

Editor's Introduction

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Hylomorphism is the theory according to which, within a specified domain, the entities within that domain are best understood as comprised of both matter and form. Hylomorphism was first introduced as a theory of material objects by Aristotle (though Plato's own view of material objects can, to a certain extent, be considered hylomorphic). Aristotle introduced the theory of hylomorphism in his *Physics* as a general account of physical change, but he also extended his theory to offer detailed analyses of various phenomena in chemistry (*On Generation and Corruption*), biology (*On the Soul*), and cosmology (the later books of his *Metaphysics*). During the medieval period, hylomorphism became the dominant view. Medieval scholastics advanced sophisticated hylomorphic theories of the natural world and used the language of form and matter to articulate and to elucidate various theological doctrines. Throughout this period there were ongoing debates concerning the scope of hylomorphism (whether immaterial substances, such as angels and the human soul, also admit of a hylomorphic analysis¹) and the internal hylomorphic structure of living substances (whether there is to be found one or several forms within each living body²). At the start of the early modern period, however, with the rise of modern science, notions of form and matter were rejected in favor of more "empirically adequate" mechanistic explanations. As the story goes, the early moderns liberated philosophy from the constraints of the Aristotelian worldview and laid the groundwork for a more scientifically-informed reductionist account of material objects. For centuries

¹ For a helpful overview of the medieval debate over whether angels are compounds of form and matter see John F. Wippel, "Metaphysical Composition of Angels in Bonaventure, Aquinas, and Godfrey of Fontaines", in Tobias Hoffman (ed.), *A Companion to Angels in Medieval Philosophy* (Leiden: Brill, 2012): pp. 45-53.

² For a helpful overview of the medieval debate over whether there is a plurality of substantial forms within a human being see Robert Pasnau, *Metaphysical Themes 1274-1671* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011): pp. 574-596.

afterward, the theory of hylomorphism was seen by the vast majority of philosophers as obscure, unmotivated, and outdated.³

Recently, however, there has been a revival of interest in Aristotelian and Neo-Aristotelian approaches to various issues in contemporary analytic philosophy.⁴ And within that revival, hylomorphism, too, has made something of a comeback.⁵ Hylomorphic views have been re-introduced into contemporary debates within the subdisciplines of logic⁶, mereology⁷,

³ For some helpful overviews of the history of hylomorphism, especially its rejection in the early modern period, see Pasnau, *Metaphysical Themes*, pp. 549-573; Benjamin Hill, “Substantial Forms and the Rise of Modern Science”, *Saint Anselm Journal*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (Fall 2007); David Banach, “What Killed Substantial Form?”, *Saint Anselm Journal*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (Fall 2007).

⁴ This is especially true in contemporary analytic metaphysics, as evidenced by the number of recent volumes dedicated to Neo-Aristotelian approaches. See Tuomas E. Tahko (ed.), *Contemporary Aristotelian Metaphysics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); John Greco and Ruth Groff (eds.), *Powers and Capacities in Philosophy: The New Aristotelianism* (New York: Routledge, 2012); Edward Feser (ed.), *Aristotle on Method and Metaphysics* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2013); Daniel D. Novotny and Lukas Novak (eds.), *Neo-Aristotelian Perspectives in Metaphysics* (New York: Routledge, 2014); Lukas Novak, Daniel D. Novotny, Prokop Sousedik, and David Svoboda (eds.), *Metaphysics: Aristotelian, Scholastic, Analytic* (Frankfurt: Ontos Verlag, 2012); Riin Sirkel and Tuomas E. Tahko (eds.), “Aristotelian Metaphysics: Essence and Ground”, *Studia Philosophica Estonica*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (2014); Rafael Huntelmann and Johannes Hattler (eds.), *New Scholasticism Meets Analytic Philosophy* (Neunkirchen-Seelscheid, Germany: Editiones Scholasticae, 2015); William M.R. Simpson, Robert C. Koons, and Nicholas J. Teh (eds.), *Neo-Aristotelian Perspectives on Contemporary Science* (New York: Routledge, 2017).

⁵ This too is evidenced by the number of recent volumes and special issues dedicated to the topic. See, for example, David S. Oderberg (ed.), *Form and Matter: Themes in Contemporary Metaphysics* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 1999); *Res Philosophica*: Special Issue on “Neo-Aristotelian Themes in Metaphysics and the Philosophy of Mind”, Vol. 91, No. 2 (Apr., 2014); Simpson, Koons, and Teh, *Neo-Aristotelian Perspectives on Contemporary Science*; *Metaphysics*: Special Issue on “Hylomorphism”, Vol. 1, No. 1 (2018); *Synthese*: Special Issue on “Form, Structure, and Hylomorphism” (forthcoming); *Logical Analysis and History of Philosophy*: Special Issue on “Forms, Kinds, Essences”, Vol. 24 (forthcoming). See also Andrew Bailey and Shane Maxwell Wilkins, “Contemporary Hylomorphism”, *Oxford Bibliographies* (Feb., 2018).

⁶ Catarina Dutilh Novaes, “Reassessing Logical Hylomorphism and the Demarcation of Logical Constants”, *Synthese*, Vol. 185, No. 3 (Apr., 2012): pp. 387-410.

