

2. Human Nature according to St. Thomas Aquinas

Taking from Aristotle's definition, St. Thomas defines man as a composite of body and soul,¹ and then he explains that the human soul indeed exists "on the confines of the spiritual and corporeal."² As Jean-Marie Aubert states, man "...is a being who belongs to two worlds, who inhabits in an *ordo*, a structure of material, vegetable, animal and spiritual beings. The dividing line between matter and spirit passes through him, he is a living hinge joining the two."³ After all, St. Thomas refers to the soul as the *horizon aeternitatis*⁴ because it participates both in eternity and in time. It is here that man's battles as *homo viator* take place. It is here that God infuses His salutary grace. It is here that man can taste simultaneously heavenly delights and earthly anguishes.

The composite of soul and body is the unity of form and matter. This does not seem to be too different from other natural substances. What makes the difference is that the human soul has two faculties, the intellect and the will. Having appetites like all other creatures, man also has the rational appetite which is the will itself, a faculty informed by the intellect. The highest capacity of man's soul is in fact the intellect. It is an immaterial power that is united to a material body in a truly awesome way. It communicates its spiritual being to matter, and it is not made to be apart from that body matter. That is why the *anima separata* is not the natural state of the soul. Each soul separated from its body at death craves to be reunited to that very body. It is thus not proper to say that the soul is likened to an angel. It is not a spirit descended into matter, as the Platonists would hold. Rather, it is the only kind of spirit can be itself only in and through its intimate and integral union with the body. It is like the lowest form of spirit which is united to the highest form of matter. Our way of being spiritual involves physicality and being physical involves spirituality.⁵

This worldview clashes with the accounts we find in modern philosophy since Descartes. Since the advent of modern philosophy we have two extremes in Cartesian dualism and Hobbesian materialism. They both reject the very notion of the soul as the animating and directing principle of the body taught by the hylomorphic unity we read in Aristotle and St. Thomas.⁶ In this union between body and soul, one is in potency, and the other has to be in act. Both cannot be in act, so the body is in potency, and the soul is in act because the soul informs the body. If both were in act, there would be a contradiction in the hylomorphic unity. The importance placed on the hylomorphic unity being intact is the person who wills, loves, and cares for his children. In the hylomorphic unity, the soul is in each part of the body. The soul as form is found in every part of the body as matter. After all, many of the debates we now see over the mind and the body show the confusion there is in this area. The question in many of these debates is whether mental states are reducible to physical ones. Can thought be reduced to a mere physiological process? Is there no distinction between the soul and the body? If there is no such distinction,

¹ Cf. *STI* q. 75, a. 4; q. 76.

² St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I q. 77, a. 2.

³ Jean-Marie Aubert, *A God for Science?*, Newman Press, Westminster, Maryland 1967, p. 47. Also Cf. Joseph de Finance, SJ, *Cittadino di due mondi, Il posto dell'uomo nella creazione*, Editrice Vaticana, Roma 1993, p. 23.

⁴ At one point in *Quaestiones Disputate De Potentia* q. 3, a. 9, St. Thomas writes: "anima rationalis constituta est inter deum et res corporales media; unde in libro de causis dicitur, quod est creata in *horizonte aeternitatis* et temporis."

⁵ For a good talk on this, view Prof. John Finley's talk at Kenrick Seminary in St. Louis on March 8, 2016: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3gO0O7w5VBs>.

⁶ The logical demonstration "quia" shows that there is a union between the soul and the body which St. Thomas and the various other realist schools teach. The next step is the logical demonstration "propter quid" which explains why in such a union each part cannot be autonomously limited in act.

especially on the level of what is potential and what is actualized, of what is the form and what is the matter, then the danger is that the body will be denigrated to what is merely biological. It becomes merely mechanical and nothing more. We will elaborate on this later.

2.1 Gender viewed metaphysically⁷

2.1.1 The Body and Gender

In terms of the material or spiritual changes advocated in gender confusion, what exactly do we mean by gender? St. Thomas does not talk about gender as such because that term is first used by Judith Butler, whom we will discuss later. Rather, St. Thomas talks about sexual differentiation. By this he understands the person as either male person or female person. St. Thomas considers it basically identifying the biological capacities in virtue of which persons are identified as male or female, so he is not distinguishing it apart from its biological nature. This is an important reminder today because we are bombarded by the postmodern redefinition of gender according to whatever one feels. While there are certainly some exceptions of nature or problems that can emerge from surgical accidents of sorts, as we see in the now-famous John Colapinto story of David Reimer,⁸ these are the exceptions and cannot be considered the norm, notwithstanding what Dr. Money at John Hopkins University desires. We wish to address gender, therefore, not from the perspective of a privation of that which is due to the person.⁹ It is important to address gender from the physiology of the question and not the pathology, privation, or difference. When we think of the sexually-differentiated nature St. Thomas considers, we see that it is in the necessary, inseparable, permanent accidents that we have to focus our attention.

Just like 3 can never be 4, a male can never be a female. One cannot have an odd without a number. One cannot have an even without a number. In a similar way, one cannot have a male without a person, and one cannot have a female without a person. As odd and even are inseparable to numbers, male and female are inseparable to human personhood, as they are to the whole animal kingdom for that matter. It is in the material cause, therefore, that we see maleness and femaleness organized and determined as such. In this way, human nature can be said to be expressed in two modes of being. Clearly, the material/physical traits of the bodies have something to do with the behavioral/spiritual traits of each “gender” or “sex.” When we are talking about an individual person we are talking about an individual who is male in everything he does or female in everything she does. By “everything” we consider the way he or she walks, the way he or she sits, etc.

What about the soul in all of this? Robert Sokolowski writes, “We go beyond the restrictions of space and time, and the kind of causality that is proper to material things. We do things that cannot be explained materially. To speak adequately about ourselves, we

⁷ I am very grateful to Prof. Isobel Camp, Philosophy Professor of the Pontifical University of St. Thomas in Rome, for the time she took to look over and help with my corrections in this section.

⁸ Cfr. John Colapinto, *As Nature Made Him: The Boy Who Was Raised As A Girl*, HarperCollins Publishers, New York, 2001.

⁹ The distinction between *caerentia* and *privatio* is found in *II Sent.* d. 30, q. 1, a. 2. Also, Cf. *III Sent.* d. 22 q. 2 a. 1.; *II Sent.* d. 33, q. 2, a. 1. The only punishment due to original sin alone is the deprivation of grace, and consequently of the Beatific Vision. In other words, the only punishment is the lack (*caerentia*) of these great gifts. Furthermore, St. Thomas’ argument implies that Limbo must exist; otherwise, those who die only with original sin would be punished with pain of sense, even without personal fault, which is contrary to God’s justice. St. Thomas argues here that original sin is not the removal of what is man’s by right; God does not, by refusing to admit a man to Heaven, take away what is his by nature. Rather, he simply gives to that nature what is its due, depriving it only of grace, which is something which God Himself can add or not add over and above man’s nature.

must use categories different from those used to speak about matter.”¹⁰ This is why the soul is immaterial and subsistent; it can know the nature of all bodies, something not possible for a body.¹¹ Yet, matter is also very important. After all, St. Thomas teaches that even in the state of being separate, the soul is inclined to being united to its specific body.¹² It is in this union that we see how maleness and femaleness characterize the whole person, uniting the body’s biological structure to the soul. The soul is itself not sexualized, or else the distinction between men and women would make them different species. The gender is in the body, but the soul is not immune from its influence since it is so integrally united to the body.¹³

As St. Thomas continues to discuss how this hylomorphic unity operates, the intellectual, sensitive or animal, and vegetative souls are in the one soul, the one and only form because there cannot be more than one substantial form of the same body, and this is after he stresses that there are as many forms as there are people in the affirmation of the principle of individuation.¹⁴ This substantial form is intellectual and gives life to the body, much like what is in act giving life to what is in potency.¹⁵ When we speak of the body we have to speak of different physical sensibilities due to different ends for which the bodies are made, and these can be considered diverse accidental dispositions. As accidents they are associated with the soul via the body, but they are not essential to the soul, yet the soul finds itself in all these accidents of the body, thereby perfecting not only the whole but each part of the body as well.¹⁶

Before addressing the differences between male and female among people, St. Thomas discusses the potencies or powers of the soul which are manifest in the body which is in potency.¹⁷ Clearly, there is a hierarchical order: according to dependence from spiritual to animal or sensitive to vegetative; according to generation from vegetative to animal to spiritual; and according to the order of the objects, i.e. the visible is above the auditory which is above the smell.¹⁸ However, the soul is not the subject of all of these potencies or powers; that which is vegetative and animal is tied directly to the body, but that which deals with knowing and willing, between the intellect and the will, is not necessarily tied to the body but to the soul itself.¹⁹ Therefore, here we begin to understand that gender stems from the body. However, at death all of these potencies remain in the soul, the faculties of the intellect and the will in act, whereas the animal and vegetative dimensions in a virtual way since what is their subject is the hylomorphic composite body-soul.²⁰

It is along the lines of perfection that according to St. Thomas a male is that which can generate in another, and a female is that which can generate in itself. He discusses the female after expressing some of the reasons for the shape of the human body in general, i.e. the capacity to stand straight as it is tied to knowledge or the hands which can produce fruits of this knowledge.²¹ However, it is when he talks about the female that we

¹⁰ Robert Sokolowski, “Soul and the Transcendence of the Human Person,” in *What Is Man, O Lord?: The Human Person in a Biotech Age*, Proceedings of the 18th Bishops’ Workshop. National Catholic Bioethics Center, Washington, 2002, p. 49.

¹¹ Cf. *STI* q. 75, a. 2.

¹² Cf. *STI* q. 76, a. 1.

¹³ This is a debated position, as we see in Prof. Finley’s thesis that gender stems from the soul, as he announces in mins. 8:05-07 in the video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3g0007w5VBs>.

¹⁴ Cf. *ST* q. 76, aa. 2-3.

¹⁵ Cf. *ST* q. 76, a. 4.

¹⁶ Cf. *STI* q. 76, aa. 6-8.

¹⁷ Cf. *STI* q. 77, aa. 1-2.

¹⁸ Cf. *STI* q. 77, a. 4.

¹⁹ Cf. *STI* q. 77, a. 5.

²⁰ Cf. *STI* q. 77, a. 8.

