

Are There Too Many Hylomorphic Individuals Thinking about this Life and the Next?

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The unexamined death is not worth dying – Peter Koch

I. Introduction

If you are having back pains, an orthopedist will recommend surgery, a chiropractor will suggest realignment, and a physical therapist will endorse strengthening and stretching. These are occupational hazards. I work on personal identity so the occupational hazard that tempts me is to judge every metaphysic by how well it does with the famous personal identity thought experiments and, more importantly, the problem of too many thinkers. Historically, the thought experiments favored Neo-Lockean views that understood our persistence conditions to be determined by mental features of some sort and thus we were distinct from our animal or body. But the animalist (and later the dualist) opponents of the Neo-Lockeans eventually responded that distinguishing human persons from human animals led to the Problem of Too Many Thinkers. If the person could think with its brain, why couldn't the animal? Animalist or bodily views of personal identity look much better when the too many thinkers problem is central. But as Patrick Toner points out, animalists like van Inwagen, Merricks and Olson should be known as “latter day animalists.”¹ Hylomorphism is the original animalism. And unlike latter day animalism, traditional animalism preserves the ontological significance of personhood while it avoids the problem of too many thinkers that plagues Neo-Lockeans who distinguish the human person from the human animal.

I am not that interested in Aquinas's actual position. That is a good thing, not in the least because I am not much of an Aquinas scholar.² I am more interested in what Aquinas should have said given his hylomorphic commitments and Christian world view. The latter includes, at least, the existence of the person's soul immediately after the person's death. The former involves understanding the human being, human animal and human person to be identical, a single substance, a thinking, living creature resulting from a soul configuring matter.

Much of the appeal of soul theories is that they seem to make possible an immaterial afterlife prior to the resurrection. Ironically, it is precisely the metaphysical commitments that enables us to think in the afterlife that make the dominant interpretations of Thomistic hylomorphism suspect. There are problems if it is your soul and not your person in Purgatory,

¹ I wonder whether Patrick chose the name so we “latter day animalists” would be tainted by an association with Mormon metaphysics. Well, we should be grateful that he didn't name us “New Age Animalists.”

² The actual truth is I became interested in Thomistic Hylomorphism when I was courting my future wife who was writing a dissertation on the subject. So in order to talk to her about something dear to her heart, I just read some Stump and Leftow on Aquinas' Hylomorphism – being a lazy pseudo intellectual, I didn't even read Aquinas himself!

Heaven or Hell prior to the resurrection. On the so-called “corruptionist” account, in which the soul but not the person is disembodied, it is morally problematic that the soul is punished or purged. The problem is that if the detached soul undergoes punishment or purging for its sins then it must have been a thinker and a doer prior to death, but if the soul wasn’t earlier such a subject and agent then it is unfair that it later suffers for actions of the person to whom it isn’t identical. Moreover, it isn’t at all clear why if the soul can think when detached, it couldn’t think earlier when embodied. And if the embodied soul couldn’t think but merely contributed to a substance’s thought, then a plausible principle governing substantial change should rule out that it can acquire new powers when disembodied enabling it to become a subject of thought when it wasn’t before.

It might appear that if one instead defends the so-called “survivalist” account that the deceased person exists with the soul as his only part, one could appear to avoid the above problems because the same person is still doing the thinking. But this is easier said than understood. It is hard to grasp why the soul can’t think on its own given that the soul doesn’t seem to be lacking any parts required for thought. Stump, Oderberg, Brown and Eberl³ are fond of drawing an analogy between the human animal being reduced to the size of the brain and the human animal being reduced to having the soul as its only part. But this doesn’t so much help their as it starkly reveals the problem of too many thinkers for why couldn’t the brain think if the spatially coincident being could? Leaving aside the violation of the mereological principle of weak supplementation that excludes anything from having a proper part without a disjoint one, if the person persists posthumously with the soul as its only proper part, it is then very hard to get one’s mind around the intimate relationship between the then completely immaterial person and the always immaterial soul. Unlike Cartesianism, the deceased hylomorphic person is not a soul, yet still becomes fully immaterial. Moreover, the bodiless person is supposed to be essentially a rational animal. It is very hard to consider the immaterial person an animal for animals are living bodies and don’t seem to be the type of thing that can survive disembodiment. While adolescents can survive the loss of their adolescence, it is very difficult to conceive of the body as something that can survive disembodiment!

I have defended some of these views before.⁴ What I plan to do here is offer some new defenses and also, regrettably, like all too many philosophers, use this present paper to settle scores

³ Stump, Eleonore. *Aquinas*, Routledge 2003; Brown, *Aquinas and the Ship of Theseus*, Continuum, 2005; Eberl, Jason “Do Human Persons Persist between Death and Resurrection” *Essays in Honor of Eleonore Stump*, Routledge 2009; Oderberg, David, “Hylemorphic Dualism,” in *Personal Identity* ed. E.F. Paul, F.D. Miller and J. Paul, Cambridge 2005.

with those who have disagreed with me, or more likely, ignored what I earlier wrote.⁵ So if there is a Purgatory, my less than pure motives will mean extra time there. Perhaps my confession will reduce my sentence.

II. Lonely Souls and the Corruptionist Account of the Afterlife

If we human beings are a hylomorphic composite of soul and matter, then none of us are identical to our soul. If Purgatory (or Hell or Heaven prior to the resurrection) involves not an ensouled body but just the soul of the deceased undergoing a transformation between death and resurrection, then none of us shall ever endure Purgatory. There arises a question of the justice of Purgatory being experienced by a being that was not the human being responsible for the character in need of purging. My contention is that any attempt to remove the moral problems will lead to another problem. Perhaps as problematic as justifying the treatment of the posthumous soul in Purgatory or Hell, is the presence of a *thinking* soul to which each of us is not identical. This raises a hylomorphic version of the “Problem of Too Many Thinkers.” That is, if the soul can think without the human being, then prior to their separation at death, why couldn’t the soul think the same thoughts the composite human being was thinking? It is quite odd that the soul could be the subject of thought at one time in its existence, but not at another. If the soul can think then perhaps the person’s thought is derivative and persons are only thinkers because a part of them, their soul, really thinks and acts. Or the person is the soul, but then we have Cartesianism. However, if the soul can’t think until it is detached, then there is the problem of substantial (or is it subsistent?) change and the ante mortem soul isn’t the same as the post mortem soul

Pray for Me: I’m in Purgatory and I’ve been Framed!

