

Soulless Organisms? Hylomorphism vs. Animalism

Introduction

Should an advocate of animalism instead endorse hylomorphism or would it be best for a hylomorphist to switch his support to animalism?¹ More precisely, are the considerations in favor of animalism more successfully met, and its drawbacks better avoided, by adopting a hylomorphic position, or does a Thomistic thinker have reasons to undergo a “metaphysical conversion” and emerge proselytizing for a Catholic animalism? We’ll look for answers by comparing the Angelic Doctor’s account of personal identity to that of the Patron Saint of Animalism, Eric Olson.² Alas, the comparison will be incomplete due to the vast number of points of contention. Nevertheless, I hope to make some headway and provide some results that will be rather startling.

Animal Magnetism and Animal “Turn Offs”

What I find most appealing about animalism is that it avoids the Problem of Too Many Thinkers that plagues its psychological rivals. If there are spatially coincident persons and organisms, or persons embedded within organisms, the shared brain suggests too many thinkers. If the person can use it to think, why can’t the animal? Thus there will be two thinkers where we would like just one. Olson draws our attention to a number of problems, the most interesting being an *epistemic problem* for the animal. Any reason the person had to think he was the person, so would the overlapping thinking animal sharing his thoughts. What Olson has not stressed is that commonsense morality is greatly

¹ Someone might call both theories “animalism.” I am not opposed to this but just stipulating for our purposes that animalism is the theory that we are essentially living animals and soulless.

² Eric Olson, *The Human Animal: Identity without Psychology*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1997), In case readers are wondering, I have made Peter van Inwagen the animalist equivalent of a Church Father rather than Patron Saint.

undermined by the problem of too many thinkers. If human animals can't self-refer or don't know that they are referring to themselves with the first-person pronoun, then how can they be said to autonomously agree to any actions? One couldn't be autonomous if one could not reflect upon one's interests, desires and reasons as *one's* own. Since the autonomy literature often runs parallel to the free will literature, what makes autonomy impossible will, in many cases, also make free will impossible. Without free will there will not be moral responsibility and so our ethics will be turned upside down.

Let's now look at the "Turn Offs" of animalism. It is often pejoratively said of animalism that it understands us to be "mere animals" or "brute animals." The approach makes mental capacities irrelevant to our identity and persistence. What many take to ontologically distinguish us from other creatures, our being reasoners, moral agents, and knowers, are all contingent on the animalist account. Such assumptions result in animalism faring poorly with thought experiments such as the cerebrum transplant that are aimed to elicit our intuitions about what kind of being we are. The animalist needs to explain away the *transplant intuition* that our apparent prudential concern tracks identity and thus our concern for any future being with our cerebrum indicates a concern for our *own* future.

Olson draws upon the Parfit-inspired claim that fission scenarios show that identity is not what matters to us. Parfit holds that if only one of our cerebral hemispheres survived the removal procedure, we would identify with the recipient of that remaining hemisphere, just as we would identify in the absence of any fictional transplants with the maimed possessor of our reduced cerebrum after a stroke destroys one of the two hemispheres. But if both hemispheres are separated and successfully transplanted into

distinct bodies, it would be arbitrary to identify with the person possessing one of the hemispheres, hard to believe that one was a scattered being, and logically problematic to be identical to both cerebrum recipients if they were considered distinct persons. Thus the conclusion that we are not identical to either of them. However, we seem to care about our successors in much the same manner as we would about our own future self in the absence of fission. According to Parfit, the moral of such reactions to fission is that identity is not what matters to most of us. He insists that what we care about in normal cases of survival isn't that we persist but that our psychology does. We care about the being which in which the physical realization of our psychological capacities are found.

Olson draws upon this to argue that that the hypothetical transplant case without the fissioning of cerebral hemispheres should be understood as analogous to the fission case. Our concern for the being that receives the undivided cerebrum in a transplant should not be interpreted as providing any more metaphysical insight into our identity than such concern did in the fission scenario. Practical questions about what matters to us and metaphysical questions whether we would survive some event need to be separated. The answer to the first will not enlighten us about the latter.