²¹ Cf. *STI* q. 91, a. 3.

understand how closely tied the structure of the human body is to the first command of God: be fruitful and multiply. The connection between the body and generation is fundamental,²² and the connection between generation and its right ordering in the family is also fundamental. The telos of the union between man and woman is generative. It is the *proprium* of marriage after all.²³ It is the first end of the sexual act to be intimately united to the second end, but we have to prioritize the procreative end of marriage because it is the distinctive, proper and privative end of marriage. It does not exist in any other kind of human union, and it belongs to the very nature of marriage itself. The unitive end works with the procreative end in harmonizing the love between the parents which teaches the children what love is, so when Pius XI and other Popes say that it is a secondary end, this is not to diminish its importance. This becomes revisiting in 1965 with *Gaudium et Spes* and later in 1968 with *Humanae Vitae*, but here the language changes, and we no longer hear talk of ends. In St. Thomas, however, we find such language because in looking at the end of something, we understand its nature and cause. Thus, it is called final cause. It stems from classic philosophy and the idea of *telos*, and it is tied to what are the formal, material, and efficient causes. Without such language in mind, we cannot understand the metaphysics of man or marriage according to St. Thomas or many other philosophers.

In all of this, we find a common end between male and female in the procreative end. The particular, material causes or ends, however, between male and female are different. They are complementary but different. St. Thomas writes, “Among perfect animals the active power of generation belongs to the male sex, and the passive power to the female.”²⁴ St. Thomas stresses the perfection of the person because he is stressing the perfect fulfillment of the end, and he defines the person stemming from the definition of the person *par excellence*, i.e. the divine Person, much like what Boethius does. *A person is an individual substance of a rational nature*. This rational nature shows why St. Thomas calls the soul “intellective” in *ST I* q. 76, a. 5. This is the primary faculty. The will is defined according to it as the “rational appetite.” It is intimately united to the intellect, but it is not primary.²⁵ In fact, before addressing these physical differences in the body, the principle of individuation for man, St. Thomas has already talked about the two faculties. Overall, Boethius’ sixth century definition still echoes today as one of the first clear definitions of person in

²² Cf. *ST I* q. 78, a. 2. Here St. Thomas addresses the parts of the vegetative “soul” as generative, growth, and nutritional. The generative is to acquire existence and is therefore the most important part. The growth is to acquire the necessary bodily quantity, and the nutritional is to maintain the body.

²³ We have only to refer to the Venerable Pope Pius XII’s discourse to the midwives to see this:

“The truth is that marriage, as a natural institution, is not ordered by the will of the Creator towards personal perfection of the husband and wife as its primary end, but to the procreation and education of a new life. The other ends of marriage, although part of nature’s plan, are not of the same importance as the first. Still less are they superior. On the contrary they are essentially subordinate to it. This principle holds good for all marriages, even if they are unfruitful: just as it can be said that all eyes are intended and constructed to see, even though in abnormal cases, because of particular internal or external conditions, they can never be capable of giving sight.

It was precisely for the purpose of putting an end to all uncertainty and wanderings away from the truth, which were threatening to spread mistaken ideas about the order of precedence in the purpose of marriage and the relationship between them, that We ourselves, some years ago (10th March, 1944), drew up a statement placing them in their right order. We called attention to what the very internal structure of their natural disposition discloses, to what is the heritage of Christian tradition, to what the Sovereign Pontiffs have repeatedly taught, and to what was afterwards definitely stated in the Code of Canon Law (Can. 1013, par. 1). Furthermore, a little while afterwards, to put an end to conflicting opinions, the Holy See, by a public Decree, proclaimed that the appeal of certain modern writers who deny that the procreation and education of the child is the primary end of marriage, or teach that the secondary ends are not essentially subordinate to the primary end, but rather are of equal value and are independent of it, cannot be admitted.” (S.C.S. Off., 1st April, 1944 – *Acta Apost. Sedis*, vol. xxxvi, 1944, p. 103.)

²⁴ *ST I* q. 92, a. 1 respondeo.

²⁵ Cf. Lawrence Dewan, “The Real Distinction between Intellect and Will,” In *Wisdom, Law, and Virtue*, 125-150. New York: Fordham University Press, 2008.

Western Philosophy. St. Thomas stresses the importance of the relationship with other persons well, but, more importantly, he sees personal existence as the most perfect form of existence.²⁶

In terms of relationship, then, gender affects the *mode* in which one participates in this human personal nature, so the same nature is shared but differently because of a fundamental reproductive difference in the body. The maleness or femaleness is a property of nature; it is not of the substantial form but rather is a property of the material principle of man. After all, in man there are two principles: spiritual/formal and material, i.e. the soul and the body. The soul is primary in its life-giving, but it could not be perfectly itself without its body, the end to which it is called. As one sees, there are frequently two complementary ends in St. Thomas, formal and material, procreative and unitive, male and female. Gender falls within the same sort of logic. The attributes of gender deal with specific organs with specific reproductive purposes. It is not just an attribute like eye color. All of these other attributes deal with the material principle of the person. There is a uniformity to this particular reproductive attribute that is not found in other accidental attributes. Being male or female affects the person differently than merely having blue or brown eyes, white or black skin, choleric or melancholic temperament. We see how these very attributes, such as character, can be affected by the material differences in the bodies, material differences that are tied to the final causes of the each body in terms of procreation. Studies show precisely the differences between men and women on a cerebral level.²⁷ The capacity for women to multi-task and their tendencies to be able to learn and teach languages seem to be tied to their maternity. Clearly, the capacity to suffer physical pain is greater in women because of their having to give birth. These differences influence the rapport that exists not only between the body and the soul but the rapport between the person and the cosmos and that between the person and others, and finally between the person and God.²⁸

So, as we look at these different accidents²⁹ we must consider the two different classifications of St. Thomas: logical and metaphysical. The logical arise in terms of genus, species, etc., as we see in *Quaestiones Disputate de Anima*, and the metaphysical arise from the form of matter, as we see in the *Opuscula De ente et essentia*. Finley remarks:

“On the logical classification there are three sorts of accidents: *proper accidents* (for example, risibility in humans) result from the principles of the species and so characterize all members, *inseparable accidents* (for example, masculine and feminine) result from the principles of the individual through permanent causation and so characterize that member in a lasting fashion, and *separable accidents* (for example, sitting and walking) flow from the principles of the individual through temporary causation and so only characterize that member at particular times. The main focus here is the

²⁶ *ST I* q. 29, a. 3. “*Persona significat id quod est perfectissimum in tota natura, scilicet subsistens in rationali natura.*”

²⁷ In Italian alone, there are a number of books available on this. I would recommend the following: Laura Palazzini, *La bioetica e la differenza di genere*, Studium LUMSA, Roma, 2007; Xavier Lacroix, *In principio la differenza: omosessualità, matrimonio, adozione*, Vita e Pensiero, Roma 2006; Georges Cottier, *Valori e Transizione. Il rischio dell'indifferenza*, Studium, Roma 1994; Livio Melina e Sergio Belardinelli, *Amare nella differenza. Le forme della sessualità e il pensiero cattolico: studio interdisciplinare*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2012. There are many articles on this subject. Here are some recent links, for instance: <http://it.aleteia.org/2016/01/14/le-6-differenze-tra-il-cervello-di-un-uomo-e-quello-di-una-donna/>; <http://www.lastampa.it/2013/03/08/scienza/benessere/cervello-femminile-vs-cervello-maschile-il-parere-del-neurologo-z9V0YrL3TtjpC6AZgwBqhI/pagina.html>.

²⁸ Cf. Cornelio Fabro, *L'Anima*, EDIVI, Segni, 2005, p. 10.

²⁹ We define the accidents in terms of the substance as follows: “attributes which substances possess and depend on the substance for their being.”

inseparable accidents, however it's not clear what other examples of such accidents there are. Aquinas gives examples like eye color, bone structure, and natural temperament, but as noted above these seem less significant than gender. A question arises as to which principles of the individual (soul, or body, or both) bring these accidents about. This is addressed by his metaphysical classification in *On Being and Essence*.³⁰

Finley goes on to say that both the soul and body seem to generate gender because of the flow of the accidents coming from the soul as well. As we know from the *De ente et essentia*, "matter is the principle of individuation"³¹ which distinguishes the essence of men and of a particular man in the distinction designated and non-designated. Socrates would be the designated essence of man, for instance.³² Finley explains that while the whole substance is the *true* subject of all accidents, we cannot fail to see that since humans are composed of two principles (form and matter) certain accidents flow more from form and others more from matter. There are four kinds of accident (two following from form primarily, and two following from matter primarily). First of those following from form, *rational activities* — understanding and willing — occur entirely in the soul and have no share in matter (though there is a measure of dependence on the physical sense organs). They are rooted in the two faculties, intellect and will.³³ Instead, there are accidents, like *sensation*, that do have a share in matter since they properly reside in the composite substance. The soul originates powers of sensation, even if it cannot sense on its own.³⁴ Instead, accidents flowing from matter will always have a relation to form because matter on its own is always in potency, but form is in act.³⁵ This third type is where we get to gender. For Aquinas, masculine and feminine are accidents that follow from matter but precisely in relation to an *animal form*. So when the animal dies, and the animal form is separated from the body, it is no longer gendered in an univocal way. Finally, there is a fourth type of accident that follows from matter which relates to a more general form, as one's skin color which remains even after the person has died. Combining the two accounts, St. Thomas takes gender to be an inseparable accident following from one's matter in direct relation to one's substantial form as an animal. This helps us distinguish it from other inseparable accidents, as they would follow from one's matter in direct relation to some form other than one's animal substantial form. It seems that gender is the only example of this special class of inseparable accident we have, and so it is in this sense a metaphysically unique feature.

If being male or female relates necessarily to the form of an animal why does St. Thomas assign gender's origin to matter? There are two reasons. First, as we have seen, the male and female roles in generation are active and passive respectively. Insofar as every act of generation is directed toward producing one's likeness and since the male is more active in the generative act, the act naturally tends toward a male offspring, and a female results from an accidental alteration in the male semen. This is where modern biology would differ, and Pope John Paul II addresses this in his Apostolic Letter *Mulieris Dignitatem*. Since gender is determined by the manner in which the seminal matter has been affected, it is seen to follow from matter as opposed to form, but this is not the strongest argument available because the biology does not sustain it. Aquinas agrees that one's reproductive power — as all powers — arise because of the soul, but the difference in gender is owed to a defect in the matter of the female (since the male, insofar as he is more active, has the

³⁰ Finley, min. 11:28-14:33

³¹ St. Thomas, *De ente et essentia* 22.