According to the standard Thomistic hylomorphic account of the human being, we are composites of a soul and matter.⁶ Aquinas writes “‘Humanity’ signifies something composed of

4 “Personal Identity and Purgatory” With Rose Koch-Hershenov *Religious Studies*, 2006, 42, 439-451; “Fission and Confusion” with Rose Hershenov *Christian Bioethics*. 12:3, December 2006, 237-254; “A Hylomorphic Account of Personal Identity Thought Experiments,” *ACPQ* 2008, 82, 481-502; “Soulless Organisms? Animalism vs. Hylomorphism” *ACPQ*, 2011, 85.

5 On a more serious note, I should acknowledge that I will be concentrating upon Toner because no one else who works on either original or latter day animalism knows as much about the other group of animalists. He strikes me as the most sophisticated Thomistic critic of the latter day animalism that is dear to my heart. And he is the Thomist who has been most concerned with responding to the too many thinkers challenge. I suspect that he will eventually, with some help from Oderberg, convert me to traditional animalism. That would good for many reasons, including domestic harmony given that my wife is a committed Thomist.

6 See Aquinas *Being and Essence*, Ch. II; *Summa Theologica* I q. 75; q. 76.

matter and form, just as ‘man’ does.”⁷ It would thus seem that death involves the loss of matter and end of our existence. Other supporting quotes from Aquinas are: “Death is substantial corruption”⁸ and “Death deprives one of the primary good, namely being”⁹ and “by death the subject ceases to be man or animal.”¹⁰ So if Purgatory (or Hell) occurs after death and prior to resurrection, it will not be you being purged. Purgatory is, in most cases, reserved for the souls of those who “die in God’s grace and friendship but (are) still imperfectly purified”. Souls that are in need of purification undergo a period of transformation prior to their presentation before God. This purification is necessary due to transgressions against God during one’s earthly life. Given that it is just a part of you that undergoes a process of purification or purgation for the sins committed by you, a human being, I have argued elsewhere (in a paper co-authored with my wife) that it is unfair to punish the soul.

Toner disagrees. Not surprisingly, I agree with David Oderberg’s description that Toner offers “a detailed and ingenious response to Koch-Hershenov and Hershenov, but it is ultimately unsuccessful.”¹¹ Toner appeals to Aquinas view of punishment to explain why it is permissible for the detached soul to be punished.¹² It is not like punishing you for something a stranger did. The person’s sin is *in* the soul somewhat like Adam’s sin is in our souls as original sin. Toner presses the distinction between *sin in us* and sin committed *by us*. He argues that “it is just to punish one thing for sins committed *by* another thing, provided the sins are *in* the one punished.”¹³ Since Aquinas believes the “powers of the operations...of will and understanding are in the soul as their subject...”,¹⁴ the soul can be the guilty subject. Toner enthusiastically quotes Aquinas:

7 *SCG* IV, 81,10

8 *Disputed Questions of the Soul*. 1.

9 *Supp.* 65, 2 ad 3

10 *ST* III. 50.4 Toner forcefully argued for this interpretation in a live debate with Oderberg that took place at the University at Buffalo on September 26, 2013. See Spencer’s “Personhood of the Separated Soul” for a defense of the claim that medieval Thomists were corruptionists. *Op. cit.* p. 32 for

11 David Oderberg “Survivalism, Corruptionism and Mereology” *European Journal of Religion* (2012) 4:4, p. 3 nt. 4.

12 Toner, Patrick “St. Thomas on Punishing Souls” *International Journal of the Philosophy of Religion*.

13 Toner, “St. Thomas on Punishing Souls” *Op. cit.*

14 *ST* I 77.5

But merit and fault are fitted to the body only through the soul, since there is essentially no merit or demerit except so far as a thing is voluntary. Therefore, both reward and punishment flow suitably from the soul to the body, but it does not belong to the soul by reason of the body. There is, therefore, no reason in the infliction of punishment or bestowal of rewards why the souls should wait for the resumption of their bodies; rather, it seems more fitting that, since the souls had priority in the fault or merit, they have priority also in being punished or rewarded.¹⁵

But this just gives rise to a dilemma for the corruptionist. Either it is fitting for the detached soul to be punished for its being the subject of the will, which means that it earlier was the responsible agent, or it was not earlier a thinker and doer and the person should be punished, not the disembodied soul. I don't see how Aquinas can have it both ways. If the soul voluntarily willed the wrongful acts then it was the subject of thought and action, the person was not. If the embodied soul wasn't the subject of thought and action, then it doesn't deserve to be punished when detached from the body and person. We need to be told why the soul's being the "subject" of the powers of "will and understanding" doesn't make it a thinking agent. What we are usually told is that the soul has one mode of agency and understanding when it has one mode of existence (embodied) and another mode of agency and understanding with a different mode of existence (disembodied). But it seems that if the disembodied soul is to be held accountable, it has to have been the agent of wrongdoing.

An alternative is to think of Purgatory more along the lines of a reform and moral cultivation that is not harsh and painful but will benefit the soul and the human being. The soul, though no fault of its own, is disordered because of the person's ante-mortem choices. It benefits then from becoming properly ordered and aligned with right reason. Purged, penitent and reformed, the soul will no longer be disordered and will be ready to meet God and partake in such beatific bliss that precedes resurrection. But this won't help with Hell with its suffering and permanent separation from God. This corruptionist position could be salvaged by adopting universalism about Hell or combining a belief in Hell with the compatibilism.