I fail to share Parfit and Olson's intuitions about identity not mattering.³ I want to survive into the future and find little comfort in a merely qualitatively identical replacement. Identity seems to be a precondition for much of what we value. Identity is not something only of derivative value due to one's being identical to the subject of the thoughts and feelings, the continuation of such mental states, regardless of who is their subject, being what really, nonderivatively matters. I think the attitude that identity really

³ As does Harold Noonan, *Personal Identity*, (London: Routledge Press, 2003), 169-70.

does matter is very evident when contemplating one's young son or daughter splitting because concern for the well being of offspring is more clearly dependent upon their identity being preserved than their psychology continuing. We don't come to love our children in virtue of their psychology and we would continue to show the same great concern if they underwent radical psychological discontinuity. But if they cease to exist via fission, our concern won't transfer undiminished to their successors.

Moreover, I suspect that if the argument about identity not mattering is based on the famous fission scenario, then it is flawed for the reason Hawley gives: it leaves unexplained correlations between distinct existences.⁴ Entities are dependent upon each other for their existence (or nonexistence) but not in the causal manner that would seem to be needed. Each of the fissioned or branching-produced individuals exists only because of the other but they are without causal connections. Hence the appeal of Wiggins's Only x and y rule. That is, whether person x survives as person y should depend only on the relations between x and y and not upon the existence a qualitatively similar individual elsewhere. So if the original (prefission) person would be the person possessing the left hemisphere of the cerebrum if it wasn't for a psychologically similar competitor person possessing the right hemisphere of the cerebrum, then the person with the right cerebral hemisphere can determine the existence of the person with the left hemisphere without any causal interaction. It would have been a different person with the left hemisphere if it wasn't for the existence of the person with the right hemisphere likewise being psychologically continuous with the original person. So the person with the left hemisphere owes its existence to the person with the right hemisphere, and vice

⁴ Katherine Hawley, 'Fission, Fusion and Intrinsic Facts,' *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 71, (2005): 602-21.

versa, but there are no causal connections between the person with left hemisphere and the person with the right part of the cerebrum despite the existence of each playing a role in the creation or sustaining of the other. Moreover, the original person stands respectively in the same causal relationship to the bodily recipients of its left and right hemispheres when it fissions out of existence as when it survives as the person with the left or the right hemisphere. One would think that the causal relationship between recipients and the original owner of the cerebral hemispheres must be different when the original survives from when it goes out of existence.

If fission scenarios cannot undermine the transplant intuition, one might hope there was a way to both accommodate the intuition and also acknowledge that we were once mindless fetuses. Olson recognizes the appeal of such a hybrid account but protests that the view doesn't seem to admit of a clear statement. "It denies that psychological continuity is necessary for us to persist, because we once persisted without it as fetuses...It also denies that biological continuity ...is either necessary or sufficient for us to persist: not necessary because you don't need it to survive in the transplant case, and not sufficient because the empty-headed being left behind in the transplant case, though biologically continuous with you, would not be you."⁵

Hylomorphic Highlights

My contention is that unbeknownst to Olson, hylomorphism is a hybrid view that offers a way to capture the belief that we are animals and yet that we are to be found wherever our transplanted brain is functioning. So the hylomorphic approach can endorse the transplant intuition and doesn't have to rely upon the claim that identity doesn't

⁵ Eric Olson, "Was I Ever a Fetus." *Philosophy Through Science Fiction*. R. Nichols et al. Eds. (Routledge Press).

matter, nor base that on a questionable interpretation of the fission scenario that runs afoul of the rationale behind the Only x and y rule. Thus it is an attractive third way between animalism and its opponents who claim we are essentially thinking beings overlapping distinct animals. Since hylomorphism does not posit the spatial coincidence of a human person and human animal, but identifies the thinking person and the living animal, there is no problem of too many thinkers.

So what happens with the cerebrum transplant? According to the animalist, an organ has been removed but you, the animal, stays behind with a partially empty skull in what amounts to a permanent vegetative state. Since the hylomorphic account on offer claims that the person is identical to the animal, the reader might think that no one was transplanted when the cerebrum was. If the person is the animal, then a transplant of a person would also be the moving of the animal. But the animalist states that no animal has moved in the transplant scenario. Olson emphasizes that you can't move an animal by moving its cerebrum any more than you can by transplanting one of its kidneys. Moreover, one can't make the case that the mere cerebrum in a transplant scenario is a maimed animal for it lacks the integrative functions characteristic of an animal.

The hylomorphic tradition construes a human being to as a single substance resulting from a soul configuring matter. According to my construal of hylomorphism, the person's soul will configure less matter during the transplant procedure than it did before being the cerebrum was removed, and then will configure more and different matter after the cerebrum has been "replanted." In the interim period, the time which the cerebrum has been removed from one skull but not yet put in another, the person

becomes physically very small, just cerebrum-size. Instead of configuring the body of an animal, the rational soul configures merely the matter of the cerebrum.

