In Defense of Modified Thomistic Holism: A Proposal for Christian Anthropology

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A thesis submitted to the University of Birmingham for the Degree DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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November 2018

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Abstract

In this thesis I set forth what I understand to be the criteria of a Christian anthropology. From this, I then evaluate the major anthropological systems that Christians tend to employ to develop their accounts of human persons, with special attention given to Christian materialism, substance dualism, and Thomistic hylomorphism. I contend that neither Christian materialism nor substance dualism adequately satisfy the criteria of a Christian anthropology, and that some of the best examples of these perspectives have unique philosophical problems of their own. I then consider Thomas Aquinas's hylomorphic account of human persons and argue that, while it does not perfectly satisfy the criteria of a Christian anthropology, it does fair better than both Christian materialism and substance dualism, and that there are ways to modify his account to enable it to better satisfy the Christian criteria.

Acknowledgements

After earning a first PhD in theological studies in 2008, I was overcome with fascination for the philosophical and theological questions about human persons. Once the desire to pursue a second PhD crystalized in my mind, and my wife graciously agreed to let me proceed, I began the process that resulted in this thesis. And while I still have more questions than answers at this point in the journey, I am deeply grateful for the opportunity and support of those who have helped me get to this point.

First, I wish to thank my supervisor, Dr. Yujin Nagasawa. Yujin has been a constant encourager to my ideas and arguments, offering helpful feedback and criticism throughout every step of this journey. He embodies the unique combination of grace, firmness, creativity and patience that anyone would want in a doctoral supervisor. And, his friendship and mentorship have changed the way I think about the issues in this thesis. Yujin, I count you as a dear friend and I have developed a deep respect and admiration for you as a person.

Second, I want to thank Ashgate and the European Journal of Philosophy of Religion for allowing me to incorporate material in this thesis that was previously published with them. In chapter 4, my thoughts on the problems with Kevin Corcoran's accounts of postmortem survival are taken from, and expanded upon, a chapter published in Andrew Moore's collection *God, Mind, and Knowledge* (see works cited Dew, J. (2014a) Corcoran's Anthropological Constitutionalism and the Problem of Post-Mortem Survival. In Moore, A. (ed.) *God, Mind and Knowledge.* Burlington, Ashgate). Likewise, in chapter 8, my thoughts on Richard Swinburne's brain replacement argument and mental properties are taken, and expanded upon, from an article I published as a review of Swinburne's Mind, Brain, and Free Will (see works cited Dew, J. (2014b) Swinburne's New Soul: A Response to Mind, Brain, and Free Will. *European Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 6.2, p. 29–37).

Third, I want to thank my various colleagues, friends, and students at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. These folks have been constant dialogue partners throughout this project. Being in an environment like this pushed me to think, analyze, and reformulate some of my initial convictions on these questions. Having regular dialogue partners in this field of work is absolutely essential and I am deeply grateful for each of you.

Fourth, and finally, I want to thank my family. To my father, James K. Dew, Sr., thanks for the sacrifices you made to put me in a place to succeed and have opportunities that you never had. Our paths have been very different. Yet, I am cut from your cloth and I am so grateful for your impact in my life. I am very proud to call you my father. To my sweet and wonderful kids, Natalie, Nathan, Samuel, and Samantha, thanks for your patience while daddy chased another project. Your laughs and snuggles keep my feet on the ground even when my head is in the clouds. I love you deeply and am so proud of you. And to my wife, Dr. Tara Dew, there is no way I could do what I do without you. Thank you for being a haven to my mind and soul. You are indeed my better part!

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Chapter 1

An Introduction

1.1   Questions and Argument.

What exactly are human persons? Are we purely material beings, consisting only of body, brain, and various organs? Are we immaterial beings, consisting in soul or spirit only? Or, are we a combination of both? And for those that are religiously inclined, as I am, what does the Christian tradition have to say about these important matters? These questions have been some of the most important questions driving theology and philosophy throughout the history of the western tradition. These are also the kinds of questions that drive this thesis.

In this thesis, I shall explore some of the most popular answers to these questions—materialism and substance dualism—before defending a modified version of Thomas Aquinas's view. Specifically, I shall argue that with some modifications to what Aquinas has to say about the human body, a view I call Modified Thomist Holism is both philosophically and theologically superior to both Christian materialism and Christian substance dualism.

1.2   Goal, Method, and Structure.

Like any philosopher I hope my conclusions are both rational and plausible. As such, as I consider the various views in this thesis, I will need to give special attention to the philosophical issues that arise for each view, including my own. But being a Christian theist brings an additional burden to the work of this thesis. I shall also need to ensure that the view I endorse is consistent and compatible with the teachings of the Christian faith itself. In some ways, therefore, this thesis is an exercise in the coherence of theism—or perhaps more specifically, an exercise in the coherence of Christian anthropology.

With these goals in mind, I shall proceed as follows. First, it will be vital to know what the Christian faith teaches about human persons. While this thesis is not a work in theology *per se*, setting forth the theological criteria for a Christian anthropology is essential for determining how well of the various "Christian" anthropologies actually cohere with the faith. I shall seek a set of ideas that are so strongly endorsed by the Church throughout Christian history that it is plausible to take the claims as a set of criteria for adjudicating between anthropologies that carry the label of "Christian." Given the amount of interest in these questions throughout history, it will be impossible that any particular idea is universally assented to by every Christian thinker through time. Nevertheless, I shall argue that there is strong enough support for some ideas about human persons that they should be taken as criteria for a Christian anthropology.

But I must also do more than simply evaluate how well the various anthropological views cohere with the Christian faith. I must also evaluate the various views on their own philosophical grounds. In other words, I must also try to determine if there are any significant philosophical problems—problems that are independent of the theological concerns—with the different views I explore.

To accomplish these tasks, I adopt the following structure in the remaining chapters. In the next chapter (chapter 2) of this first part, I argue for what I call the criteria of a Christian anthropology. These criteria include:

(C1)   Bodies and souls are distinct entities.

(C2)   Human persons are composed of bodies and souls.

(C3)   Human personhood begins at the moment of conception.

(C4)   At death, the body and soul separate with the body decomposing and the soul going to the intermediate state.

(C5)   At the end of this world, our souls will be rejoined to bodies that are numerically identical to our current bodies.

In part 2, I consider Christian materialism. In chapter 3, I offer some general philosophical concerns with this view. After this, I evaluate Christian materialism against the five criteria for a Christian anthropology. I conclude that Christian materialism has substantial problems, problems that lead me to reject this family of views. But in addition to these general philosophical and theological problems, I go on in chapters 4, 5, and 6 to explore specific versions of materialism—Baker and Corcoran's constitutional view, Murphy's non-reductive view, and van Inwagen's eliminativist view. I argue in those chapters that in addition to the general problems mentioned in chapter 3, each version of materialism has unique philosophical problems of their own.

In part 3, I turn my attention to substance dualism. In chapter 7, I argue that like materialism, there are some general philosophical and theological problems with Christian substance dualism. Problems that are again sufficient for me to reject these views. But as in section 2, there are also three chapters in this section (chapters 8, 9, and 10) that evaluate specific versions of substance dualism—Swinburne's cartesian view, Moreland and Rae's "Thomistic" view, and Hasker's emergent view. And again, like the previous section, I argue that in addition to the general problems with Christian substance dualism, each of these views has unique philosophical problems of their own.

This brings me to part 4. In chapter 11, I offer an exegesis of Thomas Aquinas's account of human persons and consider some popular objections that are raised against it. I will argue that none of the most common objections to his view are successful. I then consider how well his view coheres with the criteria of a Christian anthropology, concluding that his account easily satisfies three of the criteria ((C1), (C2) and (C4)), but that there are two criteria (C3) and (C5)) that he fails to satisfy. On this basis, I move into chapter 12 to introduce my unique contribution to philosophical anthropology—the doctrine of essential parts. With the doctrine of essential parts, I seek to modify what Aquinas has to say about the human body, making it now possible for a Modified Thomistic Holism to satisfy (C1)–(C5). Once this is done, I consider the best

philosophical objections to my view, arguing that none of them are successful against it. Finally, in

chapter 13 I conclude by reviewing the overall argument of the thesis and then offer several areas

for further study. Such is the scope of this thesis. Without any further ado, I shall begin!

Chapter 2

The Criteria of a Christian Anthropology

2.1   Introduction

Christian anthropologies come in all shapes and sizes. Some thinkers, for example, affirm the existence of an immaterial soul and build their anthropology around that concept. Others, by contrast, reject this notion and insist that human beings are nothing more than physical bodies. But this is not all. There are other questions about what happens at death and a variety of answers to these questions. As such, the question of how to adjudicate between materialism and dualism—one of the primary concerns of this thesis—is of great significance.

In this chapter I shall set forth what I understand to be a plausible set of criteria for a Christian anthropology. This is indeed a challenging task, as Christians have affirmed a wide variety of things about human persons over the last two millennia. Despite this, however, I will suggest that there are some dominant themes throughout Christian history that can be identified and put forward as representative of what most theologians have said about human persons over time. There are, of course, always outliers to the ideas I set forth in this chapter. But for those that reject these ideas, I suggest that in so doing, they find themselves at odds with the majority of theologians throughout history. To establish each of the criteria, I shall consider biblical, historical, and contemporary resources.

But before moving forward, I must say something about how this chapter relates to my considerations of Christian materialism, substance dualism, and Thomism in later chapters. Once again, the question of adjudication is central to this project. While most discussions in the philosophy of mind and philosophical/theological anthropology focus on the plausibility of materialism and substance dualism, a Christian anthropology must also be concerned with the question of coherence with the Christian faith itself. In other words, for an anthropology to count as

a "Christian" anthropology, one must have equal concern with the way a particular view "fits" or "lines up with" the teachings of the Christian faith. Some philosophers will not be concerned with the possibility that their view fails to "fit" or "line up with" the teaching of the Christian faith. But for those who have a desire to be consistent with the faith, the issue of coherence is of major importance. Such is the concern of this thesis. As such, after establishing what I think a plausible account of the criteria of a Christian anthropology might be here in chapter 2, I shall then use these criteria in later chapters—chapters 3, 7, 11, and 12—to evaluate some of the major anthropologies that are put forward as Christian.

2.2   The Criteria of a Christian Anthropology

How does one go about identifying the criteria for a Christian anthropology? Since Christians today affirm a wide variety of things about human persons, this can be somewhat difficult. For example, a Christian doctrine of human persons will likely include affirmations about topics such as, human origins, the image of God, the body and the soul, the origin of the soul, freewill, the fall into sin, man's need for salvation, man's place within community, metaphysical composition, and much more. Despite the wide-ranging affirmations about human person that Christians make, however, it is possible to narrow things down in order to serve the purposes of this thesis. Given the kinds of the questions that this thesis will address, what is most importance to ascertain in this chapter is this: (1) what are the most common metaphysical affirmations that Christians have made regarding human persons, that (2) are sometimes debated or denied by contemporary philosophers?

With this question in mind, one might expect that our discussion would begin with the doctrine of the *Imago Dei*—the image of God. According to this doctrine, human persons differ from all other created things in that they "bear the divine image". This doctrine does indeed represent an idea about human persons that has been overwhelmingly, perhaps even universally,

affirmed by the theologians throughout history.[1] Yet, since Christian theologians have almost universally affirmed this doctrine, I shall leave it aside and focus only on those ideas that are widely affirmed in Christin history but are debated by contemporary philosophers. I suggest that there are at least five distinct ideas that are central to our concerns. These ideas have either been overwhelmingly affirmed by the Christian Church, or have after centuries of debate, become the final conclusions within both Catholic and Protestant Churches. I suggest that these ideas, or what I call the criteria of a Christian anthropology, represent the majority position for the Christian faith. They include the following affirmations:

> (C1)   Bodies and souls are distinct entities.
>
> (C2)   Human persons are composed of bodies and souls.
>
> (C3)   Human personhood begins at the moment of conception.
>
> (C4)   At death, the body and soul separate with the body decomposing and the soul going to the intermediate state.
>
> (C5)   At the end of this world, our souls will be rejoined to bodies that are numerically identical to our current bodies.[2]

As already noted, while not all these ideas have been affirmed by every Christian thinker, they have been affirmed by the majority of Christian thinkers throughout history. I contend that, while selected Christian thinkers have rejected some of these ideas at various times, based on the testimony of Christian Scripture and the majority position of the Church, it is plausible to say that (C1)–(C5) represent the Christian tradition's teaching on human persons. If so, then I suggest that for any view to succeed as a "Christian" anthropology, these criteria should be satisfied.

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[1] What I say here is not intended to suggest that there are not theological debates about the Imago Dei throughout history. An example of a very important debate over the *Imago Dei* revolves round the nature of the image—substantive vs. relational. Yet, these debates are not, the best I can tell, germane to the issues I am concerned with in this thesis.

[2] The "C" in (C1)–(C5) stands for "criteria".

But several points of qualification are in order. First, in what follows, I shall not attempt to offer a full systematic or historical treatment of these theological points. If this were a history or theology project such would be necessary. This thesis, however, is a philosophical project. Second, for each of the ideas set forth as criteria below, there is vastly more literature than could be considered in this chapter. As such, all I attempt to do in this chapter is provide an initial basis for thinking that (C1)–(C5) might very well represent the concerns of the Christian faith with regard to human persons. I now turn to the rationale for each of the criteria.

2.2.1 *(C1) Bodies and Souls are Distinct Entities*

According to (C1), bodies and souls are distinct metaphysical entities: immaterial souls and material bodies. While some have referred to these two entities as distinct "substances", others have stopped short of that language in reference to bodies and souls, even while maintaining a metaphysical distinction between them. Whichever nomenclature these entities have been given, most theologians have recognized that Christianity requires us to affirm that the body and soul are different metaphysical entities in their own right.

Biblically speaking, passages from the Old and New Testaments support (C1). In Ecclesiastes 12:6-7, for example, Solomon says, "*Remember your Creator* before the silver cord is loosed, Or the golden bowl is broken, Or the pitcher shattered at the fountain, Or the wheel broken at the well. Then the dust will return to the earth as it was, And the spirit will return to God who gave it."[3] By using the images of silver cords, golden bowls, pitchers at the fountain, and wheels as metaphors for death, Solomon references a time when "the dust will return to the earth as it was, And the spirit will return to God." The implication of this being that man possess both a body and soul. Likewise, in the New Testament, Matthew 10:28 notes Jesus' warning of judgment

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[3] Throughout this chapter and thesis, all biblical references are taken from the New King James Version (NKJV) of the Bible.

when he said, "And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." Here again, an operating assumption in this passage is that bodies and souls are distinct things in the make-up of the human being.

