, the principle of actions of a human subject, which is the soul, must also be of a particular sex.

Response to Objection 6. Adopting the distinction made between the (human) body and the (human) organism and binding sexuality with the organism (the organization of the body), we point out that there are two organizing forms of this body: one responsible for the emergence of a male or female organism, and the other which forms this organism into a human one. The numeric identity (individuation) of a human being would be decided by the organic body, that is, a corporeal form, while the species identity would be decided by the soul and some non-corporeal body—consequently, the human being would be organized by two souls. We would then inevitably face the two problems: (1) that of (the lack of) unity of the form which not only organizes the matter but also bestows existence upon it, and (2) that of (the lack of) the individual character and identity of the human person that is always either a man or a woman. Moreover, it is the act of existence that individuates the human being, and the soul—possessing its own act of existence, and

⁸² Cf. *ibid.*, 269–270: “It is . . . worth . . . remembering that things which in themselves must be recognized as manifestations of the sexual urge can be converted in the interior of a person into the real ingredients of love.”

⁸³ Cf. *ibid.*, 47: “[E]very human being is a sexual being, and membership of one of the two sexes means that a person’s whole existence has a particular orientation which shows itself in his or her actual internal development.”

organizing that being from the inside—must be individual, i.e., either male or female.

Response to Objection 7. The fact that something is the organizing principle, like the soul is, does not mean that it has to be identical with that which is organized. A carpenter who “organizes” wood into a table does not have to be identical with that table. Such kind of organization is an accidental form of organization. The soul, however, is the substantial form of the human being and the first act of its existence. This entails that the soul determines the body in a total, wholesome way. It permeates the body and bestows upon it a particular mode of existence, which is either male or female. Therefore, the human soul must be sexed.

Response to Objection 8. The fact that, as a result of medical procedures, transitions between sexes take place does not mean that human nature (the nature of a man or a woman) undergoes a change but rather that an accidental reorganization of the body is accomplished—the body which essentially remains either female or male. It does not mean that sexuality is separated from the soul which organizes and individuates the body as a whole. What is accomplished in the procedures of this kind is a distortion, or a falsification of sorts, as regards the way in which human nature operates. Human bodies exposed to such procedures are enhanced and assisted by the administration of hormones, and further studies are required in order to establish whether withholding such assistance would restore these bodies to their “original nature.”

Response to Objection 9. Those who maintain that the human soul is a spirit, should be reminded that although the human soul is spiritual (i.e., immaterial), it is not a spirit. And what is created is not a human spirit but a human being. The latter is not a spirit nor the soul as such but rather a sexed being: a woman or a man. What constitutes a male human being and a female human being is the soul. Therefore, the

soul must be sexed. Moreover, the human being is created for eternity which means that both woman and man must endure forever.

Response to Objection 10. The supporters of theories related to the concept of gender cannot corroborate their positions with scientific research results. For this reason, these theories make up a type of cultural and political ideology. Scientific studies of the human brain, on the other hand, demonstrate radical differences between the structures of female and male brains. The brain is an organ of thinking and cognition the subject of which is the soul. If such an organ, together with the specific mode of cerebral activity, is determined in a different manner for women and men, then the determining subject must also be differentiated accordingly. Therefore, the soul must be sexed.

Response to Objection 11. When the Holy Scripture says that, after the resurrection, they will be “like the angels in heaven” (Mt. 22:30), what is referred to is the existential perfection of the human being after death. Human beings will be no longer subject to change, illness, and suffering. Instead, they will be granted the fullness of being a person. And since this fullness will be granted to male human beings and female human beings, and that which perfects human beings and strives toward their fullness is the soul, then to improve a man or a woman up to the fullness of their existence, this soul must possess such power and potency in itself. Therefore, it must be sexed.

Conclusion

The above discussion on the sexuality of the human soul is the first attempt of this kind in the field of realistic philosophical anthropology. The author sought to answer the question of how deeply our sexuality is anchored in the structure of the human being. In the Aristotelian-Thomistic tradition, both ancient and modern, we do not encounter the problem posed in such a way, nor do we come across solutions

as those proposed in this paper. The strength of arguments put forward in favor of the sexual character of the soul is of metaphysical and anthropological nature, with a decisive role played by the discovery of the individuating and individualizing *esse personale* (personal existence), which—taking up the function of the soul and the organizing principle of the human being—decides on the existence of that being as a man or a woman, as this is the only way in which human beings can exist. The analyses carried out and the arguments presented may also be considered to be an encouragement for further studies in this area.



**Is the Human Soul Sexed?
In Search for the Truth on Human Sexuality**

SUMMARY

The author attempts to answer the question about the ontic basis of human sexuality: Is sexuality an indispensable element of being human, or is it just an element of human cultural diversity? In his search for an answer, he applies the structure of the medieval *quaestiones disputatae* including objections, counter-objections, solutions and responses to objections. In his discussion of solutions, the author refers first and foremost to the metaphysical method (which consists in pointing out the objective factors that ultimately explain the examined fact of human sexuality), but also to theological and neurological methods. The whole of the analysis is aimed at proving that the human soul is inherently sexual and, therefore, that being a man or a woman is a proper mode of the existence of a human person.

KEYWORDS

soul, body, sex, sexuality, woman, man, person, gender, anthropology, metaphysics.

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