³² Ibid, 24.

³³ Cf. *STI* qq. 79 and 82.

³⁴ Cf. *STI* q. 78.

³⁵ Cfr. *STI* q. 70, a. 3.

more reproductive power more perfectly). We would not so much call it a defect as much as a fundamental difference in the complementary material causes in the generative act, i.e. the final cause. After all, without these two complementary material causes, there would be no fulfillment of the final cause. Today, contrary to nature, there are precisely attempts to bypass these material causes in what I group together as part of the transhumanist project because it seeks to go beyond human nature.

Second, since form is what makes matter to be a certain kind or species, a difference in form must result in a difference in species. Thus differences applying to individuals *of the same species* must be differences originating from *matter*. However gender's origination from matter does *not* mean that it has no bearing on the soul. While the soul in its own right is not gendered, just as the soul on its own possesses no sensation, presumably the soul of a male can be derivatively considered a male soul and the same in the case of the female, since the soul's identity is marked by it's being the soul of a male or female body. One's gender then, as following from the principles of the individual, characterizes the person as a whole.

2.1.2 Gender as an inseparable accident

As Finley makes clear, St. Thomas's logical classification of gender as an inseparable accident makes sense as long as gender does not apply to the species as a whole but to individual members. Can we say that it is an accident like any other? Is it the same as hair color, for instance? Clearly, gender is in a class of its own, quite unlike other accidents, and this is what requires our attention. Here we look at St. Thomas Aquinas's metaphysical account of gender arising from matter in relation to a specific form.

We begin by noting that it is not completely clear what it means for an accident to follow from the matter in relation to a specific form. If this means that the accident flows from the principles of the individual as such, then it is clear because evidently one gender is not a characteristic of the species. This would still leave open, however, which of the individual's principles is at work here (soul, matter, or both). When St. Thomas says that the female gender arises from an accidental alteration of the semen, he answers the second question. It arises from matter and not the soul. This does not necessarily follow with current biology because we cannot say that female reproductive abilities are imperfect versions of male ones. However, just because the issue of perfection is not necessarily to be taken from St. Thomas, there is a clear *material* difference between men and women which affect the way they are. We cannot discard St. Thomas's account simply because he may have missed the point on the perfection issue and not seen that the male and female are equally intended on the biological level.³⁶

Modern biology, however, seems to support St. Thomas Aquinas's position that gender is better attributed to matter than soul. It teaches that gender is intimately connected with various genetic networks, especially the chromosomal patterns XY or XX found in the zygote. Finley, however, in sustaining his position that the soul is the formal principle of gender itself, says that this truth posed by modern biology does not so much entail that gender differentiation arises from matter primarily as show us more clearly how intimately related substantial form and matter relate to one another in the constitution of a human being. He affirms that any becoming of a substance requires appropriately disposed matter, after all the being is generated by the actualization of potencies in the matter. He concludes that it is the resultant form (the actuality) that primarily characterizes the being that is generated.

³⁶ St. Thomas covers the issue of contraries differing in species in Lesson 10 of his *Commentary on Aristotle's Metaphysics*.

However what does Finley have to answer to us when we affirm with St. Thomas that difference in form constitutes difference in species? After all, since men and women clearly share the same species, their difference must therefore arise from matter. Moreover the notion of an individual brings forth the consideration of matter because it has to do with the principle of individuation. However, we must make a distinction between a universal form and a particular form. St. Thomas grants that when a soul is commensurate to a particular body (that is, when they mutually limit one another so as to constitute an individual) in a sense it takes on additional characteristics, an obvious example being individuation even after separation from the body at death. We keep returning to the issue of what flows from the accidental, bodily differences between men and women. They are not so much accidents like hair color but rather are powers. Also, rather than being an additional power that determines the essence of the individual, Finley stresses that gender concerns the *maintenance* of the essence that the other powers constitute. In this way, as oriented towards the species itself, the generative powers cannot in themselves constitute new species, probably referring to *ST I* q. 78, a. 2. Thus, Finley can defend his position on the powers flowing from the soul, but even this is still questionable.

We cannot fail to consider that gender is a *co-generative* power which differentiates it from the other powers given by the soul insofar as they are independent in some sense. They exclude each other in definition (“four-legged” excludes “winged”) or in fact (“scaled” excludes “feathered”). Gender’s nature, however, presuppose “one like itself” and so depends on and includes its contrary both in fact and in definition. Male is defined in terms of female and vice versa through the co-generative relation. The reproductive powers are not merely distinct as one sense is distinct from another, but as mutually dependent powers contributing to a single action (ie. generation). They are not to be understood as characterizing distinct species, then, but rather as integral parts of the same species considered at the reproductive level. In women, for example, we see how the generative power is itself ramified into multiple powers: for generation, support, and nourishment of the offspring all of which are required for procreation (since the ultimate object of generative powers is a *human* and not merely *a clump of flesh*).

Finley asserts that since there are really distinct generative powers, their distinction must arise from the substantial form and not the matter. Could we then say that the powers are related to each other in such a *mode* because of the matter? We would prefer not to touch the substantial form, but we understand Finley’s intuition as far as this is concerned because there is really a group of powers related to each other in each gender. Our approach is simply to stress the *mode* each such power acts in each gender.

While man and woman are not distinct species of human nature, they are also not merely individuals of human nature. It is good, therefore, to introduce some notions that can describe the genders with regards to their human nature. Man and woman are principles of the nature; they are parts of it; they are modes of it existing incarnated in a body, and they are relational as mutually fulfilling complements. Gender has a richer meaning than non-human gender insofar as the procreative activity is integrally marked by *rational choice*. In this way, reproduction for man is a moral act, not simply an act of man. It is here that we see how gender has far deeper meaning; there is a moral dimension to it. There is mutual consent in the rapport between man and woman so that the biological tendency becomes absorbed by a conscious intention to love which becomes a habit, a virtue. It is here that the hylomorphic dimension of human nature shows forth.

2.2 Beyond metaphysics

What do when we consider other elements of human nature, such those that pertain to the psychological, social, and ethical realms? What about those that pertain to pathologies?

For instance, the issue of sex-reassignment surgery and the reality of inter-sex persons. These are exceptions, and they must be taken into consideration in order to clarify what we mean by gender. The problem today, however, is that these very exceptions have become the defining traits of gender in the gender ideology. It is so much an ideology that while we read Simone de Beauvoir saying that “one is not born a woman but becomes a woman,” meaning that nature has nothing to do with one’s gender, we also read that homosexuals are born this way. Science, in other words, is being used to fit the purposes of political lobbies which have an agenda to put forth, oftentimes connected with lucrative ends. This is yet another way to see the negative results of avarice.

If gender deals with the whole person the way that the soul does, then sex-reassignment surgery really cannot change the gender. Even if such a surgery can change the outward appearance of an organ it nonetheless leaves the patient sterile. So rather than say that one’s gender has *changed* it is more accurate to say that it has to some degree been *lost* (or *blocked*). Clearly, the whole of the person is much more than merely his or her capacity to generate. That may be the case for animals who find their complement when they mate, but people are ordered to nobler activities. The relational nature of man, of person really, shows us that there are higher realms than merely physical. It is in this way that gender involves the soul, and it is in this aspect that we can understand Finley because these are potencies of the soul which deal with sensitive, intellective, and appetitive faculties which St. Thomas addresses.³⁷ However, these faculties cannot be fulfilled if not in the body, and the body of a male is quite different from that of a female in its mode. This is why Finley’s argument on this point does not convince us.

2.2.1 Evaluation of St. Thomas in light of posterior thought from Scotus to Descartes: the roots of Transhumanism

What is good about Finley’s position, however, is that he looks at the holistic picture which unites the soul and the body in a special way. This is essentially what is changing after St. Thomas Aquinas. What is interesting is that the roots of this change occur shortly after the death of St. Thomas Aquinas with the metaphysical syntheses of Blessed Duns Scotus and William of Ockham. Here we see a refusal of the metaphysical views of Aristotle. All one has to do is read Ockham who criticizes the unity of forms in St. Thomas.³⁸

The object which Ockham refuses is the unity of the substantial form which we find in *ST I* q. 76 and to which Finley refers as he considers the unity of the gender. The debate between the Franciscans was about the specific questions that dealt with the status of the body of Christ during the days of the sepulcher. They stressed that it was just a form *esse simpliciter* that could not be preserved as a true body. This *forma corporeitatis* was refused already by St. Thomas when he stressed that the body of Our Lord would have preserved itself notwithstanding the sepulcher because of the hypostatic union of the Word, a union that would have taken His *esse* from the *esse* of the very same divinity.³⁹

³⁷ Cfr. *ST I* q. 78, a.1.

³⁸ William Ockham, *Dialogus de imperio et pontifica potestate*, I, l.2, c. 24, 14 a-b, Lyon, 1494, Reprint Gregg, 1962. He writes: “Saepe audivi a multis Anglicis et Bretonibus enarrare quod de opinione Thomae de unitate formae quando conclusiones quae ex ipsa sequuntur explicabantur scandalum fuit in Anglia prope infinitum.”

³⁹ «From this new concept of act and potency follows the second aspect of Thomistic metaphysics, which is also the thesis that drew the most severe attack during Thomas’ lifetime, namely, the doctrine of the unicity of substantial form in all bodies, including living beings and man himself with his spiritual soul [...] As for the theological difficulty which was the main cause of the controversy, namely, that, if one followed the Aristotelic theory, Christ’s dead body when separated from the soul could no more be called the body of Christ except equivocally [...]» Cornelio Fabro, *The intensive Hermeneutics of Thomistic Philosophy: The Notion of Participation*, trans. by B.M. Bonansea, *Review of Metaphysics*, vol. 27/3, 1974, pp. 464.