Beyond biblical references to the distinction of bodies and souls, one can also point to the views of the Church throughout history in support for (C1). In the early Church era, for example, Cyril of Alexandria said, "For they say that God the Word hath taken a perfect man from out the seed of Abraham and David according to the declaration of the Scriptures, who is by nature what they were of whose seed he was, a man perfect in nature, consisting of intellectual soul and human flesh" (Cyril of Alexandria, 2014, p. 18). Gregory of Nyssa made a similar distinction between body and soul, saying that "the simplicity and invisibility of the soul and the solidity of the body have nothing in common according to the principle in their natures" (Nyssa, 1993, p. 46). And he further notes that "the soul is in the body although it differs from the body in its essence" (Nyssa, 1993, p. 65). Likewise, St. Augustine argued that God made "every soul and of every body . . . who made man a rational animal consisting of soul and body" (Augustine, 1950, p. 93).

Affirmations of (C1) can also be found frequently within the medieval period and reformation thinkers. The great Catholic theologian/philosopher Thomas Aquinas, for instance, argued that the "soul is united to the body as its proper form" (Aquinas, 1975, v.2, p. 172). Likewise, Protestant theologians like John Calvin said "that man consists of a soul and a body ought to be beyond controversy" (Calvin, 1960, v.1, p. 184). Countless other thinkers could be mentioned here in support of (C1). John Cooper is right to suggest, therefore, that throughout history "the ecumenical Christian tradition—Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and most historic Protestant churches—has affirmed that God created humans as unities of body and soul" (Cooper, 2009, p. 32). As such, despite some contemporary materialist attempts to deny the immaterial soul, I contend

that (C1) represents the Christian faith, both in the teachings of scripture and its historical figures, and that any Christian account of human persons should affirm this idea.

2.2.2 *(C2) Human Persons are Composed of Bodies and Souls*

(C2) expands on upon (C1) by affirming what I shall call "ontological holism." On this view, we affirm more than just the existence of bodies and souls as distinct metaphysical entities. Indeed, (C2) goes further by suggesting that human persons *are* the composites of bodies and souls. That is, it seems that the Christian faith suggests that a human person is his body and soul essentially. Moreover, this union is not a mere functional holism, where it is maintained that persons are identical to their immaterial souls even if they cannot function as intended without being fully integrated with a physical body.[4] Rather, (C2) contends for an "ontological holism" where the human person is ontologically constituted by and identified with the unified body/soul composite.

As mentioned above, there are dissenting voices within Church history on this matter. Methodius notes, for example, that Origin thought "that the soul alone is man, as did Plato" (Methodius, 2004, p. 370). And, like many substance dualists after him, John Calvin would insist that the person is identical with the immaterial soul (Calvin, 1960, v.1, p. 185).[5] But as I will argue here, Origin and Calvin's view was not the majority view throughout history, and that there is a biblical and historical basis for rejecting it in favor of (C2). Simply put, in patristic and medieval eras of the Church, Christendom most frequently held that the human person is the living union of a material body and immaterial soul essentially.

Biblically speaking, passages like Genesis 2:7 suggest a composite view of human persons consistent with (C2). There it says, "And the Lord God formed man *of* the dust of the ground, and

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[4] For an example of this kind of holism, see Moreland & Rae (2000) and Taliaferro (1994).

[5] As an example of a contemporary substance dualist that makes this claim, see Moreland & Rae (2000, p. 121). They say, "human persons are identical to immaterial substances, namely, to souls."

breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being." It is significant to note here that the Bible suggests that God constructs human beings from both spirit and matter and identifies them with the body soul composite. In I Thessalonians 5:23, the apostle Paul prays for the Thessalonian believers saying, "Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." Here again, the human person is identified with the composite of the material body conjoined to the immaterial soul—the composite whole.

That (C2) is how the patristic and medieval theologians understood human nature is overwhelmingly clear with just a quick survey of thinkers. For instance, in the 2nd century, Irenaeus said rather plainly: "Now the soul and the spirit are certainly a *part* of the man, but certainly not *the* man; for the perfect man consists in the commingling and the union of the soul receiving the spirit of the Father, and the admixture of that fleshly nature which was moulded after the image of God" (Irenaeus, 2004, v.1, p. 531). Tertullian, another 2nd century church father, also clearly affirmed (C2). He insists that the composite nature of human beings as bodies and souls is something that starts at the moment of conception, and follows all the way through a person's life. He says:

> We have already demonstrated the conjunction of the body and the soul, from the concretion of their very seminations to the complete formation of the *fetus*. We now maintain their conjunction likewise from the birth onwards; in the first place, because they both grow together, only each in a different manner suited to the diversity of their nature— the flesh in magnitude, the soul in intelligence—the flesh in material condition, the soul in sensibility (Tertullian, 2004, v.3, p. 218).

Also in the 2nd century, Methodius said that man "with respect to his nature, is most truly said to be neither soul without body, nor, on the other hand, body without soul; but a being composed out of the union of soul and body into one form of the beautiful" (Methodius, 2004, v.6, p. 370).

(C2) was also affirmed in the 4th and 5th centuries. In the *Pseudo-Justin Martyr* of the 4th century[6], for example, the author says, "Is the soul by itself man? No; but the soul of man. Would the body be called man? No, but it is called the body of man . . . that which is made up of the two together is called man" (Martyr, 2004, v.1, p. 297–298). In the 5th century, Cyril of Alexandria affirmed (C2) as well, saying, "Do we not say that a man like us is One and his nature one, although he has not simpleness [of nature] but is compounded out of two, I mean a soul and body? We do" (Cyril of Alexandria, 2014, p. 27). Likewise, in the Athanasian Creed (5th century)[7], (C2) is affirmed by way of comparison to the union of divine and human natures in the person Jesus Christ. It says, "For as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man: so God and man is one Christ" (Athanasian Creed, 1931, p. 69). Also in the 5th century, St. Augustine endorsed (C2) by following Varro's view of human persons, arguing "that man is neither body alone, nor the soul alone, but both together" (Augustine, 1950, p. 674). The affirmation of (C2) were certainly not limited to the 2nd through 5th centuries. And as we will see in greater detail in chapter 12, Thomas Aquinas of the 13th century also affirmed (C2) saying that "man is not a mere soul, nor a mere body; but both soul and body" (Aquinas, 1948, v.1, p. 336).

Many more examples could be given in favor of the historical support for (C2). Suffice it to say, this conception of human nature has been upheld repeatedly throughout Christian history. As Herman Bavinck of the Dutch Reformed tradition summarizes the historical position, "The body is not a prison, but a marvelous piece of art from the hand of God Almighty, and just as constitutive for the essence of humanity as the soul. …It is so integrally and essentially a part of our humanity that, though violently torn from the soul by sin, it will be reunited with it in the resurrection of the

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[6] This patristic era work was originally attributed to Justin Martyr, but this is now widely denied. Most believe it was written in the 4th century, possibly by Athenagoras.

[7] Though the creed bears Athanasius's name, most scholars agree that it likely was not penned by Athanasius himself.

dead" (Bavinck, 2003, p. 559). Langdon Gilkey agrees, arguing that "as opposed to the contemporary pagan writers, Christians insisted that the whole man includes body as well as soul" (Gilkey, 1959, p. 199). And finally, Stephen Davis summarizes the point concisely, going so far as to label the concept of (C2) as "patristic theory" (Davis, 1989, p. 128). He says, "both in scripture and tradition, that classical dualism is not the Christian position. For example, the biblical view is not that the soul is the essence of the person and is only temporarily housed or even imprisoned in his body; human beings seem rather to be understood in scripture as psycho-physical entities, that is, as unities of body and soul" (Davis, 1989, p.120). I contend, therefore, that despite the occasional outliers to (C2), (C2) represents the traditional Christian teaching on human composition.

2.2.3 *(C3) Human Personhood Begins at the Moment of Conception*

A case can also be made in favor of (C3). (C3) affirms not just that human *life* begins at the moment of conception, but more specifically, human *personhood* begins at the moment of conception.[8] That is, (C3) affirms that the life that is produced by the fertilized human embryo is not just "living human tissue", but is rather an actual human person.

The case for (C3) begins with a number of biblical passages. In Jeremiah 1:5, for example, the Bible says, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; Before you were born I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations." Interestingly, in this passage God refers to the unconceived and unborn Jeremiah in the personal term of "you", and speaks of him as a person with a future and purpose. Similarly, in Psalm 139:13–14, King David notes God's view of himself while still unborn or fully formed. He says, "For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise You, for I am fearfully *and* wonderfully made." The same inference

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[8] The distinction here is that, while some contemporary thinkers affirm that biological life begins at conception, they deny that personhood has begun. (C3) Affirms both (1) that biological life has begun and (2) that personhood has begun as well.

for (C3) may also be drawn from Exodus 21:22–25 where a grave warning is given to those that harm or kill the unborn. It says:

> If men fight, and hurt a woman with child, so that she gives birth prematurely, yet no harm follows, he shall surely be punished accordingly as the woman's husband imposes on him; and he shall pay as the judges *determine*. But if *any* harm follows, then you shall give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.

The point here is not to defend a particular view on moral issues like abortion. Rather, the point here is simply to show that in biblical terms, human personhood is something that begins at the moment of conception, not birth.

In fairness to theological critics of (C3), it must be noted that many theologians in the patristic or medieval eras did not affirm (C3). One exception to this, however, is Tertullian, who said, "Now we allow that life begins with conception, because we contend that the soul also begins from conception; life taking its commencement at the same moment and place that the soul does" (Tertullian, 2004, v. 3, p. 207). Despite examples like Tertullian, however, the patristics generally did not affirm (C3), not because of a disagreement with it, but simply because it was an ignored issue during this time. Things are different, however, with the medieval thinkers. As I will demonstrate in chapter 12 with Thomas Aquinas, for example, medieval thinkers typically rejected (C3), suggesting instead that human personhood begins at some later moment of fetal gestation. Yet, even here, there is good reason not to lean too heavily on Aquinas. As John Haldane and Patrick Lee have argued, Aquinas's view is largely based, not on a theological or philosophical commitment, but on a faulty understanding of embryology. Moreover, they contend that had Aquinas known what we now know of embryology, it is likely that he would have affirmed (C3) (Haldane & Lee, 2003, p. 268–273).

Nevertheless, Aquinas's stance of the beginning of human personhood is, in this particular case of (C3), at odds with the official teaching of the Protestant and Catholic Churches. In *The Enchiridion*, for example, Augustine argues that "the unborn child is from the very first a child. It is

still developing and has no independent life. But it is a man and a not a thing, nor a mere part of the mother's body" (Augustine, 1999, p. 112). Or, consider the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. It says, "The Church teaches that every spiritual soul is created immediately by God—it is not 'produced' by the parents—and also that it is immortal: it does not perish when it separates from the body at death, and it will be reunited with the body at the final Resurrection" (Catechism, 1994, p. 93). It then adds, "From the first moment of his existence, a human being must be recognized as having the rights of a person—among which is the inviolable right of every innocent being to life" (Catechism, 1994, p. 547). And then again, "Since it must be treated from conception as a person, the embryo must be defended in its integrity, cared for, and healed, as far as possible, like any other human being" (Catechism, 1994, p. 548). And finally, in *Calvin's Commentaries*—specifically his commentaries on *The Four Last Books of Moses*—John Calvin, of the Protestant tradition, argues that the fetus, "though enclosed in the womb of its mother, is already a human being" (Calvin, 2003, v.3, p. 41–42). Thus, despite what medieval theologians like Aquinas thought about the beginnings of personhood, it appears that the majority teaching of Christian tradition has been in favor of (C3). I contend, therefore, that (C3) represents the official teachings of both Protestant and Catholic traditions and as such, should be included as one of the criteria for a Christian anthropology.

2.2.4 (C4) At Death, the Body and Soul Separate with the Body Decomposing and the Soul Going to the Intermediate State

One of the most important concerns in historical Christian anthropology has been with what happens to the body and soul at death. Generally speaking, theologians from the majority traditions of Catholicism and Protestantism have maintained (C4)—that at death the body and soul separate with the body decomposing and the soul going to the presence of God in the intermediate state. Like the other criteria, the basis for (C4) comes from biblical and historical sources.

Biblically speaking, Ecclesiastes 12:6–7 is as significant to this point as it is to (C1) above. Again, Solomon says, "*Remember your Creator* before the silver cord is loosed, Or the golden bowl is broken, Or the pitcher shattered at the fountain, Or the wheel broken at the well. Then the dust will return to the earth as it was, And the spirit will return to God who gave it." With a warning to remember God before death, the author describes what takes place at the moment of death. At this point, the spirit returns to God where it came from, and the dust (material body) returns to the earth that and to being "as it was." In the New Testament, theologians have often pointed to Luke 23:43 to support (C4). There, Jesus says to the thief on the cross, whose body would soon decay in the earth, that "today you will be with Me in Paradise." As theologians often note, Jesus's statement to the thief, combined with the reality of material decay of the thief's body, can only be understood in ways consistent with (C4). And, in I Corinthians 5:1–8, the apostle Paul described the process of death in more vivid terms, but again in keeping with (C4). He says:

> For we know that if our earthly house, *this* tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven, if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked. For we who are in *this* tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life. . . . So *we are* always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord. For we walk by faith, not by sight. We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.

What Paul shows here is that when death occurs, the "tent" of the body is destroyed. And yet, after this takes places, something about us—the soul—continues to exist and awaits a day of being "further clothed."

Yet, the support for (C4) goes well beyond the biblical passages just noted. Once again, this concept of death enjoys wide support by theologians throughout history. Irenaeus, for example, suggested that:

> The Lord has taught with very great fulness, that souls not only continue to exist, not by passing from body to body, but that they preserve the same form [in their separate state] as the body had to which they were adapted, and that they remember the deeds which they did

in this state of existence, and from which they have now ceased,—in that narrative which is recorded respecting the rich man and that Lazarus who found repose in the bosom of Abraham" (Irenaeus, 2004, v. 1, p. 411).

Likewise, in *The City of God*, Augustine says:

> Wherefore, as regards bodily death, that is, the separation of the soul from the body, it is good unto none while it is being endured by those whom we say are in the article of death. For the very violence with which body and soul are wrenched asunder, which in the living had been conjoined and closely intertwined, brings with it a harsh experience, jarring horridly on nature so long as it continues, till there comes a total loss of sensation, which arose from the very interpenetration of spirit and flesh (Augustine, 1950, p. 416).