To understand why the human animal on the hylomorphic construal behaves differently than does an organism - human or otherwise - on the animalist account, readers need to keep in mind the Thomistic claim that the human animal is a distinctive animal. This is why the human soul had to be imposed by God from the outside rather than emerges from appropriately configured matter as with the vegetative and sensitive souls. Aquinas thought no material organ could give rise to or be responsible for such capacities. If those capacities have gone with the cerebrum then there is reason to think that the person has moved. What is left behind is a mindless animal that doesn't have the capacity for thought and action. In fact, it doesn't even have the potential to acquire or manifest such capacities as the normal fetus does. There is no natural development of the cerebrumless animal that will give rise to thought in the way there is with the developing fetus. If the soul provides the capacity for rational thought, and the person will be found where their soul is, then one has some reason to claim that the soul and the person have moved when the cerebrum does - assuming a story where thought is preserved during the transplant and the recipient of the cerebrum knows secrets that have never been revealed by its possessor.

Let us first look more closely at how the traditional Thomistic succession of souls theory could deal with the transplant thought experiment. Aquinas believed that there is substantial change as a sensitive soul emerges and replaces the vegetative soul and then substantial change again occurs when the rational soul is implanted by God and it takes over the vegetative and sensitive functions. Rational ensoulment means that a new living

entity has appeared on the scene but there isn't a noticeable change in life functions. It has been called "delayed hominization". So the traditional Thomistic theorist posits a new rational soul smoothly coming to configure matter that had been configured before by the sensitive soul.

It is likewise for the recipient of the transplanted cerebrum. One mindless animal has been replaced by a distinct thinking animal with the acquisition of a single organ because there was a rational soul configuring that organ. The soul that configured the cerebrum during the transplant procedure comes to configure the entire organism that receives the transplant. Although it didn't look like the death of one organism and the replacement of it with another, this occurrence is in principle no different from what happens in the Thomistic succession of souls' story with the substantial change from a creature with a sensitive soul to one with a rational soul.

What occurs with the removal of the cerebrum in the transplant thought experiment is basically the reverse. We can call it "departed hominization." Aquinas seems to defend departed hominization. He writes: "In the course of corruption, first the use of reason is lost, but living and breathing remain: then living and breathing go, but a being remains, since it is not corrupted into nothing...when human being is removed, *animal* is not removed as a consequence"⁶ So claiming that substantial change has occurred upon the removal of the cerebrum doesn't involve any radical adjustment to the tenets of the traditional Thomistic hylomorphic theory. The advocate of Aquinas's metaphysics has to anyway accept substantial change and the replacement of one organism by another where there appears to be no death and no corpse has appeared.

⁶ *In Librum De Causis Expositio*, 20-21). Translation from Robert Pasnau, *Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 124.

Bad Biology?

Animals popping in and out of existence without noticeable biological changes appear to be bad biology. The animalist will protest that if human people are identical to human animals as the hylomorphic theorist admits, then they wouldn't move with the cerebrum if the same animal that once had a brain is still in the original operating room in a brainless state. Animalists insist that functioning cerebra are not needed for an animal to persist. Human embryos existed early in their lives without cerebra and older humans in permanent vegetative states have non-functioning and liquefying cerebrums. So it might seem that no human animal has gone out of existence with the removal of its cerebrum in the thought experiment. Moreover, there is no denying that after the removal of the cerebrum for transplant that there is a living cerebrumless animal in the operating room. It would seem that if the hylomorphic theorist claims that the post-transplant cerebrumless animal is not identical to the human being with a cerebrum that was brought into the operating room prior to the surgical procedure, then there has come into existence a new human animal, merely as a result of cerebrum removal! How, asks the amazed animalist, can the hylomorphic thinker accept that a new animal has popped into existence when there hasn't been any noticeable change in life processes during the operation? It certainly doesn't appear that an organism died on the operating table and a new animal took the place of the deceased. Furthermore, since the hylomorphic theorist maintains that the human being has moved with its cerebrum, placing that cerebrum into a mindless animal body will bring about the demise of the animal and its replacement by the human animal that the transplanted human being was identical to. The animalist protests that placing a cerebrum in a cerebrumless entity can no more bring about the

replacement of one animal with another than can the transplant of a liver.⁷ Claims to the contrary are just bad biology.