Notwithstanding the strong defense of St. Thomas, this was not received, so opposed proposals developed which postulated a plurality of substantial forms. These were theses of medieval essentialism which reached their apex in the formalistic construction of Blessed Duns Scotus' *natura communis*. They added to this *natura communis*, as distinct forms, every imaginable predicate, i.e. man, animal, the *haecceitas*, and the *existentia* which were considered forms that combined to form the individual.⁴⁰

All of this has to do with gender and with the way man is understood anthropologically today, in a post-Cartesian world, because this vision sees man as "parts" of "forms" conglomerated together like a puzzle or like legos. This vision does not see man as matter and form but as distinct matters and forms. It is, in fact, Descartes who sees man as distinctly two parts: *res cogitans* and *res extensa*. The rapport that he sets between these two parts is almost mechanical. There is not the harmony one finds in St. Thomas Aquinas between the three "souls:" vegetable, animal, and rational. Whereas the body in St. Thomas Aquinas has to do mainly with the vegetable and animal souls, giving it a more spiritual and dignified definition, in Descartes it has a mechanical, cold, mathematical definition: *res extensa*. It is almost not even alive, and I contend that the mentality that brought this about is precisely the one that implicitly refuted St. Thomas Aquinas in the early fourteenth century, the one we see in Bl. Duns Scotus with his compilation of forms. This becomes the source for gender but also for transhumanism because man comes to be viewed mechanically, and if something is merely mechanical it can be built in parts. Combine this with the modern problem of voluntarism, and you have Frankenstein with which to contend.

As Robert Sokolowski stresses, in our culture, "to claim that we have a spiritual dimension is very controversial, because much of our culture takes it for granted that we are simply material things. It assumes that anything that seems spiritual will sooner or later be explained away as the working out of material bodies and forces."⁴¹ Sokolowski cites the book by Edward O. Wilson, *Consilience: The Unity of Knowledge*, which basically attempts to give a comprehensive explanation of the human person and society in terms of the evolution of matter, referring to human beings as "organic machines."⁴² This is all tied to the Darwinian theory of evolution, "which thinks it can give us the complete story of how we developed from physics to chemistry to biology to psychology. Evolution as an ideology is very important in the cultural controversies of our present day because it claims that someday it will be able to show how the specifically human being developed randomly

⁴⁰ Ioannes Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio* II, d.3, pars 1, q.1.

⁴¹ Robert Sokolowski, *ibid*, pp. 49-50.

⁴² Edward O. Wilson, *Consilience: The Unity of Knowledge*, Knopf, New York, 1998, p. 82. Typical passage is the following: "As late as 1970 most scientists thought the concept of mind a topic best left to philosophers. Now the issue has been joined where it belongs, at the juncture of biology and psychology. With the aid of powerful new techniques, researchers have shifted the frame of discourse to a new way of thinking, expressed in the language of nerve cells, neurotransmitters, hormone surges, and recurrent neural networks. The cutting edge of the endeavor is neuroscience..." (p. 99) Three other widely noted books expressing a reductive understanding of man are: Francis Crick, *The Astonishing Hypothesis: The Scientific Search for the Soul* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1994); Paul M. Churchland, *The Engine of Reason, the Seat of the Soul: A Philosophical Journey into the Brain* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1995); and Patricia Smith Churchland, *Neurophilosophy: Toward a Unified Science of the Mind-Brain* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1986). There are many works being published now about the brain and human activity. The works of the neuroscientist Antonio Damasio are especially interesting philosophically and less reductive: see *Descartes' Error: Emotion, Reason, and the Human Brain* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1994), and *The Feeling of What Happens: Body and Emotion in the Making of Consciousness* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1999). For a less deterministic understanding of the function of genes, see Evelyn Fox Keller, *Reconfiguring Life: Metaphors of Twentieth-Century Biology* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), and *The Century of the Gene* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000).

from matter and material forces.”⁴³ Thus, with such a mechanistic, materialistic, voluntaristic world view that looks at man as a puzzle with which it can play, we cannot be surprised if people are not only meddling with gender but with the very nature of man. We cannot be surprised if we read that people are having sex not only with others of the same genders (and expecting this to be as normal as the natural man-female sexual act) but with animals and robots.⁴⁴ This is not to mention the people actually trying to transform themselves into cats or other felines today. The trans-species behavior is a clear sign connecting the gender ideology we have today to transhumanism. After all, if there indeed are 100s of genders what is to say that some of these are not connected to other species? If, as we hear, where “there is a will there is a way,” then this now also applies to moving beyond the limits of nature. Then, according to Francis Bacon, “knowledge is power,” so why not use our knowledge of technology and add “forms” we dream up to the natural substance of our bodies? This is the perversion of the intellect and the will which stems from a different philosophical grounding, especially one that views freedom as absolute freedom. What these ideas fail to see, intentionally or not, is that freedom is limited by the nature of the being. Even God’s nature limits His freedom.⁴⁵ He cannot deny Himself, for instance.

Instead, for St. Thomas Aquinas, the study of the soul is the primary way to study human nature. While gender may have to do with the material sphere, Finley has a point in addressing the soul because of its intimate connection with the body. In the order of study, the study of human nature is the culminating inquiry of the philosophy of nature. We recall that the order of study is as follows: logic, math, natural philosophy, ethics, politics, and metaphysics. So, the study of man falls right in the middle. One sees, however, that this approach is much more holistic than the one taken by most mind-body problem thinkers we encounter in contemporary academe. The parts are not put together like pieces of a puzzle that can or cannot be there, but they flow from one another. Martha Nussbaum and Hilary Putnam explain this well:

“The mind-body problem ... starts from a focus on the special nature of mental activity—therefore from just one part of the activity of some among living beings...Aristotelian hylomorphism, by contrast, starts from a general interest in characterizing the relationship, in things of many kinds, between their organization or structure and their material composition. It deals with the beings and doings of all substances...It asks two questions in particular...How do and should we explain or describe the changes we see taking place in the world?...What is it about individuals that makes them the very things that they are?”⁴⁶

We see how the soul must be understood in relation to the body. It is not a spiritual nature like that of an angel which is a “separated form” which is a subsistent species of its own, much like whiteness is its own form.⁴⁷ The soul’s very spiritual nature is tied to a specific body. Sokolowski comments that, “Soul is not a separate entity, not a ghost in a machine, and we must try to speak about it in such a way that we do not give the impression that it is a separate thing. A good synonym for the word *soul* is *animation*, and this word has an important advantage: we are much less tempted to think that the animation of a living thing could be found apart from that thing. You cannot have animation by itself; it has to

⁴³ Robert Sokolowski, *ibid*, p. 51.

⁴⁴ Robyn Beck, “Robotic sex may become addictive as sexbots can’t say no,” RT, Sept. 5, 2016. (<https://www.rt.com/uk/358343-sex-robots-addiction-ethics/>).

⁴⁵ Cf. *STI* q. 19.

⁴⁶ Nussbaum, Martha and Putnam, Hilary, “Changing Aristotle’s Mind,” in *Essays on Aristotle’s De Anima*, ed. A. Rorty and M. Nussbaum, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992, pp. 28-29.

⁴⁷ Cf. *STI* q. 75, a. 7.

animate something.”⁴⁸ It is also for this reason that the two faculties of the soul, the intellect and the will, are tied to time and therefore function discursively, not intuitively. In God the intellect is intuitive. He knows everything simultaneously. He is eternal, and so the comprehension is whole and simultaneous, just like the very definition of what is eternal according to Boethius: “...*aeternitas igitur est interminabilis vitae tota simul et perfecta possessio.*”⁴⁹ There is no memory in God, a faculty which St. Augustine attributes to man and which is bound by time. In God His Intellect and Will are united to His Being, Being *qua* Being and therefore eternal. In His creation, the Angels are the first among the intelligent beings created in His image and likeness. They are spiritual and therefore have intuitive intellects, but they are not eternal; they are always created *ex nihilo*, so their intuitive power is not as intuitive as it is in God. Man comes next in the order of creation, but he is bound by matter, by his body, so his intellect reasons discursively using the senses at his disposal.

In this way, man is truly different than a mere animal but is more connected to the animals and vegetables than an angel is, for instance. Even the linguist Derek Bickerton recognizes how different man is from a mere animal when he complains that many behavioral scientists would like to deny how human beings are different from other species, and he is not even one opposed to evolution.⁵⁰ After all, as Thomistic philosophy shows, “the rationality of the human person is usually associated with the ability to think about the forms of being and to achieve universal concepts.”⁵¹ This is where we see the hylomorphic nature of man because one is in space and time but can think beyond them, at least in a discursive mode. It is the mode of reason which takes place in time with a specific language in order to be able to escape the confines of space, time, and material causality. Man learns these universal concepts with language, and specific times of development in his life are key. If a child is deprived of human linguistic interaction during the early years which are critical to his formation, he will not become able to learn to use human grammar, for instance. This is the distinction between protolanguage and language. The first two years of life are in this protolanguage phase. Those who fail to develop real language are fixed in this first phase their entire lives, and from this one finds severe cognitive problems that demonstrate an inability to think in terms of universal principles, i.e. to think critically.⁵² In addition to the use of grammar, reasoning includes the ability to intend things in their absence, thinking of the past and anticipating the future. It is clear from this that there is a relationship between the senses which perceive materially and the soul’s faculties.

As St. Thomas reasons or reflects on man’s nature from a theological perspective as that which we find in the *Summa Theologiae*, he begins with that which is closest to God, the soul. It is here that man is involved in activities transcending the restrictions of time, space, and matter itself.⁵³ Thomas Hibbs explains that what St. Thomas notes in his *Commentary on the De Anima*, Book I, Lecture 1, how the *De Anima* is pivotal in three respects.

“First, the study of what human nature is and its proper activities is a prelude to the study of the human good in the disciplines of ethics and politics. Second, metaphysics, the discipline at the pinnacle of philosophy, answers to the natural, human desire to know, an orientation that is disclosed in the study of

⁴⁸ Robert Sokolowski, *ibid*, pp. 52-53.

⁴⁹ Boethius, *De consolacione philosophiae* V, 6

⁵⁰ Cfr. Derek Bickerton, *Language and Human Behavior*, University of Washington Press, Seattle, 1995, p. 113.

⁵¹ Robert Sokolowski, *ibid*, p. 58.

⁵² Robert Sokolowski, *ibid*, p. 58. Cf. Derek Bickerton, *Language and Species*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1990, pp. 110-118.