And he adds, "For although the human soul is truly affirmed to be immortal, yet it also has a certain death of its own. For it is therefore called immortal, because, in a sense, it does not cease to live and to feel; while the body is called mortal, because it can be forsaken of all life, and cannot by itself live at all" (Augustine, 1950, p. 412). More recently, in the *Heidelberg Catechism*, the Protestant church affirmed that the "soul, after this life, shall be immediately taken up to Christ its head" and that the body will be later "raised by the power of Christ" and "made like unto the glorious body of Christ" (Heidelberg, 1996, p. 325–326). And in the *Westminster Confession*, the Church affirmed that "The souls of the righteous, being then made perfect in holiness, are received into the highest heavens, where they behold the face of God in light and glory, waiting for the full redemption of their bodies" (Westminster, 1996, p. 670–671).

On this biblical and historical basis, contemporary theologians regularly affirm (C4). As Millard Erickson summarizes the Christian tradition, "There is between death and resurrection an intermediate state in which believers and unbelievers experience, respectively, the presence and absence of God. While these experiences are less intense than the final states, they are of the same qualitative nature" (Erickson, 2013, p. 1085). John Cooper agrees. Against some attempts by materialists to dismiss the intermediate state, he says, "I must reaffirm my claim that the New Testament teaches an intermediate state of fellowship with Christ for believers. None of the exegetical and theological works on this topic or the *ad hoc* efforts of non-theologians have come

close to offering an alternative explanation of the evidence or refuting it" (Cooper, 2000, p. xxv). I contend that Erickson and Cooper are correct, and that the majority Christian traditions have affirmed (C4).

2.2.5   *(C5) At the End of this World, our Souls will be Rejoined to Bodies that are Numerically Identical to our Current Bodies*

Finally, and most importantly, the majority Christian traditions have also affirmed (C5). According to this criterion, what we are required to say about the resurrection is that the body which is eventually resurrected is numerically identical to the body we currently possess. That is, (C5) denies that the resurrection body is a mere duplicate of the body that we currently inhabit. Rather, for personal identity to be maintained in the resurrection, we must be resurrected in the very same numerical body of this life. But there is more. A quick survey of Christian history suggests that the early and medieval churches not only affirmed the numerical identity of the body in the resurrection. It also shows that theologians typically took a specific view about how such numerically identical bodies might be brought about. According an overwhelming number of theologians throughout history, the resurrection body will be numerically identical to the body we current possess because that body will be constituted by the very same material bits that currently constitute our body. And because of this, it is the reassembly model of resurrection that has received the most historical support.

Once again, however, we begin with biblical data. Hints of (C5) appear to be present within I Corinthians 15. In vs. 36, for example, the apostle Paul notes the ontological continuity between the body of death and the body of the resurrection, saying "what you sow is not made alive unless it dies." Then in vs. 42–44, he adds, "So also *is* the resurrection of the dead. *The body* is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body." Despite the

qualitative differences between the body of death and the resurrection body, Paul suggests an ontological continuity between the two. That is, it is the same body that dies that will be raised, even if in the process of resurrection, significant spiritual transformation takes place by way of glorification. Yet, such transformation is a matter of redeeming and restoring that which was broken by the fall, and is not a matter of numerical change. (C5) also finds support from passages like Daniel 12:2 which says, "And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, Some to everlasting life, Some to shame *and* everlasting contempt."

Historically speaking, (C5) enjoys a massive amount of support, far more than could be considered here in this chapter. I will, however, note a few significant passages. Athenagoras, for instance, argued that there "must certainly be a resurrection of bodies whether dead or even quite corrupted, and the same men as before must come to be again . . . and it is impossible for the same men to come together again if the same bodies are not given back to the same souls. Now the same soul cannot recover the same body in any other way than by resurrection" (Athenagoras, 1956, p. 115–116). Caroline Walker Bynum summarizes Athenagoras's main concern. She says that for Athenagoras, "it will not be the same man unless the same body is restored to the same soul: such restoration is resurrection. . . . Resurrection is reassemblage of parts" (Bynum, 1995, p. 32). Similarly, Justin Martyr argued that the "resurrection is a resurrection of the flesh which died" (Martyr, 2004, p. 298).

(C5) is also affirmed by Augustine in his *Enchiridion* and *The City of God*.[9] In *The Enchiridion*, for example, he says that "a Christian must in no way doubt that the flesh of all human beings who have been born or are to be born, and have died or will die, will rise again" (Augustine, 1999, p. 111). But he is even more specific elsewhere in *The Enchiridion*. He makes it clear that he understands

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[9] For this affirmation in *The City of God*, see Augustine (1950, p. 843-844).

the resurrection to be accomplished by God regathering and reassembling the previous material of

the body in this life. He says:

> "Nor does the earthly material from which mortal flesh is created perish in the sight of God, but, whatever dust or ashes it may dissolve into, into whatever vapors or winds it may vanish, whatever other bodies or even elements it may be turned into, by whatever animals or even men it may have been eaten as food and so turned into flesh, in an instant of time it returns to the human soul that first gave it life so that it might become human, grow, and live" (Augustine, 1999, p. 113).

He then adds God is the wonderful craftsman who will "remake our flesh with wonderful and

indescribable speed from all the material that had constituted it" (Augustine, 1999, p. 114).

In affirmation of the same points, Peter Lombard references Augustine's treatment of the

question, suggesting that Augustine accurately reflects the teaching of Isaiah 26: 19 and I

Thessalonians 4:12–16 (Lombard, 2010, p. 233–234). Numerous other theologians of the Church

affirmed (C5) and the resurrection of the same material of our earlier bodies in this life.[10] By the

Fourth Lateran Council of 1215, this idea was set forth as a matter of theological orthodoxy. Of the

dead that shall rise, the council concluded that "all of them will rise with their own bodies, which

they now wear, so as to receive according to their deserts, whether these be good or bad" (IV

Lateran Council, 1215). Interestingly, even John Calvin—who as we saw earlier, thought that the

person is identical to his immaterial soul—insists that God must bring back numerically identical

bodies in the resurrection. He contends that it is a "monstrous" error to suppose that "souls will not

receive the same bodies with which they are now clothed but will be furnished with new and

different ones" (Calvin, 1960, v.2, p. 998). He insists that the Christian doctrine of resurrection

requires us to say that God "does not call forth new matter from the four elements to fashion men,

but dead men from their graves" (Calvin, 1960, v.2, p. 999). This is because it "would be utterly

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[10] For an extensive treatment of the various thinkers that endorse these ideas, see Bynum (1995).

absurd that the bodies which God has dedicated to himself as temples (I Cor. 3:16) should fall away into filth without hope of resurrection" (Calvin, 1960, v. 2, p. 999).

Once again, there are numerous other examples of theologians and Christian thinkers that affirm (C5) throughout history. It is not surprising, therefore, that Caroline Walker Bynum would say that

> In the years around 200, Irenaeus of Lyons (writing in Greek) and Tertullian of Carthage (writing in Latin) defended a literal, materialistic understanding of resurrection against those who argued for a spiritual understanding of the risen body. The particles of flesh… would be reassembled by God at the end of time in such a way that no detail of bodily structure was lost, neither genitals, nor intestines, nor eyelashes, nor toes" (Bynum, 1995, p. 59).

But she is also careful to note that this view was not unique to the 200's. She says that "the question of the nature of the resurrected body continued to come up in important ways for hundreds of years" (Bynum, 1995, p. 43). Like the other criteria set forth in this chapter, (C5) has had its critics. Yet, as I have demonstrated here, (C5) has been widely held throughout Church history. I contend, therefore, that (C5) offers a plausible criterion for a Christian anthropology.

2.3   Conclusion

I have argued in this chapter in favor of five criteria for a Christian anthropology. Each of these criteria have had dissenting voices at times throughout history. Nevertheless, these ideas enjoy biblical support and have been affirmed by an overwhelming number of theologians. Because of this, I contend that it is plausible to say that these ideas represent the criteria of a Christian anthropology. I suggest, therefore, that contemporary philosophers seeking to articulate a Christian anthropology should have concern for (C1)–(C5). Perhaps there are other ways to articulate a Christian account without (C1)–(C5), but the amount of support in favor of them should give those who reject them great pause. As such, these criteria shall play a significant role in my evaluation of the various perspectives of Christian materialism, substance dualism, and Thomism in the remaining chapters.

Chapter 3

A Philosophical and Theological Critique of Christian Materialism

3.1   Introduction

In recent philosophical and theological history, Christian materialism has become a major

anthropological category for Christian thinkers.[11] Broadly speaking, materialism refers to a family of

anthropological views that are committed to the idea that human persons are material beings that

lack any kind of immaterial or spiritual substance or elements. Ontologically speaking, materialism is

a form of anthropological monism that identifies human beings with the material body. As Alvin

Plantinga puts it, "According to materialism, human persons are material objects. They are not

immaterial things, or objects, or substances; neither do they contain as parts immaterial selves or

souls or entelechies" (Plantinga, 2007, p. 99).

Such is generally true of all forms of materialism. And yet, there are, as with other families of

views, various kinds of materialism to consider. In the following three chapters I consider distinct

versions of materialism that have been put forward by Christians as brands of materialism thought

to be consistent with a Christian view of human persons. I will argue in those chapters that each

iteration of Christian materialism has unique philosophical problems of their own. In this chapter,

however, I want to raise some broad concerns with materialism *per se* from which I think all versions

will suffer. Philosophically speaking, with a host of other philosophers that raise similar concerns, I

will to argue that phenomenal consciousness is a major metaphysical problem for materialism.

Theologically speaking, I want to argue that materialism fails to satisfy any of the criteria set forth in

chapter 2 for a Christian anthropology. And on the basis on these concerns, I suggest that

materialism should be rejected by Christian philosophers and theologians.

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[11] For a quick sample, see Merrick (2001), van Inwagen (2007), Murphy (2006), and Baker (2000).

3.2   A Philosophical Critique of Christian Materialism

My philosophical concerns with materialism are not unique or novel. Like many other philosophers,

Christian and non-Christian, I contend that the issue of phenomenal consciousness is deeply

problematic for materialism. To represent the kind of concern that I have, I offer a concise modus

tollens argument.

> (1)   If materialism is true, then it would be able to fully account for all ontological facts
>   of the world.
>
> (2)   Materialism cannot account for all the ontological facts of the world.
>
> (3)   Therefore, materialism is false.

To clarify, I offer this not with the intention of "disproving" materialism. The debate over the

problem of consciousness has been raging for decades and will continue hereafter. Rather, this

argument simply outlines the basic concern I have with materialism as a position.

Premise (2) seems to be the crucial point of the argument. As countless philosophers have

argued in recent history, materialism cannot explain one of the most basic and obvious features of

our world: namely, phenomenal consciousness. One need not come from a Christian, or even a

dualist, perspective to recognize this concern. John Searle, for example, famously says:

> [M]aterialists have a problem: once you have described all the material facts in the world, you
> still seem to have a lot of mental phenomena left over. Once you have described the facts
> about my body and my brain, for example, you still seem to have a lot of facts left over
> about my beliefs, desires, pains, etc. Materialists typically think that they have to get rid of all
> these mental facts by reducing them to material phenomena or by showing that they don't
> really exist at all (Searle, 1997, p. 136).

He then adds, "The aim is to describe the world in materialist terms without saying anything about

the mind that does not sound obviously false. That is not an easy thing to do. It sounds too

implausible to say right out that pains and beliefs and desires don't exist, though some philosophers

have said that" (Searle, 1997, p. 136). Colin McGinn makes similar observations. He says, "Our

modes of concept formation, which operates from a base in perception and introspection, cannot

bridge the chasm that separates the mind from the brain . . . we know that consciousness exists and that it is robustly natural, though we cannot in principle produce the theory that would make its nature manifest" (McGinn, 1997, p. 106).

Perhaps no one has noted the difficulties of accounting for consciousness from within a physicalist or materialist perspective more than David Chalmers. Chalmers distinguishes between at least two problems of consciousness: the "easy" problem and the "hard" problem. He says that the easy problems of consciousness are those problems that "seem directly susceptible to the standard methods of cognitive science, whereby a phenomenon is explained in terms of computational or neural mechanisms" (Chalmers, 2004, p. 617–618). These problems include such things as:

- the ability to discriminate, categorize, and react to environmental stimuli;

- the integration of information by a cognitive system;

- the report ability of mental states;

- the ability of the system to access its own internal states;

- the focus of attention;

- the deliberate control of behavior;

- the difference between wakefulness and sleep (Chalmers, 2004, p. 618).

What makes these problems "easy" problems, is not that science has been able to answer them as of yet. But rather, the fact that science knows how to go about answering these problems. He says, "While the technical problems are enormous, there is a clearly defined research program for their answer" (Chalmers, 1996, p. 24).

By contrast, the "hard" problem of consciousness stems from the phenomenological experience of consciousness. He says, "when we think and perceive, there is a whir information-processing, but there is also a subjective aspect" (Chalmers, 2004, p. 618–619). For example, how is it exactly that the structures of our brains are able to give rise to things like "the sound of a clarinet,

the smell of mothballs" and "bodily sensations, from pains to orgasms" (Chalmers, 2004, p. 619). Chalmers notes, "If any problem qualifies as the problem of consciousness, it is this one" (Chalmers, 2004, p. 619).

While this problem does not always lead philosophers to a dualistic view of the mind, it does cause serious metaphysical problems for materialism, a problem that leads me to reject it. While I do not affirm substance dualism for reasons I articulate in chapter 7,[12] I do contend that the experience of consciousness described above is strongly suggestive that our ontology of human persons must also include immaterial aspects or features.

3.3   A Theological Critique of Christian Materialism

In addition to the metaphysical concern that phenomenal consciousness creates for materialism, I also suggest that materialism fails to satisfy any of the criteria of a Christian anthropology. Thom Atkinson notes that "Christian physicalism has not had a time-honored history. No ecumenical council, denominational synod, or inquisitorial office, no Pope or archbishop or reformer, has, to my knowledge, ever endorsed physicalism. In fact, one may note that the doctrinal statements of a large variety of Christian denominations have been taken to be inconsistent with physicalism" (Atkinson, 2018, p. 27). Plantinga agrees, suggesting that materialism "goes contrary to the vast bulk of the Christian tradition" (Plantinga, 2007, p. 99). But how so?

In chapter 2 I offered five ontological claims about human persons that Christians have made throughout history as a set of criteria for a Christian anthropology. These claims include the following:

(C1)   Bodies and souls are distinct entities.

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[12] Specifically, I argue in chapter 7 that substance dualists affirm STUFF DISTINCTION (which claims that bodies and souls are distinct kinds of ontological stuff or substances) and PERSON-SOUL IDENTITY (which claims that human persons are identical to their immaterial souls). I reject PERSON-SOUL IDENTITY but accept, per the issue of phenomenal consciousness and the teachings of the Christian faith, STUFF DISTINCTION.