The hylomorphic tradition has the resources to take much of the sting off the animalist's charge that no animal would have replaced another when the former's cerebrum is removed and that no animal will go out of existence when the functioning cerebrum of another is placed in its skull. It is important for Christian readers to keep in mind their commitment to our being distinct in creation. We are told in *Genesis* that we are made in God's image. Aquinas rejects the claim that "the image of God is also in the body, and not only in the mind" Instead, he claims "...man is the most perfectly like God according to that which he can best imitate God in his intellectual nature."⁸ We are the only rational, self-conscious, free and morally responsible animals. These capacities distinguish us from all other living creatures. If such capacities are granted to have ontological significance rather than just conceived as contingent features of us, then if the matter that composes something with such capacities later composes something without these capacities, none of us would be identical to the resulting entity. So it is not as bizarre for the Christian metaphysician to posit in the cerebrum transplant thought experiment that most of the matter that had composed us moments before our cerebrum's removal, afterwards ceases to do so since the soul that makes our unique mental capacities possible no longer configures that matter. The resulting body composed of the matter that used to be configured by our soul won't even have dormant or stymied mental capacities for they have gone with the transplanted cerebrum.

⁷ Olson. (1997): 114-19.

⁸ ST 1 Q 93 a. 4.

Advocates of hylomorphism might make some odd biological claims but they don't have to claim that we go out of existence when consciousness is irreversibly lost due to stroke or injury as do the psychological accounts of identity that claim we are essentially thinking beings. The "common sense" view is that someone goes with their transplanted (operational) cerebrum but would stay alive in their original body as a mindless animal if their cerebrum is destroyed in say a stroke. My informal polls of students has discovered that they want to say that Grandma stays behind in the vegetative state when her cerebrum is destroyed by a stroke, but that if it were possible to transplant someone's *functioning* cerebrum then that person would be found wherever his working cerebrum was. The animalist says we can't have it both ways since the cerebrumless body and the body with the destroyed cerebrum are functionally equivalent from a biological point of view. But Mark Spencer argues that the hylomorphist can indeed have it both ways, preserving both common sense intuitions.⁹ Spencer suggests that the hylomorphist should see the soul going with the cerebrum rather than staying behind in the comatose or cerebrumless animal. His point is the hylomorphic soul strives to realize its highest powers. So if it has a chance to manifest its rationality, then it will. Since it can't realize its rationality in a cerebrumless body, it will go with the transplant. If the cerebrum is destroyed rather than transplanted, the soul will stay in the body realizing its vegetative powers rather than depart and bodily death ensue. Spencer's idea provides the theoretical framework for treating permanent comas and vegetative states differently from transplants. This gives hylomorphism further appeal since it doesn't have to treat permanent comas and vegetative states like transplants, a point which the animalist

⁹ "A Reexamination of the Hylomorphic Theory of Death." *The Review of Metaphysics*. Forthcoming

makes against advocates of the psychological approach to personal identity. So Terry Schiavio survived in a permanent vegetative state until her husband brought about her death. But if her functioning cerebrum had been transplanted a decade earlier, then she would have switched bodies.

It is also worth adding that the animalist's claim about identity not mattering is, ironically, bad or, at least, peculiar biology. I would claim that survival is in the interest of a mindless animal just as water and sun is in the interest of a plant. But according to the Olson-style animalist, when animals develop significant cognitive function they aren't nonderivatively concerned for themselves. What they come (or ought) to really care about is their psychology continuing, not themselves as the subject of such thought. I think this is an odd sort of disconnect that animals at one stage in their ontogenetic development have survival as a good (which then must obviously be nonderivative) but come later to care only derivatively about their own interests and persistence. That is, they are only interested in remaining alive to realize their psychology, if someone else could do that, their own lives wouldn't be of interest to them.

A similar charge of bad or peculiar biology can be leveled against Olson-style animalism in terms of proper function which will reinforce the above argument, or replace it if it is an error to ascribe interests or a good to mindless animals. Most accounts of health claim organ systems are functioning properly when they make their contribution to the organism's survival. But if we read the Parfit-Olson claim about identity not mattering in a normative fashion, then when the animal's cognitive system develops, it is functioning properly when it serves not the animal's survival but that of its psychology, whoever may be its subject. The animal would be malfunctioning if it cared about its own

survival as a thinker in the transplant scenario. This is thus evidence of a rather peculiar biological disconnect between the proper functioning of an animal's cognition and the rest of its organ systems.

