

“Purgatory”

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Abstract: Purgatory raises many interesting metaphysical, moral, and doctrinal issues. It has historically been a major point of contention between Christian denominations. Purgatory is most identified with the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church and contemporary Catholic philosophers typically construe the ante-mortem person and the disembodied soul in the hylomorphic framework of Aquinas. We'll very briefly explore the origins of the doctrine of Purgatory, its biblical sources, Protestant rejection, and some ecumenical reconciliation. Then we'll focus on the moral and metaphysical puzzles that Purgatory creates. We'll concentrate upon the philosophical divisions between survivalist and corruptionist accounts of Purgatory. Both camps assume a hylomorphic framework. The survivalists believe the deceased person can persist in Purgatory prior to the resurrection with the soul as his only part. The corruptionists believe it is not the deceased person but just his soul that resides in Purgatory. Corruptionists face certain moral obstacles if the entity purged won't be the agent of the earlier misconduct. Both sides must confront major metaphysical hurdles explaining the relationship of the soul to the person given that the posthumous soul contributes to thought in a manner quite different than it did when embodied.

I. Introduction

Purgatory is typically understood as a place (sometimes a condition or state) which the deceased enter until they are purified of sin and fit to join God in Heaven. On the tombs of the early Christians were often inscribed words of hope and petitions that the dead would experience peace and rest. Survivors prayed for their deceased loved ones. As Paul Griffiths wrote “Purgatory makes beautiful sense of some Christian beliefs and practices very deeply woven into the fabric of the religion: that most faithful Christians dies as sinners; that living Christians have a continuing, intimate, and lovingly transformative relation with their dead; and that there is an intermediate state with experiential content between the individual’s death and the general resurrection.”¹ In the earliest period of the church, making philosophical sense of Purgatory was not a priority because Jesus’s return was thought to be imminent. But as time passed, the intermediate state between our death and the resurrection became an issue of greater personal and philosophical concern. The doctrine received its most developed philosophical formulation in the Roman Catholic Church, its most imaginative treatment in Dante, and met its greatest resistance from the Protestant reformers.²

It is only the Catholic Church that treats Purgatory as binding doctrine but its commitments are more minimal than the public’s conception and historical practices. The Council of Trent (1563) proclaimed that “The Catholic Church has taught...that purgatory exists, and that the souls detained there are helped by the prayers of the faithful and especially by the acceptable sacrifice of the altar.” It did so without an unequivocal Biblical statement in defense of Purgatory. Prayer for the dead has some support in the second Book of Maccabees (12:38-46). After hearing that some of his men had died while wearing amulets dedicated to idols, the Maccabean leader ordered his men to both send “twelve thousand drachmas of silver to Jerusalem for sacrifice to be offered for the sins of the dead”

¹ “Purgatory” *The Oxford Handbook on Eschatology*. Ed. Jerry Walls.

² Jacques Le Goff writes in his 1981 *Birth of Purgatory* that the “Roman Catholic Church honed the doctrine of Purgatory” (169) not just against the Protestants of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries but also against the heretics of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries (168-176) and the Greeks of the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries (280-288).

and to offer prayers “so the sinful deed might be fully blotted out.” Prayers would seem to have little point if they couldn’t affect the dead. Christ declares in Matthew 12:32 “And whoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but he that shall speak against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, nor in the world to come.” Augustine and many others have claimed that it makes sense to deny that certain sins will be forgiven in the next world only if others were.³ A rather difficult passage of St. Paul in I Corinthians 3:11-15 has been interpreted by many Church Fathers as evidence of an intermediate state in which the fire burns away the effects of the lesser sins. “Every man’s work shall be manifest; for the day of the Lord shall declare it, because it shall be revealed in fire; and the fire shall try every man’s work, of what sort it is...If any man’s work burns, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire.”

It hardly needs to be said that Protestants have been unimpressed by this textual support.⁴ They are also dubious of a relationship with the dead that could change their condition by prayers or other interventions like the sale of indulgences, “the Bingo of the 16th century.”⁵ It was charged that Purgatory undermined the belief that sufficient for salvation was Christ’s sacrifice and the faithful’s response to the sacrifice on the cross. Calvin didn’t mince words: “Purgatory is a deadly fiction of Satan, which nullifies the cross of Christ, inflicts unbearable contempt upon God’s mercy, and overturns and destroys our faith.”⁶ Some Protestants not only rejected prayers for the dead and indulgences but all forms of penance. They maintained that not only were others unable to affect your relationship to God, but you couldn’t do anything that produce such effects. Faith, itself, is a gift of God, and recipients don’t deserve or merit it. The more predestinarian one’s religious views, the more objectionable Purgatory will seem.