⁷ Christopher M. Brown, *Aquinas and the Ship of Theseus: Solving Puzzles about Material Objects* (New York: Continuum, 2005); Kathrin Koslicki, *The Structure of Objects* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008); Jeffrey E. Brower, *Aquinas’s Ontology of the Material World: Change, Hylomorphism, and Material Objects* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014); Ross D. Inman, *Substance and the Fundamentality of the Familiar: A Neo-Aristotelian Mereology* (New York: Routledge, 2017); William Jaworski, “Hylomorphism and Part-Whole Realism”, *Ancient Philosophy Today*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (Apr., 2019): pp. 108-127.

ontology of the human person⁸, philosophy of mind⁹, philosophy of science¹⁰, and philosophy of religion¹¹, among others. True, not everyone is on board with hylomorphism. There have also been several new critiques of hylomorphism: some critical of the theory's intended scope, others critical of certain features of particular versions of the theory, and some critical even of its most basic claims.¹² But the fact that authors have felt the need to offer new critiques of the theory suggests that hylomorphism is being taken seriously once more.

Contemporary discussions of hylomorphism have found philosophers revisiting classic points of contention concerning the theory's scope, application, and utility, but it has also led philosophers to carefully reconsider how best to understand hylomorphism's most basic claims.

⁸ David B. Hershenov "A Hylomorphic Account of Personal Identity Thought Experiments", *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. 82, No. 3 (Summer, 2008): pp. 481-502; David B. Hershenov, "Soulless Organisms? Hylomorphism vs. Animalism", *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. 85, No. 3 (Summer, 2011): pp. 465-482; Patrick Toner, "Hylemorphic Animalism", *Philosophical Studies*, Vol. 155, No. 1 (Aug., 2011): pp. 65-81; Patrick Toner, "Hylemorphism, Remnant Persons, and Personhood", *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 44, No. 1 (Feb., 2014): pp. 76-96; Allison K. Thornton, "Disembodied Animals", *American Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. 56, No. 2 (Apr., 2019): pp. 203-217; Jason T. Eberl, *The Nature of Human Persons: Metaphysics and Bioethics* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2020).

⁹ Eleonore Stump, "Non-Cartesian Substance Dualism and Materialism Without Reductionism", *Faith and Philosophy*, Vol. 12, No. 4 (Oct., 1995): pp. 505-531; John Haldane, "A Return to Form in the Philosophy of Mind", *Ratio*, Vol. 11, No. 3 (Dec., 1998): pp. 253-277; David S. Oderberg, "Hylemorphic Dualism", *Social Philosophy and Policy*, Vol. 22, No. 2 (Jul., 2005): pp. 70-99; John Mouracade, "Aristotelian Hylomorphism and Non-Reductive Materialism", *Apeiron*, Vol. 41, No. 3 (Sep., 2008): pp. 153-178; William Jaworski, *Philosophy of Mind: A Comprehensive Introduction* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011); James D. Madden, *Mind, Matter, and Nature: A Thomistic Proposal for the Philosophy of Mind* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2013); and William Jaworski, *Structure and the Metaphysics of Mind: How Hylomorphism Solves the Mind-Body Problem* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016). See also the Jaworski and De Haan contributions to the Simpson, Koons, and Teh Volume.

¹⁰ See, for example, Edward Feser, *Aristotle's Revenge: The Metaphysical Foundations of Physical and Biological Science* (Neunkirchen-Seelscheid, Germany: Editiones Scholasticae, 2019). See also the Koons, Morganti, and Brungardt contributions to the *Synthese* special issue, as well as the essays included in the Simpson, Koons, and Teh volume.

¹¹ For a helpful overview, see James Madden, "Thomistic Hylomorphism and Philosophy of Mind and Philosophy of Religion", *Philosophy Compass*, Vol. 8, No. 7 (Jul., 2013): pp. 664-676. See below for a brief discussion of the ongoing debate concerning hylomorphism and the afterlife.

¹² E.J. Lowe, "Form Without Matter", *Ratio*, Vol. 11, No. 3 (Dec., 1998): pp. 214-234; Gordon P. Barnes, "The Paradoxes of Hylomorphism", *The Review of Metaphysics*, Vol. 56, No. 3 (Mar., 2003): pp. 501-523; Jeff McMahan, *The Ethics of Killing: Problems at the Margins of Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003): pp. 7-14; Howard Robinson, "Modern Hylomorphism and the Reality and Causal Power of Structure", *Res Philosophica*, Vol. 91, No. 2 (Apr., 2014): pp. 203-214; Maegan Fairchild, "A Paradox of Matter and Form", *Thought*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (Mar., 2017): pp. 33-42; Antonella Corradini, "Hylomorphism: A Critical Analysis", *Acta Analytica*, Vol. 34, No. 3 (Jan., 2019): pp. 345-361; M. Oreste Fiocco, "Each Thing is Fundamental: Against Hylomorphism and Hierarchical Structure", *American Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. 56, No. 3 (Jul., 2019): pp. 289-301; John Heil, "Hylomorphism: What's Not to Like?", *Synthese* (forthcoming).

In what follows, I begin by providing a brief overview of some of these main points of discussion in the contemporary literature on hylomorphism and some of the main hylomorphic views currently on offer. After that I provide an overview of some of the main topics discussed in this special issue, offering a brief summary of each contribution.