⁵³ Robert Sokolowski, *ibid*, p. 52.

the soul. Third, without the knowledge, established in the *De Anima*, of the immateriality of the human intellect and the nature of its operation, we would not even be able to begin thinking about the nature and activity of the separate substances and God. Thus, we would not be able to do metaphysics. If the study of human nature is for Aquinas crucial to philosophical inquiry, it is also central to theology.”⁵⁴

While philosophical inquiry begins with what is most evident to us in our own experience (natural philosophy) and proceeds to what is first in the order of nature or being (metaphysics), theological inquiry begins from God. The order in theology is from what is first in being to what is last in our experience. With this in mind, one cannot help but see that today much of this is reversed. Even our learning is reversed, and we can see that what Giovanni Sartori polemically contends in his work *Homo videns* in 1997 is quite accurate 20 years later. He explains that the advent of television has marked an anthropological change in man.

The image certainly affects man differently than the word, and man’s discursively reasoning is especially manifest by means of the written word. Civilization begins through writing. Many historians attest to this. As Warren Carroll, in the opening pages of his six-volume *A History of Christendom*, describes the Neolithic or agricultural revolution, he explains that it “...also laid the foundation for civilization, which is distinguished from barbarism by two elements above all: the presence of cities and the use of writing.” He continues by describing such cities: “The ancient city, seed of civilization, was three things: a shrine, a market, and a wall.”⁵⁵ So, if writing is so fundamental to civilization both for anthropological and historical reasons, what happens to a society dominated by the image? According to Sartori, such a society is in danger of dying out and succumbing to barbarism. The image by which we are dominated today does favor discursive reasoning; it does not favor abstract thought because let us say it is more intuitive. Sartori concludes that if man is thinking less discursively, then his critical thinking skills are actually less than would be appropriate for him to be able to function in a democracy. Such is the anthropological change in man that Sartori finds today. One has only to think of the damages less edifying images, such as those found in the multi-billion dollar pornography industry, can do to man. Studies show the mind-altering effects on men and women regularly exposed to such images.⁵⁶ While such alterations in man indeed occur, this is not to say that there is a change in the nature of man as much as it is to say that man is not being actualized.

From a Christian perspective there is a dynamic that exists between the *Logos* and the Beatific Vision, for instance. However, as we see, the vision comes at the end. Both are necessary. When we view a film, for example, we are much more apt to understand it if we come with a critical apparatus that much reading would afford us. We also observe that the older we get, the more we are able to intuit what we experience, but if the critical discursive work was not done before, then the intuitive work will not be as accurate. This is why it is critical that children be taught to read and to think, avoiding too much use of the images they find in their high-tech devices. In an article by Tom Jay in *Crisis Magazine* from February 1, 2017, we read of the anthropological negative consequences of such an

⁵⁴ Hibbs, Thomas, *Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature*, Edited, with Introduction, by Thomas S. Hibbs, Hackett Publishing, Cambridge, 1999, p. ix (introduction).

⁵⁵ Carroll, Warren, *A History of Christendom: The Founding of Christendom* (vol. 1), Christendom College Press, Front Royal, 1985, p. 24.

⁵⁶ There is a good website on this topic which is quite useful: <http://fightthenewdrug.org/get-the-facts/>. Here is an article which specifically targets how the brain is changed by porn: <http://fightthenewdrug.org/how-porn-changes-the-brain/>. Then, one can read a brief history of porn since Playboy began in 1953: <http://fightthenewdrug.org/porns-harm-is-changing-fast/>.

educative approach with children.⁵⁷ Children are so disoriented by these devices that they can no longer focus for more than ten minutes on any one task. What is the solution the same parents who find their children tech savvy skills so appealing? Medication. Just put them on medication, and everything will be fine. After all, if we are nothing more than material beings, then our rational activities, “both our knowing and our willing, are said to be reducible to neurological processes; the mind and the will are to be reduced to the brain and nervous system. The mental and spiritual dimensions of man are reduced to biology.”⁵⁸ It is no wonder then that we resort to medicine and technology to normalize people and to make people more than what they are. We weaken them first with the destruction of the family, with gender confusion, with high-tech distractions of all sorts, and then we resort to extra-human solutions to “fix” them, if not to make them “superhuman.” In fact, we are moving beyond pharmaceutical solutions to robotic and more technical solutions, and this is evident just by the fact that this is now not only

⁵⁷ Cfr. Tom Jay, “What To Do About Honey Baby Dolly?” in *Crisis Magazine*, February 1, 2017. In concluding his article, Tom Jay writes some insightful thoughts on how to educate the youth:

“In the early 1970s, 18-year-olds were fighting for their lives in the jungles of Vietnam. In the 1940s, they were storming the beaches of Normandy or charging into a meat grinder on Okinawa. Today’s 18-year-olds are playing with clay and coloring because they can’t handle the results of an election. As Jesus said, in the beginning it was not so.

In Plutarch’s “On Bringing Up a Boy,” he laments the proliferation of bad teachers and the ignorance of parents, observing that “the behavior of some fathers is contemptible” because “they put their children into the hands of frauds and charlatans.” Maybe Plutarch saw the future.

Reflecting on children in a text entitled *On Anger*, Seneca observed:

“We ought to allow him some relaxation, yet not yield him up to laziness and sloth, and we ought to keep him far beyond the reach of luxury, for nothing makes children more prone to anger than a soft and fond bringing-up... He to whom nothing is ever denied, will not be able to endure a rebuff, whose anxious mother always wipes away his tears, whose pedagogus is made to pay for his shortcomings... Flattery, then, must be kept well out of the way of children. Let a child hear the truth, and sometimes fear it; let him always reverence it.” (My emphasis.)

College students today don’t trouble themselves about truth because their teachers tell them daily it doesn’t exist. But, if they really believed the drivel fed them by their teachers, parents, and social media, they wouldn’t need the therapy dogs and hot cocoa.

St. John Chrysostom, following the classical ideal of virtue, also urged prayer: “Furthermore, let him learn to pray with great fervor and contrition.” He also recommended fasting for teenagers on Wednesdays and Fridays. Like the ancients, Chrysostom knew a disciplined body leads to a disciplined soul, which is paramount. “First train his soul and then take thought for his reputation in the world,” Chrysostom writes. Most importantly is what Chrysostom calls the “master principle,” by which he means wisdom. This is the function of philosophy, whereby “he may know God and all the treasure laid up in Heaven, and Hell and the kingdom of the other world.” Given the repudiation of authentic education in favor of training and social conditioning, it is no wonder millennials demonstrate a deplorable incapacity to reason.

Chrysostom said young people need to curb their spirit, both a blessing and a curse, because it produces both good and bad. Menial labor humbles the spirit of a young person. It encourages respect for the value of work and compassion toward those who either lack employment, or who have little hope of attaining anything higher. I recall a Hispanic boy I bussed tables with at a country club when I was 19. He was my age, intelligent, and had dreams. I asked him why he didn’t apply to college. He said he couldn’t afford it. I told him about financial aid. He told me he was in Phoenix illegally. That job was better than anything he could find in his hometown in Mexico.

Menial labor helps young people understand what really matters. It is a powerful antidote to entitlement, and it prepares them to strain toward the summit of wisdom. One could do worse than learn to pray and work.”

⁵⁸ Robert Sokolowski, *ibid*, p. 50.

appearing in specialized science magazines nor in sci-fi classics like *Terminator I* and *II* or *AI* or the recent English series *Black Mirror*⁵⁹ but in daily Catholic newspapers like the *Avvenire*, run by the Italian Bishop's Conference,⁶⁰ and other academic Catholic journals like the *Urbaniana University Journal Euntes Docete* the Vatican Congregation Propaganda Fidei and its Urbaniana University.⁶¹

Rather than resort to all of these medical and technological solutions, if we have a Thomistic and classic anthropology, we understand that man has a soul, and that man has freedom tied to this soul and its faculties. If a mature man is courageous or avaricious, it is because of the choices that he has made along the course of his life. "He has shaped his own life, and he has done so in a deeper and more personal, more spiritual way than even his soul has shaped him. He is what he is not just because he was born a human being, nor just because he lived in this particular situation, but most of all because he did what he deliberately chose to do in his circumstances...Animals and plants do not do this, and hence they lack the dignity as well as the responsibility of persons. This spiritual responsibility of persons shows up vividly for us in their benevolence and malevolence, in

⁵⁹ I am specifically thinking of the episodes *Be right back* (Season 2, ep. 1) and *San Junipero* (Season 3, ep. 4). In *Be right back*, Martha (Hayley Atwell) and Ash (Domhnall Gleeson) are a young couple who move to a remote house in the countryside. The day after moving into the house, Ash is killed while returning the hire van. After discovering she is pregnant, Martha reluctantly tries out a new online service that lets people stay in touch with the deceased. By using all of his past online communications and social media profiles, a new "Ash" can be created virtually. In spite of the virtual reality, there is no soul in the new Ash, and Martha senses it very much. It shows the limits of technology. Then in *San Junipero* a shy, sheltered young woman, Yorkie (Mackenzie Davis), is visiting San Junipero for the first time, and she meets Kelly (Gugu Mbatha-Raw), at the bar. Over the course of a few days their sexual tension rises until Kelly's advances bring about a sexual relationship between the two. Here we see the perfect example of the blend between gender issues and transhumanism. In the present-day real world of the 2040s, the consciousnesses of the dead or dying can be uploaded into a simulated reality system, where they can live in the fantasy town of San Junipero as their younger selves forever. An elderly Kelly (Denise Burse) lives in an assisted living facility, dying of cancer. She goes to visit the real-world Yorkie, who is a completely paralyzed woman surviving via life support. Yorkie became paralyzed over 40 years earlier when her parents rejected her for being a lesbian and she consequently ran her car off the road. The technology for San Junipero is relatively recent and has now given Yorkie a chance to live a full life again; her plan is to be euthanized and spend her afterlife inside the virtual reality system: a technological process called "passing over." Since her family has religious objections to signing the papers allowing her to be unplugged from life support, she plans on legally marrying Greg, her nurse, so that he may officially override their authority. Upon learning of this, Kelly spontaneously requests a few minutes' visit with Yorkie in San Junipero, where she proposes marriage in Greg's stead, and Yorkie enthusiastically accepts. They wed, and Kelly then authorizes Yorkie's euthanasia, which takes place a few hours after the wedding. These two episodes struck me when I first saw them, and then I read in early February of 2017 an article that signaled *Be right back* with the photo of the attempted "homicide" of the cyborg: Antonio Grizzuti, "La vita eterna dell'io digitale," *Il Foglio*, 6 febbraio 2017. <http://www.ilfoglio.it/tecnologia/2017/02/06/news/vita-oltre-la-morte-dell-io-digitale--118754/> Grizzuti explains that these scenarios are not just sci-fi: "Hossein Rahnama della Ryerson University sta studiando come mettere a punto dei chatbot a partire dai dati personali: "da qui a sessant'anni i giovani di oggi avranno raccolto uno zettabyte (un miliardo di gigabyte) di dati, esattamente quanto serve per creare una versione digitale di sé". Negli ultimi anni sono comparsi sul web svariati siti che vanno in questa direzione. Eter9 è un social network basato sull'intelligenza artificiale e mirato alla formazione di una "controparte", un sé virtuale che ricava e immagazzina le informazioni a partire dai post e dalle immagini che pubblichiamo. Analogamente, eterni.me è un servizio web ad inviti che promette di conservare pensieri, storie e ricordi attraverso la creazione di un avatar digitale."