³ *City of God* XX1.24

⁴ Protestants don’t recognize the one book that explicitly supports prayer for the dead as part of the Old Testament.

⁵ Robert Bainton’s memorable phrase from his *Here I Stand: The Life of Martin Luther*. 1950. 58.

⁶ *Institutes* 3, 5, 6.

However, Protestants have not uniformly rejected all conceptions of Purgatory.⁷ A few, C.S. Lewis being the best known, have recently shown interest in a sanctification rather than a satisfaction model of Purgatory.⁸ Protestants can agree with Catholics that many people are not virtuous enough to be in God's presence. They may not have debts of justice to pay and guilt to expiate in order to warrant Heaven, but they died in a flawed condition with too little virtue to share Heaven with God. Some Protestants will accept a sanctification model of Purgatory which understands the deceased as needing to be purified to be with God. What they object to is a satisfaction model for Purgatory that involves a punishment of sorts as the sinner works off a debt of justice remaining due to his sins.

Catholics typically favor a Thomistic or hylomorphic account of the person whose soul may be remanded to Purgatory. The rest of this chapter will concern itself with the moral and metaphysical puzzles that Purgatory poses for the hylomorphic account of persons. We'll focus upon the philosophical divisions between the *survivalist* and *corruptionist* accounts of Purgatory. Survivalists believe the deceased person can persist in Purgatory prior to the resurrection with the soul as his only part. Corruptionists believe it is not the deceased person but just his soul that resides in Purgatory. Corruptionists face certain moral obstacles if the posthumous entity purged wasn't the agent of the earlier ante-mortem misconduct. The moral puzzles will be worse for the satisfaction model but won't completely vanish even if one imagines Purgatory as painless character reform. Both corruptionists and survivalists must confront major metaphysical problems explaining the relationship of the soul to the person given that the posthumous soul contributes to thought in a manner quite different than it did when embodied.

⁷ Lewis defends Purgatory in his 1964 *Letters to Malcolm: Choice on Prayer*.

⁸ The satisfaction and sanctification models are informatively contrasted in Jerry Walls's *Purgatory: The Logic of Total Transformation* pp. 59-91.

II. Metaphysical and Moral Problems

A. The Corruptionist Account of the Afterlife⁹

According to the standard Thomistic hylomorphic account of the human being, we are composites of a soul and matter.¹⁰ Aquinas writes “‘Humanity’ signifies something composed of matter and form, just as ‘man’ does.”¹¹ Corruptionists argue it would thus seem that death involves the loss of matter and end of our existence. Other supporting quotes from Aquinas are: “Death is substantial corruption”¹² and “Death deprives one of the primary good, namely being”¹³ and “by death the subject ceases to be man or animal.”¹⁴ So if Purgatory occurs after death and prior to resurrection, it will not be you being purged. Purgatory is, in most cases, reserved for the souls of those who “die in God’s grace and friendship but still imperfectly purified”.¹⁵ Souls that are in need of purification undergo a period of transformation prior to their presentation before God. This purification is necessary due to transgressions against God during one’s earthly life. Given that it is just a part of you that undergoes a painful¹⁶ process of purgation for the sins you committed, a human being, it strikes us as unfair to punish the soul for what the person did.¹⁷

⁹ The corruptionist ranks include Anthony Kenny, *Aquinas on Mind*, Routledge 1993, 138; Robert Pasnau, *Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature*, Cambridge 2002, 380-393; Brian Davies, *The Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, Oxford 1992, 215-220; Patrick Toner, “Personhood and Death in St. Thomas Aquinas,” *History of Philosophy Quarterly*, 2009, 26:2, 121-38; Leo Edlers, *The Philosophy of Nature of St. Thomas Aquinas* 1997, 274-84; Patrick Lee and Robert George, *Body-Self Dualism in Contemporary Ethics and Politics*, Cambridge 2008, 66-81.