Disputed Questions

Perhaps the most basic question that one can ask about the theory of hylomorphism is to ask about the two main terms in its formulation. To what do these two terms refer? What exactly is a form? And what do we mean by ‘matter’? In contemporary discussions of hylomorphism there are a wide variety of understandings of these two terms.¹³ With respect to form, some authors take the form of a material object to be a sort of complex relation that holds between its material parts.¹⁴ Other authors take the form of a material object to be a certain kind of structure¹⁵ or configuration¹⁶ realized in its matter. Others take the form of a material object to be a kind of power or disposition.¹⁷ Still others take the form of a material object to be a kind of process or activity occurring in its matter.¹⁸ With respect to matter, some authors, following St. Thomas

¹³ For a helpful overview of the main views currently on offer, see Kathrin Koslicki, *Form, Matter, Substance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018). See Chapter 2 for her discussion of competing conceptions of matter and Chapter 3 for her discussion of competing conceptions of form.

¹⁴ Kit Fine, “Things and Their Parts”, *Midwest Studies in Philosophy*, Vol. 23, No. 1 (1999): pp. 61-74; Mark Johnston, “Hylomorphism”, *The Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 103, No. 12 (Dec., 2006): pp. 652-698; Michele Paoletti, “Structures as Relations”, *Synthese* (forthcoming).

¹⁵ Koslicki, *The Structure of Objects*; Jaworski, *Structure and the Metaphysics of Mind*.

¹⁶ Eleonore Stump, *Aquinas* (New York: Routledge, 2003): Chapter 6; Eleonore Stump, “Substances and Artifacts in Aquinas’s Metaphysics,” in Thomas M. Crisp, Matthew Davidson and David Vander Laan (eds.), *Knowledge and Reality: Essays in Honor of Alvin Plantinga* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2006): pp. 63-80; Eleonore Stump, “Emergence, Causal Powers, and Aristotelianism in Metaphysics,” in Ruth Groff and John Greco (eds.), *Powers and Capacities in Philosophy: The New Aristotelianism* (New York: Routledge, 2012): pp. 48-68.

¹⁷ Michael C. Rea, “Hylomorphism Reconditioned”, *Philosophical Perspectives*, Vol. 25, No. 1 (Dec., 2011): pp. 341-358; Jaworski, *Structure and the Metaphysics of Mind*, pp. 94, 97; Anna Marmodoro and Christopher J. Austin, “Structural Powers and the Homeodynamic Unity of Organisms”, in William M. R. Simpson, Robert C. Koons, and Nicholas J. Teh (eds.), *Neo-Aristotelian Perspectives on Contemporary Science* (New York: Routledge, 2017): pp. 169-183; Anna Marmodoro, “Power Mereology: Structural versus Substantial Powers”, in Michele Paoletti and Francesco Orilia (eds.), *Philosophical and Scientific Perspectives on Downward Causation* (New York: Routledge, 2017): pp. 110-128.

¹⁸ Robert C. Koons, “Stalwart vs. Faint-Hearted Hylomorphism: Toward an Aristotelian Account of Composition”, *Res Philosophica*, Vol. 91, No. 2 (Apr., 2014): pp. 151-177; Jaworski, *Structure and the Metaphysics of Mind*, pp. 14-15, 104; Christopher J. Austin, “A Biologically Informed Hylomorphism”, in William M. R. Simpson, Robert C.

Aquinas, take the underlying matter of a material object to be prime matter, a sort of purely potential substrate completely lacking in any actual features of its own.¹⁹ Other authors take the matter of a material object to be a sort of “gunky stuff”: “gunky”, in that it is infinitely divisible, and “stuff” in that it is non-particulate.²⁰ Still others take the matter of a material object to be a set or collection of smaller material objects, perhaps even simples or atoms.²¹

Another fundamental question one can ask about the theory of hylomorphism concerns the relationship between the matter, the form, and that which is said to be comprised of matter and form. What does it mean for something to be “comprised” of both matter and form? Are matter and form to be understood as parts or components of the thing? If so, is the form of a material object a part of that object in the same way that its material parts are? Some authors do indeed take matter and form to be proper parts of the object that they compose.²² Some even take the form of an object to be a part of that object in the very same way that its material parts are.²³ Other authors reject a mereological construal of hylomorphism, arguing that form is best understood not as some further part of an object but as an irreducible aspect, feature, or organizing principle of that object.²⁴

There are also key questions in contemporary discussions of hylomorphism about the relationship between a hylomorphic compound and its *material* parts. Are hylomorphic wholes grounded in their material parts or are the material parts of a hylomorphic compound grounded

Koons, and Nicholas J. The (eds.), *Neo-Aristotelian Perspectives on Contemporary Science* (New York: Routledge, 2017): pp. 185-209; Jeremy W. Skrzypek, “From Potency to Act: Hyloenergeism”, *Synthese* (forthcoming). Koons seems to have distanced himself from his earlier process view in more recent works, however (see, for example, Robert C. Koons, “Forms as Simple and Individual Grounds of Things’ Natures”, *Metaphysics*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (2018): pp. 1-11).

¹⁹ David Oderberg, *Real Essentialism* (New York: Routledge, 2008): pp. 71-76.

²⁰ Brower, *Aquinas’s Ontology of the Material World*, pp. 113-129.

²¹ Koslicki, *Form, Matter, Substance*, pp. 57-61; Jaworski, *Structure and the Metaphysics of Mind*, pp. 117-123.