So corruptionists likely need to defend a compatibilism where even if someone just popped into existence, that creature will be accountable if it identifies with its character or, at least doesn't experience it as foreign, unnatural, inauthentic or imposed. As a result, the purging is appropriate, a fitting response to the soul's character, even though there wasn't the opportunity for that individual

15 *SCG* 4, 91

to have made choices that would have brought about a different character. So while the soul doesn't pop into existence in Purgatory or Hell, it first becomes there a subject of thought and is accountable for its character that didn't earlier stem from its choices. However, I suspect many readers will resist a soul condemned to Hell for what not it but its person chose to do. Such readers might conclude that if corruptionism requires compatibilism, that's reason not to be a corruptionist.

“I Think, Therefore I am Dead”

So says the detached soul of the corruptionist. The main problem that I want to concentrate upon in this section is that if the disembodied soul can think during Purgatory or Hell, then it seems that it should have been a thinking entity prior to detaching from the human being at death. The problem that then arises is there seems to be two subjects of thought, one thinker would be the soul and the second thinker would be the human being composed of the soul and the informed matter. This is the hylomorphic version of the Problem of Too Many Thinkers. A typical complaint is that epistemic puzzles arise due to the two thinkers not knowing which of them is the person. I tend to downplay the epistemic puzzles and emphasize the moral puzzles and the extreme counterintuitiveness of there being more than one overlapping thinker.

It is no solution to say that the human being thinks “in virtue of” the soul. This is just relabeling the problem, not explaining it away. If the “in virtue” relation is describing a part that couldn't think on its own, as someone might describe the brainstem, then it might be tenable. But the Thomistic corruptionist approach has the soul thinking in Purgatory. Since the soul can think on its own after ceasing to inform the body, it is difficult to see why it couldn't think earlier when informing the body. The Thomist owes us an explanation of why the soul's powers are diminished when informing matter. Any “solution” will be further complicated by the Thomistic claim that some cognitive powers of the soul operate independently of the organs of the body. So it is hard to see how the body could prevent the soul from exercising these powers.

If the disembodied soul can think in Purgatory, then it should be able to think earlier when it configured matter. Given that Aquinas maintains that the person's abstract thoughts are the result of capacities independent of the operation of its organs, it is even more difficult to see why a soul could think disembodied but not when embodied. If the soul *and* the human being can both think, that would mean too many thinkers. However, if the soul can't think on its own but only the human being thinks, though in virtue of the soul, this extra thinker can be avoided. So let's explore this

possibility and try to follow Stump's advice to avoid the pitfalls of ascribing the thought of a system to just a component.¹⁶

Aquinas believes that even the embodied person's intellectual thought involves phantasms, or images due to the sensations, their production dependent upon material organs. The phantasms are in the brain, unlike the intellect which is in the soul. The same is true for other components of inner sense such as the imagination, memorative power and the common sense. Aquinas writes of the process of abstraction: "Someone who wants to understand a human being has occur to him the imagination of a six foot tall human being; but the intellect understands the human being as a human being, not as having this quantity." The soul needs phantasms produced by organs, but the thinking is done by the human being that is composed of matter configured by a soul. So it might seem that the soul is not capable of thought on its own.

But can we be so sure that the forms derived from the phantasms aren't thought by the soul even though the phantasms aren't in the soul? The brain may be needed by the soul but only in the way that one might need to use a drawing on paper or a chalk board to facilitate one's thought. Of course, the soul configures the brain and doesn't configure the paper or board, so perhaps that is reason to think the person and not the soul thinks with the products of the phantasms. But I have my doubts that the soul's involvement in the presence of the organs with the phantasms or images renders the human being the thinker rather than the soul. Consider a materialist analogy: the brain's autonomic functions make it possible for the sense organs to exist and function. But the perceptions they give rise to are still in the brain and an appropriately arranged brain stimulated by a neuroscientist could have such illusory perceptions without a perceived object outside it. So the hylomorphic soul's configuring of the sense organs doesn't prevent the soul from *itself* thinking when engaged in reasoning with propositions with the abstracted concepts, what Aquinas called the process of *compounding and dividing*. The soul, after all, is distinct from the matter it informs and the body that results. The contribution of the brain is causally downstream and a condition of abstract thought but not constitutive of thought. Thus the soul is thinking. Only if the embodied soul doesn't use the phantasms as a ladder that it kicks away when it thinks abstractly could it be said that it is the composite human being rather than the soul thinks. What is needed is for the embodied soul to be too weak to think without phantasms. That is, it always thinks with images under description. So even when thinking about a universal, it needs an image. Pasnau suggests this may be the case:

¹⁶ Stump, Eleonore. *Aquinas*. Routledge. p. 273

“even once we have grasped the nature of lines and triangles, we still cannot help but think about these things in light of specific images....because our intellects are too feeble to do anything else.”

The corruptionist needs to claim that when the soul is disembodied, the *bestowed* or *absorbed* powers that earlier made the human being the subject of thought then *drain* or *flow back* and are manifested by the soul alone. Does this work? It is hard to think of an analogy or helpful comparison to illustrate our metaphors. Why should the soul’s powers to be the subject of thought be *absorbed* by the configured animal (prior to death or after the resurrection) but *flow* back into the soul when it is disembodied?

Corruptionists are fond of appealing to an analogy of Haldane to explain how the disembodied soul produces thought on its own but earlier merely contributed to the person’s thought. *But there are analogies and there are analogies.* Whichever of those just mentioned two kinds of analogies is the bad one is where Haldane’s belongs. He writes:

To fix this idea, think of compound pigment colours such as brown, and claim that red, say exists virtually, but not actually in this compound. What this means is that, certain conditions obtaining, the brown pigment might be destroyed but red pigment is precipitated out. Might this provide a model for the post-mortem existence of a subject of abstract thought?¹⁷

No. It doesn’t provide a model for it. It is extremely disanalogous. The redness of the pigment is supposed to be like the thought produced by the detached soul and the brownness of the compound like the thought of the hylomorphic union of the soul and matter. But what is needed is the pigment to contribute to the production of redness (abstract thought) of the compound but not to appear red itself until it is precipitated out. However, the pigment never contributed redness to the whole. The whole was brown. So the pigment/soul didn’t contribute to the respective production of redness/thought in the soul-matter compound and then later instantiate redness/thought on its own. The red disposition either *finkeed*, to use the language of the powers literature, when it combined with other pigments, or its surface reflection contributed to the wave length but was swamped or absorbed into the wave length that produced brown. So the pigment is not a good model of the soul. A good model would contribute features to the larger compound, then later instantiate those very same features by itself.