¹⁰ See Aquinas *Being and Essence*, Ch. II; *ST I* q. 75; q. 76.

¹¹ *SCG IV*, 81,10

¹² *Disputed Questions of the Soul*. 1.

¹³ *Supp.* 65, 2 ad 3

¹⁴ *ST III*. 50.4

¹⁵ *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* 1995. Part 1. Sec 1. Art. 12

¹⁶ Augustine, Gregory the Great, and Bonaventure claimed that the pains of Purgatory are worse than any person ever suffered in this life. Augustine. *Comments on Psalm 37*. Bonaventure. *Ps. 3 poenit. n. 1*. Gregory the Great. *IV. dist. XX. P. 1 a. q. ii*

¹⁷ David Hershenov and Rose Koch-Hershenov. “Personal Identity and Purgatory” *Religious Studies*, 2006, 42, 439-451. Oderberg agrees in his “Survivalism, Corruptionism and Mereology” *European Journal of Religion* (2012) 4:4, p. 3 nt. 4.

Toner disagrees. Toner appeals to Aquinas's view of punishment to explain why it is permissible for the detached soul to be punished.¹⁸ It is not like punishing you for something a stranger did. The person's sin is *in* the soul somewhat like Adam's sin is in our souls as original sin. Toner presses the distinction between *sin in us* and sin committed *by us*. He argues that "it is just to punish one thing for sins committed *by* another thing, provided the sins are *in* the one punished."¹⁹ Since Aquinas believes the "powers of the operations...of will and understanding are in the soul as their subject...,"²⁰ the soul can be the guilty subject. Toner endorses the following quote of Aquinas:

But merit and fault are fitted to the body only through the soul, since there is essentially no merit or demerit except so far as a thing is voluntary. Therefore, both reward and punishment flow suitably from the soul to the body, but it does not belong to the soul by reason of the body. There is, therefore, no reason in the infliction of punishment or bestowal of rewards why the souls should wait for the resumption of their bodies; rather, it seems more fitting that, since the souls had priority in the fault or merit, they have priority also in being punished or rewarded.²¹

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

¹⁸ Toner, Patrick "St. Thomas on Punishing Souls" *International Journal of the Philosophy of Religion*.

¹⁹ Toner, "St. Thomas on Punishing Souls" Op. cit.

²⁰ *ST I* 77.5

²¹ *SCG* 4, 91.

agency and understanding with a different mode of existence (disembodied).²² But it seems that if the disembodied soul is to be held accountable, it has to have been the agent of wrongdoing.

An alternative is to think of Purgatory more along the lines of a reform and moral cultivation that is not harsh and painful but will benefit the soul and the human being. The soul, through no fault of its own, is disordered because of the person's ante-mortem choices. It benefits then from becoming properly ordered and aligned with right reason. Purged, penitent and reformed, the soul will no longer be disordered and will be ready to meet God and partake in such beatific bliss that precedes resurrection. But this won't explain away the unfairness of the soul suffering in Hell and permanently separated from God. This corruptionist position could be salvaged by adopting universalism about Hell²³ or combining a belief in Hell with the compatibilism about determinism and moral responsibility. The compatibilist maintains that someone can be responsible for a state in the absence of being able to have freely chosen an alternative to it as long as the state is something they endorse or identify with in some sense that makes the feature in question their own.

So corruptionists likely need to defend a compatibilism where even if someone just popped into existence, that creature will be accountable if it identifies with its character or, at least doesn't experience it as foreign, unnatural, inauthentic or imposed. As a result, the purging is appropriate, a fitting response to the soul's character, even though there wasn't the opportunity for that individual to have made choices that would have brought about a different character. So while the soul doesn't pop into existence in Purgatory or Hell, it first becomes a subject of thought there and is then accountable for its character that didn't earlier stem from its choices. However, we suspect many readers will resist a soul condemned to Hell (or the pain of Purgatory) for what not it but its person

²² ST1, 89, 1.

²³ Le Goff considered Origen a father of Purgatory for he conceived of Hell as a place that one could leave after purification. *Op. cit.* 55.

chose to do. Such readers might conclude that if corruptionism requires compatibilism, that's reason not to be a corruptionist.