²² Fine, “Things and Their Parts”, p. 72; Koslicki, *The Structure of Objects*, p. 181.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Johnston, “Hylomorphism”, pp. 652-653, 659, and 672-673; Marmodoro, “Aristotle’s Hylomorphism Without Reconditioning”; Jaworski, *Structure and the Metaphysics of Mind*, pp. 327-329.

in the whole? Is a hylomorphic composite an emergent entity, something over and above the material parts on which it depends? Or is a hylomorphic composite best understood as ontologically prior to its parts in such a way that each of its parts depends for its existence and identity on the whole? Traditionally, hylomorphism, at least in its Thomistic formulation, was seen as committed to the latter understanding,²⁵ though many contemporary authors have defended emergent, bottom-up conceptions of the view.²⁶ Others, following the more Thomistic understanding, have defended “submergent”, top-down conceptions of hylomorphism.²⁷

Many of the contemporary discussions concerning hylomorphism have to do with its scope. What sorts of things admit of a hylomorphic analysis? Are all material objects comprised of both matter and form or are only some material objects hylomorphically composed? Can a hylomorphic analysis be extended beyond the material? Naturally, contemporary authors are less concerned about whether souls or angels admit of hylomorphic analysis, but there is some discussion about whether it can be applied to the realm of abstracta, that is whether properties or propositions should also be understood as comprised of something akin to matter and something corresponding to form.²⁸

Another area in which hylomorphic views have been re-introduced is the philosophy of science, including the philosophies of physics, chemistry, and biology. Historically,

²⁵ For a helpful overview of St. Thomas’s position see Joseph Bobik, *Aquinas on Matter and Form and the Elements* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1998). See also the contributed article by Gyula Klima in the present volume. It should be pointed out, however, that there are also traditional, non-Thomistic formulations of hylomorphism which are not so committed (see for example, Thomas M. Ward’s discussion of the Scotistic formulation in his *John Duns Scotus on Parts, Wholes, and Hylomorphism* (Leiden: Brill, 2014)).

²⁶ Koslicki, *The Structure of Objects*; Koons, “Stalwart vs. Faint-Hearted Hylomorphism”; Jaworski, *Structure and the Metaphysics of Mind*. It seems to me that any version of hylomorphism according to which the ‘matter’ of a hylomorphic compound refers to a set or collection of smaller material objects is committed to something like this view.

²⁷ Oderberg, *Real Essentialism*; Patrick Toner, “Emergent Substance”, *Philosophical Studies*, Vol. 141, No. 3 (Dec., 2008): pp. 281-297; Stump, “Emergence, Causal Powers, and Aristotelianism in Metaphysics”; Inman, *Substance and the Fundamentality of the Familiar*.

²⁸ Teresa Britton, “The Limits of Hylomorphism”, *Metaphysica*, Vol. 13, No. 2 (Mar., 2012): pp. 145-153; Graham Renz, “Hylomorphism and Complex Properties”, *Metaphysica* (forthcoming).

hylomorphism was abandoned as a theory of the natural world largely because it was regarded, along with the rest of the Aristotelian worldview in which it was a key explanatory tool, as having been overturned by the dramatic paradigm shifts that occurred in the natural sciences during the early modern period. In light of its apparent early modern demise, the recent resurgence of interest in hylomorphism in the philosophy of science is indeed a rather surprising development. What relevance, what application, what utility could hylomorphism possibly hope to have in a post-Cartesian, post-Darwinian world? Several contemporary proponents of hylomorphism have argued that hylomorphism is not only compatible with recent observations and theories within the empirical sciences but also illuminative or explanatory of those observations and theories. And so there are ongoing discussions concerning possible applications of the theory of hylomorphism to various phenomena in physics and the special sciences, and the ways in which a hylomorphic theory of the natural world might need to be revised or adapted to accommodate more recent findings within those sciences.²⁹

The key question for contemporary hylomorphists working in the subdisciplines of philosophy of mind and ontology of the human person is how best to classify hylomorphism with respect to current debates in those fields. In the philosophy of mind, authors have explored whether hylomorphism should be considered a version of non-reductive physicalism, a version of property dualism, or a variant of substance dualism.³⁰ Similarly, in debates on the ontology of the human person, authors have explored whether hylomorphism should be regarded as more akin to animalism, according to which human persons are identical to human animals and persist

²⁹ See citations in fn 10 above.

³⁰ See citations in fn 9 above.

by means of biological continuity³¹, or as more akin to dualism, according to which human persons transcend their bodies by virtue of their possession of an immaterial soul³².

Summary of Contributed Articles

Hylomorphism as a theory of mind is often taken to be a sort of balanced intermediary between reductive materialism and substance dualism, preserving the ontological significance of our rational capacities while also carefully maintaining the unity of the human person. Hylomorphism attempts to preserve the unity of the human person by understanding the person's soul to be the form of her body. But what exactly is the nature of this formal relationship between the soul and the body and what sort of unity does the union of body and soul create? In his contribution, "Aquinas on the Union of Body and Soul", Gyula Klima argues that the sort of unity present within a human person should be understood as the union of a single substantial form enforming purely potential prime matter. The sort of unity produced in that case is one in which the material parts of the body are ontologically dependent on the whole of which they are parts, depending on the whole (and the substantial form of that whole) for their existence and identity. Anything less than this robust sort of unity, Klima argues, produces not a single unified substance, but an aggregate or conglomerate of smaller substances. In this way, Klima's updated defense of Aquinas's unicity doctrine, according to which within each material substance there is but one substantial form, serves as a critique of not only competing medieval views which countenance a plurality of substantial forms within material substances but also modern substance dualism and contemporary "bottom-up" versions of hylomorphism, according to which hylomorphic compounds are composed of smaller material objects or atoms on which they depend for their existence.

³¹ See Toner, "Hylemorphic Animalism".

³² See Oderberg, "Hylemorphic Dualism".