(C2)   Human persons are composed of bodies and souls.

(C3)   Human personhood begins at the moment of conception.

(C4)   At death, the body and soul separate with the body decomposing and the soul going to the intermediate state.

(C5)   At the end of this world, our souls will be rejoined to bodies that are numerically identical to our current bodies.

My point in chapter 2 was not to say that every Christian throughout history has accepted (C1)–(C5). Instead, I argued there that (C1)–(C5) are strongly supported by the Christian scriptures and by a wide variety of theologians and philosophers of church history. And as a result of this, I suggest that (C1)–(C5) offer a plausible set of criteria for understanding the Christian view of human beings. If I am correct, then Christian materialists have a serious problem, as it is hard to see how materialists can affirm any of these criteria.

Consider, for example, (C1) and (C2). According to (C1), bodies and souls are distinct ontological entities. More specifically, (C1) says of those entities that one (the body) is material in nature, and the other (the soul) is immaterial in nature. And, (C1) also suggests that both body and soul are present within the human being. Because of this, it is fairly easy to see that materialism is at odds with (C1). Specifically, materialists are at odds with (C1) because of their rejection of the immaterial soul. In their view, human beings are wholly material beings that lack immaterial souls or spirits. If anything is clear about what the church has believed about human beings throughout its history, it is the fact that it believed humans to be composed of both body and soul. Similarly, materialism is at odds with (C2) which claims that human persons are composed of bodies and souls. Materialism, by contrast, maintains that human persons are composed, or constituted by, their material bodies, and (C2) suggests that we are composed of both body and soul. That is, for a

materialist, a human person is identical to, or at least constituted by, her material body.[13] Lynne

Rudder Baker, who rejects dualism, illustrates the disconnect between materialism and criteria (C1)

and (C2). She says, "Through the ages, Christians have almost automatically been mind-body

dualists. The Bible portrays us as spiritual beings, and one obvious way to be a spiritual being is to

be (or to have) an immaterial soul. Since it is also evident that we have bodies, Christians have

naturally thought of themselves as composite beings, made of two substances—a material body and

a nonmaterial soul" (Baker, 2004a, p. 327). I suggest, therefore, that materialism has a problem

related to (C1) and (C2).

It also seems that materialism has a problem with (C3). According to (C3), personhood

begins at the moment of conception. But on a materialist account of human persons that maintains

the person is a material being, it is impossible for a materialist to affirm (C3). If the human person is

identical with the material organism, or if the human person is constituted by the material organism,

that takes numerous months after conception to fully form, then materialism entails a denial of (C3).

This does not mean that Christian materialists cannot ground their ethical convictions about unborn

fetuses or embryos in some other way. Kevin Corcoran is one example of a materialist that has given

considerable thought to these issues. Against the charge that his own materialist position fails to

ground the pro-life conviction that many Christian's embrace, Corcoran says:

> Suppose human persons are human organisms with developed capacities for the rich sort of
> psychological life normally associated with adult human beings (i.e., suppose human persons
> aren't *necessarily* psychological beings). If so, then no early term human fetus is a person.
> Shirley, one with such a view of human persons could coherently protest the abortion oven
> early term fetus on the grounds that (1) it is *prima facie* morally wrong to destroy a person *in
> potentia*, and a normal human fetus is just such a being, or (2) even if the fetus is defective
> and does not qualify as a potential person, it is still a member of the *human* community, and

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[13] In this distinction between "identical to" and "constituted by" I have in mind a debate between
materialists about identity. While most materialist would identify the human person with the material
body, constitutionalists such as Lynne Baker (2000) and Kevin Corcoran (2006) would reject this
idea and instead insist that human persons are constituted by their body even if they are not identical
to them. I shall consider constitutionalism in more depth in chapter 4.

> to terminate the existence of a member of the community with diminish the kind of bond sensual to The preservation and health of the community (Corcoran, 2006, p. 88).

Whether or not critics of materialism are satisfied by Corcoran's defense is unimportant for now. The point of this is simply to show that materialists do have ways of attempting to stabilize their moral foundations against attacks from their critics. Be that as it may, however, I suggest that his view is still at odds with the Christian tradition as it relates to (C3). If, as Corcoran argues, (1) a human person is a being with a first-person-perspective (Corcoran, 2006, p. 68), and (2) that first-person-perspective is not present until long after conception, then even Corcoran's account is at odds with (C3) which insists that personhood starts at the moment of conception. Therefore, even if their efforts to support standard ethical convictions of their faith are successful, I suggest that materialism still fails to satisfy (C3).

Finally, I also contend that Christian versions of materialism fail to satisfy both (C4) and (C5). According to (C4), at death, the body and soul separate with the body decomposing and the soul going to the intermediate state. Christian materialism is at odds with (C4) given the fact that it explicitly denies even the existence of the soul, much less its continued existence after death. And according to (C5), at the end of this world our souls will be rejoined to bodies that are numerically identical to our current bodies. Christian materialism diverges from (C5), not in what it says about the resurrection body, but rather in what it says about the soul. Once again, according to (C5), *our soul* will be rejoined to the numerically identical body in the resurrection. If these souls never exist in the first place, then there is nothing that rejoins. Thus, for Christian materialism, postmortem survival is about nothing more than the survival of the material organism. Corcoran, for example explores (1) non-gappy survival via the possibility of a fission event, and (2) gappy survival by way immanent causal conditions (his account of persistence conditions) crossing temporal gaps.

Meanwhile, materialists like Peter van Inwagen have defended the logical possibility of a brain snatching event.[14]

My concern here is with how well their accounts fit with a Christian account of human persons. I want to suggest that even if there were no metaphysical problems with their account of human persons, their views would still fail as a "Christian" account of postmortem survival. It seems common place today for Christian materialism to suggest that "all we have to do is show how it is possible for a physical body to survive death" and their account is then compatible with the Christian faith. Their preferred way of doing this is by defending ways that are logically possible for God to preserve the physical organism of a human being, even if their accounts are incredulous and far reaching. The faulty assumption in their efforts is that "all they have to do is show how it is possible to survive death." Unfortunately for Christian materialists, the Christian tradition says far more than simply that "we somehow survive death." As I argued in chapter 2, the Christian faith says that we survive our death, not in some far-fetched logically possible way. Rather, it says that we survive our death by insisting on (C4) and (C5). In other words, for it to count as a "Christian" account of postmortem survival we need much more than simply one logically possible way that an organism could survive. What we need is a way of showing it could survive while also satisfying (C4) and (C5) which the church has affirmed for the last two thousand years. So far as I can tell, no materialist has provided a way of doing this. As such, even if a materialist can offer a plausible account of postmortem survival,[15] but nevertheless fails to satisfy (C4) and (C5), I contend that their efforts fail as a "Christian" account.

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[14] See Corcoran (2002) and chapter 4 for my treatment of his account, and van Inwagen (1978) and chapter 6 for a treatment of his persistence conditions.

[15] Interestingly, while I do not think any of the current accounts for this by materialist are plausible, I do think that a materialist could adopt my view of essential parts outlined in chapter 13 and create a logically plausible materialist account.

3.4   Conclusion

In this chapter I offered an overview of the philosophical and theological concerns that I have with materialism, or Christian materialism more specifically. I suggested that the issue of phenomenal consciousness is a major metaphysical problem for materialism and that it leads me to reject these views. Moreover, I also argued that Christian materialism fails to satisfy any of the criteria of a Christian anthropology outlined in chapter 2. In the next three chapters, I will argue that in addition to these general philosophical and theological problems for materialism, some of the more popular brands of Christian materialism have unique philosophical problems of their own.

Chapter 4

An Analysis of Kevin Corcoran and Lynne Baker's Constitution View

4.1   Introduction

Materialism about human persons comes in many different shapes and sizes.[16] This chapter

specifically examines Kevin J. Corcoran and Lynne Rudder Baker's materialist view—Constitution

View (CV)—of human beings. For each thinker, I will offer a quick overview of their position, and

will then argue that Corcoran and Baker's views have significant problems. In particular, I will argue

two particular points. First, I argue that Corcoran's view—as it is currently construed by Corcoran

himself—does not adequately account for the Christian doctrine of postmortem survival. Second, I

argue that Baker's view collapses back into substance dualism and entails some troubling

implications about what it means to be *human* person. I will also note the way their views fail to

satisfy the criteria of a Christian anthropology set forth in chapter 2.

4.2   Kevin Corcoran's Constitution View[17]

In chapter 1 of *Rethinking Human Nature*, Corcoran offers a brief assessment of three types of

dualism: Substance Dualism, Compound Dualism, and Emergent Dualism. After rejecting each of

these for various reasons, Corcoran adopts and defends his own version of CV. As he sees it, this is

a materialistic perspective that offers a middle path between dualism (which says we are distinct

from our bodies) and animalism (which says that we are identical to our bodies). As he explains:

> According to CV, we human persons are constituted by our bodies without being identical
> with the bodies that constitute us. This is not an *ad hoc* claim. Many medium-sized physical
> objects stand-in Constitution relations. For example, statues are often constituted a piece of
> marble, copper, or bronze, but statues are not identical with pieces of marble, copper, or
> bronze that constitute them. Likewise, dollar bills, diplomas, and dust jackets are often

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[16] For a quick sample, see Merricks (2001), van Inwagen (2007), Murphy (2006), and Baker (2000).
[17] This section on Corcoran is a version of an article I published in 2014 in *God, Mind and Knowledge*.
See Dew (2014a).

constituted by pieces of paper, but none of those things is identical with the piece of paper that constitutes it (Corcoran, 2006, p. 65–66).

To explain why a person is not identical to his body, even if he is constituted by it, Corcoran argues that persons and physical organisms have different identity conditions. A physical organism, for example, has "an individual biological process of a special sort, a sort that is remarkably stable, well individuated, self-directing, self-maintaining, and homeodynamic" (Corcoran, 2006, p. 69). Persons, by contrast, are something that Corcoran believes "are, minimally, beings with a capacity for intentional states (e.g., believing, desiring, intending, etc.)" (Corcoran, 2006, p. 67). Additionally, Corcoran says, "Persons are also the only sort of thing that has what Lynne Baker calls a first-person perspective" (Corcoran, 2006, p. 68).

Since persons and physical organisms have different identity conditions, Corcoran believes that the person is not identical to his body. He suggests:

A conceptual impossibility is not involved in thinking about the physical organism that is my body existing while completely lacking a capacity for intentional states. . . . That is why I believe that, while I'm constituted by my body, I am not, strictly speaking identical with it. Indeed, I believe that my body came into existence before I did, and it is conceivable that my body will outlive me (Corcoran, 2006, p. 69).

4.3   Concerns with Corcoran's Postmortem Survival

There are numerous places where one might critique Corcoran's CV. Philosophically speaking, one might consider certain ambiguities in his perspective, if in fact it is really different from animalism, if his account of personhood is sufficient, or if there might be metaphysical problems with his perspective. Likewise, one might also consider various theological concerns with his perspective like his understanding of the image of God, treatment of biblical texts on the soul, or his departure from church tradition on the issue. In this chapter, however, I want to limit my assessment of his view to considering whether or not his account offers an adequate basis for the possibility of postmortem survival.

For all naturalists, and most materialists, life after death would not be that serious of a concern, if a concern at all. They could simply deny the possibility of postmortem survival. But, as a Christian, Corcoran must explain how his view can account for the Christian doctrine of the afterlife if he hopes to be consistent with the teachings of Christianity. He says, "I do suppose that, at minimum, in order for an answer to be compatible with Christian theism it must be compatible with belief in the resurrection of the dead, with an afterlife or survival" (Corcoran, 1998, p. 332). As a materialist, Corcoran is committed to the idea that we cannot exist apart from our bodies. If, however, my body ceases to exist, then it would seem that Corcoran has no room for the afterlife.

On first appearances, one might simply suggest that God could bring our future existence about by giving us duplicate bodies. But, as Corcoran is well aware, this is not an available option for materialists like himself. For his materialistic account of human persons to succeed in providing for postmortem survival, he must offer a plausible account of how two bodies separated by a temporal gap can be numerically identical. If the body that exists at a later time is merely a qualitative duplicate, then his account is unsuccessful since a duplicate body would be a different body, and thus constitute a different person. If this is the case, then there is no postmortem survival for the human being.

Realizing the need for numerically identical bodies, Corcoran gives considerable consideration to the persistence conditions for persons over time. And, in particular, Corcoran is especially concerned with finding persistence conditions that would allow two bodies at two distinct times to be numerically identical. He first considers spatiotemporal continuity as a possible account of these conditions, but he quickly rejects it, thinking that it is neither a necessary nor sufficient condition for persistence through time. Instead, he suggests that Immanent Causal Condition (ICC) is a better account of persistence since it has one body being causally connected to a later body. He describes ICC as follows:

> A human body B that exists in the future is the same as a human body A that exists now if the temporal stages leading up to B are immanent causally connected to the temporal stage of A now (Corcoran, 2006, p. 128).

With this account of persistence in hand, Corcoran then considers two possible scenarios under which numerically identical human bodies might persist and achieve postmortem survival: (1) Gappy or Intermittent Existence, and (2) Non-Gappy (Body Fission) existence. In what follows, I will show how neither of these two proposals establishes an adequate basis for reconciling his materialist account of human persons with the Christian notion of postmortem survival.

4.3.1 *Corcoran's Gappy Survival*

What the "gappy" theory suggests is that the human person can experience a gap in his existence caused by death. So, for example, it suggests that a person A can exist at t_1, completely cease to exist at t_2, and then come back into existence at t_3. In Corcoran's version, he not only suggests that it is possible for A to exist at both t_1 and t_3, he also suggests that A's bodily existence at t_3 is numerically identical to his existence at t_1. How this is possible is not exactly clear. Corcoran simply asks the reader to consider the following argument:

(1)   Bodies cease to exist.

(2)   The Scriptures teach that my body is going to be raised.

(3)   The Immanent Causal Condition for the persistence of bodies is true.

(4)   Therefore, causal relations can cross temporal gaps (Corcoran, 2002, p. 423).

In Corcoran's mind, this argument establishes the ICC as the persistent condition for bodies across temporal gaps, such that the body at t_1 is numerically identical to the body at t_3. But, there seems to be a problem with this account. While there may be some other logically possible way for humans to have gappy existence with numerically identical bodies across temporal gaps, it does not look like it is possible given Corcoran's commitment to ICC.

In short, it appears that Corcoran's conclusion—therefore, causal relations can cross temporal gaps—is directly at odds with his commitment to ICC. Again, he describes ICC in the following way:

> A human body B that exists in the future is the same as a human body A that exists now if the temporal stages leading up to B are immanent causally connected to the temporal stage of A now (Corcoran, 2006, 128).