Even with a more sophisticated account of proper function (that doesn't involve crude malfunctioning when saving a stranger's life), the concern for one's own life is still nonderivative, just outweighed, and thus Parfit-Olson account of derivative self concerns is anomalous amongst organ systems. It would be a malfunction on Parfit-Olson's account to prefer i) saving someone's life and surviving with a slight loss of psychological continuity due to an injury that one received during the rescue to ii) saving someone's life, though dying in the process and being replaced by a perfect psychological duplicate.

Purging Souls or Taming Wild Animals?

So if identity matters, then it looks like Thomists are doing better than Olson-style animalists on practical matters. And what matters most to a Christian is the afterlife, without it, St Paul said, our faith is in vain. Readers will suspect the animalist with his purely materialistic conception of the person will fare very poorly here. They may allow that resurrection is something materialists can perhaps provide a plausible account, but Purgatory is less amenable. After all, Purgatory is thought to be the purging of *souls*. Leaving aside the traditional understanding of Purgatory as involving only souls, even if Purgatory were bodily, as it must be for the materialist animalist, what then would be the point of the later resurrection when Jesus returns? If you must be resurrected to experience Purgatory, why the later, even better established, resurrection? Advantage Hylomorphism? Maybe not.

I will suggest that opposing views of Thomistic Purgatory both fall prey to the same problem of too many thinkers. So whether it is you in Purgatory as a disembodied human being with your soul as your only part or constituted by your soul, as Eberl, Brown and Stump speculate, or if it is not you but just your soul in Purgatory, as seems to be Pasnau and Toner's understanding of Aquinas, there will be the problem of a thinking soul being a second thinker if not in Purgatory, then earlier on earth.¹⁰ Furthermore, on the latter interpretation, there will be an additional problem of *fairness* as the individual being purged is not the agent that sinned. On both interpretations, there will be a problem of *effectiveness* of Purgatory as it seems virtue must be inculcated into the bodiless.

Most troubling is that if disembodied souls can think in Purgatory, then they should be able to think prior to that posthumous disembodied state when they earlier configured matter. Given that Aquinas maintains that the person's abstract thoughts are the result of capacities it does not have in virtue of its physical 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 plague us with a hylomorphic version of the much discussed Problem of 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 someone might point out that Aquinas believes that even intellectual thought involves phantasms, images left

¹⁰ Jason Eberl, "Do Human Beings Persist Between Death and Resurrection?" in *Metaphysics and God: Essays in Honor of Eleonore Stump*, ed. Kevin Timpe (New York: Routledge). Eleonore Stump, *Aquinas*, (New York: Routledge, 2003), 53. Patrick Toner, "Personhood and Death in St. Thomas Aquinas," *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 26 (2009) and his "On Hylemorphism and Personal Identity" *European Journal of Philosophy*. Forthcoming.

over from sensations, their production dependent upon material organs. The soul needs phantasms produced by organs. It can't generate them. But a soul in Purgatory is capable of thought only because God provides a substitute for the phantasms.¹¹ Thus the soul is not a self-sufficient thinker. But why does that help with the problem of too many thinkers? If the soul is the subject of thought, though with God providing a substitute for the phantasms, why couldn't the earlier soul think with the brain providing the phantasms? Aquinas seems to imply as much as he says "The soul, therefore, when united to the body, consistently with that mode of existence, has a mode of understanding by turning to corporeal phantasms; but when it is separated from the body, it has a mode of understanding by turning to simply intelligible objects, as is proper of other separated substances."¹² Toner thinks this quote provides the solution to the problem of too many thinkers while I think it gives rise to the problem. My view is that the passage merely shows that the anti-mortem soul thinks in a different but analogous manner to the posthumous soul. What is needed for a *solution* is an account of how embodiment keeps the soul from thinking, rendering it merely a non-thinking contributor to the person's thought, roughly akin to the way the materialist understands neurons to contribute to the production of thought without themselves thinking such thoughts.

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 for thought to occur – just as Eberl conjectures. It follows that the human being is in Purgatory in a bodiless form. There would then be an immaterial human being whose

¹¹ ST Q 89 a. r. 3

¹² ST Q. 89. a. 1. See Toner's "Personhood and Death in Thomas."

only proper part is an immaterial soul. Call this view “compositional hylomorphism.” Leaving aside that this violates the mereological axiom of weak supplementation,¹³ it seems to run afoul of the necessity of identity. The reason Compositional Hylomorphism violates the necessity of identity is that it posits that one is identical to one’s body (composed of soul and matter) and then exists later in Purgatory without the body.