Classical hylomorphists hold that material substances are ontologically prior to both their accidents and their material parts, which is to say that those entities depend for their existence and their identity on the substances to which they belong. That accidents and material parts depend for their existence and identity on the substances to which they belong is typically taken to mean that no accident and no material part can exist detached from the particular substance to which it owes its existence and identity: no accident or material part can survive separation from that particular substance while that particular substance remains in existence, and no accident or material part can survive that particular substance's destruction.

In his contribution to the special issue, "Remnant Substances: A Neo-Aristotelian Resolution of the Puzzles", Robert Koons argues that there is room in a classical hylomorphic ontology for what he calls "remnant substances", material parts of material substances which can survive the corruption of the wholes of which they were once parts, and "remnant accidents", accidents of material substances which can survive the corruption of the substances to which they once belonged. As Koons explains, classical hylomorphists can recognize the existence of such entities without having to abandon the Aristotelian principle that no substance can be itself a part of any other substance. For, on the proposed view, neither the remnant accidents nor the remnant material parts are themselves substances. Nor do such entities become substances when separated from the whole. Even though they are capable of surviving on their own, they do so as incomplete parts of a now-absent whole. As a result, remnant accidents and remnant material parts are incapable of entering into the composition of any other substances after their separation. Koons argues that by recognizing remnant parts and remnant accidents, classical hylomorphists can better respond to puzzles concerning organ and tissue transplantation, cancerous cells, and the apparent continuity of accidental features in the corpses left behind by living organisms.

In a series of recent articles, Elseltijn Kingma has argued, based on recent empirical data on the “intimate intertwinement” between a fetal organism (which she calls a “foster”) and the maternal organism in whose womb the foster resides (which she calls the “gravida”), that a fetal human being is best understood as part of its mother.³³ Thus she argues against what is known as the “containment view”, espoused by Barry Smith and Berit Brogaard, according to which a fetal human being and its mother are mereologically distinct even though the former resides within the latter.³⁴ On Smith and Brogaard’s view, a fetal human being is best understood as a sort of “tenant” occupying a “cavity” or “niche” within its mother, and they give several reasons for resisting any relationship of parthood between the two.

In her contribution to the special issue, “Was Your *Mother* Part of *You*? A Hylomorphist’s Challenge for Elseltijn Kingma”, Hilary Yancey argues that Kingma’s own principles and observations support the view not that the fetal human being is a part of its mother, but, surprisingly, that its mother is a part of it. Yancey agrees with Kingma that the “intimate intertwinement” between the fetal human being and its mother suggests that there is indeed a relationship of parthood present, but that this parthood relation should be reversed. Yancey argues that on an Aristotelian, hylomorphic conception of material parthood, parthood is a functional notion. The key to discerning whether something counts as a part of a living organism is to identify the biological function within that organism to which that candidate-part contributes or in which it participates. In order for something to count as a part of a living body, the entity in question needs to not only exhibit a sort of interdependence with respect to the other parts but also a sort of teleological ordering of that part to the functionality of the whole. In that

³³ Elseltijn Kingma, “Lady Parts: The Metaphysics of Pregnancy,” *Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplement*, Vol. 82 (Jul., 2018): pp. 165 -187 and Elseltijn Kingma, “Were You a Part of Your Mother?,” *Mind*, Vol. 128, No. 511 (Jul., 2019): pp. 609 -646.

³⁴ Barry Smith and Berit Brogaard, “Sixteen Days”, *The Journal of Medicine and Philosophy*, Vol. 28, No. 1 (Jan., 2003): pp. 45-78.

respect, Yancey argues, it is plausible to suggest that the mother's body can be considered a part of the fetal human being, since, as she points out, the mother's body seems to exhibit a sort of teleological ordering to the good of the foster. The mother's body re-organizes and re-directs several of its functions to better accommodate that which is in her womb, making adjustments and even sacrifices in order to do so. Yancey admits that her conclusion that a maternal human organism is best understood as part of the fetal human organism that it carries will strike many as counter-intuitive. She also admits that her conclusion runs into conflict with the standard commitments of Thomistichylomorphism, according to which no substance can itself be a part of any other substance. But, as she points out in the conclusion of her paper, there are other versions ofhylomorphism, those that admit the possibility of a plurality of substantial forms within a single substance, which might be more hospitable.³⁵

In contemporary debates on the ontology of the human person, animalism is the view that we human persons are identical to human animals and that we persist over time by means of biological continuity, the continuity of the animal's life. Animalism's main rival is the psychological approach, according to which we human persons bear some other relation to human animals short of identity, and that we persist by means of psychological continuity, the continuity of certain mental states or capacities. Animalism and the psychological approach disagree on what would happen to us in various scenarios, including whether I was ever a fetus, whether I could survive falling into a persistent vegetative state, and whether I would go with my transplanted cerebrum were it to be relocated to another body. The fact that, according to a psychological approach, I was never a fetus is often seen as a counterintuitive implication of the

³⁵ Thomas M. Ward, "Animals, Animal Parts, and Hylomorphism: John Duns Scotus's Pluralism about Substantial Form", *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, Vol. 50, No. 4 (Oct., 2012): pp. 531-557; Timothy Pawl and Mark K. Spencer, "Christologically Inspired, Empirically Motivated Hylomorphism", *Res Philosophica*, Vol. 93, No. 1 (Jan., 2016): pp. 137-160.

view.³⁶ And the fact that, according to animalism, I would not go with my transplanted cerebrum were it to be relocated to another body is often seen as a counterintuitive implication of that view.³⁷ Some authors have looked to provide a hybrid approach to personal identity, one that can preserve both the fetus intuition and the transplant intuition.³⁸ This might be done by understanding human persons to be merely contingently animals such that for most of our existence we go where the animal goes, except in cases of cerebrum transplant, during which we temporarily cease to be human animals and are solely constituted by our cerebra. Alternatively, this can be done by understanding the persistence conditions of human animals in such a way that they allow an animal to be transplanted with its relocated cerebrum.