According to ICC, what is required for persistence is an actual causal chain which connects two distinct moments—t_1 and t_3. But, given premise (1) of his argument—that bodies cease to exist—it looks like ICC could not possibly allow for the gappy existence of a particular body across temporal gaps. For example, if, as he explains, the object before me at 10:00 AM (t_3) must be causally connected to the object that was before me at 9:58 AM (t_1), then how is persistence possible if at 9:59 AM (t_2) the object ceased to exist? If the body does not exist between death and resurrection, then the person does not exist either and the causal chain is broken. As Corcoran says himself, "I would argue that a necessary condition for the persistence of a person is that his or her constituting physical organism persists. If your body does not persist, then you do not persist. Not because you are your body but because the existence of your body is necessary for your own persistence" (Corcoran, 2006, p. 73). And so, if the body ceases to exist at 9:59 AM (t_2), then the causal link is broken and future existence at 10:00 AM (t_3) would be impossible.

It is one thing not to know how something works. It is another thing to affirm something, as Corcoran seems to do, in the face of what appears to be an impossibility. In light of this puzzling scenario, Corcoran simply says, "I think there are aesthetic reasons for preferring a view of the resurrection that involves God on the front end of the gap . . . bestowing on the parts that compose the bodies a capacity for passing on causal 'umph' across temporal gaps" (Corcoran, 2006, p. 129). This is hardly satisfying. If Corcoran's first premise is true—that bodies cease to exist—then nothing

exists to connect A before (t_1) and after death (t_3). In other words, nothing exists that can span the gap, cause later existence, and allow for gappy existence. We might state the problem as follows:

(5)   According to Corcoran's ICC, for A to persist from t_1 to t_3, there must be a causal link between A at t_3 to A at t_1.

(6)   A ceases to exist at t_2.

(7)   Since A no longer exists at t_2, there is no causal link between A at t_3 and A at t_1

(8)   Therefore, ICC cannot bridge the gap of A's existence from t_1 to t_3.

So then, if Corcoran's conclusion is incompatible with ICC, then there is a problem with one of the premises. Premise (1)— bodies cease to exist—is obviously true. The problem, therefore, is with either premise (2) or premise (3). I shall consider both options.

What about premise (2)? On the one hand, it is certainly true that the Christian Scriptures teach that our bodies will be raised from the dead in the eschaton. As such, Corcoran properly represents what the Church has taught for two millennia. But if premise (1) and (3) are correct, then this would seem to entail that there is something wrong with premise (2). And since we cannot dispute that the Christian tradition has taught the bodily resurrection, we must draw the conclusion that it has simply been wrong in this teaching throughout its history. In other words, the Christian tradition may very well claim that the bodily resurrection will happen, but this idea is false nonetheless. Thus, if Corcoran insists on premises (1) and (3), then it looks like he is at odds with the traditional teaching of the church, despite his best attempts to the contrary. This likely would not satisfy Corcoran, nor would it be satisfying to any Christian theist wanting to maintain a traditional view of life after death. Because of this, we must consider premise (3).

According to (3), ICC for the persistence of bodies is true. But as argued above, this account of persistence conditions requires a continuous causal chain in the life of an object for that object to persist. But if per premise (1) bodies cease to exist, and per premise (2) we affirm that our bodies will be raised again in the resurrection, it looks like ICC simply cannot be a correct understanding of

persistence conditions for a material object, the human body. Since the causal chain is broken in the case of death and bodily cessation, then whatever it is that causes a numerically identical body to come back in the resurrection, it cannot be the ICC. So then, the absurdity in Corcoran's "gappy" account of postmortem survival comes about by either premise (2) or premise (3) being false. As a Christian theist committed to the possibility of bodily resurrection, I contend that the problem is with premise (3).

Perhaps there is some other way to account for the gappy existence of a numerically identical body at t_1 and t_3, but it does not look like Corcoran's particular account of how this might happen is successful. But, since this is only one of the possible ways that he thinks postmortem survival is possible, we must also consider his Non-gappy proposal.

4.3.2 *Corcoran's Non-Gappy Survival—Body Fission*

In addition to his gappy account of postmortem survival, Corcoran also offers the possibility of body fission. In this case, at the instant just prior to death, a person experiences a fission event wherein two sets of bodily simples—two bodies—emerge. The life of the person is passed on to one of these sets, while the other experiences death. He says:

> Suppose the simples composing my body just before my death are made by God to undergo fission such that the simples composing my body then are causally related to two different, spatially segregated sets of simples. Let us suppose both are configured just as their common spatiotemporal ancestor. Suppose now that milliseconds after the fission one of the two sets of simples ceases to constitute a life and comes instead to compose a corpse, while the other either continues on in heaven or continues on in some intermediate state (Corcoran, 1998, p. 335).

In other words, in body fission, the two bodies are phenomenologically identical, even though they are numerically distinct. This numerical distinction exists precisely because one body is alive and continues the life of the given person, while the other body suffers death. As he explains, "The set of simples along one of the branching paths at the instant after fission fails to perpetuate a life while

the other set of simples along the other branch does continue to perpetuate a life" (Corcoran, 2002, p. 424). We might illustrate this as follows:

A at t_1

Fission Event at t_2

B at t_2
Person

C at t_2
Corpse

Phenomenologically and Physically, B = C at t_2
Numerically, B ≠ C at t_2
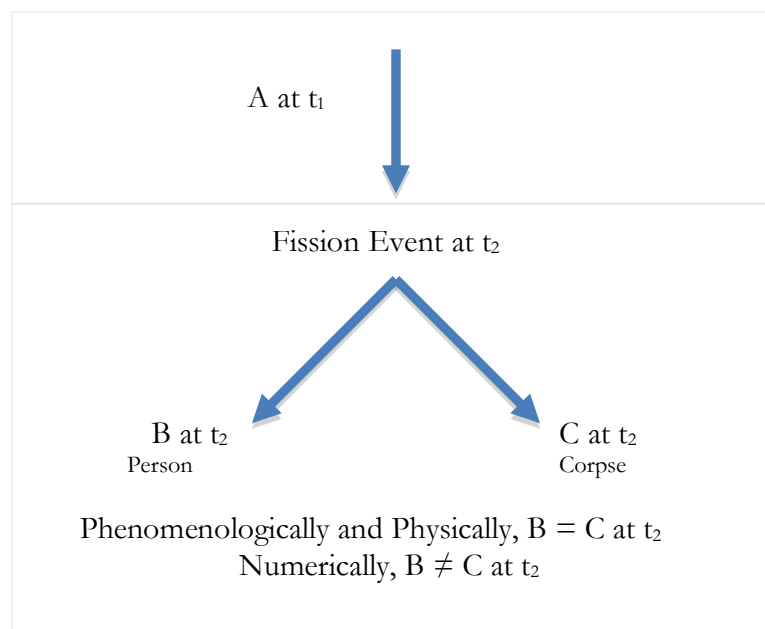
In Corcoran's mind, this account of body fission offers a plausible account of how postmortem survival is possible. If it works, the person A persists though death in a numerically identical body that is Immanent Causally Connected to A's previous body. Corcoran says, "It looks to me like the defender of Constitution has got all she needs in order to make a case for my continued existence, *post mortem*" (Corcoran, 1998, p. 335).

Once again, however, it is not clear that this account of postmortem survival succeeds for materialists like Corcoran. In short, this account seems to betray materialism by strongly implying the existence of something over and above the physical in cases of persons. As such, the fission account of postmortem survival would be an available option for dualists, but not for materialists like Corcoran. Here is why. At t_1, A exists as a person prior to death and the fission event. At t_2, just prior to her death, A experiences a fission event wherein two sets of physical simples, B and C, arise that are phenomenologically identical to A at t_1, and to each other at t_2. Now since B and C at t_2 are

phenomenologically identical to each other at t_2, then they are also physically identical to each other at t_2. As such, neither has anything physically unique from the other at t_2. Thus, B and C at t_2 are phenomenologically and physically identical to each other at t_2. They have identical physical sets of bodily simples.

Interestingly, however, B and C are not numerically identical at t_2. To preserve the life of A at t_1 through death, Corcoran suggests that A's life at t_1 is transferred to B at t_2. As such, B at t_2 comes to compose the life and person of A at t_1, whereas C comes to compose a dead corpse at t_2. Thus, even if B at t_2 is physically identical to C at t_2, there is a radical distinction between them at t_2 such that they are not numerically identical at t_2. So what is it that causes this radical distinction between B and C at t_2? According to Corcoran, B has life and is therefore a person. As he explains, the life and personhood of A at t_1 is preserved by being passed on to B at t_2. As such, B at t_2 has personhood, whereas C at t_2 (though physically identical) is just a corpse. B at t_2, then can be said to possess a physical body, and the non-physical attribute of personhood.

The concern for Corcoran is this. If body fission is what is used to account for postmortem survival, then it seems that he is really a dualist after all. We must remember that both B and C at t_2 are phenomenologically and physically identical to each other at t_2. And yet, there is something radically different about them. One is alive and counts as a person, the other is a dead corpse. But since B and C have exactly the same physical properties, there should be no such distinctions between them if, as Corcoran argues, persons are wholly physical. Yet, as he explains, B at t_2 is numerically distinct from C at t_2 precisely because B is a person, and C is not. Thus, it looks like B has something over and above the physical. The argument might be expressed like this:

(9)   Phenomenologically and physically, B is equal to C at t_2.

(10)   B at t_2 is unique from C at t_2 since B is a person.

(11)   Numerically, B and C are not identical at t_2.

(12)   Given (1) and (2), at t_2, B possesses an attribute distinct from all the physical attributes of C at t_2.

(13)   B possesses something distinct from its physical body.

If this is right, then it looks like the possibility of body fission for postmortem survival points towards dualism as opposed to materialism. If so, then body fission fails to to provide materialism with an account of postmortem survival.

So far, I have contended that Corcoran's account of postmortem survival fails for philosophical reasons. It is also worth mentioning that his account also suffers from some theological concerns. But since these theological concerns are also concerns with Baker's CV account, I will consider those concerns together at the end of the chapter. For now, we turn to consider Lynne Rudder Baker's CV account of human persons.

4.4   Lynne Rudder Baker's Constitution View

Like Corcoran's work, Lynne Baker's *Persons and Bodies: A Constitution View*, offers a materialistic account of human persons that she suggests is neither dualistic, nor animalistic in nature. Of those who have argued for this position, her work is perhaps the clearest and best argued. And although there are aspects of Baker's work that make positive contributions to the discussion of human persons, there are also some places where her view seems to be inconsistent or problematic for materialists like herself. In this section, I will do two things: (1) I will consider her views on persons, human persons, and body transfer and (2) I will note two concerns that arise from her CV in light of the possibility of body transfer.

Before we can consider some of the problems or puzzles associated with Baker's CV, we should first consider some of her basic categories and definitions. We begin with her account of what it means to be a person. According to Baker, a person is some kind of being that has first-person-perspective. In *Persons and Bodies*, she says, "To be a person—whether God, an angel, a

human person, or a Martian person—one must have the capacity for a first-person perspective" (Baker, 2000, p. p. 92). In a later article she explains this further, saying, "What distinguishes the *person* from other primary kinds (like *planet* or *organism*) is that persons have first-person perspectives. Just as a statue is not a piece of clay, say, plus some other part, so too a human person is not a human organism plus some other part. The defining characteristic of person is a first-person perspective" (Baker, 2005, p. 28). So, on Baker account, a person would be any being or object that has first-person-perspective.

But what exactly does it mean to have first-person-perspective, and is this a sufficient criterion for personhood? Baker has important things to say about both of these questions. We shall consider the first question. What does it mean to have first-person-perspective? In Baker's works, we can identify two important criteria: (1) what I shall call the intentional states criterion, and (2) the awareness of self criterion. The intentional states criterion requires that, at minimum, a person has mental states like desiring, planning, and intending. But this criterion is clearly not a sufficient condition for personhood, since many animals demonstrate these capacities on regular basis. As such, Baker adds an additional condition that is the most important one for us to consider—(2) the awareness of self criterion. She suggests that for a person to have first-person-perspective, she will be able to think of herself as herself. She has discussed this at length in several of her works, but offers a concise account in an essay entitled "On Being One's Own Person". She says, "A being with [first-person-perspective] not only can have thoughts about herself, but she can also conceive of herself as the subject of such thought" (Baker, 2004b, p. 131). In other words, first-person-perspective requires more than me being able to have desires, intentions and plans, it requires me to realize that *it is me who has such* desires, intentions and plans. It is this first-person awareness of my mental states that seems to be the key for Baker's account. This is what it means for me to have first-person-perspective, and it is in virtue of first-person-perspective that I am a person.

The awareness of self criterion—that first-person-perspective involves me being aware *that it is me* who is having desires, plans and intentions—is highly important to Baker's CV. Without it, one could easily argue that her view of first-person-perspective does not adequately distinguish persons (like humans) from higher level animals (like rhesus monkeys, dogs, penguins, or dolphins) who clearly demonstrate that they have desires, intentions and can make plans. In Baker's view, certain animals can satisfy the intentional states criterion, but not first-person-perspective criterion. In other words, persons can think of themselves as themselves, but dogs cannot. As such, dogs, monkeys, and dolphins are not persons.

Having set out what it means to be a person, she then considers what it means for a person to have a body. In short, Baker sees bodies as the constituting agents of material persons. In other words, a body is not the sum total of a material person, such that the person is one and the same with her body. Rather, she argues that material persons are constituted by their bodies. She says:

> For a person to have a body is for the person to be constituted by a body . . . A person is not a separate thing from the constituting body, any more than a statute is a separate thing from the constituting block of marble. Nor is a person identical to the constituting body. The non-identity of person and body, on the Constitution View, is guaranteed by the fact that any body could exist without a first-person perspective, but no person could exist without a capacity for first-person perspective (Baker, 2000, p. 91).

In this account, bodies are essential to material persons. But, to be a human person, just any material body will not do. As she makes clear, human persons require a human body. She says, "On the Constitution View, what makes a human person a *person* is the capacity to have a first-person perspective. What makes a human person a *human* is being constituted by human organism" (Baker, 2000, p. 91). In other words, I am a person by virtue of the fact that I have first-person-perspective. But I am a *human* person by virtue of having a human body.

Related to her discussions on persons and human persons, Baker also has a lot to say about personal persistence over time. In other words, if I am wholly physical, and my physical organism is constantly changing over time, how exactly do I continue to be the same person over time? Or, how

is it possible for a person to exist after her body has ceased to exist? Since her account of persons denies the existence of an immaterial soul that would be immune to physical changes in an organism, these kinds of questions pose some potential problems for her CV position. As such, Baker offers an account of persistence conditions that might allow her position to avoid these problems.