Leaving Hell aside, there's still the unfairness of the soul that has passed from Purgatory to Heaven but doesn't continue to be the subject of the beatific vision after the resurrection.²⁴ Perhaps the corruptionist may respond to our charge of unfairness by borrowing from Parfit's famous claim that identity is not what matters to us, psychological continuity and connections matter.²⁵ Parfit famously claimed that fission thought experiments showed that what matters isn't that we are identical to a future being but just that there should be someone later with our psychology.²⁶ So that would enable the person to care in a prudential-like manner about his non-identical soul in Purgatory and it would be reasonable for the soul in Purgatory or Heaven to likewise care about the resurrected person.

Although we can't here do justice to the argument against Parfit, we can offer a brief sketch. Most of us have intuitions where our concern for our future doesn't drop to the degree that psychological continuity is diminished say due to a stroke that leaves one with permanent amnesia and child-like cognitive capacities. Secondly, the fission thought experiment "works" by assuming that identity consists of psychological relations and a no-branching rule. The latter is extrinsic and trivial so Parfit concludes what matters is not identity but psychological relations. But the whole set up is flawed. Identity is a primitive concept and simple property and the same for thinking and non-thinking entities, *a fortiori*, it doesn't consist in anything like psychological relations. So psychological relations shouldn't be in the identity criterion and thus the candidate for what really matters. Moreover, the inclusion of a no-branching clause in the identity criterion violates the rationale

²⁴ Stump. "Resurrection, Reassembly and Constitution." *The Human Soul: Do we Need Dualism?* 2006. 158

²⁵ *Reasons and Persons*, 1983 Oxford.

²⁶ Parfit alleges that we would have the same concern for the two persons resulting from our cerebrum fissioning and each hemisphere being transplanted into a different body as we would have for the single being receiving our only extant cerebral hemisphere. But only in the latter scenario would we be identical to a post-transplant person.

behind the *only x and y rule* that the identity of x and y shouldn't depend upon the causally uninvolved presence of z. But this violation occurs when the existence of the two new people resulting from fission depend upon the presence of each other without there being any causal ties between them. Since it's wrong to build the trivial and extrinsic no-branching rule into the criterion of identity, Parfit isn't entitled to claim that fission shows that only psychological relations matter.

The problem that we want to concentrate upon in the rest of this section is that if the disembodied soul can think while in Purgatory or Hell, then it seems that it should have been a thinking entity prior to detaching from the human being at death. The problem that then arises is there seems to be two subjects of thought, one thinker would be the soul and the second thinker would be the human being composed of the soul and the informed matter. This is the hylomorphic version of the Problem of Too Many Thinkers.

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

If the disembodied soul can think in Purgatory, then it should be able to think earlier when it configured matter. Given that Aquinas maintains that the person's abstract thoughts are the result of capacities independent of the operation of its organs, it is even more difficult to see why a soul could think disembodied but not when embodied. If the soul *and* the human being can both think,

that would mean too many thinkers. However, if the soul can't think on its own but only the human being thinks, though in virtue of the soul, this extra thinker can be avoided.

Aquinas believes that even the embodied person's intellectual thought involves phantasms, or images due to the sensations, their production dependent upon material organs. The phantasms are in the brain, unlike the intellect which is in the soul. The same is true for other components of inner sense such as the imagination, memorative power and the common sense. Aquinas writes of the process of abstraction: "Someone who wants to understand a human being has occur to him the imagination of a six foot tall human being; but the intellect understands the human being as a human being, not as having this quantity."²⁷ The soul needs phantasms produced by organs, but the thinking is done by the human being that is composed of matter configured by a soul. So it might seem that the soul is not capable of thought on its own.