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. Let’s call this view ‘Constitutional Hylomorphism.’ However, 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

¹³ The axiom that anything with a proper part has at least one other.

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.¹⁴

Constitutional Hylomorphism violates the constitution principle 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 (i.e., 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).¹⁵ 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!

Even if I am wrong about the unsuitability of compositional and constitutional models for hylomorphism, there is still the considerable problem of what is left of the human being to do the thinking in Purgatory? The soul is its only part. If the soul doesn't combine with any other parts to produce thought, how can we resist saying the soul is the thinker? We can't use as an analogy the person seeing in virtue of the eyes seeing, even though the eyes themselves don't literally see. It is clear that our eyes are not sufficient for vision, but the departed soul seems sufficient for thought. Hence the possibility that the postmortem separated "soul understands by means of participated species, arising

¹⁴ Judith Thomson, "The Statue and the Clay," *Nous*, 32, (1998): 149-173.

¹⁵ Lynne Baker, *Persons and Bodies: A Constitution View*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 43.

from the influence of the divine light...”¹⁶ will mean the problem of an ante-mortem soul thinking with the phantasms.

Can this be avoided? I suspect it can't, nonetheless, I will try to sketch an approach others can perhaps improve upon. If successful, it will offer an advantage over animalism in its treatment of Unger's problem of the thinking many and Olson's problem of the thinking brain, the latter which Olson acknowledged as the most troubling aspect of his animalism.¹⁷ The hylomorphic account denies thought to the brain or any organ.¹⁸ The thought is made possible by a soul whose powers transcend its material organs. It would be a mistake to understand the soul apart from the body doing such thinking. To do so is to think of the soul as having a *part* that doesn't configure any material part of the organism and that this non-configuring immaterial part is doing the abstract thinking. This will lead one to think of the soul as a subject of thought, rather than merely contributing to the human being's thinking. Moreover, if we think of the soul as an extended simple,¹⁹ then it won't even be correct to say that the brain *plus* the soul that thinks, or the head *plus* the soul that thinks. To do so is to either abstract away from the soul's configuration of the human being or to again treat the soul as if it had parts, one part pairing with the head, another (overlapping) part with the brain. Rather, the extended, simple (partless) soul configures the rest of the body so it enables the entire human being alone to think. The soul doesn't think but its intimate connection to the

¹⁶ST Q 75 a. 2 reply obj. 2.

¹⁷ Eric Olson, *What are We? A Study in Personal Ontology*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 216. Olson's solution is to deny the brain's existence! There are just "simples arranged brain-wise."

¹⁸ ST Q. 76 a. 8. r. 4.

¹⁹ Eleonore Stump, "Non-Cartesian Substance Dualism and Materialism without Reductionism", *Faith and Philosophy* 12, (1995): 511-512.

human body that it configures renders the human being capable of thought. When the soul is detached, the *bestowed* or *absorbed* powers making the human being the subject of thought then *drain* or *flow back* and are manifested by the soul alone.

Does this work? I doubt it. 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 but *flow* back into the soul when it is disembodied? In fact, it is easier to envision an analogy to the contrary. If a brain in a vat can think, then why would attaching it to a body prevent its thinking? It will come to use the body's sense organs rather than receive inputs from the vat machinery, but it will think in both scenarios. The artificial vat inputs are akin to the divinely bestowed 'participated species' while the products of the sense organs are like the phantasms.

It is no help to appeal to thought being maximal for that seems to me to be just a desperate attempt to linguistically stipulate away a substantial metaphysical problem.

One could turn to God to bestow missing powers on the detached soul when before it merely contributed to thought? However, one problem would seem that the soul belongs ontologically to the wrong category of thing to be a thinker. Forms seem more on the property side of the substance/property divide. But interpreting the soul more substantially, the acquisition of the capacity to be a subject of thought flirts with substantial 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 succession of souls theory doesn't bestow new cognitive powers on an earlier soul without them. Of course, the rational embodied soul is not

previously uninvolved with thought, but its being the subject of thought is akin to some neurons that contributed to thought suddenly becoming thinkers of those thoughts.