In Baker's CV, a person can persist over time even if she does not have an immaterial soul, as long as she maintains first-person-perspective. In other words, in light of changes in the human organism that constitutes a specific human person, Baker suggests that all that is necessary for the persistence of the person is continuity of first-person-perspective and higher brain function. She says, "Suppose that a person slowly had her organs replaced by nonorganic parts, to the point where there was no longer metabolism, circulation, digestion, and so on, but the [higher brain function] remained and the person's sense of herself was uninterrupted. In this case, the person would persist but the organism would not" (Baker, 2000, p. 19). And so, in Baker's persistence conditions, first-person-perspective and higher brain function provide sufficient conditions for a person to persist over time.

4.5 Concerns with Baker's Account of Human Persons

Questions about the adequacy of her view of human persons arise when we consider two different thought experiments revolving around the possibility of body transfer. The first originates with John Locke and his famous Prince and the Cobbler thought experiment, and the second comes from her consideration of gradual part replacement over time. I suggest that these two thought experiments illustrate some vexing problems with Baker's CV.

4.5.1 *Baker and Body Transfer*

As we have seen, Baker defines human persons as human organisms with first-person-perspective. She says, "A human person—who, like all persons, has the capacity for first person perspective—is distinguished from other kinds of persons in that a human person is constituted by a human body that is . . . the object of his first-person reference" (Baker, 2000, p. 93). So then, as long as an organism maintains its first-person-perspective, it is still a person. And, as long as a human organism maintains its first-person-perspective, it remains as a human person. This account of persistence of human persons opens the door for some very interesting, if not troubling, possibilities. In particular, it allows for a person to transfer from one body to another body while continuing to be the very same person throughout the transfer. There seem to be at least two different ways that body transfer would be possible in Baker's CV: immediate body transfer and gradual body transfer.

Consider the possibility of immediate body transfer where in an instant, two people named Derek and Jay swap bodies. According to Baker, such scenarios are genuinely possible. In a section devoted to the possibility of body transfer, she says, "I find the traditional thought experiments about bodily transfer—for example the Prince and the Cobbler—utterly convincing when considered from a first-person point of view" (Baker, 2000, p. 141). This famous thought experiment dates back to Locke who asks us to imagine a Prince who wakes up one day in the body of a cobbler. While he may now appear to be the cobbler to everyone else, he is actually the Prince. He is still the same Prince by virtue of the fact that he possesses all the Prince's memories, despite experiencing a body transfer. Though her account of personal identity is different from Locke's memory theory, Baker affirms this kind of body transfer as a genuine philosophical possibility.

The second way body transfer can happen in Baker's CV is implied by the way she describes body part replacement over time. Baker notes that a human body can have a change of parts over a given amount of time. What is unclear for her, however, is just how much of a person's body can change before it ceases to be a human body. She says:

Although a human body starts out as entirely organic, it can acquire non-organic parts. An artificial leg that I think of as my own, and that I can move merely by intending to move it, becomes a part of my (still human) body. Exactly how much replacement of parts a human body may undergo and still remain a human body is somewhat vague, but as long as it continues to be sustained by DNA-based organic processes, it should be considered a human body, a member of the species *Homo sapiens*" (Baker, 2000, p. 95).

The important question for Baker is not whether body transfer is actually possible. Rather, the important question is *if it were possible*, what would it tell us about human persons? In her view, the possibility of body transfer is consistent with her CV. I suggest, however, that even if it is possible for a person to be transferred to another body, this would count against a materialistic perspective such as Baker's, in favor of substance dualism. In other words, if body transfer really is possible, it would seem that substance dualism is true and not materialism. After all, if the body at t_2 after the transfer is physically identical to the body at t_1 prior to the transfer, but that body no longer is the person it once was, then it looks like the "person" would be something different and distinct from the body. And the opposite would also be true. If the person that transfers from one body at t_1 is numerically identical to the person in a different body at t_2, then the person must be something else distinct from the material body, and it must also be true that the person can be wholly present apart from material bodies.

Consider the following example of a particular person, Derek. Derek exists at a given time in a purely human body, but has his life transferred to a different body, or physical substances, very slowly over time.[18] Now, if Derek the person is the same at the end of the process, but his body is

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[18] Baker may be inclined to reject this kind of change, but given what she says about part replacement and persistence conditions, I see no good reason why examples like these are not possible within the bounds of her CV. And, because she acknowledges the possibility of quick body transfer, like in cases of the Prince and the Cobbler, it is clear that she is open to such possibilities. As such, body transfer is possible in at least two ways: (1) Either by the slow replacement of body parts over time until the body is completely new while preserving Derek throughout the process, or (2) by a quick and instantaneous process like in the cases of the Prince and the Cobbler.

completely different, then it looks like Derek is something distinct from his physical body. We might

argue something like the following:

(14)   A particular person Derek exists at t_1 in an entirely human body.

(15)   Derek also exists at t_2 some years later in a body that has been gradually replaced with silicon computer chips.

(16)   Now if Derek at t_1 is numerically identical to Derek at t_2, but Derek's body at t_1 is distinct from his body at t_2, then Derek the person must be distinct from his body.

Thus, what the possibility of gradual body transfer seems to suggest is that human personhood is

something distinct from its physical structure of the human body.

How Baker might respond to this concern is not exactly clear. But, for someone who wants

to take the CV, there are at least two possible options. First, she could grant my argument by noting

that persons have different identity conditions from bodies, making them distinct from bodies.

Baker and others within the CV community actually make this kind of distinction when illustrating

their position with the marble and the statue and discussing the identity conditions of persons and

bodies. As such, she might simply insist that even though bodies and persons are distinct, the person

cannot exist without a body. And since persons cannot live without their bodies, persons must be

wholly physical.

For the sake of argument, let us grant that the person cannot exist without the body.

Whether or not this is possible is a matter for another day. For now, I simply note that any

admission of distinction between persons and bodies seems to imply a form of dualism. If, as she

argues, persons have different persistence conditions than bodies, then persons and bodies must be

different kinds of things. Using similar illustrations as Baker—marble and the statue—Aristotle and

Aquinas, for example, both argued for the difference between body and soul, and affirmed

hylomorphism, or what is sometimes called compound dualism (Aristotle, 1984). As such, even if we

grant that souls cannot exist apart from their bodies, this still does not diffuse the charge of dualism.

Second, she might respond by claiming that the argument above overstates the case, making it possible to argue for other forms of dualism which are clearly absurd. For example, she might say that arguments like these could also be used to argue for car dualism where cars that have complete part replacement over time but have something distinct from their parts which allows them to maintain a kind of identity—car souls.

Unfortunately, however, it does not look like these kinds of arguments—those for car dualism—would be successful. Unlike the original argument, the car dualism argument may breakdown at an important point, making it possible for us to affirm the original argument about Derek (what I will now call Argument A), while rejecting the car dualism argument (what I will call Argument B). To see why, consider the two possible arguments: Arguments A and B.

Argument A[19]

(14 a)   A particular person, Derek exists at t_1 in an entirely human body.

(15a)   Derek also exists at t_2 some years later in a body that has been gradually replaced with silicon computer chips.

(16a)   Now if Derek at t_1 is numerically identical to Derek at t_2, but Derek' body at t_1 is distinct from his body at t_2, then Derek the person must be distinct from his body.

To make a similar argument for car dualism, we keep the same form of the original Derek argument (Argument A), but replace Derek with Bob the Buick (Argument B). The new argument for car dualism would go as follows:

Argument B

(14b)   A particular Buick, Bob exists at t_1 in an entirely physical form of a car.

(15b)   Bob also exists at t_2 some years later in a body that has been gradually replaced with completely different physical parts.

(16b)   Now if Bob at t_1 is numerically identical to Bob at t_2, but Bob's parts at t_1 are distinct and different from his body at t_2, then Bob the Buick must be distinct from his parts.

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[19] This argument is identical to the argument I presented above, but "a" is added to each line of the argument to distinguish it from the second argument (B) which follows.

These are two arguments are structurally identical and both are based on the possibility of body transfer. The first is given as a response to Baker's CV and suggests that her view seems to be dualism after all. The second is an example of a kind of car dualism argument, which is obviously absurd. Yet, if they are structurally identical, something must be wrong with the second argument.

In short, it looks like the analogy between the first argument (Argument A) and the second argument for car dualism (Argument B) breaks down. For Argument B, it seems like we can, and should, reject (15b) since there are no significant unifiers between Bob the Buick at t_1 and whatever the object is at t_2. Bob the Buick is different from Derek who possesses unified consciousness, first-person perspective, and an overwhelming sense of self over time, since Bob is not conscious, does not have first-person perspective, and has no sense of self in past or present. Thus, there is nothing about Bob at t_1 and the object at t_2 that is continuous. Other than the fact that we continue to call the object at t_2 Bob, there are no significant unifiers to allow us to say that it actually is Bob. And, in the absence of significant unifiers, Bob the Buick is "nothing but" material. If so, then as the material changes and is completely replaced, the identity of Bob is lost as well. Thus, it seems like we cannot say that it actually *is* Bob at t_2 that exists. He (this particular car called Bob) has ceased to exist sometime between t_1 and t_2, even though we still call the object at t_2 Bob the Buick. Therefore, it looks like we should reject (15b) because of this. If so, then (16b) does not follow from (14b) and (15b).

In the case of (15a), however, we seem perfectly justified in affirming this premise, simply because there are very significant unifiers between Derek at t_1 and Derek at t_2. He has a unified sense of consciousness, continuous first-person perspective, and an overwhelming sense of self that persists from t_1 to t_2. As such, (16a) seems to follow from (14a) and (15a). Thus, the analogy between argument A and B breaks down, allowing us to affirm the first (Argument A), but not the second (Argument B). If so, then attempts to combat the Derek argument via *reductio* are

unsuccessful. And as such, given the possibility of body transfer, Baker's CV seems to collapse back into some form of dualism.

4.5.2 *Body Transfer and Ambiguities about Human Persons*

There is at least one other puzzling implication of Baker's CV of human persons. In short, it seems like it is possible on her view for a person to maintain her personal identity while ceasing to be a *human* person. Going back to Baker's discussion on body part replacement over time, it looks like it would be possible for a person to have all her body parts replaced until every part is now a non-human physical part. Consider the following argument that would be possible from the CV:

(17)   At t_1, Seth is a *human* person if he has first-person-perspective and is constituted by a human organism.

(18)   At t_2, Seth is the same person if his higher brain function and first-person-perspective remain the same.

(19)   Seth's body is human at t_1, but non-human at t_2.

(20)   Seth remains the same person from t_1 to t_2, but is no longer human.

It seems unlikely that Baker would dispute (17) or (18). After all, (17) is Baker's own definition of *human* persons. Moreover, she makes (18) clear throughout her work. In her view, it is the continuation of a particular first-person-perspective that causes a person to persist over time. As such, (19) is the possible premise of dispute. I suggest, however, that there are good reasons for thinking that (19) is possible within Baker's account. Again, Baker notes the possibility of having a person's organic body parts replaced by nonorganic parts. In her example, it is the preservation of "higher brain functions" that is most important, since they allow the person's "sense of herself" to be "uninterrupted". As long as first-person-perspective is maintained over time, it would not matter what physical form first-person-perspective is instantiated in Baker's system.

If so, then we can imagine a case where all of Seth's body parts are replaced over the course of many years. Not only are Seth's legs, arms, and organs replaced, but also the neurons and

portions of his brain without causing him to lose "his sense of self". In other words, what if science one day advances to the point that we can replace parts of people's brains with computer chips without them losing their first-person-perspective of themselves as themselves? If first-person-perspective and higher brain function are all that matter in Baker's view, it should not matter if the brain is slowly replaced with computer chips, as long the sense of self is preserved. This appears to be not only a logical possibility, but also might even be a nomological possibility one day. If so, then it looks like her account of human persons allows for the possibility of an ontological change from human to non-human persons.

It is not exactly clear what Baker would say to this possibility. But, she might have two options. First, she might simply grant that ontological changes of this kind are possible. But if this is true, then we now have to consider the possibility that robots or computers can be not just persons, but that they could become human persons through gradual part replacement. After all, in the case just presented, the person's first-person-perspective and higher brain function were retained even through the gradual change from organic to non-organic parts composed of computer chips. Moreover, as a Christian, she would face the possibility that other kinds of ontological changes for persons are possible as well. For example, if a person can change from human to non-human, why could there not be changes from human to divine, human to angelic, and so forth? In the end, such ontological changes appear to be highly problematic at best, or impossible at worst.

Second, Baker might also respond by saying that the property of being *human* is simply an accidental property for persons. That is, perhaps being *human* for persons might be something like a person having brown or blonde hair. These are properties that the person really does have, but certainly does not have to have in order to be the person she is. The problem with this response is that it seems to go against the way that we normally think about ourselves. We tend to think of ourselves as a very distinct kind of persons in comparison to other such persons like God or angels.

It goes against the commonsense notion that my personhood consists, at least in part, in being human. Moreover, there seems to be some irreconcilable issues with this understanding of what it means to be human and the teachings of Christianity, which Baker affirms. For example, Christian theology affirms that Christ came in human flesh (John 1:1-18, Phil 2:5-11) to redeem the race of Adam (Rom 5:12-15). In other words, in the incarnation, Jesus identifies with a species of a particular kind. It also teaches that Christ's death was an atonement for human persons, but not angelic persons (Heb 2:16). In places like these, the Christian Scriptures are making some very important ontological distinctions between the various kinds of persons. This is especially clear when we consider the difference that the Bible describes between God and Man. Thus, there seems to be a problem in making *humanness* an accidental property. As such, there are some ambiguities and puzzles relating to Baker's view of human persons. If a human person is simply a human organism with first-person-perspective, and it is possible to change the organism itself over time, then it looks like her view entails the possibility of ontological change.

4.6   Theological Concerns with Corcoran and Baker's CV

Thus far I have argued that there are some mincing philosophical problems with Corcoran and Baker's CV. Here I wish to note that there are also some theological concerns with their accounts of human persons. As argued in chapter 2, the Christian tradition has historically affirmed a clear set of ideas about human persons. These ideas include the following affirmations:

(C1)   Bodies and souls are distinct entities.

(C2)   Human persons are composed of bodies and souls.

(C3)   Human personhood begins at the moment of conception.

(C4)   At death, the body and soul separate with the body decomposing and the soul going to the intermediate state.

(C5)   At the end of this world, our souls will be rejoined to bodies that are numerically identical to our current bodies.