Where does a hylomorphic theory of the human person belong in this debate? Some hylomorphists have argued that hylomorphism should be understood as a version of animalism, giving the same account of our persistence conditions in the three cases above.³⁹ Others have argued that hylomorphism should be understood a hybrid view, able to preserve both the fetus intuition and the transplant intuition (as well as the PVS intuition, if such there be).⁴⁰

In his contribution to this issue, “Evaluating Hylomorphism as a Hybrid Account of Personal Identity”, David Hershenov evaluates the plausibility of hybrid views in general, as well as the plausibility of hylomorphic hybridism.⁴¹ Hybrid views, Hershenov argues, are implausible for at least two reasons. First, hybrid views are committed to “bad biology”

³⁶ Eric Olson, *The Human Animal: Personal Identity Without Psychology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997): pp. 73-93. Olson calls this the “Fetus Problem” for psychological approaches.

³⁷ Olson, *The Human Animal*, pp. 42-44; McMahan, *The Ethics of Killing*, pp. 31-35; Derek Parfit, “We Are Not Human Beings”, *Philosophy*, Vol. 87, No. 1 (Jan., 2012): pp. 5-28. Olson calls this the “Transplant Intuition”.

³⁸ Rory Madden, “Human Persistence”, *Philosopher’s Imprint*, Vol. 16, No. 17 (Sep., 2016): pp. 1-18; Simon Langford, “On What We Are and How We Persist”, *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. 95, No. 3 (Sep., 2014): pp. 356-371.

³⁹ Toner, “Hylomorphic Animalism”.

⁴⁰ Mark K. Spencer, “A Reexamination of the Hylomorphic Theory of Death”, *The Review of Metaphysics*, Vol. 63, No. 4 (Jun., 2010): pp. 843-870.

⁴¹ See also, Hershenov, “A Hylomorphic Account of Thought Experiments” and Hershenov, “Soulless Organisms?”.

inasmuch as they claim that a human animal can be pared down to the size of a cerebrum, that removing a cerebrum from a living human animal gives rise to a brand new human animal in its place, and that successfully transplanting a functioning cerebrum into another living human animal results in the death of that animal. Second, hybrid views are committed to rejecting a plausible metaphysical principle called the “only a and b rule”, according to which whether or not a future entity *b* is numerically identical to some past entity *a* is determined solely by the relations that hold between *a* and *b* and not any relations between *a* and some third thing. Hershenov argues that hylomorphic hybridism fares better with respect to the first concern, and considerably better with respect to the second, but also that it doesn’t wholly resolve either concern. As a result, hylomorphists ought to reject a hybrid interpretation of the view and instead support a more straightforwardly animalist reading.

One of the leading arguments against any view of the human person that denies that we are identical to human animals is Eric Olson’s Thinking-Animal Argument.⁴² According to this argument, if I, the human person, am thinking, but am not identical to the human animal sitting in my chair, then either the animal in my chair is not thinking or both me and the animal are thinking my thoughts. But that seems like too many things thinking my thoughts. And so Olson’s argument forces any view that denies that we are identical to human animals to reject the existence of animals, or to deny that the human animal with which I am associated can think, or to come to terms with there being two things thinking every one of my thoughts. As a result, the problem that Olson has introduced for animalism’s rivals has also come to be known as the “Too Many Thinkers Problem”.

⁴² Eric T. Olson, “An Argument for Animalism,” in Raymond Martin and John Barresi (eds.), *Personal Identity* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2003): pp. 318-334.

Hylomorphism as a theory of the human person identifies the human person with the human animal (though it understands the nature of human animals quite differently than Olson does). As a result, hylomorphism avoids the Too Many Thinkers that plague animalism's chief rivals. There is, however, an analogous problem for hylomorphism, a problem we might call the Thinking-Soul Problem.⁴³ According to St. Thomas Aquinas, a human person's thoughts, like all other operations of the human person, are properly attributed to the whole human animal, the form-matter compound. However, St. Thomas also says that the human person's rational soul possesses its own cognitive and volitional operations; it is the source and subject of the human person's acts of intellect and will. Indeed, that the rational soul has its own cognitive and volitional operations which transcend the body serves as a key premise in St. Thomas's argument for the unique separability of the human soul. As St. Thomas explains, while the rational soul makes use of sensory input from the bodily sense-organs to conduct acts of intellection while embodied, the acts themselves do not actually make use of any bodily organ, and so are able to be carried out even after the body undergoes corruption at death. In its separated state, the separated soul will continue to engage in acts cognition apart from the body but in a new mode of operation, made possible only through special divine assistance. But if the rational soul is capable of engaging in acts of intellect and will on its own when separated from the body, and if, even while embodied, the rational soul is the source and subject of those acts of the human person, is the rational soul not an additional thinker of the person's thoughts? Is it not the case that right now both me and my soul are thinking my thoughts?