But can we be so sure that the forms derived from the phantasms aren't thought by the soul even though the phantasms aren't in the soul? The brain may be needed by the soul but only in the way that one might need to use a drawing on paper or a chalk board to facilitate one's thought. Of course, the soul configures the brain and doesn't configure the paper or board, so perhaps that is reason to think the person and not the soul thinks with the products of the phantasms. But we have our doubts that the soul's involvement in the presence of the organs with the phantasms or images renders the human being the thinker rather than the soul. Consider a materialist analogy: the brain's autonomic functions make it possible for the sense organs to exist and function. But the perceptions they give rise to are still in the brain and an appropriately arranged brain stimulated by a neuroscientist could have such illusory perceptions without the sense organs or a perceived object outside it. So the hylomorphic soul's configuring of the sense organs doesn't prevent the soul from *itself* thinking when engaged in reasoning with propositions with the abstracted concepts, what

²⁷ *In DMR 2.34-37*

Aquinas called the process of *compounding and dividing*. The soul, after all, is distinct from the matter it informs and the body that results in this theory. The contribution of the brain is causally downstream and a condition of abstract thought but not constitutive of thought. Thus the soul is thinking. Only if the embodied soul doesn't use the phantasms as a ladder that it kicks away when it thinks abstractly could it be said that it is the composite human being rather than the soul thinks. What is needed is for the embodied soul to be too weak to think without phantasms. That is, it always thinks with images under description. So even when thinking about a universal, it needs an image. Pasnau suggests that Aquinas might have held this to be the case: "even once we have grasped the nature of lines and triangles, we still cannot help but think about these things in light of specific images....because our intellects are too feeble to do anything else."²⁸ Pasnau, like myself, finds this a rather unconvincing account of abstraction.²⁹ We seem to quite often think abstractly without images.

The separated soul wills, loves and desires, it can pray and hear prayers, appear to embodied humans and have relationships with other immaterial beings. So if the detached soul can think, why couldn't it think earlier when embodied? It is not enough to argue as Aquinas frequently does that the body hampers the soul's powers.³⁰ The powers to think must not only be stymied in the soul but they must be transferred to the thinking human being. We need a story about how the embodied soul merely contributes to thought roughly like how neurons contribute to thought but can't themselves think then. Toner disagrees and says we don't need to explain how the soul was earlier a non-thinking contributor to thought for it was a "partly thinking contributor to a person's thought."³¹ But what is it to partly think? Is the soul thinking some parts of our thoughts but not others? It reasons abstractly about universals while we think about particulars? Then how do we

²⁸ Pasnau. *Op. cit.* 291.

²⁹ Pasnau *Op. cit.* 293-294.

³⁰ *SCG* II 81. 1625. See also *Quaestiones de Anima* (15c)

³¹ "Saint Thomas Aquinas on the Problem of Too Many Thinkers." *Modern Schoolman* 2012, 3:4, 215.

account for the unity of thought? Does it think some thoughts with us while we think others it doesn't? Is the model that our thought is like the collective intention a group of thinkers can have? We very much doubt it. So we need to be told much more than that our soul is a "partly thinking contributor" to our thought. And then we need to be told why it can't do embodied what it can later do – will, love, desire, pray and so on.

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

Corruptionists are fond of appealing to an analogy of Haldane to explain how the disembodied soul produces thought on its own but earlier merely contributed to the person's thought. Haldane writes:

To fix this idea, think of compound pigment colours such as brown, and claim that red, say, exists virtually, but not actually in this compound. What this means is that, certain conditions obtaining, the brown pigment might be destroyed but red pigment is precipitated out. Might this provide a model for the post-mortem existence of a subject of abstract thought?³²

This is a poor analogy and doesn't provide a model for abstract thought. The redness of the pigment is supposed to be like the thought produced by the detached soul and the brownness of the compound like the thought of the hylomorphic union of the soul and matter. But what is needed is for the pigment to contribute to the production of redness (abstract thought) of the compound but not to appear red itself until it is precipitated out. However, the pigment never contributed redness

³² Haldane, John. "The Examined Death and the Hope of the Future" *American Catholic Philosophical Association Proceedings*, 74, 2001, 254.

to the whole. The whole was brown. So the pigment/soul didn't contribute to the respective production of redness/thought in the soul-matter compound and then later instantiate redness/thought on its own. The red disposition either *finkeed*, to use the language of the powers literature, when it combined with other pigments, or its surface reflection contributed to the wave length but was swamped or absorbed into the wave length that produced brown. So the pigment is not a good model of the soul. A good model would contribute to the features to the larger compound, then later instantiate those very same features.