Like other materialist views that I will consider in later chapters, I simply note here that Corcoran and Baker's CV fails to align with several of the criteria of a Christian anthropology. In fact, I contend that their view fails in direct opposition to all five of the criteria. As such, while there may indeed be Christian concerns represented in their accounts, the philosophical anthropology does not satisfy the Christian tradition's teaching about human persons. And as a result, even without the philosophical problems highlighted in this chapter, their view is untenable for the Christian theist.

4.7   Conclusion

The Constitution View—as articulated by Corcoran and Baker—offers a very unique and interesting account of what it means to be a person that attempts to avoid dualism and animalism. Yet, this chapter has argued that there are philosophical and theological problems with both of their perspectives. In Corcoran's case, it does not appear that his Gappy account of postmortem survival is really possible, and his non-Gappy approach requires some form of dualism. And while Baker's version of CV may avoid Corcoran's problems with postmortem survival, it has problems of its own. Furthermore, theologically speaking, both views fail to satisfy the criteria of a Christian anthropology.

Chapter 5

An Analysis of Nancey Murphy's Non-Reductive Physicalism

5.1   Introduction

Substance dualists claim that the body and the mind are of two fundamentally different natures—material and immaterial—but have had great difficulty in explaining how these two substances are able to interact with each other. This issue is so puzzling that physicalists and materialists often cite this problem as the primary reason for rejecting such forms of dualism. Interestingly, this problem has also influenced some Christian philosophers and theologians, such as Nancey Murphy, to reject dualism in favor of non-reductive physicalism.

This chapter will argue that, like other versions of Christian materialism, Murphy's view does not satisfy the criteria of a Christian anthropology. Second, it will also explore Murphy's concerns with the mind-body interaction problem and the related issue in the philosophy of religion of divine causation. From this, I shall argue that theists like Murphy who reject substance dualism because of the interaction problem are inconsistent given their commitments to Christian Theism.

5.2   Murphy's Non-Reductive Physicalism

Like other materialist and physicalists about human persons, Murphy rejects a substance dualist view of human persons. But in addition to this, she also rejects a reductive physicalist view of human persons, where every aspect of the human person—including the mental life of the person—can be accounted for in purely physical terms. That is, while she contends that there is only one kind of substance or stuff regarding the ontology of human persons, she does not believe that our mental life can be reduced to physical explanation. She explains the difference between reductive and non-reductive physicalism this way. "A reductive view would say that, if there is no soul, then people must not be truly rational, moral or religious; that is, what was taken in the past to be rationality,

morality or spirituality is really nothing but brain processes" (Murphy, 2005, p. 116). She then adds that the "non-reductive physicalist says instead that if there is no soul, then these higher human capacities must be explained in a different manner. In part they are explainable as brain functions, but their full explanation requires attention to human social relations, to cultural factors and, most importantly, to God's action in our lives" (Murphy, 2005, p. 116).

On Murphy's view, the mental is something distinct from the brain or physical body. When it comes to consciousness, for example, she makes clear that her view "denies the existence of a nonmaterial entity, the mind (or soul) but does not deny the existence consciousness (a position in philosophy of mind called eliminative materialism) or the significance of conscious states or other mental (note the adjectival form) phenomena" (Murphy, 1998, p. 130–131). She then adds, "In brief, this is the view that the human nervous system, operating in concert with the rest of the body in its environment, is the seat of consciousness (and also of human spiritual or religious capacities). Consciousness and religious awareness are emergent properties and they have a top-down causal influence on the body" (Murphy, 1998, p. 131).

There are several things to note about her account. First, unlike the reductive brands of materialism such as identity theory and eliminativism, Murphy's account of persons affirms conscious experience without reducing it down to, or identifying it with, brain states. Mental states are immaterial properties that human beings possess and experience. As such, Murphy's account affirms property dualism, even if it rejects substance dualism. Second, these mental properties are emergent in that they emerge at a particular level of brain function. Third, once these mental properties emerge, they exercise a downward causation of the physical structures of the body and the brain. As Murphy and Brown explain, bottom-up refers to "the assumption that behavior of an entity is determined by the behavior (or laws governing the behavior) of its parts" (Murphy & Brown, 2007, p. 62). By contrast, a downward causation model suggests that "phenomena at some

higher level or organization of a complex system had a downward causal influence on the events that were being studied at a lower level" (Murphy & Brown, 2007, p. 63).

What is interesting about this view is that Murphy affirms the possibility of downward causation in the case of mental properties on the physical structures of the human body. For her, given that there are not two radically distinct substances involved in the causal event, there is no problem involved in this kind of causation. But in the case where there are two distinct substances involved, as in the substance dualist's case of an immaterial soul and a material body, the possibility of interaction is deeply problematic. In fact, as I shall set forth below, Murphy follows other materialists about human person in thinking that the mind-body interaction problem is a defeater for substance dualism.

5.3   Concerns with Murphy's Non-Reductive Physicalism

Murphy's account of human persons is both interesting and important. There are, however, a number of concerns that might be raised with her non-reductive physicalist view. As William Hasker has argued, for example, there is some concern that her account of downward causation will collapse back into causal determinism which she wants to avoid.[20] I shall not, however, explore those concerns in this chapter as they have received sufficient treatment by Hasker. Instead, I shall raise two primary concerns, one theological and the other philosophical, with her account. In short, like the other materialist accounts of human persons considered in this thesis, I contend that Murphy's non-reductive physicalism does not satisfy the criteria of a Christian anthropology. Furthermore, I shall argue that her endorsement of the mind-body interaction argument against substance dualism creates a problem for her commitment to Christian theism.

5.3.1   A *Theological Concern with Murphy's Account*

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[20] See Hasker (2005, p. 83-89).

As a non-reductive physicalist, Murphy rejects the existence of an immaterial soul. In her ontology, there is but one substance, the physical body. While this account may have certain advantages, the theological concerns with it are rather simple and straightforward. Like other materialist views of human persons, her view does not satisfy the criteria for a Christian anthropology set forth in chapter 2. There I argued that the Christian tradition has historically affirmed the following.

(C1)   Bodies and souls are distinct entities.

(C2)   Human persons are composed of bodies and souls.

(C3)   Human personhood begins at the moment of conception.

(C4)   At death, the body and soul separate with the body decomposing and the soul going to the intermediate state.

(C5)   At the end of this world, our souls will be rejoined to bodies that are numerically identical to our current bodies.

Since criteria (C1), (C2), (C4), and (C5), all require the existence of an immaterial soul, it is rather easy to see why it is that Murphy's nonreductive physicalism is at odds with the Christian tradition. And while (C3) is not explicitly denied, it is denied by implication given the gestational process involved to bring a material body into existence and for the cognitive function to reach the proper point of development.

To clarify, however, the problem here is not just with the fact that Murphy's account is at odds with the Christian tradition. After all, even Thomism which I will endorse later in the thesis is at least superficially at odds with the criteria at particular points.[21] Rather, the problem is that, unlike Thomism, there appears to be no plausible ways of modifying her account to satisfy the criteria. Any modifications to her view that would make it satisfy the criteria of a Christian anthropology would make it such that her account is no longer a form of materialism. Thus, for the Christian that

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[21] I set these concerns forth in chapter 11, and then offer ways to modify the Thomistic account in chapter 12 to bring it into agreement with the criteria.

endorses her account of persons puts himself immediately, and irreversibly, at odds with the Christian tradition. As such, I contend that even without the philosophical problems I raise below, Murphy's account is problematic for Christian theists.

5.3.2   *A Philosophical Concern with Murphy's Account*

In addition to the theological concern raised above, I also contend that given Murphy's commitment to Christian theism, her reasons for rejecting substance dualism create a possible incoherence for views on the whole. Specifically, her rejection of dualism entails a deep problem for her theism. If—per her rejection of dualism—immaterial things cannot interact with material things, then it would follow that God (an immaterial being) cannot interact with the material world. To see this, I begin with the mind-body interaction problem as it is typically stated.

Virtually no one dismisses the puzzle of mind-body interaction. For physicalists, this is often thought to be a significant enough problem to reject substance dualism altogether. And while dualists stop short of rejecting dualism, the interaction problem is still a perplexing issue that is taken very seriously. But what, exactly, is the problem that substance dualism faces? The interaction problem can be set forth in at least two different ways. In its most popular form, this problem asserts that the physical universe is causally closed such that it would be impossible for material and immaterial things to interact with each other. If substance dualism is correct, then minds and bodies are of two fundamentally different substances with different natures. Bodies, for example, are characterized by mass and spatial extension, and are governed by the laws of nature. Minds, on the other hand, lack mass, have no spatial extension whatsoever, and are not necessarily subject to the laws of nature. But if they are of two radically different natures, it is difficult to see how they might interact, since there can be no physical point at which they connect with each other. Dale Jacquette explains why:

The problem is that substance dualism implies that the immaterial mind is 'unextended' in Descartes' phrase. The mind, according to Descartes, is literally nowhere. It lacks any spatial location. In everyday experience, on the contrary, causation always occurs at a particular place. The billiard ball that strikes another on a table imparts motion to it or causes it to move at a particular location in space. It happens just where the balls make contact, where the proximate cause of the second ball's movement can be said to have had its effect. Nothing like this can possibly be true of causation between immaterial minds and material bodies such as the brain and nervous system. The immaterial mind, if there is such a thing, is not located anywhere in space, and so cannot touch the body at any particular place (Jacquette, 2009, p. 16).

Or, as the late Richard Taylor put it, "However natural it may seem to conceive a person is such terms, as a dual complex of two wholly disparate things, body and mind, it is nonetheless an impossible conception, on the simplest metaphysical grounds. For on this view, the body and the mind are wholly disparate things, so that any bodily change wrought by the mind or by some nonphysical occurrence transpiring therein is a charge that lies quite outside the realm of physical law" (Taylor, 1991, p. 19–20).

Recently philosophers have offered a modified, and more specific, form of the objection, which appeals to the law of the conservation of energy. William Jaworski offers a precise description of the concern. He says:

If substance dualism is true, then persons are completely nonphysical entities, and it seems impossible that nonphysical entities could have a causal impact on physical ones. The reason is that physical events occur in space and involve forces or changes in energy. But if you and I are entirely nonphysical, then we have no spatial location; and it is not clear how something without spatial location could influence something in space, or in general how something could manipulate forces or energy states without being in some way physical (Jaworski, 2011, p. 56).

Owen Flanagan agrees:

If we accept the principle of the conservation of energy we seem committed either to denying that the nonphysical mind exists, or to denying that it could cause anything to happen, or to making some very implausible ad hoc adjustments to our physics. For example, we could maintain that the principle of conservation of energy holds, but that every time a mind introduces new energy into the world—thanks to some mysterious capacity it has—and equal amount of energy departs from the physical universe—thanks to some perfectly orchestrated mysterious capacity the universe has (Flanagan, 1991, p. 21).

Thus, substance dualism faces the problem of how mind-body interaction is possible given the nature of the two substances. And it also faces the challenge of explaining how this kind of interaction is possible given the law of conservation of energy.

It is easy to see why the interaction problem causes so many philosophers to reject substance dualism. What is less easy to see, however, is why this concern holds any influence with Christian philosophers who are committed to the idea that God interacts with the physical world. I contend that Christian physicalists like Murphy who (1) reject substance dualism (or perhaps even other forms of dualism) because of the mind/body interaction problem but also (2) affirm that God is immaterial being that can interact with the physical world, are inconsistent. But first, a quick survey of what Murphy has to say on these issues will be helpful.

Like other philosophers, Murphy rejects substance dualism. She says, "It may be conceptually impossible to give an account of mind-body interaction—how can something nonmaterial interact causally with material entities?" (Murphy, 2006a, p. 97). But, like Flanagan, her concerns revolve specifically around the conservation of energy. She says, "Now the problem has to do with the law of conservation of matter and energy: if Descartes is right that a nonphysical mind can cause the body to move, then there must be a transfer of energy to the body. In order for physical energy to be transferred to any physical system, it has to have been transferred from some other physical system" (Murphy, 2006b, p. 46).[22]

Taken by itself, such a rejection of dualism is not surprising in philosophical discussions. What is interesting about this particular case, however, is that it comes from a Christian theist who defends certain aspects of traditional Christian theism. That is, Murphy, like most other Christian

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[22] It is worth noting that this is but one of several problems that Murphy has with substance dualism. She also mentions the impact of Darwinian thinking and the development of neurosciences as contributing factors as well. Here she makes it clear that she thinks the issue for mind/body interaction is a matter of the laws of the conservation of energy (a nomological issue).

theists, is committed to the idea that God is an immaterial being and that he can interact with the material world. And yet, she is well aware that such interaction in the case of God is also hotly disputed in scientific and philosophical discussions. She notes that one of the major problems facing the question of divine causation is "the question of how God could act in a universe where all causes were believed ultimately to be physical forces if God was not a physical force" (Murphy, 2006b, p. 128).

Nevertheless, Murphy does not accept these concerns as defeaters for divine interaction with the material world. In her view, this kind of concern arose from an overemphasis on mechanical causes in science. She says that science "itself has moved far beyond this conception of natural causation, so the old arguments based on such a picture should no longer stand in the way of belief in special divine acts" (Murphy, 2006b, p. 129). She continues by suggesting that it "is no longer the case that we have clear scientific reasons for rejecting claims regarding special divine actions. In a sense this puts us back to square one: as in the early and middle centuries of Christianity, we have no good reasons (philosophical or scientific) to deny special divine actions, and, I would claim, much theological reason to affirm them" (Murphy, 2006b, p. 129). Finally, she notes, "The critical issue is to avoid reducing God to a mere physical cause, yet to find ways of recognizing that God's intentional action can bring about events above and beyond what could be accomplished merely by holding natural processes and causes in existence" (Murphy, 2006b, p. 129).

To summarize Murphy's view of human persons and divine causation, we can list the following points. First, she accepts that mind-body interaction is deeply problematic for dualism. In fact, as I have noted, she raises this as one of the key reasons she rejects this view of human persons. Specifically, she believes that the law of the conservation of energy is a major issue. As such, she appears to accept standard philosophical and scientific concerns about interaction between material and immaterial entities. Second, as a Christian theist, she accepts traditional Christian claim that God

is an immaterial being. This might also be confirmed from her desire to "avoid reducing God to a mere physical cause," and to "find ways of recognizing that God's intentional action can bring about events above and beyond what could be accomplished merely by holding natural processes and causes in existence" (Murphy, 2006b, p. 129). Like most Christian theists, it seems as though she affirms the immateriality of God. Third, she is also committed to the possibility that God can interact with the physical world.