⁶⁰ Andrea Lavazza, "Il cervello «potenziato», *Avvenire*, 7 febbraio 2017. Here, Prof. Michela Balconi explains how far neuro science has come to help people augment their mental capacities with magnetic devices of all sorts. Of course, she also cautions against considering these devices like miracle cures. <https://www.avvenire.it/agora/pagine/cervell-2435ba974c87496e9c95430e8da650b9>

⁶¹ The last of three volumes of the journal for 2016 was dedicated to the theme of "Rethinking the Human." In this volume one finds a very interesting article by Giambattista Formica, "*Umanesimo, post-umanesimo, nuovo umanesimo. Alcune considerazioni a partire dal natural-born cyborg*," *Urbaniana University Journal Euntes Docete*, Urbaniana University Press, LXIX/3 2016, pp. 61-84.

the good or bad things they do to us.”⁶² This is the root of freedom and the moral life, to choose good and to avoid evil, as the *synderesis* teaches us. Unlike animals, men can truly shape their lives, and this the transhumanists understand. However, what the transhumanists do not seem to understand is that there are limits posed by our nature on what we can do to shape our lives.

The soul is the starting point of St. Thomas’s anthropology. If this order is not considered, and if our priorities are not in order, there is a danger to the actualization of our nature that is the starting point of the transhumanism we are experiencing in many ways today. First, I will cover some scientific aspects of this transhumanism in contemporary cloning research, the human genome project and its philosophical roots in modern philosophy. Then, I will proceed to show how gender and its education is also part of this project and how the sexual revolution which we find in everything from divorce to contraception and abortion is at the heart of the gender problem because of its relation to the destruction of the traditional family unit which forms man’s identity. The Magisterium in the papal teachings on Marriage and the Family has been attentive to the family seeing it as a real jewel of a social institution to be protected for the greater common good of society and each man. If the family unit is hurt, man is ultimately hurt, and the results are evident all around us that there is indeed an abolition of man in course. We now see that we could not have gender or transhumanism without divorce, nor divorce without contraception and abortion. These elements are all intimately linked to one another.⁶³ If instead the family unit is united and faithful to God, focused on Our Lord, then there is order in its life and that of its members.

2.2.2 From Feminism to Gender and Transhumanism

In her book, *The Global Sexual Revolution*, Gabriel Kuby traces the development from feminism to gender ideology. She shows how gender has been corrupted. She shows the pathology, not the physiology, of gender and how these distortions are being pushed by science, politics, economic interests by ideologically-driven people. She writes:

“For the first time in history, power elites are claiming authority to change men’s and women’s sexual identity through political strategies and legal measures. They had previously lacked expertise in social engineering. However, today this is happening before our eyes on a global scale. The strategy’s name: *gender mainstreaming*.”⁶⁴

Before writing this, Kuby has already expressed who the trailblazers are in such mainstreaming: Thomas Malthus (1766-1834); Margaret Sanger (1879-1966) and the

⁶² Robert Sokolowski, *ibid*, p. 59.

⁶³ Francesco Antonio Grana, “Il fatto”, April 15, 2015, writes a summary of what the Holy Father, Pope Francis, had discussed at an Angelus the previous Sunday, and he then cites the words of Cardinal Bagnasco, President of the Italian Episcopal Conference, who relates gender directly to transhumanism.: “La cultura moderna e contemporanea - ha affermato Bergoglio - ha aperto nuovi spazi, nuove libertà e nuove profondità per l’arricchimento della comprensione delle differenze tra uomo e donna. Ma ha introdotto anche molti dubbi e molto scetticismo. Per esempio mi domando se la cosiddetta teoria del gender non sia anche espressione di una frustrazione e di una rassegnazione, che mira a cancellare la differenza sessuale perché non sa più confrontarsi con essa. Sì, - ha aggiunto il Papa - rischiamo di fare un passo indietro. La rimozione della differenza, infatti, è il problema, non la soluzione”.

Parole che si ricollegano a quelle espresse più volte dal presidente della Conferenza episcopale italiana, il cardinale Angelo Bagnasco, che ha sostenuto che “*il gender edifica un ‘transumano’*” in cui l’uomo appare come un nomade privo di meta e a corto di identità”.

⁶⁴ Gabriele Kuby, *ibid*, p. 42.

Eugenics Movement (which has since become even worse with what is now dysgenics)⁶⁵; Karl Marx (1818-1883) and Friedrich Engels (1820-1895); Alexandra Kollontoi (1872-1952); Wilhelm Reich (1897-1957); Magnus Hirschfeld (1868-1935); Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) and Carl Jung (1875-1961); John Watson (1878-1958), Edward Barnays (1891-1995) (Freud's nephew), and Bernard Berelson (1912-1979); Alfred Kinsey (1894-1956); John Money (1921-2006); Simone de Beauvoir (1908-1986), and Judith Butler (1956-). Kuby continues:

“With the Communist opposition to early capitalism, a socialist current arose in the nineteenth century. Women's issues were taken up by Marx and Engels and converted into a class issue. In his book *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, for instance, Engels demanded the abolition of the family, the identical integration of men and women into the workplace, and the collective rearing of children in institutions run by the state.”⁶⁶

This sounds very common nowadays as we hear presidential candidates like Hillary Clinton demanding that the State educate children. Backed by the Sartrian existentialist idea espoused by Sartre's lover, Simone de Beauvoir, that “One is not born, but rather becomes, woman” these social revolutionaries could work their strings and maneuver the public as they wished. Of course, one notices that science is really used at whim because what Simone de Beauvoir affirms about women the gay movement certainly does not affirm about being gay. In fact, to prove its case, it affirms that one is born gay, and all of this is in the name of science. It is no wonder that people today are skeptical of everyone. If what is supposed to be objective science and news is so subjective, what is one to think? It is no wonder that people are willing to listen to so-called conspiracy theories with more willingness today. They are trying to find the logic to the madness they see around themselves.

The radical feminist leaders from the latter part of the 20th-century have not been fighting so much for equality between men and women as much as they have been fighting against marriage, Kuby claims, because they are generally against women as mothers and for the complete deregulation of sexuality. This is where the whole gender theory emerges. In order to destroy the family—and ultimately weaken individuals so as to make them more easily malleable—there was the deconstruction of binary sexuality. Enforcing this social policy required a new word: Gender. Why create a new word? In a nominalist world like ours, reality is created by language. Truth is no longer *adaequatio intellectus et rei dicitur*⁶⁷, so it is in this context that the word “gender” is coined so as to allow for more than two sexes. After all, with the word “sex” one can only answer male or female. Maybe one ought to use her term as he would use the term “sex.” While we can certainly say that there are variables to be considered among different people, we cannot eliminate the substantial reality of male and female, just like we cannot eliminate day and night. Yes, at 4pm in the winter in Rome, the sun is not as strong as it is at noon, but it is still day. Every hour and every minute cannot get its particular definition. If that were the case, it would

⁶⁵ One has but to consider the controversial books by Richard Lynn, but while he takes on the approach of defending eugenics because of genetic deterioration in modern populations which Francis Galton (Darwin's cousin) had himself seen in the 19th-century when he developed Eugenics, the dysgenics we see today is monstrous. There is a case, for instance, of two deaf Lesbians who want to have a child together but select only the sperm of a donor who is himself deaf so as to have a deaf child. With the choice of “knowledge is power” and the voluntarism that is rampant today, people are really trying to become like gods. This is at the root of the problem: men trying to be like gods. It is the Myth of Prometheus; it is the first temptation of Adam by the serpent.

⁶⁶ Gabriele Kuby, *Ibid.*, p. 43.

⁶⁷ St. Thomas Aquinas, *De Veritate*, q. 1, a. 1.

make communication itself more difficult. Language is made to simplify our grasp and communication of reality, not to complicate it.

What Judith Butler and other deconstructionist feminists have done is to use language to destabilize and deconstruct the binary sex or gender identity. Kuby summarizes: "For her the experience as a lesbian of taking on the masculine role at one moment and the feminine at another seems to determine her nature more than the fact that each of her cells, the composition of her body, her organs, and her voice are feminine and are recognized by anyone as those of a woman."⁶⁸ Rather than adhere to what nature limits, Butler believes that there are fictive categories of sexual identity constructed through language.⁶⁹ Post-structuralist literary critics and philosophers, Judith Butler, Michel Foucault (1926-1984), and Jacques Derrida (1930-2004) have in common the use of developing new language which shakes the very foundations of society. In this case, Butler uses language to construct confusion through the multiplication of gender identities. As Kuby writes, "If her views were expressed in simple words, anyone would see that she has lost touch with reality, but because she clouds her destructive ideas with highly philosophical terminology that is hard to understand, readers and listeners reverently nod their heads."

With the methods of propaganda developed by the likes of Edward Barnays and the very clever work in higher education system by the likes of Michel Foucault,⁷⁰ it is no wonder that this objective has been reached in many ways. Just think of how the UN and the EU have been giving millions of Euros to LGBTI organizations that are pushing gender mainstreaming. There are many, many articles out there on the propaganda in the schools. In Italy alone, there is a weekly news alert *Osservatorio Gender* that informs citizens of these news updates. All areas of society, especially those that govern society at large, are now filled with this agenda. As Kuby summarizes, "For the clever ones among the homosexuals, the academically trained, a career was opening in international organizations, universities, the media, and the courts."⁷¹ It is now extremely evident that the objective has been reached, but it is not too late to change the tide. What needs to happen is to have a unified effort on all fronts of people of good will, i.e. those who have the desire and knowledge of what is true and good.