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

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

has a mode of understanding by turning to simply intelligible objects, as is proper to other separate substances.³³

Our worry is that we have here an occurrence of substantial change when something that couldn't think comes to think. Consider some neurons of the brain that aid in the production of thought. If their aggregate became capable of thought it would seem they have come to compose something else, a thinker. Or perhaps a better analogy is the lower half of the worm that doesn't compose an organism when embedded within a larger worm but merely contributes to the life of the worm. But when the worm is cut in half, the matter of the lower half becomes the matter of a new living worm, and that living creature is not identical to what was before the undetached non-living part of the worm.³⁴ There has occurred substantial change. We suspect readers wouldn't modify the above quote and claim parts of worms have one mode of agency when existing in one mode as an embodied part and another mode of agency when existing detached.

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

³³ *ST* 1. 89, 1.

³⁴ A plant cutting is another such example of substantial change. The branch of a plant is not a plant. But cut it off and place the cutting in soil and its matter may be reorganized, roots start to grow etc.

Thought is a property of a substance. There is a long tradition where thought is a substance conferring trait. It is essential to the substance and its onset means the emergence of a new substance. Non-substances can't think. The general principle that can be applied to thought (or life in our earlier worm example) is as follows: *If a part makes a contribution to a substance-conferring essence of a whole, then that part can't come to possess that essence on its own for its instantiation will require a new substance as its subject.* The idea is that there are no entities that first don't themselves think but instead contribute to thought and then later come to think. We are allowing that there are things like organisms that couldn't think at one time but could come to think later. They were already substances when they became thinkers. The key difference is that organisms didn't earlier contribute to thought and then later come themselves to be thinkers. So we don't think it helps to appeal to the soul having its mode of agency change when its mode of being changes – i.e., when it becomes disembodied.

B. The Survivalist Account of the Afterlife³⁵

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

We suspect those theorists that don't mind spatially coincident entities will think that this model works for the hylomorphic person. Consider the lump of clay which has modal or sortal

³⁵ The survivalists ranks include Eleonore Stump, *Aquinas, Op. cit.* 51-54; David Oderberg *Real Essentialism*, Routledge 2008, 241-260; Jason Eberl “Do Human Persons Persist Between Death and Resurrection,” *Metaphysics and God: Essays in Honor of Eleonore Stump*, 2009, 188-205; Christopher Brown, “Souls, Ships and Substances” *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly*, 2007, 81, 655-88; Mark Spencer, “Personhood of the Separated Soul,” *Nova et Vetera* 2014; Scott Rae and J.P. Moreland, *Body and Soul*. Intersarsity Press, 2000, 201.

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

But psychological capacities aren't like modal and sortal properties. They would seem to depend on parts and properties.³⁶ One would expect thinking things that don't have the same cognitive capacities to differ due to differences in their parts. So think like a materialist for a moment and consider a scenario in which the person was reduced to the size of his brain. All his other parts were destroyed. Why couldn't the brain think if its maimed person could then think without any other parts but the brain? What could the brain possibly lack that prevents it from thinking? True, it isn't a person for it has the wrong historical and modal properties. We'll assume that the person can reacquire a torso, legs and arms etc. as parts, and the brain can't. Likewise, the hylomorphic person can acquire such anatomical items as parts at the resurrection but the soul cannot. But we don't see any reason why the disembodied soul can't think if the brain of the maimed person could think. It isn't enough to say the soul is not a person. The person must have a capacity to be the subject of thought that the soul does not. The reason why the person was the hylomorphic ante-mortem thinker was because its soul and its matter composed the person and made thought possible for the person. But the disembodied hylomorphic person doesn't have anything other than the soul composing it. So it is hard to see why it is a disembodied subject of thought and the soul is not a subject of thought. What is needed is a feature or capacity in the

³⁶ Even if semantic content is external, the person and the soul are related to the same environment.

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

One survivalist account has the deceased human being having only a single proper part, a soul. If it were the case that the soul merely contributes to thought but is incapable of being a subject of thought, then the deceased person would have to be there in Purgatory (Hell or Heaven) for thought to occur – just as survivalists conjecture. It follows that the human being is in Purgatory without matter. There would then be an immaterial human being whose only proper part is an immaterial soul. Call this view “Compositional Hylomorphism.”