The Threat of Substantial (Subsistent?) Change

17 Haldane, John. “The Examined Death and the Hope of the Future” *American Catholic Philosophical Association Proceedings*. 74, 2001, 254.

If the soul is to be involved in thinking in the afterlife, it must have a divine substitute for phantasms for it to perform its function. Aquinas writes of divinely infused species that enable the disembodied soul to think in absence of phantasms.¹⁸ Somehow the disembodied soul acquires the power to think universals (and even some particulars) without the help of the phantasms. One could turn to God to bestow missing powers on the detached soul when before it merely contributed to thought. I don't think this reliance upon God is ad hoc and objectionable since hylomorphic theory already accepts that ensoulment is a miracle, as is the substitute for phantasms required for disembodied thought, and the resurrection. Those who object to an *additional* appeal to divine intervention are treating God like he is a genie limited to three miracles per person – creating us, purging our soul, and then resurrecting us. However, even miracles are constrained by what is metaphysically possible.¹⁹ So I suspect that it is metaphysically suspect for corruptionists to trot out time after time²⁰ the following quote of Aquinas:

To solve this difficulty, (the question of how the separated soul knows) we must consider that as nothing acts except so far it is actual, the mode of every agent follows from its mode of existence. Now the soul has one mode of being when in the body, and another when apart from it, its nature remaining always the same... The soul, therefore, when united to the body, consistently with that mode of existence, has a mode of understanding ...but when it is separated from the body, it has a mode of understanding by turning to simply intelligible objects, as is proper to other separate substances.²¹

My worry is that we have here an occurrence of substantial change (perhaps it should be called “subsistent change” since hylomorphic thinkers claim that the soul is a subsistent rather than a substance) when something that couldn't think comes to think. Consider some neurons of the brain that aid in the production of thought. If their aggregate became capable of thought it would seem they have come to compose something else, a thinker. Or perhaps a better analogy is the lower half of the worm that doesn't compose an organism when embedded within a larger worm but merely contributes to the life of the worm. But when the worm is cut in half, the matter of the lower half

18 See John Wippel's “Thomas Aquinas on the Separated Soul's Natural Knowledge” for a helpful account.

19 And we'll see that it doesn't help if God puts this power into the soul at its origins and thus long before it is disembodied.

20 Toner even reproduces the quote twice in the very same paper! See pp. 214 and 220 of his “St. Thomas Aquinas on the Problem of Too Many Thinkers”. *The Modern Schoolman* 89, 3-4, 209-222.

21 *ST* 1. 89, 1.

becomes the matter of a new living worm, and that living creature is not identical to what was before the undetached non-living part of the worm. There has occurred substantial change. I suspect readers wouldn't modify the above quote and claim parts of worms have one mode of agency when existing in one mode as an embodied part and another mode of agency when existing detached.²²

So the danger becomes that the acquisition of the capacity to be a subject of thought indicates substantial (or subsistent) change in a hylomorphic metaphysics. It may be that some object that doesn't have the *natural* potential to think can't ever acquire it, rather it must be replaced by an object that can. The traditional Thomistic succession of souls theory (delayed hominization) doesn't bestow new cognitive powers on an earlier soul without them. Of course, the rational disembodied soul in Purgatory is not previously uninvolved with thought, but its becoming the subject of thought is suspiciously akin to some neurons that contributed to thought suddenly becoming thinkers of those thoughts. Thought is the mark of a person, a thinking substance. The neurons would have to compose something, a person, that they didn't compose earlier.

Thought is a property of a substance. There is a long tradition where thought is a substance conferring trait. It is essential to the substance and its onset means the emergence of a new substance. Non substances can't think. The general principle is that if a part contributed some substance conferring property or essence to a whole, then that part can't come to possess that property on its own. The instantiation of that property will require a new substance as its subject. The idea is that nothing can contribute to thought and then come to think. I am allowing that there are things like organisms that couldn't think at one time but could come to think later. They were already substances when they became thinkers. The key difference is that organisms didn't earlier contribute to thought and then later come themselves to be thinkers.

It is no help to claim that the soul is a subsistent, not a complete substance because its nature is to be embodied so it in an unnatural state when it is not embodied. Then my worry is that we have subsistent change. The soul is substance-like and so I would extend to it the forementioned principle about non-thinkers being unable to become thinkers. Just consider the brain of the organism after the rest of the organism has been stripped away. I assume the brain will need massive life support. Even if it doesn't, its nature is to be embodied. Its nature is to be a part of larger organism. If we assume the brain couldn't think before it was detached, why would we believe it can

²² A plant cutting is another such example of substantial change. The branch of a plant is not a plant. But cut it off and place the cutting in soil and its matter may be reorganized, roots start to grow etc.

think afterwards? I would think it underwent substantial change if there was a subject of thought after the operation that wasn't there before.