To begin one can develop arguments against these positions not tire to teach with these persuasive arguments to people willing to listen. Kuby's work, for instance, is laudable. She reveals what is happening by "connecting the dots" between these different thinkers and schools. She also shows how illogical someone like Butler is. At one point, for example, Kuby writes: "If there is no such thing as sexual identity, then the feminists fighting for female supremacy have a problem. There is a choice of expanding women's power at the expense of men or of completely abolishing binary sexual identity and leaving it up to individual choice. Butler is aware of the problem and asks "whether feminist politics could do without a 'subject' in the category of women."⁷²...But dissolution of sexual identity is

⁶⁸ Gabriele Kuby, *ibid*, p. 45.

⁶⁹ Cfr. Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, Routledge, New York 1999, p. 8

⁷⁰ Cfr. Keith Windschuttle, *The Killing of History: How literary critics and social theorists are murdering our past*, Encounter Books, New York 1996, pp. 131-171. Also, read a recent polemical article in *The Federalist* on the war being waged to change this tide in education: Inez Feltscher, "State Lawmakers Need to Increase Dramatically School Choice Now or America is Over," in *The Federalist*, February 14, 2017. <http://thefederalist.com/2017/02/14/state-lawmakers-need-dramatically-increase-school-choice-now-america/>

⁷¹ Gabriele Kuby, *Ibid*, p. 44.

⁷² Judith Butler, *Ibid*, p. 209.

really the goal, because not until then will the individual be emancipated from the dictatorship of nature and realize complete freedom of choice, the ability to reinvent oneself at any time.”⁷³ Here we have the connection between gender and what is now transhumanism.

In order to bring about the reduction to human identity to a freely chosen, mutable sexual orientation and avoid its formation in the countless influences besides sex, the elimination of these other influences—such as family, culture, and religion—are necessary. In fact, Kuby remarks that according to Butler, “families are formed not by the bonds between spouses and children, but by arbitrary acts of momentary belonging. In Butler’s parallel universe, children are not conceived, but “designed” and produced with the aid of artificial technical modes of reproduction, such as sperm donation, egg donation, surrogate motherhood, artificial wombs and gene manipulation.”⁷⁴ The “dictatorship of nature” itself is a point of contention in this promethean project, and what is absolutely incredible is that this is all endorsed by the elites. Such is not new to us. All we have to remember is that when the reliability of Alfred Kinsey’s empirical data for his theories were being questioned in Congress in 1951, the very Rockefeller Foundation that funded him, backed away officially, but simultaneously Hays Sulzberger, on the board of the same Rockefeller Foundation, promoted his theories through his influence as editor of the *New York Times*.⁷⁵ Academics and science, in other words, are themselves pawns in the hands of these manipulators of society.

Of course, there are many faces among the feminists. One has only to consider that the first feminists were themselves very much pro-life and that today there are groups of feminists for life on campuses like Georgetown University. There is a growing opposition to such manipulation, and books like that of Gabriele Kuby are a witness to it.

One has only to consider what Camille Paglia, a famous opinion writer who certainly does not stand on same side of the spectrum as Gabriele Kuby does, wrote in a June 2017 interview from *The Standard* when relating feminism to transgender, for instance.

“Feminists have clashed with transgender activists much more publicly in the United Kingdom than here. For example, two years ago there was an acrimonious organized campaign, including a petition with 3,000 claimed signatures, to cancel a lecture by Germaine Greer at Cardiff University because of her “offensive” views of transgenderism. Greer, a literary scholar who was one of the great pioneers of second-wave feminism, has always denied that men who have undergone sex-reassignment surgery are actually “women.” Her Cardiff lecture (on “Women and Power” in the twentieth century) eventually went forward, under heavy security.

And in 2014, *Gender Hurts*, a book by radical Australian feminist Sheila Jeffreys, created a heated controversy in the United Kingdom. Jeffreys identifies transsexualism with misogyny and describes it as a form of “mutilation.” She and her feminist allies encountered prolonged difficulties in securing a London speaking venue because of threats and agitation by transgender activists. Finally, Conway Hall was made available: Jeffrey’s forceful, detailed lecture there in July of last year is fully available on

⁷³ Gabriele Kuby, *Ibid*, p. 46.

⁷⁴ Gabriele Kuby, *Ibid*, p. 47.

⁷⁵ Gabriele Kuby, *Ibid.*, p. 33.

YouTube.⁷⁶ In it she argues among other things, that the pharmaceutical industry, having lost income when routine estrogen therapy for menopausal women was abandoned because of its health risks, has been promoting the relatively new idea of transgenderism in order to create a permanent class of customers who will need to take prescribed hormones for life.

Although I describe myself as transgender (I was donning flamboyant male costumes from early childhood on), I am highly skeptical about the current transgender wave, which I think has been produced by far more complicated psychological and sociological factors than current gender discourse allows. Furthermore, I condemn the escalating prescription of puberty blockers (whose long-term effects are unknown) for children. I regard this practice as a criminal violation of human rights.

It is certainly ironic how liberals who posture as defenders of science when it comes to global warming (a sentimental myth unsupported by evidence) flee all reference to biology when it comes to gender. Biology has been programmatically excluded from women's studies and gender studies programs for almost 50 years now. Thus very few current gender studies professors and theorists, here and abroad, are intellectually or scientifically prepared to teach their subjects.

The cold biological truth is that sex changes are impossible. Every single cell of the human body remains coded with one's birth gender for life. Intersex ambiguities can occur, but they are developmental anomalies that represent a tiny proportion of all human births.

In a democracy, everyone, no matter how nonconformist or eccentric, should be free from harassment and abuse. But at the same time, no one deserves special rights, protections, or privileges on the basis of their eccentricity. The categories "trans-man" and "trans-woman" are highly accurate and deserving of respect. But like Germaine Greer and Sheila Jeffreys, I reject state-sponsored coercion to call someone a "woman" or a "man" simply on the basis of his or her subjective feeling about it. We may well take the path of good will and defer to courtesy on such occasions, but it is our choice alone. As for the La Leche League, they are hardly prepared to take up the cudgels in the bruising culture wars. Awash with the milk of human kindness, they are probably stuck in nurturance mode. Naturally, they snap to attention at the sound of squalling babies, no matter what their age. It's up to literature professors and writers to defend the integrity of English, which like all languages changes slowly and organically over time. But with so many humanities departments swallowed up in the poststructuralist tar pit, the glorious medium of English may have to fight the gender commissars on its own."⁷⁷

It is always a gratifying to read what people who are not necessarily on the same wavelength as oneself are in agreement about such important matters. This is natural law which beckons, and it is this approach that needs to be taken. It is always helpful to hear

⁷⁶ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DTPgmTVt5_Q

⁷⁷ Jonathan V. Last, *Weekly Standard*, "Camille Paglia: On Trump, Democrats, Transgenderism, and Islamist Terror," 15 June 2017.

the truth proclaims from different sides and even with different words; this is true even though it is clear that a stronger, metaphysically-founded language has more ammunition when facing some of the errors we see today. Some scholars, like Maria Teresa Russo at *Università degli Studi Roma Tre*, offer some good alternatives to people like Judith Butler. In a metaphilosophical approach inspired by an old article by Ann Garry, "The philosopher as teacher. Why are Love and Sex philosophically interesting,"⁷⁸ Maria Teresa Russo wrote an interesting article recently, "Soggettività, Corpo e Differenza Sessuale Nel Dibattito Filosofico di Area Femminista."⁷⁹

Russo begins by explaining that after what she defines a long "sexual absence" in western tradition, a tradition which considered the human being as a rational animal without giving much attention to sexual body, we are now seeing a change that is in large part due to the work of feminists. These feminists have focused a lot on the issue of subjectivity in the woman. We can also think of the work which St. Edith Stein contributed in the field, even though she did stress how the soul itself was sexual, and that was in large part due to the influence of Bl. Duns Scotus on her, Heidegger, and other phenomenologists. Russo further explains that feminism is very much a part of the sexual revolution, and she goes further to say that the sexual revolution is unlike other revolutions which aimed to change social structures and the like. This revolution has changed the human person. Here we see the relation between gender ideology and transhumanism, also hinted at by Gabriele Kuby. The effects, Russo continues, are to be found in many areas of the person: procreation (with contraception and reproductive technologies), genealogy (with the new rapports between parents and children, if not the very structure of the family), and sexual identity (with the blurred gender borders). Clearly, all of this has repercussions on the common good, especially as economic and political factors enter the mixture of influences.

Russo brushes over the fact that feminism has different historical phases. She stresses how the first phase of feminism sought equality and therefore ignored the body, and this, according to Elizabeth Grosz, is tied to what she calls a form of *somatophobia* rooted in ancient Greece.⁸⁰ Such a position is in contrast with the dualist position of Descartes and the monist position of Spinoza. Clearly, the Thomist position we stressed earlier shows much more realism in that it links the mind and the body very easily to one another. It is then from the more liberal feminism of those like Mary Wollstonecraft (at the very origins of feminism itself), Simone De Beauvoir, and Shulamit Firestone that we begin to see how the body itself is considered vulnerable, a limit to the woman. What would resolve these limits would be technical procedures, much in line with what Francis Bacon had said in the early 17th-century. In fact, Grosz stresses how such claims, in which the corporeal dimension ends up being accidental in the idea of a more neutral humanity, in fact restore the very *somatophobia* of the Greeks.⁸¹ Clearly, this is not shared by other feminists like Gayle Rubin, Nancy Chodorow, Adrienne Rich, or Sara Ruddick. In order to overcome such *somatophobia* Grosz sees how the differences in sex are part of a "mobile and volatile concept," very much in line with what would have read in Alfred Kinsey fifty years earlier. Can we really agree that sex or gender is such a "slippery and ambiguous" term, as Grosz, Butler and others would like us to believe? While there are certainly accidental divergences, substantially each sex is very, very often easily identifiable. The exceptions are

⁷⁸ Ann Garry, "The Philosopher as teacher. Why are Love and Sex philosophically interesting?," in *Metaphilosophy*, 11/2, April 1980, pp. 165-177.

⁷⁹ Maria Teresa Russo, "Soggettività, Corpo, e Differenza Sessuale nel Dibattito Filosofico di Area Femminista," in *Acta Philosophica*, II, 25, 2016, pp. 257-271.

⁸⁰ Elizabeth A. Grosz, *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington 1994, pp. 5-18.