In her contribution to the special issue, "St. Thomas Aquinas and the Too Many Thinkers Problem", Kendall Fisher responds to hylomorphism's special problem of too many thinkers by

⁴³ For discussion, see Patrick Toner, "St. Thomas Aquinas on the Problem of Too Many Thinkers", *The Modern Schoolman*, Vol. 89, No. 3-4 (Jul.-Oct., 2012): pp. 209-222.

focusing on the rational soul's status as an incomplete part of the human person. In her paper, Fisher argues that when St. Thomas asserts that the cognitive and volitional acts that take place in the soul are properly attributed to the whole human animal, he is not simply articulating the proper manner of speaking. Rather, as Fisher explains, the claim that the operations of incomplete parts are properly attributable only to the whole is a well-founded metaphysical claim. Only a form-matter compound is a complete substance in the sense of possessing the full realization of the actuality of its form, and only complete substances can be said to act. Making use of the contemporary notion of partial identity, Fisher argues that the human person and the rational soul are not two distinct thinkers. The rational soul is a part of the human person, and so the person is to be understood as partially identical to her soul. The human person is indeed the thinker of her thoughts. The soul is merely that part by which the person engages in acts of understanding. It is only after the separation of the soul from the body, when there is no longer any composite whole of which the rational soul is an incomplete part, that the soul comes to be the proper subject of thought.

One of the more vigorously debated topics within contemporary debates on hylomorphism is the topic of hylomorphism and the afterlife. Aquinas and other medieval theologians held that the rational soul, the substantial form of the human person, due to its special relationship to the human person's *esse* and due to its possession of its own characteristic operations, survives the death of the human person whose soul it is. But does that also mean that the human person survives her death? As Aquinas is careful to emphasize, a human person is neither her body nor her soul but some third thing essentially composed of both.⁴⁴ And so what happens to the human person at the separation of her soul at death?

⁴⁴ See, for example, Thomas Aquinas, *De Ente et Essentia*, Chapter 2.

There are two main hylomorphic accounts of the afterlife. Both accounts agree that, before death, a human person exists as composed of matter and form, body and soul, and that, after the resurrection, the same human person exists as composed of the same form and the same matter. Following Aquinas, both accounts also agree that, in the interim, the human person's substantial form, her rational soul, remains in existence without its corresponding matter. The disagreement between the two camps is over whether the human person herself remains in existence during that interim. Corruptionists hold that the persistence of the human person's rational soul is insufficient to maintain the persistence of the human person throughout the interim (though the persistence of her rational soul may be necessary to ensure that it is the very same person that is later resurrected). According to corruptionists, at death, a human person ceases to exist, and it is only when the rational soul is later reacquainted with its matter at the resurrection that the human person is present in the afterlife.⁴⁵ Survivalists, on the other hand, hold that the persistence of the human person's rational soul is indeed sufficient to maintain the persistence of the human person throughout the interim. According to survivalists, at death, the human person survives the loss of her matter and comes to be temporarily composed of or constituted by, but not identical to, her rational soul, until she later regains her matter at the resurrection.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Notable defenders of corruptionism include Patrick Toner ("Personhood and Death in St. Thomas Aquinas", *History of Philosophy Quarterly*, Vol. 26, No. 2 (Apr., 2009): pp. 121-138; "St. Thomas Aquinas on Death and the Separated Soul", *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. 91, No. 4 (Dec., 2010): pp. 587-599; "On Hylomorphism and Personal Identity", *European Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 19, No. 3 (Sep., 2011): pp. 454-473; "St. Thomas Aquinas on Punishing Souls", *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion*, Vol. 71, No. 2 (Apr., 2012): pp. 103-116) and Turner C. Nevitt ("Survivalism, Corruptionism, and Intermittent Existence in Aquinas", *History of Philosophy Quarterly*, Vol. 31, No. 1 (Jan., 2014): pp. 1-19; "Aquinas on the Death of Christ: A New Argument for Corruptionism", *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. 90, No. 1 (Winter, 2016): pp. 77-99; "Annihilation, Re-creation, and Intermittent Existence in Aquinas", *Proceedings of the Society for Medieval Logic and Metaphysics*, Vol. 13 (2016): pp. 101-117). For further references to other commentators who are sympathetic to corruptionism, see citations in Nevitt, "Aquinas on the Death of Christ", p. 78. See also the Nevitt contribution to the present volume.

⁴⁶ Notable defenders of survivalism include Eleonore Stump (*Aquinas*, pp. 51-54; "Resurrection, Reassembly, and Reconstitution: Aquinas on the Soul", in Bruno Niederberger and Edmundunggaldier (eds.), *The Human Soul: Do We Need Dualism?* (Frankfurt: Ontos Verlag, 2006): pp. 151-171; "Resurrection and the Separated Soul", in Brian

The debate on hylomorphism and the afterlife is further complicated by the fact that different authors appear to have slightly different understandings of the goal of this discussion. Some authors within this debate take the goal of the discussion to be a matter of determining which view Aquinas actually held.⁴⁷ Other authors take the goal of the debate to be a matter of determining which view follows from certain metaphysical and theological doctrines that Aquinas himself accepts, regardless of which view of the afterlife he actually endorses.⁴⁸ Still others take the goal of the debate to be a matter of determining which view contemporary hylomorphists ought to hold, setting aside the actual position of Aquinas and setting aside certain of his own theological or metaphysical commitments.⁴⁹

As part of our special issue on hylomorphism, we are excited to include a special symposium section on the topic of hylomorphism and the afterlife, based on a similar symposium which took place at the 2019 Meeting of the American Catholic Philosophical Association involving the same participants.⁵⁰

In his contribution to the symposium section, “Survivalism vs. Corruptionism: Whose Nature? Which Personality?”, Turner Nevitt argues on behalf of corruptionism. Nevitt first introduces a metaphysical argument in favor of corruptionism, according to which, since matter