So I don't think it helps to appeal to the soul having its mode of agency change when its mode of being changes – i.e., when it becomes disembodied. Why couldn't it think earlier? The separated soul wills, loves and desires, it can pray and hear prayers, appear to embodied humans and have relationships with other immaterial beings. And it is not enough to argue as Aquinas frequently does that the body hampers the soul's powers.²³ The powers to think must not only be stymied in the soul but they must be transferred to the thinking human being. We need a story about how the embodied soul merely contributes to thought roughly like how neurons contribute to thought but can't think then. Toner disagrees and says we don't need to explain how soul was earlier a non-thinking contributor to thought for was a “partly thinking contributor to a person's thought.” (2012, 215.) But what is it to partly think? Is the soul thinking some of our thoughts but not others? It reasons abstractly about universals while we think about particulars? Then how do we account for the unity of thought? Does it think some of our thoughts with us while we think others it doesn't? Is the model that our thought is like the collective intention a group of thinkers can have? I very much doubt it. So we need to be told much more than that our soul is a “partly thinking contributor” to our thought. And then we need to be told why it can't do embodied what it can later do – will, love, desire, pray and so on.

III. Wimpy Human Beings and the Survivalist Account of the Afterlife

Given the above problems plaguing a thinking soul existing in Purgatory after the human being ceases to exist at death, we should perhaps look elsewhere for a less counterintuitive hylomorphic “solution” to the problem of Purgatory. One Thomistic-inspired approach, though not loyal to Aquinas whom I take to be a corruptionist, is to claim that the human being and the soul coexist in Purgatory. That would mean that the human being can exist without a body. I find it hard to believe that there are any such wimpy human beings.²⁴ And the soul should be able to think since the person uses it and nothing else to think.

23 *SCG* II 81. 1625. “The soul, when it is kept from being preoccupied with its own body, is rendered more capable of understanding certain higher things.” See also *Quaestiones de Anima* (15c) “There is no doubt that bodily emotions and the preoccupation of the senses impede the soul from receiving the influence of separate substances.”

24 But see Spencer for a way in which the separated person's self cognition will be ‘stronger’ and more certain than it was embodied. *Op. cit.* 49

I suspect those theorists that don't mind spatially coincident entities will think that this model works for the hylomorphic person. Consider the lump of clay which has modal or sortal properties the statue does not. This isn't because of any differences in parts. In the same way, the disembodied person has modal and sortal properties the soul does not despite there being no proper part of the person that isn't a (proper or improper) part of the soul. One might suggest that the hylomorphic theorist should also be able to link two objects and differentiate them without doing so in virtue of their relationship to parts possessed by one and not the other. Thus there aren't in principle new puzzles individuating the distinct properties of two immaterial beings that are coincident but not *spatially* coincident.

But psychological capacities aren't like modal and sortal properties. They would seem to depend on parts and properties.²⁵ One would expect thinking things that don't have the same cognitive capacities to differ due to differences in their parts. So think like a materialist for a moment and consider a scenario in which the person was reduced to the size of his brain. All his other parts were destroyed. Why couldn't the brain think if its maimed person could then think without any other parts but the brain? What could the brain possibly lack that prevents it from thinking? True, it isn't a person for it has the wrong historical and modal properties. I will assume that the person can reacquire a torso, legs and arms etc. as parts, and the brain can't. Likewise, the hylomorphic person can acquire a material body as a part at the resurrection but the soul cannot. But I don't see any reason why the disembodied soul can't think if the brain of the maimed person could think. It isn't enough to say the soul is not a person. The person must have a capacity to be the subject of thought that the soul does not. The reason why the person was the hylomorphic ante-mortem thinker was because its soul and its body composed the person and made thought possible for the person. But the disembodied hylomorphic person doesn't have anything other than the soul composing it. So it is hard to see why it is a disembodied subject of thought and the soul is not a subject of thought. Claiming, as Spencer does, that human personhood requires not just a human nature but the addition of an act of existence or the mode of subsistence doesn't seem to help.²⁶ What is needed is

25 Even if semantic content is external, the person and the soul are related to the same environment.

26 Spencer. Op. cit "When actualized, a human subsists in its nature with personal dignity able to perform certain acts proper to a person." Op cit. 27. "The mode of personality (or subsistence) is the completion and termination of an essence. See pp 45-46 for why Spencer thinks this prevents too many thinkers. But he claims that although the soul "strictly speaking" does not think, "it is correct to say that the separated soul thinks since the person and the separated soul differ not as two things, but as what is complete and what is able to be completed. Op. cit. 46.

a feature or capacity in the person that is absent from the soul, yet which combines with the features or capacities of the soul to produce thought just in the person.

Compositional Hylomorphism

One survivalist account has the deceased human being having only a single proper part, a soul. If it were the case that the soul merely contributes to thought but is incapable of being a subject of thought, then the deceased person would have to be there in Purgatory (Hell or Heaven) for thought to occur – just as survivalists conjecture. It follows that the human being is in Purgatory in a bodiless form. There would then be an immaterial human being whose only proper part is an immaterial soul. Call this view “Compositional Hylomorphism.”

It is a standard mereological notion that something can't have a single proper part. I don't think that is so implausible.²⁷ I don't see why a tree would cease to have a trunk as a proper part because it lost its other proper parts, e.g. its branches. Donnelly has argued that the principle of weak supplementation is not part of the meaning of “proper part” and mereological theories can be constructed quite well without it. Oderberg thinks that weak supplementation makes more sense when applied to material than immaterial beings. I am not sure of that for three reasons. First, although Olson had compound dualism in mind, he complains of experiencing ontological double vision when considering the person coming to be purely immaterial with only an immaterial thinking part.²⁸ At least with standard material objects like trees and trunks, statues and lumps, nothing that was a material being later is an immaterial being without being the soul. Secondly, the idea of immaterial beings with parts is very difficult to conceive. Souls are typically construed as partless so they are indestructible and don't have extension. But the hylomorphic person has an immaterial part, its soul. It is something over and above its only part but not in virtue of any further immaterial part. Third, I find it easier to understand how the typical dualist, who identifies us with our soul, can explain our thought even though this thought is neurologically dependent. The Cartesian soul is an immaterial simple and uses the brain to think. The soul is the thinker, the subject of thought. The soul is the person on the Cartesian theory. But in a hylomorphic account the soul is not the thinker that accounts for the unity of thought belonging to a single subject of thought. Although the

27 The axiom that anything with a proper part has at least one other disjoint part. For doubts that the axiom is true or true of the meaning of parts and wholes, see Maureen Donnelly's “Using Mereological Principles to Support Metaphysics” *Philosophical Quarterly* (2011) 61, 225-246 and Oderberg's “Survivalism, Corruptionism, and Mereology” op. cit.