⁸¹ Cfr. Maria Teresa Russo, *Ibid.*, p. 260.

very, very rare, and we cannot build a law based on extreme exceptions. In fact, Russo writes that no matter what we experience individually, there is an impassable materiality of the sexualized body which we simply cannot deny.⁸² Russo agrees with Kuby that such fluidity in Butler and other feminists is counter-productive to feminism, to women and to mankind in general.

It is for this reason that Russo turns to the very issue of ontology, just as we did. However, it is in *difference* that we find our starting point. If there is no difference, we cannot appreciate the individual. Jacques Maritain, in fact, wrote an interesting work in the 1932 on this very subject: *Distinguer pour unir ou Les degrés du savoir*. If we want to unite beings, we need to distinguish them. Sexual difference is founded on such union. Even the union between the Mediator between God and Man shows a very clear and perfect distinction between the divine and the human natures of Our Lord Jesus Christ. It is for this reason that we appreciate what Russo is attempting in her work. We cannot come to see people as having fluid sexualities as Kinsey, Butler, and others would like. Fortunately, Russo is not alone in seeing this problem. Virginia Held also sees how dangerous they can be for feminism itself.⁸³ This so-called “feminism of difference” wishes to abandon openly politically polemical tones which see the sexes in a power struggle and to stress instead the differences between the sexes which stress how the sexes complement one another in the way they build the family and society. This really shows the richness of humanity that is already present in nature itself. In this context we find feminists like Luce Irigaray, Iris Young and Sara Ruddick.

Clearly, what Irigaray does when she sexualizes her very being can be controversial from a metaphysical perspective because sex is not itself a quality of being, but the attempt she is making in her context is laudable nonetheless.⁸⁴ What is important to note is that she sees difference as fundamental. She sees that the woman is defined by her difference, a corporeal difference which bespeaks of openness and relation. This is strangely not too far from what we would read in St. Thomas Aquinas. He ties very well the principle of individuation to the principle of participation. Just because there are many individual variations does not mean that one does not participate in a specific sex or gender. Just because there are many other individual variations does not mean that these do not participate in a specific race. Just because there are many racial variations does not mean that these races do not participate in the human species. The argument goes on and on.⁸⁵ If one does not start from such a clear metaphysical distinction, it is clear that one can find himself in a nominalist trap, like the one we find espoused by Alfred Kinsey.

Irigaray then advances another idea which is key even to what we read in Joseph Nicolosi’s work on homosexuality.⁸⁶ She explains that man and woman do not confront themselves

⁸² Cfr. Maria Teresa Russo, *Ibid.*, p. 261.

⁸³ Cfr. Virginia Held, *Feminist Morality: Transforming Culture, Society and Politics*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1993, p. 22.

⁸⁴ Cfr. Luce Irigaray, *Ce sexe qui n'en est pas un*, Éditions de Minuit, Paris 1977.

⁸⁵ St. Thomas Aquinas, *In duodecim libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis expositio*, lectio 10, 4: “...quod singulis speciebus attribuuntur multa individua univocorum, idest multa individua univocae speciei praedicationem suscipientia et hoc secundum participationem; nam species, vel idea est ipsa natura speciei, qua est existens homo per essentiam. Individuum autem est homo per participationem, inquantum natura speciei in hac materia designata participatur. Quod enim totaliter est aliquid, non participat illud, sed est per essentiam idem illi. Quod vero non totaliter est aliquid habens aliquid aliud adiunctum, proprie participare dicitur. Sicut si calor esset calor per se existens, non diceretur participare calorem, quia nihil esset in eo nisi calor. Ignis vero quia est aliquid aliud quam calor, dicitur participare calorem.”

⁸⁶ Cfr. Joseph Nicolosi, *Shame and Attachment Loss: The Practical Work of Reparative Therapy*, InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, IL, 2009.

in the same way with their birth and genealogy. This is the reason why the relationship between the daughter and the mother is fundamental. Nicolosi would say that it is easier for the girl and the mother because the boy has to work to separate himself from the mother and identify himself with the father. In other words, it is the time in which the boy or girl identifies himself or herself and comes to know himself or herself in and through this other person. This is the first “other” whom he or she encounters.⁸⁷ She then affirms what St. Thomas Aquinas stresses from the beginning, i.e. the generative power. This is what is tied to the sexualized body. We always return to this, and Irigaray is not alone because even other feminists like Sara Ruddick and Hannah Arendt stress this element which is tied to birth, sexuality, and death, the whole of the human experience.⁸⁸ Birth, according to Arendt, is key because she considers it the event that saves the world. It is amazing to read feminist thinkers who stress the salutary nature of birth. Often times when one thinks of feminists one thinks of women who do not want to give importance to birth because they see it as an impediment to their freedom, to their being. Instead, here we read books by feminists who say that this is precisely where the woman defines her very being! Ruddick stresses the reciprocal relationship between the woman and the newborn with a living being existing within another; a living being emerges from another; a body nourishes another body.⁸⁹

To Ruddick’s rich reading of the intimate relation between the mother and the child in which the child could not live without her but who nonetheless is not her, Irigaray explains the psychological dimension of the woman understanding from this that there are potentially two in her.⁹⁰ In another work, *Speculum*, Irigaray furthers this analogy by showing the mirror-image the woman has to do with her own mother as she carries her own child in the womb. Some of the wording can be a bit too Freudian for our way of thinking, especially when she talks about the annulment of the daughter’s own rapport with her mother as she substitutes the mother with the new rapport being established with the baby in the womb, a phenomenon that goes on *ad infinitum* in what she terms a sort of mother earth phallic relation.⁹¹ All of the psychological phenomenology diverts from what we are trying to say, especially since it is in this book that Irigaray is trying to show how the woman stands on her own without what she finds has been a misunderstanding of women in masculine terms, of women defined as a disadvantaged man.

In spite of this position to which we do not adhere and to which she dedicates a lot of her book,⁹² what we find most interesting and important with Irigaray’s work is how she shows the way the person comes to understand her own gender individuation, in spite of whatever variations there may be. This is why this book is particularly interesting. It speaks from the feminist position, but it proves what we are trying to say about gender identification, about the embodied existence. This is key for men and women, and what is interesting is that other such existential phenomenologists who follow Merleau-Ponty come to similar conclusions.⁹³ Coming from a more Thomistic background we would prefer the term “corporeal” rather than “embodied” because it is a more objective term.

⁸⁷ Cfr. Luce Irigaray, *Key Writings*, Bloomsbury Publishing, London-New York 2006.

⁸⁸ Cfr. Sara Ruddick, *Maternal Thinking: Towards a Politics of Peace*, Ballantine Books, New York 1980. Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1958.

⁸⁹ Cfr. Sara Ruddick, *Maternal Thinking...*, *Ibid.*, pp. 256-257.

⁹⁰ Cfr. Luce Irigaray, *Key Writings*, *Ibid.*, p. 287.

⁹¹ Cfr. Luce Irigaray, *Speculum of the Other Woman*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca 1985.

⁹² This is especially the case with her critique of Plato’s myth of the cave. She sees it as a metaphor that is at the root of the exclusion of meaning for women.

⁹³ Cfr. Toril Moi, *What Is a Woman?: And Other Essays*, Oxford University Press, New York 1999; Iris Marion Young, *On female body experience. “Throwing Like a Girl” and other essays in feminist philosophy and social theory, Introduction*, Oxford University Press, New York 2005.

What phenomenologists do is typical of most rationalist philosophy since the 18th-century which seeks to use existence as the point of departure, rather than being itself. In an attempt to avoid Cartesian dualism, these feminists prefer to avoid ontological terminology, but we feel that ontological terminology does not put male and female against one another. Rather, it shows how they are part of the same species, and the “gender” differences that stem from the biological differences are not merely accidents like hair color or height would be. If they were, then we would see a plurality of differences and a plurality of genders, which is the risk Maria Teresa Russo also admits.⁹⁴ The hylomorphism of St. Thomas Aquinas helps because it places the human form in the soul, and the gendered form in the body. Yes, it is all one form, but let us say that both the body and the soul are ontological. The ontological similarity between man and woman lies in the soul, and the ontological difference in the gender. This way the differences are not merely accidental.

Notwithstanding these different philosophical approaches, the coming to understand the truth about one’s own nature—fulfilling the inclination we all have to come to truth, to come to the *adaequatio intellectus et rei*,⁹⁵—is particularly interesting about these studies. It shows us that the spectrum of feminism is much more complex than meets the eye. Clearly, there is a dark political and belligerent side to feminism as an ideology, but there is also a side that seeks to understand and to proclaim the truth about the human experience. Such a side we found with the guidance of Maria Teresa Russo who sees the role of symbol, education, and society as a whole in the formation—not destruction—of the person’s sexual identity, one substantially stemming from a biological sex. According to Russo, while she agrees with early feminists that “biology is not destiny,” she does not feel that it is indifferent either. This is precisely what we do not see in Butler’s explicit attempt to destroy binary sexuality; such is not just an attempt to eliminate philosophical dualism stemming from Descartes. Rather, it is an attempt to destroy the person’s identity and to replace it willingly with whatever else comes to mind, with whatever possibilities there may be. With such perversion we come to the different forms of transhumanism present today, all of which can only be won with the clarity of vision a family, culture, and religion with a clear sense of identity—of final causality—can provide. When there is a final cause, then the efficient cause of the world of *techne*, of technology, can be directed well. It is when such a final cause is not the primary end that we can have serious Frankenstein-like results and prove that Nietzsche was correct in saying that the human species, left to its own, would either double itself or destroy itself.⁹⁶

⁹⁴ Cfr. Maria Teresa Russo, “Soggettività, Corpo e Differenza Sessuale,” *Ibid.*, p. 269.

⁹⁵ Cfr. *De Veritate* q. 1.

⁹⁶ Russo agrees with this sort of conclusion since she herself cites J. Baudrillard’s *L’échange impossible*, Galilé, Paris 1999, p. 42. Two other good recent articles on this subject in the English-speaking world are the following: Margaret H. McCarthy, “Gender ideology and the humanum,” in *Communio*, summer 2016 (<http://www.communio-icr.com/articles/view/gender-ideology-and-the-humanum>); and Michael Cook, “Radical individualism is at the heart of gender theory: what does this mean for democracy and the family?,” Mercatornet, March 6, 2017 (<https://www.mercatornet.com/conjugality/view/radical-individualism-is-at-the-heart-of-gender-theory/19441>).