Perhaps the best thing for the Thomist to do is to accept that we think derivatively in virtue of our soul strictly or nonderivatively 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 earlier mentioned epistemic and duplication problems.²⁰ On this account, the first person pronoun “I” doesn’t automatically refer to all of its thinkers but to the individual with the appropriate persistence conditions. Or if pronoun revisionism is too conventional and thus suspect as a linguistic quick fix to a substantial metaphysical problem, the inability of the soul to refer in the manner characteristic of the essential indexical can be built into the soul’s nature. One, perhaps tolerable, problem with this solution 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.”²¹

An additional problem for Toner if he accepts Noonan’s assistance, though not for Eberl if he does so as well, is there is no human being for the soul to refer to in Purgatory with the first person pronoun. The hylomorphic theorist could borrow from three other metaphysics (the occasional identity of Gallois, the four-dimensionalist worm theory a la Hudson, or a Sider-like stage theory) that can place the human being *and* his soul in Purgatory without running afoul of the mereological principle of weak supplementation

²⁰ Noonan. 211.

²¹ Roderick Chisholm, *Persons and Objects*. (Lasalle: Open Court 1976), 104. The contrary view does have illustrious representatives like David Lewis holds that persons think in virtue of their perduring stages.

as do Eberl and Stump's accounts. While these three accounts avoid what Olson derided as "ontological double vision"²² of two coinciding immaterial thinking beings in Purgatory, they wouldn't prevent the earlier embodied soul from thinking along with the earthly human being.²³

Even if a posthumous thinking soul doesn't create a problem of too many ante-mortem thinkers, if it is not you in Purgatory, there is problem of unfairness. Since Purgatory is described by Aquinas as unpleasant, there arises the question of fairness to the soul who suffers for what the human being had done earlier. The soul is not the responsible agent, the human being is, but the soul suffers for the latter's sins.

Someone might be tempted to say that identity is not what matters, psychology is. So if the soul becomes the subject of thought, then it is understandable that the person should care about his soul and the soul care about the resulting person that will, come resurrection, be the thinker of its thoughts once again. Thus the apparent unfairness will be neutralized by the soul sharing the person's interests in psychological continuity. But we have already questioned the Parfitian version of this. And it turns out to be quite at odds with Catholic bioethics. If it is merely psychology that matters to us, then it is a short step to a McMahan-like thesis that one can only be harmed if one loses out on a future that one would have been otherwise psychologically connected. Harm, on McMahan's *Time Relative Interests Account* is a function of the degree and type of psychological connections. So aborting the mindless would not be a harm since they lack

²² "A Compound of Two Substances," ed. Kevin Corcoran, *Soul, Body and Survival*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001), 73-88.

²³ Andre Gallois, *Occasions of Identity*. (Oxford University Press, 1998). Hud Hudson, *A Materialist Conception of the Human Person*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002), 131. Ted Sider, *Four Dimensionalism: An Ontology of Persistence and Time*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

what matters to us. But if they would be harmed, then it seems that psychology isn't the whole story about what matters. Thus we should not expect the soul to be unmoved by its suffering so a later thinker can benefit.

A third consideration involves the *effectiveness* of Purgatory in the Thomistic framework. It would seem that much of our psychology that needs to be purified is a result of our bodily-based appetites. A bodiless experience of Purgatory seems not to be the best way to bring about the desired transformation. We have already explored some of these problems when we considered that Purgatory would not involve us but instead just our soul. But even if the matterless human being experiences Purgatory with a soul as its only proper part, there are similar worries about the purifying transformation occurring without one's body undergoing the experience. So much of the need for Purgatory is a result of our physical drives. It is quite odd that the physical source of our vices is not present when we purge ourselves of these flaws. The classical conception of virtue is possession of the right amount of desire. This mean is acquired. The desires must exist to be appropriately modified. If Purgatory involves anything like the inculcation of virtue, then the body may be necessary.

Perhaps one could claim that the soul's experience of an existence free of the turmoil produced by one's body-based passions and drives can be a useful lesson to the later resurrected human being. That is, awareness of what a purer existence could function as an ideal to guide later behavior. But this awareness would be only quasi-recollection. Other solutions in which the soul has its own psychological traits and flaws (pride being not a bodily-based vice) will bring us back to a too many thinkers' problem.