28 Olson. Eric. “A Compound of Two Substances.” *Soul, Body and Survival*, Ed. Kevin Corcoran

disembodied hylomorphic person is not a soul, nor has any parts other than its soul, it is somehow able as the subject of thought to use that soul to think. I have a hard time conceiving how such a thin conception of the disembodied person can do something that its soul cannot.

Constitutional Hylomorphism

It might seem that these problems can be avoided by an appeal to constitution in which the living person is constituted rather than identical to his body, and then the deceased person is constituted by just his soul in Purgatory. There would then be no violation of the mereological principle of weak supplementation. And in a Baker-style account of constitution, the soul and the person would instantiate the same thought, one thinking derivatively what the other thought non-derivatively. So there wouldn't be two thoughts even if there were two thinkers. Let's call this view 'Constitutional Hylomorphism.' But if the soul constitutes the post-mortem person, what constitutes the ante-mortem person? If one claims that the ante-mortem constituter is the soul and matter, that makes it seem as if the animal constituted the human being/person for isn't the animal just ensouled matter? But the animal is supposed to be the human being/person on the hylomorphic view. If one instead claims that the body constituted the animal, one makes a mystery out of the relationship between the living body and the living animal. I would think that when a soul informs matter the result is a living body that is identical to the animal. And if one is identical to an animal body, then one can't survive death and the destruction of that body.

Even if one is not bothered by the above, there are other reasons why hylomorphism shouldn't rely upon principles of constitution. Constitution theorists such as Baker usually claim that the constituting entity (lump/body etc.) is not a part of the constituted entity (statue/person etc.), though parts of the constituting are parts of the constituted. So Constitutional Hylomorphism would construe Purgatory as involving the constituting entity (the soul) as not being a part of the constituted (person), unlike Compositional Hylomorphism. Thus the person in Purgatory has become a simple being without even a soul as a part in Purgatory. But a person without a soul as a part violates core hylomorphic principles. And it won't help to adopt Thomson's alternative account in which the constituted and the constituting are parts of each other for while that makes the soul part of the person, it makes the person part of the soul.²⁹

Constitutional Hylomorphism violates the fundamental principle of constitution that if x constitutes y at t, it is possible that: x exists without being linked to anything of the kind that y is at t

²⁹ Judith Thomson, "The Statue and the Clay," *Nous*, 32, (1998): 149-173.

Informally, the lump could exist without constituting the statue at *t*; but the statue doesn't constitute the lump because it couldn't exist without a lump at *t*.³⁰ However, the hylomorphic body or soul never exists without the person. In fact, the person can exist without the body in Purgatory, so it seems that the person constitutes the body! That's because the person satisfies the principle: *x* constitutes *y* at *t* if it is possible for *x* to exist at *t* without being linked to a thing of kind *y*.

Moreover, if the constituted and the constituting share properties as Baker conjectures, then each is derivatively and contingently the kind of thing the other is. So just as the human animal is derivatively as person, the human person is derivatively an animal. So when applied to the afterlife, the soul is derivatively a person for it constitutes the person. That might not strike the ears as obviously false.³¹ But far less attractive is the claim that the person is derivatively a soul. Perhaps it is best for the hylomorphist not to take the constitution model too literally.

Persons as Derivative Thinkers

A not very attractive alternative move for the Thomist-inspired hylomorphic thinker is to accept that we think derivatively in virtue of our soul strictly or nonderivatively thinking.³² We think when embodied in virtue of the soul thinking, and we think when disembodied in virtue of the soul thinking. If some form of Noonan-style pronoun revisionism is accepted, it will take some of the sting off the too many thinkers problem and perhaps avoid the much discussed epistemic problems.³³ On Noonan's account, the first person pronoun "I" doesn't automatically refer to all of its thinkers, but to the individual that is essentially the person with the appropriate persistence conditions. But a problem is that the disembodied soul may need to refer to itself. Van Dyke mentions the case of rich man's soul referring to itself in the parable involving Lazarus. This might be handled by contextualizing reference perhaps the way we might contextualize demonstratives like "this" when pointing at the statue and lump in a constitution relation. We refer to the lump with

30 Lynne Baker, *Persons and Bodies: A Constitution View*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 43.

31 Spencer points out that Aquinas held the view that the soul is 'reductively' in the genus animal because it is our form. *ST I* q. 90 a 4 ad 2.

32 Jason Eberl has brought to my attention places where Aquinas writes of properties being held derivatively. He wrote of properties of the body "accidentally overflowing into the soul" *Quaestiones disputatae de veritate* q 26. A 2 ad 3-4 and the soul receiving a halo nonderivatively results in the body if informs receiving the halo derivatively: "such that the aureole is principally [non-derivatively] in the mind [which is a power of the soul] but shines also in the flesh by a kind of overflow. [i.e. derivatively]." *ST Supp* q. 96 a 10.

33 Harold Noonan. *Personal Identity*. Routledge Press, 2003, 211.

statements like “*This* used to be in a quarry” but refer to the statue with the same gesture accompanied by the claim “*This* was made by Michelangelo.”

However, the main drawback, thought perhaps a tolerable one with this solution that the person thinks in virtue of the soul thinking, is that it runs afoul of the sentiments so aptly expressed by Chisholm: “If there are two things that now hope for rain; the one doing the so on its own and the other such that its hoping for rain is now done by the thing that happens to constitute it, then I’m the former and not the latter”.³⁴

Disembodied Bodies?

