It seems that a human soul is not something subsistent:

**Objection 1:** That which is subsistent is said to be a this-something (Latin: *hoc aliquid*). Yet it is not the soul that is a this-something, but rather that which is composed of a soul and a body. Therefore, a soul is not something subsistent.

**Objection 2:** Anything that is subsistent can be said to operate. But a soul is not said to operate, since, as [Aristotle’s] *De Anima* 1 puts it, “To say that a soul senses or understands is like saying that a soul weaves or builds.” Therefore, a soul is not something subsistent.

**Objection 3:** If a soul were something subsistent, then it would have an operation without a body. But none of its operations occurs without a body not even the act of intellective understanding, since the soul cannot have an act of intellective understanding without phantasms, and phantasms cannot exist without a body. Therefore, a human soul is not something subsistent.

But contrary to this: In *De Trinitate* 10 Augustine says, “If anyone discerns the nature of the mind and sees that it is a substance, but not a corporeal substance, he will see that those who think it is a corporeal substance make this mistake because they attach to the soul those things, viz., the images of bodies, without which they cannot think of any nature.” Therefore, the nature of a human mind is not only incorporeal but also a substance, i.e., something subsistent.

**I respond:** One must claim that the principle of intellectual operations, which we call a man’s soul, is an incorporeal and subsistent principle. For it is clear that by means of his intellect a man is able to have cognition of the natures of all bodies. But that which is able to have cognition of given things must be such that it has nothing of those things in its own nature,
since what exists in it naturally would in that case impede the cognition of those other things. For instance, we see that a sick tongue infected with bilious and bitter humors is unable to perceive anything sweet; instead, everything seems bitter to it. Therefore, if an intellectual principle had within itself the nature of any sort of body, it would be unable to have cognition of all bodies. But each body has some determinate nature. Therefore, it is impossible that this intellectual principle should be a body. And, similarly, it is impossible that it should have intellective understanding through a bodily organ, since the determinate nature of that bodily organ would likewise prevent its having cognition of all bodies—in just the same way that if some determinate color exists not only in the pupil but also in the glass vase, then a liquid poured into that vase seems to be of that same color.

Therefore, the intellectual principle itself, which is called the mind or the intellect, has an operation in its own right that the body does not share in. But nothing can operate in its own right unless it subsists in its own right. For to operate belongs to a being that is actual and so a thing operates in the way in which it exists. It is for this reason that we say that it is the hot thing rather than the heat that gives warmth. It follows, then, that the human soul, which is called the intellect or mind, is something incorporeal and subsistent.

Reply to objection 1: The term ‘this-something’ can be taken in two senses. In the first sense it is taken for any subsistent thing, whereas in the second sense it is taken for a subsistent thing that is complete in the nature of some species. The first sense excludes inherence of the sort that belongs to an accident or material form; the second sense excludes in addition the incompleteness that belongs to a part. Hence, a hand could be called a this-something in the first sense, but not in the second sense.

So, then, since the human soul is a part of the human species, it can be called a this-something, i.e., subsistent, in the first sense, but not in the second sense. For in the second sense what is called a this-something is that which is composed of a soul and a body.

Reply to objection 2: ... [T]o act in its own right befits something that exists in its own right. But the phrase ‘exists in its own right’ can sometimes be [said] of a thing as long as it is not inherent like an accident.
or a material form, even if it is a part. On the other hand, what is said to subsist properly and per se is such that it is neither inherent in the aforementioned ways nor a part. In this sense, neither an eye nor a hand could be said to subsist in its own right, and so neither could it be said to operate on its own. Hence, the operations of the parts are attributed to the whole by means of the parts. For we say that a man sees by means of his eye, and that he touches by means of his hand. This is different from saying that a hot thing gives warmth by means of its heat, since there is no sense in which the heat gives warmth, properly speaking. Therefore, one can claim that a soul understands in the same sense in which an eye sees, but that it is more proper to say that the man understands by means of his soul.

Reply to objection 3: The body is not required for the intellect’s action as an organ by means of which that action is exercised; rather, the body is required for the sake of the action’s object (ratione objecti). For a phantasm is related to intellective understanding in the way that a color is related to seeing. But needing the body in this sense does not rule out the intellect’s being subsistent; otherwise, it would be the case that because it needs external sensible things in order to have sensation, an animal is not something subsistent.