Davies and Eleonore Stump (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Aquinas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012): pp. 458-466), Jason T. Eberl (“The Metaphysics of Resurrection: Issues of Identity in Aquinas”, *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association*, Vol. 74 (2001): pp. 215-230; “Do Human Persons Persist Between Death and Resurrection?” in Kevin Timpe (ed.), *Metaphysics and God: Essays in Honor of Eleonore Stump* (New York: Routledge, 2009): pp. 188-205; “Varieties of Dualism: Swinburne and Aquinas”, *International Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. 50, No. 1 (Mar., 2010): pp. 39-56; *The Nature of Human Persons*, Chapter 7) Christopher M. Brown, (*Aquinas and the Ship of Theseus*, pp. 78-79; “Souls, Ships and Substance: A Response to Toner”, *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. 81, No. 4 (Fall, 2007): pp. 655-668) and David S. Oderberg, *Real Essentialism*, pp. 255-260; “Survivalism, Corruptionism, and Mereology”, *European Journal for Philosophy of Religion*, Vol. 4, No. 4 (Winter, 2012): pp. 1-26. For further references to other commentators who are sympathetic to survivalism, see citations in Toner, “Punishing Souls”, pp. 103-104. See also the Eberl contribution to the present volume.

⁴⁷ See, for example, the contributed articles by Turner Nevitt and Daniel De Haan and Brandon Dahm in the present volume.

⁴⁸ See, for example, the contributed article by Jason Eberl in the present volume.

⁴⁹ See, for example, the contributed article by Mark Spencer in the present volume.

⁵⁰ Many thanks to Turner Nevitt for organizing this session and to Chris Brown for chairing it.

is of the essence of a human being, and since nothing can survive the loss of any part of its essence, when the rational soul is separated from the human being's matter at death and the body corrupts, even though the rational soul survives, the human being must cease to exist. Nevitt then offers a systematic defense of this argument, responding to several recent attempts by survivalists to reject one or more of its premises.⁵¹

In his contribution to the symposium, "Surviving Corruptionist Arguments: Response to Nevitt", Jason Eberl argues on behalf of survivalism. Eberl argues for the conclusion that the human person survives the loss of her matter at death and, moreover, that she does so as a rational animal. According to Eberl, the person survives by virtue of her continued possession of her rational soul, in which reside the intrinsic potentialities or inherent capacities for her characteristic operations. Eberl argues that what the person loses at death is the material substrate on which certain of those capacities depend for their realization. But the capacities themselves remain, and that is sufficient for the continued persistence of the person whose capacities they are. Eberl compares the interim state to a persistent vegetative state, in which a human being loses the material substrate necessary for the exercise of her rational capacities, but remains a rational animal by virtue of the continued possession of those unrealized capacities and the rational soul which serves as their ground. Similarly, in the interim state, the human being loses the material substrate necessary for the exercise of her nutritive and sentient capacities but remains a rational animal by virtue of the continued possession of those unrealized capacities which are also grounded in her rational soul.⁵²

In their contribution to the symposium section of the issue, "After Survivalism and Corruptionism: Separated Souls as Incomplete Persons", Daniel D. De Haan and Brandon Dahm

⁵¹ See also, Nevitt, "Aquinas on the Death of Christ"

⁵² See also Eberl, *The Nature of Human Persons*, Chapter 7.

introduce a novel third way between corruptionism and survivalism, according to which the separated rational soul survives the death of the person as an incomplete person. De Haan and Dahm provide a careful analysis of the ways in which the separated soul satisfies the conditions for personhood but is nevertheless metaphysically incomplete, pointing to several important subtleties in Aquinas's account overlooked by other contributors to the debate on hylomorphism and the afterlife.⁵³ De Haan and Dahm then respond to several concerns raised for their account, many of which can be found in the Spencer piece that follows.

In the final contribution to this symposium section, "Survivalist, Platonist, Thomistic Hylomorphism: A Reply to Daniel De Haan and Brandon Dahm", Mark Spencer presents several key challenges to De Haan and Dahm's account. Spencer argues that De Haan and Dahm's account is problematic because it introduces complexity or divisibility in the essence or nature of human persons, it entails that certain things capable of performing operations characteristic of persons can still fail to count as persons, strictly speaking, and it entails that metaphysical personhood can be a matter of degree. Spencer also takes issue with De Haan and Dahm's account of whether and in what sense what survives will be *me*. As a result of these difficulties for De Haan's and Dahm's third way, Spencer argues that hylomorphists should shift to a more Platonist Thomistic Hylomorphism, according to which the entire essence of the human person resides in her rational soul.⁵⁴

As should be clear from my brief overview of the main points of discussion in contemporary debates on hylomorphism and my brief summaries of the each of contributed articles, hylomorphism is, for the moment, alive and well in contemporary analytic philosophy.

⁵³ See also Daniel De Haan and Brandon Dahm, "Thomas Aquinas on Separated Souls as Incomplete Human Persons" *The Thomist* (Forthcoming).

⁵⁴ See also Mark K. Spencer, "The Personhood of the Separated Soul", *Nova et Vetera*, Vol. 12, No. 3 (Summer, 2014): pp. 863-912.

There are a wide variety of versions of hylomorphism currently on offer and several ongoing discussions about the scope, application, and utility of the view. It is our hope that this special issue will help further advance these discussions and help keep hylomorphism a live option for future philosophers to explore.

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