Let us turn now to the animalist treatment of Purgatory. I hope that speaking of materialist conception of the Catholic person sounds merely oxymoronic rather than heretical. I mentioned above that if you will be in Purgatory as a material being, then it is hard to envision what the point of the later resurrection promised upon Jesus' return. The best scenario for the materialist is to have Purgatory post-resurrection. Since such a position denies that we are ensouled, it obviously can't accept that we or one of our parts exist in an immaterial state. Now there is actually some truth to the claim of an embodied Purgatory. The Nicene Creed states the Lord will return to judge the living *and the dead*. So there will be people alive when Jesus returns and they, we assume, will need to undergo the process of purgation. Since even thehylomorphist is going to be committed to some people apparently experiencing Purgatory embodied, it doesn't seem an implausible conjecture that all of us do so. But this runs afoul of tradition that deems Purgatory for most people to be prior to resurrection and legitimate recipients of prayer, the saintly even influential.

Given the earlier mentioned considerations of fairness and a problem of thinking parts, it won't help the animalist if it is just your cerebrum in Purgatory. But if you could survive, as Olson maintains, as a maimed human being pared down to the size of the brain, then we can make sense of both you being in Purgatory and there still being a need for a later resurrection. If your *whole* resurrected body is in Purgatory, there wouldn't be a point of the later resurrection. However, this vision of an intermediate afterlife is extremely weird for it renders Purgatory, to borrow a favorite image of epistemologists, like a giant vat full of brains.

Purgatory will necessitate van Inwagen-style body takings and replacements, even if one accepts a reassembly model of the later resurrection in order to avoid this.²⁴ Olson calls this the “body snatching account” and says that God would be involved in “egregious systematic deception.”²⁵ I find the charge of deception and the body snatching thesis morally less problematic than most. First, the body taking and replacement may not be deception for deception must be intentional. I would define *deception* along the lines of something like “intentionally keeping the truth from someone.” While God deliberately creates a body that looks like that of the deceased, his intention may not be to deceive survivors and keep them from believing the corpse is a duplicate.

God’s actions will appear a lot less objectionable if we imagine that the alternative to taking and replacing the body, assuming the Olson/van Inwagen metaphysics where there must be the immanent causation of the organism’s previous states and life processes causing its later states and life processes. There would not be any remains of the dead to be viewed by the survivors. A benevolent God would want us to know that our loved ones (and others) have died and have not just gone missing. That is one thing that the corpse or a replacement corpse does. In its absence, without the so-called deception, we would be left wondering whether our loved ones were still alive and in need of our help. It wouldn’t even help for God to have inscribed in Scripture that bodies would be taken upon death for we still won’t know whether someone was dead and bereavement should begin or if they had gone missing.

²⁴ While the reassembly account of resurrection would allow people’s remains to now decay in the grave, if there are people *presently* in Purgatory, parts of their remains must *now* be missing.

²⁵ Eric Olson, “Death, Decay and the Afterlife.” Keith Augustine, ed., *The Myth of Afterlife*. (McFarland Press), Forthcoming.

So it is for the best that God replaces the bodies of the deceased with duplicates. But someone might say that just makes it a benevolent deception for the knowledge that someone is dead will be inferred from God causing a fallacious perceptual belief. So God brings about a good state through deceptive means since people have inferred their belief about the deceased from perceiving their motionless body. However, while it is likely that people will reason via a false belief about someone's actual corpse being in view, that doesn't have to be God's intention. He merely intends for people to believe someone is dead (rather than missing and in need etc). He need not intend that they have the false belief that they see actual remains. He wouldn't stop people from acquiring Olson or van Inwagen's metaphysics. It is our metaphysical obtuseness, not God's deception that keeps us from the truth. And this failure of God to reveal his motives is not that different from many other such occasions that give apologists their work

It may even be the case that very few people ever are remotely caused by God to have a perceptual error for it might be that God only takes and replaces parts of the brain that are not visible to anyone viewing the body unless they were a coroner or a doctor etc. So very few people would have false beliefs, hence the alleged deception would not be 'systematic'. Now one might wonder why would God create a duplicate brain if the rest of the body was there to inform us to begin mourning – and to facilitate grieving by providing a physical link to the deceased. Well, God could very well have good reason to create the replica for doctors, coroners and med students who need to determine the cause of death or learn some anatomy. So God could at most be accused of *permitting* a widespread false belief that the deceased have the remains of their brain ensconced within their skull. Anyway, my point is that we can give a *defense*, which for all we know

is true, that avoids divine deception and is morally quite preferable to the alternatives, given the constraints of the Olson's van Inwagen-inspired metaphysics.

VII. Scorekeeping

As I said at the outset, the comparison would be incomplete and thus inconclusive. Even on the three issues discussed, I suspect different readers will balance the reasons differently. My hope is that I have put more considerations on the scales than were there before and removed some that shouldn't have been so placed.