It is a standard mereological notion that something can't have a single proper part or, more precisely, a proper part that isn't disjoint from another proper part. We don't think that such proper parts that don't combine with other proper parts to compose the whole are so implausible.³⁷ We don't see why a tree would cease to have a trunk as a proper part because it lost its other proper parts, e.g. its branches. Donnelly has argued that the principle of weak supplementation is not part of the meaning of “proper part” and mereological theories can be constructed quite well without it. Oderberg thinks that weak supplementation makes more sense when applied to material than immaterial beings. We doubt that for three reasons. First, although Olson had compound dualism in mind, he complains of experiencing *ontological double vision* when considering the person coming to be purely immaterial with only an immaterial thinking part.³⁸ At least with standard material objects like trees and trunks, statues and lumps, nothing that was a material being later is an immaterial being without being the soul. Secondly, the idea of immaterial beings with parts is very difficult to conceive. Souls are typically construed as partless so they are indestructible and don't have

³⁷ The axiom that anything with a proper part has at least one other disjoint part. For doubts that the axiom is true or true of the meaning of parts and wholes, see Maureen Donnelly's “Using Mereological Principles to Support Metaphysics” *Philosophical Quarterly* (2011) 61, 225-246 and Oderberg's “Survivalism, Corruptionism, and Mereology” op. cit.

³⁸ Olson, Eric. “A Compound of Two Substances.” *Soul, Body and Survival*, Ed. Kevin Corcoran

extension. But the hylomorphic person has an immaterial part, its soul. The posthumous disembodied person will be something over and above its only part, its soul, but not in virtue of any further immaterial part. Third, we find it easier to understand how the typical dualist, who identifies us with our soul, can explain our thought even though this thought is neurologically dependent. The Cartesian soul is an immaterial simple and uses the brain to think. The soul is the thinker, the subject of thought. The soul is the person on the Cartesian theory. But in a hylomorphic account the soul is not the thinker that accounts for the unity of thought belonging to a single subject of thought. Although the disembodied hylomorphic person is neither a soul, nor has any parts other than its soul, it is somehow able as the subject of thought to use that soul to think. We have a hard time conceiving how such a thin conception of the disembodied person can do something that its soul cannot.

Some hylomorphists seem to think 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.³⁹ There would then be no violation of the mereological principle of weak supplementation. And in a Baker-style account of constitution, the soul and the person would instantiate the same thought, one thinking derivatively what the other thought non-derivatively. So there wouldn't be two thoughts even if there were two thinkers. Let's call this view 'Constitutional Hylomorphism.' We'll show below that constitution can't be taken too literally as a model for the relationship of the the disembodied person and his soul.

If the soul constitutes the post-mortem person, what constitutes the ante-mortem person? If one claims that the ante-mortem constituter is the soul and matter, that makes it seem as if the animal constituted the human being/person for isn't the animal just ensouled matter? But the animal

³⁹ Stump draws upon constitution, Baker in particular, to illustrate Aquinas's notion of constitution without identity. Stump 2003 *Op. cit.*, 50-58 and 2006 *op cit.* 164. Oderberg explains the detached soul's relation to the posthumous person with an "imperfect analogy" of becoming mutilated so that "I am constituted by a head as I was once constituted by a whole body" in "Hylemorphic Dualism." *Social Philosophy and Policy*. 2005. 97.

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. We 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 isn't 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 or Heaven prior to the Resurrection as involving the constituting entity (the soul) as not being a part of the constituted (person), unlike Compositional Hylomorphism. Thus the person in Purgatory or Heaven 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.⁴⁰

Constitutional Hylomorphism violates the fundamental principle of constitution that if x constitutes y at t, it is possible that: x exists without being linked to anything of the kind that y is at t. Informally, the lump could exist without constituting the statue at t; but the statue doesn't constitute the lump because it couldn't exist without a lump at t.⁴¹ 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.

⁴⁰ Judith Thomson, "The Statue and the Clay," *Nous*, 32, (1998): 149-173.

⁴¹ Lynne Baker, *Persons and Bodies: A Constitution View*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 43.