Let’s turn now to the odd notion of animality the Thomist survivalist is committed to. If a hylomorphic human being is identical to a rational animal then it must always be. To allow it to survive in the afterlife without being an animal would violate the necessity of identity. You can’t be identical to an animal one time and not at a later time. But if one doesn’t want to abandon the necessity of identity, or tweak it to identity at a time, then if the survivalist doesn’t want to become a corruptionist, he must defend the strangest view of animality. It seems a very promiscuous use of animality if one insists that we are essentially animals and yet can exist bodiless in Purgatory or Hell. It seems that the hylomorphic theorist should instead consider us to be contingently animals. But the hylomorphic definition of man is a rational animal so it is our animality that is essential to us.

Now a claim that we are contingently animals preserves the necessity of identity but at the cost of by making our animality like our adolescence. Just as being an adolescent is a phase we go through, so is being an animal. The adolescent ceases to instantiate the property of being an adolescent without ceasing to exist when it becomes an adult, so the human animal at its death ceases to instantiate animality during the interim period prior to resurrection. So the human body or human animal no more goes out of existence when it becomes disembodied than the adolescent goes of existence when it grows older. However, it strikes me as quite alright to say the adolescent is

34 Chisholm. 1976, 104). “I See Dead People: Disembodied Souls and Aquinas’s ‘Two Person’ Problem.” Forthcoming *Oxford Studies in Medieval Philosophy*. I should note that the contrary view does have illustrious representatives like David Lewis who holds that persons think in virtue of their perduring stages. And making the view more attractive is that if one combined pronoun revisionism with perdurantism, the soul and the person could both exist disembodied prior to the resurrection by sharing the same temporal parts. This would also avoid van Dyke’s worries about immanent causation within an object (as opposed to transeunt causation between distinct objects) being required for resurrection for there is no longer the problem that the soul and not the person is present in an interim period. Van Dyke imagined only two choices, immediate resurrection of the person or the person being identical to the soul. The temporal parts approach would allow the soul and the person to both be present in virtue of sharing temporal parts during the period between death and resurrection.

identical to the adult but it seems flat out wrong to say the body is identical to the disembodied being in Purgatory. Bodies seem to be the type of things that are essentially bodies, in other words, animals are essentially embodied. Adolescents are not essentially adolescents and essentially young. So if we are identical to a body or an animal (and there is no way to distinguish the animal from the body given the unicity of forms), then on the survivalist account the body/animal survives disembodiment just as the adolescent survives growing into adulthood.

If the hylomorphist instead pursues the essentialist claim that the disembodied still possess animality, then I would claim that this use of animality and the essence/contingency distinction is too promiscuous. It seems to me that the mark of contingency is that there are some traits I don't have to always instantiate. I am contingently chubby, not essentially chubby. Even if I were to slim down due to weeks of dieting and exercising, my retaining the power to become chubby would not make it an essential property. This second order power or capacity doesn't make my chubbiness essential. The claim that I am essentially chubby is false – not to mention bad for my self-image and self-esteem. Of course, chubbiness doesn't play the fundamental role that animality does in accounting for my behavior and other features, unifying them and determining those that I can have and can not have.³⁵ And I am only chubby because I am an animal. So one may claim animality is essential because of its centrality to the unity and identity of my parts, while chubbiness is just an accident. There is something to this but I would still reply that animality seems to be dependent upon our humanity or personhood or whatever it is that is *actualized* by the form even when disembodied.

Moreover, it still strikes me as problematic that one is essentially something, an animal, when one doesn't manifest any of the characteristic traits of animality – metabolism, homeostasis, assimilation, and various interaction with environment through a boundary etc. I would think the essence to always be instantiated and actualized, or at least a ready to hand capacity (like the sleeping person if thought is considered to be essential), not a second order capacity.

But I will throw the hylomorphist a bone though it is not a very meaty bone - maybe it is just the subsistent form of a bone. The analogy I offer the hylomorphist is a controversial one, and one that has many disanalogies with the afterlife. Cryptobiotic organisms can enter into suspended states in which they freeze or dry up and metabolism ceases. All one has to do is add water or heat and they spring back to life. I think they should be described as neither alive nor dead when frozen or

³⁵ See the accounts of essence in David Oderberg's *Real Essentialism* and Rae and Moreland's *Body and Soul: Human Nature and the Crisis of Ethics*, InterVarsity Press, 2000

dehydrated.³⁶ They aren't alive for they don't metabolize, but they aren't dead for they have not lost the capacity to reverse the cessation of life processes and this can be done due to their retained structures in their design environment without any intervention, merely the environment restoring heat or water. They have a second-order power. Maybe the disembodied human being can be viewed as roughly the same. It is not engaged in life processes so it is not alive. But it still exists as an animal because of its powers. But there are some striking disanalogies. The cryptobiotic aren't dead, they retain much of their bodies and structures, and they can be revived in their design environment with normal changes. The hylomorphic person is dead, bodiless, and needs to be miraculously relocated in order to configure matter and engage in biological practices constitutive of life.

IV. Recommendations

Perhaps both corruptionists and survivalists may just have to insist that we must just accept that the relationship between the person and the soul is *sui generis* and not expect informative or unifying comparisons. Perhaps they might appeal to a sense in which the human being is merely analogous to other animals and persons. This tack is taken by my ex-student, Mark Spencer, whom my commentator, Chris Kaczor, interviewed for a job but mistakenly didn't hire at Loyola Marymount. If Mark had become Chris's colleague, the latter would have no problem refuting my arguments in this paper. Mark writes of the person being analogously an animal.³⁷ He emphasizes that the human form is only a form analogously to material forms for it is subsistent and doesn't depend upon matter for its continued existence. Its form is the lowest of spiritual substances. Since the human is an animal through this soul, we should expect its animality to be differing from that of other animals. So perhaps the survivalist's immaterial person has properties that somehow make it a fitting subject of thought that its only proper part (the soul) lacks. This *sui generis* hylomorphic person and soul is thus unlike the materialist's person and brain. When the material person is reduced to having the brain as a proper part and no other disjoint proper parts, both brain and person can think. But only the disembodied hylomorphic person thinks, not its soul. The corruptionists can also appeal to the *sui generis* nature of the soul. The corruptionist's soul avoids substantial change when new powers are bestowed upon it. The same is not true for the materialist's brain. The detached brain goes out of existence with the onset of thought. It doesn't become the

36 My description, shared by Cody Gilmore, is controversial. Van Inwagen believes they are actually still alive, their life reduced to the movement of sub-atomic particles. Hoffman and Rosenkrantz believe they are dead and have ceased to exist but come back into existence.