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

Now a claim that we are contingently animals preserves the necessity of identity but at the cost of by making our animality like our adolescence. Just as being an adolescent is a phase we go through, so is being an animal. The adolescent ceases to instantiate the property of being an adolescent without ceasing to exist when it becomes an adult, so the human animal at its death ceases to instantiate animality during the interim period prior to resurrection. So the human body or human animal no more goes out of existence when it becomes disembodied than the adolescent at goes of existence when it grows older. However, while it strikes us as quite alright to say the adolescent at T_1 is identical to the adult at T_2 , it seems flat out wrong to say the human body is identical to the matterless being in Purgatory. Bodies seem to be the type of things that are essentially material, in other words, animals essentially possess matter. Adolescents are not essentially adolescents and essentially young. So if we are identical to a body or an animal (and there is no way to distinguish the animal from the body given the unicity of forms), then on the survivalist account the body/animal survives disembodiment (i.e.. understanding this as loss of matter) just as

the adolescent survives growing into adulthood. To put it oxymoronically, the survivalist is committed to disembodied bodies.

If the hylomorphist instead pursues the essentialist claim that the disembodied still possess animality, then we'd claim that this use of animality and the essence/contingency distinction is too promiscuous. It seems to us that the mark of contingency is that there are some traits I don't have to always instantiate. One is contingently chubby, not essentially chubby. Even if one were to slim down due to weeks of dieting and exercising, one's retaining the power to become chubby would not make it an essential property. This second-order power or capacity doesn't make one's chubbiness essential. The claim that one is essentially chubby is false. Of course, chubbiness doesn't play the fundamental role that animality does in accounting for one's behavior and other features, unifying them and determining those that one can have and cannot have.⁴² And one is chubby because one is an animal. So someone may claim animality is essential because of its centrality to the unity and identity of our parts and properties, while chubbiness is just an accident. There's something to this but we'd still reply that animality seems to be dependent upon our humanity or personhood or whatever it is that is *actualized* by the form even when disembodied.

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

III. Concluding Recommendations

Perhaps both corruptionists and survivalists may just have to insist that we must just accept that the relationship between the person and the soul is *sui generis* and not expect informative or

⁴² See the accounts of essence in Oderberg 2007 *Op. cit.* and Rae and Moreland's *Body and Soul Op cit.* 2000.

unifying comparisons. They might appeal to a sense in which the human being is merely analogous to other animals and persons.⁴³ The human form is only a form analogously to material forms for it is subsistent and doesn't depend upon matter for its continued existence. Its form is the lowest of spiritual substances. Since the human is an animal through this soul, we should expect its animality to be differing from that of other animals. So perhaps the survivalist's immaterial person has properties that somehow make it a fitting subject of thought that its only proper part (the soul) lacks. This *sui generis* hylomorphic person and soul is thus unlike the materialist's person and brain. When the material person is reduced to having the brain as a proper part and no other disjoint proper parts, both brain and person can think. But only the disembodied hylomorphic person thinks, not its soul. The corruptionists can also appeal to the *sui generis* nature of the soul. The corruptionist's soul avoids substantial change when new powers are bestowed upon it transforming it into a thinking entity. The same is not true for a part of the materialist's brain that contributes to the thought of its human animal. If detached, that brain part would go out of existence with the onset of thought. It doesn't become the subject of those new thoughts but is replaced.

So the relationship of the hylomorphic person and his soul will not be illuminated by any of the standard models of composition, constitution, animality, embodiment, the onset of cognition, and being a subject of thought. Such *sui generis* approaches aren't incoherent. It is just that the absence of explanatory models for corruptionism and survivalism comes at the expense of some understanding.

An alternative for the advocate of hylomorphism is to explore the possibility that the person is embodied in Purgatory. There's precedent in that Dante famously bestowed bodies to the inhabitants of Purgatory that were tailored to fit their sins. So the person's soul could configure different matter in Purgatory than it did at the time of his death. This wouldn't be a numerically

⁴³ This tack is taken by Mark Spencer. He writes of the person being analogously an animal. *Op cit.*

different body or animal, just one with very different organization and completely different matter. The identity of the Purgatory and ante-mortem animal body would be guaranteed by the sameness of soul, just as is the identity of the embryonic body and the structurally and materially very different adult body. However, a major obstacle would be to explain why Purgatory's embodied people still need to undergo the final resurrection. We can again find some inspiration in Dante. It might be that that the structure of the Purgatory body would serve some function of purification but wouldn't be an appropriate structure for an eternal body. This thesis won't be easy to defend but it's worth exploring given the absence of models to illuminate the survivalist and corruptionist accounts.