37 See his forthcoming "Personhood and the Separated Soul" *Nova et Vetera* 2014. If Mark had become Chris's colleague, the latter would have no problem refuting my arguments in this paper [^].

subject of those new thoughts. But the absence of comparable cases comes at the expense of if not intelligibility, then at least some understanding.

A comparison that the corruptionists might help himself to is to claim that the soul's relation to the body is as intimate as the hand overlapping the finger so a bruise on the finger is one and the same bruise instantiated in the hand. There are not two bruises, just two bruised things instantiating the very same bruise. Likewise, the soul and the body are distinct thinkers but there is only one thought and willing. If we assume two thinkers with the very same thought or action, it is not then surprising or unfair that one of the thinkers is punished in the later absence of the other for they were thinking the same thoughts and willing the same acts earlier.³⁸ The soul configures the matter of the person and so its intellectual powers are the person's in a way that doesn't involve one not really thinking and only 'borrowing' the thought of the other. This is not the precipitation that Haldane or other corruptionists sought, for the soul would be a genuine thinker when infusing or configuring the embedded person.³⁹

I have my doubts about the soul and human person being so intertwined that thought doesn't belong primarily to one and not the other. An additional worry is that thoughts are individuated by number of thinkers standing in relations to a proposition so there are two thoughts even if there aren't two bruises. So to avoid such queerness, the hylomorphist could accept a form of survivalism that involves immediate resurrection after death.⁴⁰ This will avoid the too many thinkers problem since it doesn't require that a disembodied soul that can think and it will avoid the moral problem since the ante mortem person is the post mortem person. But it doesn't cohere well with claims of rising out of the earth on the last day (Job 19) unless one adds a complicated theory of time in which the apparent gap between death and resurrection is in Ross's words "an objective appearance, a consequent reality, explained by quite different a-temporal reality...we interpret the discourse of traditional belief so as to preserve its truth, even though the explanatory reality is an a-temporal and immediate presence of the person at the General Resurrection."⁴¹ Ross adds that "to

38 And the soul doesn't lose the beatific vision when the person is resurrected.

39 The first person pronoun refers to the person even when used by the soul (pronoun revisionism) or switches reference in different contexts. So the epistemic problem is avoided as is the moral problems in the above text.

40 Immediate resurrection for different reasons has been advocated by Van Dyke op. cit. and Ross "Together with the Body I Love" *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association* vol. 75, *Person, Soul and Immortality*, 2001. See Stump's chapter on God's Eternity pp. 149-152 for a sketch of the causal relationship between the eternal and temporal. *Aquinas*. Op.cit.

fill out the details to accord with the common faith requires some considerable, but interesting gymnastics of relativity thinking.”⁴² Indeed it does!

Ross offers another option to avoid a gap in the person’s existence between death and the resurrection that would also meet my demand to avoid the problem of too many thinkers. But this will strike many readers as not just moving around the lump in the metaphysical carpet but actually making the lump bigger. Ross conjectures there occurs a natural *metamorphosis* that is not substantial change but another form of development, though a posthumous one. Geach ridiculed something similar that he called ‘subtle bodies’ that had a sort of ghostly matter. Ross claims it fits with the hylomorphic account but admits that “militating against the idea is that it requires elements of a physical science we know nothing about.” But he thinks it accords with some old testament passages (Sheol) and even pagan myths of Hades and Tartarus... and folk lore about spirits hanging around for a while, visions of the dead and near-death experiences.”

A current graduate student of mine, Peter Koch, suggests a transitional body that isn’t natural but is instead made by God and serves until the soul is ready for a final transfigured body. A perfect body can’t have an imperfect soul. But this means there are two resurrections and one wonders why some souls weren’t ready long ago to be in God’s presence while the final resurrection is obviously still to come.

I wish I could provide the hylomorphist with an obvious solution with no counterintuitive consequences to the puzzles of disembodied existence. Perhaps invite me back and I will have an uncontroversial solution. Or when you finish your MA degree, come do a Ph.D. with me in Buffalo and we will work on it together. Unlike the suburbs of LA, your grad stipend will go a long way in Buffalo for it is very inexpensive to live there. But that might be because it is a bit of a dump and no

41 Ross asserts “So, the scientific and explanatory reality might be that the saint’s intercession, or the remission of the deceased’s temporal punishment and even the suffering itself, happens at the General Resurrection, which is immediately the next experience upon the saint’s dying, though the prayers, sacrifices, alms of the living, and the miracles interceded for, are later – even centuries later than the saint’s death – ‘in time.’”

42 I haven’t checked their book recently, but I think George and Lee complained that immediate resurrection makes everyone’s death like Mary’s assumption. They may have also wrongly thought that it leads to van Inwagen-like body snatching and divine deception for an illusory body will be in the grave. But the hylomorphic account of same body in the afterlife doesn’t need the same matter. Moreover, van Inwagen’s theory doesn’t involve anything ethically problematic. It is not God’s intentionally misleading (deceiving) the grave viewers, but their ignorance of the metaphysics of resurrection that leads to their errors. For more about why van Inwagen’s view is not morally problematic but actually morally preferable to the corpse’s absence, see my “Soulless Organisms?” Op. cit. The problem with van Inwagen’s theory is metaphysical not moral. If death occurs when the body reaches an entropic point of no return, then the first moment after death will involve a body that will require reassembly, a doctrine he rejects.

one is excited to live there unless they are coming from Detroit. Anyway, I suspect that I'll just have to leave matters with the morbid epistemological speculation that you will find out the truth after you die.