As such, it looks like there is an inconsistency in her overall philosophical and theological perspective. We might illustrate this inconsistency in the following way:

(1)   According to Christian theism, God is an immaterial being that is capable of interacting with the material world.

(2)   According to certain Christian physicalists about human persons, it is not possible for an immaterial mind to interact with a material body.

(3)   The relationship between God as an immaterial being and the material world is significantly analogous to the mind's immateriality and the material body.

Therefore,

(4)   If it is not possible for the immaterial mind to interact with the material body, then it is not possible for an immaterial God to interact with the material world.

Therefore,

(5)   Christian physicalists who reject dualism because of the mind-body interaction problem, but also affirm the possibility of divine interaction with the world, are inconsistent.

Premise (1) merely asserts what the Christian faith affirms about God. From Augustine forward, theologians have noted that God is an immaterial being that does not have a material body. This idea about God's nature was affirmed by theologians like Augustine, Aquinas, Anselm and Calvin and it is strongly suggested in the Scriptures. In Genesis 1:2, the Bible notes that during the process of creation, "the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters."[23] And again in

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[23] All Scripture passages are taken from the *New King James Version*.

Genesis 6:3, God is recorded as saying "My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he is indeed

flesh." Then, while addressing the Samaritan woman in John 4:24, Jesus responds to one of her

questions by saying, "God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship Him is spirit and in

truth." Because of these kinds of passages, Christian theists have traditionally affirmed that God is

immaterial. As such, it would be very difficult on historical grounds to reject (1) since Christians

have argued for (1).

Premise (2) merely states what various Christian physicalists say about the interaction

problem. As I have noted in this chapter, Murphy and Jaworski[24] both cite the interaction problem

as a reason for rejecting substance dualism. While other Christian physicalists might stop short of

citing this as a reason for rejecting dualism, I suspect that this problem plays into their thinking to

some extent. As such, it is unlikely that Murphy and others would reject premise (2) since this is the

very thing they wish to argue in their anthropological works.

Premise (3) is likely the most controversial premise of the argument. Again, it states that "the

relationship between God as an immaterial being and the material world is significantly analogous to

the mind's immateriality and the material body." This premise simply notes that "immateriality" in

the case of God is sufficiently similar, if not identical, to immateriality in the case of the human soul,

and that materiality in the case of the universe is sufficiently similar to materiality in the case of

human bodies. One way that the physicalists like Murphy might respond is by denying (3) and

insisting that there are significant dissimilarities between immateriality of God and the immateriality

of the soul. After all, she might argue, according to Christian theism the mind is a created thing

while God is an uncreated being. Thus, there could be a significant difference between God's

property of "immateriality" and a human mind's "immateriality". Christian theologians often

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[24] I should note that Jaworski comes from the Catholic tradition and teaches at Fordham University in NY. He holds a very unique version of hylomorphism that is more Aristotelian than Thomistic.

account for God's attributes by categorizing them as communicable (those that he shares with us to a degree) and incommunicable (those that he does not share with us). According to this categorization, his communicable attributes are those that he possesses in full and that we can possess to a degree. So then, this objection to (3) might simply entail an appeal to the communicable attributes of God and claim that "immateriality" is only partially shared by us and God, but that there is still a big difference between what we find in God and what we find in man. Perhaps then, both God and the human mind possess a property of being immaterial, but this property is significantly different in the case of God and the human mind. And if this is the case, then maybe God's immateriality is such that He is somehow able to interact with material things while human (immaterial) minds are not.

This is an interesting objection, but one that I do not think is successful. If Christian theism is true, then it is certainly the case that God is uncreated and the human mind is created. As such, there would be notable differences in the kinds of properties that human minds and the divine being possess. The Christian theologian or philosopher would certainly need to note that God's holiness far exceeds anything found in human beings. And, they should also want to affirm that God's knowledge far surpasses that of mankind. Many more examples could be cited here, but these two should suffice for the time being. Yet, when it comes to the property of "immateriality", I contend that there are no relevant differences in the case of God and the human mind. For something to be immaterial simply means that it lacks physicality or extension. Qualifying the property of "immateriality" with finite/infinite or created/uncreated would not change anything about the lack of extension or physical substance. As such, there is no such thing as "infinitely lacking extension" and "finitely lacking extension." Such notions appear to be incoherent. If so, then this kind of objection to the argument above would also be unsuccessful. Furthermore, even if there is a significant difference between God's immateriality and the human soul's immateriality, the issue of

interaction still remains. This objection simply says that God is a different kind of immaterial thing than human soul, but it does not provide any clarification or insight as to how God can interact with the material world. The person who responds to my argument in this way is still faced with the arguments from casual closure and the conservation of energy.

Regarding premise (4), it seems to follow from (1), (2), and (3). Again, premise (4) states that "if it is not possible for the immaterial mind to interact with the material body, then it is not possible for an immaterial God to interact with the material world." If what is said about (3) above holds—that the relationship of God's immateriality to the material world is significantly analogous to the mind's immateriality and the material body—then any denial of mind-body interaction from Christian physicalists like Murphy would have to mean that an immaterial God could not interact with the material world. Nevertheless, Murphy and other non-reductive physicalists might still reject (4) by appealing to the omnipotence of God. That is, she might specifically point to God's omnipotence as a means by which God (an immaterial being) can interact with the material world. That is, she might say that the property of "immateriality" in the case of God and the human mind is analogous to each other. But, she might also insist that it is God's omnipotence that allows God to overcome this challenge and interact with the material world. In this case, God's power gives Him the metaphysical "umph" to act in a causally closed system and interact with material objects when and wherever He pleases. And, since human minds are not omnipotent, they lack such abilities and are therefore unable to interact with the material world. In this objection, God's power allows him to do what is otherwise impossible for immaterial entities to do.

Once again, however, I question whether this objection works against the above argument. While it is true Christian theism affirms a radical difference in the power of God and the power of the human mind, this objection seems to miss the point raised by the interaction problem. The problem, as it is stated by those who are convinced by it, has nothing to do with the amount of

power a given entity might or might not possess. Rather, the interaction problem simply points to the metaphysical impossibility of interaction between material and immaterial substances, given the causal closure of the universe and the law of conservation of energy. This, they contend, has to do either with the fact that the universe is supposedly a causally closed system, or because of the law of the conservation of energy. Even when omnipotence is posited, these concerns are still present. As such, this objection is unconvincing.

One final objection is also worth considering. Like the last objection, this objection also employs the idea of omnipotence to challenge (4). Despite the similarity in God's immateriality and the human soul's immateriality, one might suggest that God's power affords Him the ability to interact with material objects in the following way. Perhaps it is the case, one might say, that by virtue of His power, God changes the laws of nature each time He desires to interact with the physical world to make such interaction possible. In other words, all things being equal, God would be unable to interact with the material world because He is limited by the causal closure of the universe and the law of conservation of energy. But, since He is omnipotent, He simply changes the laws each time He wants to do something in the world. If this is possible, then (5) would not follow from (1–4) since God's power gives Him a special ability that human souls do not have.

As with other objections, this approach might sidestep the argument I have presented here, but it does so at a high cost. If nothing else, this approach seems to challenge the wisdom and foresight of God in creation by presenting him as the kind of being that must constantly go back on his original work with endless revision and adjustments. This suggests either that his original work was not what it should have been, or that he continually changes his mind about what he allows to happen in the material world. Neither idea seems palatable to Christian theism. Thus, if (1–4) hold true, then (5) would also be true—Christian physicalists who reject mind-body interaction are inconsistent—since they accept divine interaction but reject mind/body interaction.

5.4   Conclusion

In this chapter I have outlined Murphy's non-reductive physicalism and have noted the way that her

account fails to satisfy the criteria of a Christian anthropology. I have also noted a major problem

for her Christian theism that is entailed in her reasons for rejecting dualism. If she is right reject

dualism on the basis of the mind-body interaction problem, then it looks like she must also reject

divine interaction with the material world, a move that her theism forbids her to make. Given the

similarity between the immateriality of God and the immateriality of the soul, along with the

materiality of the world and the materiality of the human body, Christian theists who reject dualism

because of the interaction problem are inconsistent given their commitments to Christian Theism.

For these reasons, I contend that her view is problematic for the Christian theist.

Chapter 6

An Analysis of Peter van Inwagen's Eliminativist Anthropology

6.1   Introduction

Like other materialists, Peter van Inwagen offers an account of human persons in purely material terms. More specifically, his eliminativist account operates on various metaphysical commitments about human beings that answer questions about composition, persistence, part replacement over time, and the possibility of postmortem survival. As an ontological view, van Inwagen's eliminativism is committed to two metaphysical claims. Negatively, eliminativism denies the existence of ordinary material objects like baseballs, baseball bats, and baseball gloves (and other non-baseball objects). It insists that what we normally refer to as baseballs are more technically just small material bits arranged baseballwise. Positively, eliminativism affirms the existence of living beings like my student Alex and my dogs Binkley and Buster.

In this chapter I offer a brief survey of van Inwagen's eliminativist ontology and what he has to say about persistence and the possibility of life after death. I then offer two philosophical concerns with his account that I find worrisome. First, along with David Hershenov, I argue that van Inwagen fails to disprove the possibility of traditional models for bodily resurrection. And, since his account is also at odds with the traditional account of resurrection held by the church throughout history, we should reject his account. In short, he makes a bold move without demonstrating that we have to make this move. I argue that this is problematic. Second, and more central to his positive eliminativist claims about living beings, I contend that there is a possible duplication problem within van Inwagen's account.

6.2   Peter van Inwagen and Material Beings

In *Material Beings* (van Inwagen, 1990), van Inwagen devotes his attention to answering questions about the nature of composition, with special attention given to the Special Question of Composition—"in what circumstances do things add up to compose something? When does unity arise out of plurality?" (van Inwagen, 1990, p. 31). To illustrate this question, consider a computer that is composed of a specific set of parts. Why is it that when these parts came together a computer came into existence, as opposed to the case where a collection of junk on a table does not compose some new object? Why is it that in some cases material objects come into existence, but in other cases they do not? This is the Special Question of Composition (SQC) that van Inwagen seeks to answer.

6.2.1   *Composition, Persistence, and Part Replacement Over Time*

Interestingly, as van Inwagen shows in *Material Beings*, the most intuitive answers to SQC—like contact, fusion, bonding, etc.—are plagued by metaphysical problems and simply cannot work. As a result, this leads van Inwagen to adopt an eliminativist account of composition which denies that simples compose material objects except for cases of living beings like humans, cats, and squirrels. He states the view formally as follows:

> ($\exists y$ the xs compose y) if and only if the activities of the xs constitutes a life (or there is only one of the xs) (van Inwagen, 1990, p. 82).

What this means is that, mereologically speaking, the only time small material bits come to compose a larger material object is in the case of living beings like humans, or in the case of there being only one x. Van Inwagen's view denies the existence of ordinary material objects like tables and chairs, arguing that in these cases there are only simples arranged chairwise or tablewise. But in the case of a human being (or dog, cat, rhino, or tree), the parts succeed in composing a human being just as long as the parts are caught up in the life of that person.

What, exactly, does van Inwagen mean by a life? He says, "I mean the word 'life' to denote the individual life of a concrete biological organism" (van Inwagen, 1990, p. 83). More specifically, van Inwagen sees "lives" as a kind of event. He says:

> If an organism exists at a certain moment, then it exists whenever and wherever—and only when and only where—the event that is its life at that moment is occurring; more exactly, if the activity of the xs at t_1 constitutes a life, and the activity of the ys at t_2 constitutes a life, then the organism that the xs compose at t_1 is the organism that the ys compose at t_2 if and only if the life constituted by the activity of the xs at t_1 is the life constituted by the activity of the ys at t_2 (van Inwagen, 1990, p. 145).

Such is van Inwagen's general account of the composition of living organisms. For van Inwagen, "lives" are events whereby the activities of simples (the xs) constitute a life of a living being.

But how does van Inwagen account for persistence? To see what he says, it is important to note what he has to say about the way lives cease and continue. Or more specifically, we should note what he says about the "disruption" and "suspension" of lives. To be clear, for van Inwagen, a "disrupted" life is not the same thing as a "suspended" life. When lives are disrupted, as in the case of a blast that incinerates the body and scatters the xs that once composed a life, it is not possible for an organism to live again. To be clear, disruption represents a way that lives cease and eliminates the possibility of future existence. But in the case of suspension, with a frozen cat for example, "lives" may persist if "it has ceased and the simples that were caught up in it at the moment it ceased retain . . . their individual properties and their relations to one another" (van Inwagen, 1990, p. 147). With this distinction between two possibilities, disruption and suspension, van Inwagen offers a revision of his "life" principle, and it is here that we begin to see his understanding of persistence conditions. He puts his "Revised Life" principle as follows:

> If the activity of the xs at t_1 constitutes or results from a life, and the activity of the ys at t_2 constitutes or results from a life, then the organism the xs compose at t_1 is the organism the ys compose at t_2 if and only if the life that the activity of the xs at t_1 constitutes or results from is the life that the activity of the ys at t_2 constitutes or results from (van Inwagen, 1990, p. 149).

In short, what van Inwagen insists on here is an Immanent Causal Condition (ICC) for persistence of a material object, whereby some later object (B at t_2 which is composed on the ys) is identical to the earlier object (A at t_1 which is composed of the xs) as long as the later object B exhibits a "sort of spatio-temporal and causal continuity" to the previous object A (van Inwagen, 1990, p. 149). On this view, person P persists over time via the causal sequences of P_1 at t_1 causing ($\rightarrow$) P_2 at t_2, P_2 at t_2 causing ($\rightarrow$) P_3 at t_3, P_3 at t_3 causing ($\rightarrow$) P_4 at t_4, and P_4 at t_4 causing ($\rightarrow$)P_5 at t_5 to exist. So in other words, the persistence of P over a span of time from say t_1 to t_5 would be as follows:

Persistence = $P_1 \rightarrow P_2 \rightarrow P_3 \rightarrow P_4 \rightarrow P_5 \ldots$

On this view, a person persists over time as long as her living organism continues in the causal sequence of her life is uninterrupted. If, however, her life is disrupted (that is, ended in such a way that her organism is disassembled), then she does not continue to exist, nor can she be brought back into existence at some later time. Nevertheless, a living organism can, given his understanding of persistence, be composed of different simples from one moment to the next. He says:

> Suppose that the activity of the xs constitutes a life at t; suppose that a few of the xs cease to be caught up in that life and that the remnant continue to be caught up in a life; suppose that those of the xs that have ceased to be caught up in that life are "replaced"—that certain objects, the ys, come to be caught up in the life the remnant of the xs are caught up in, in such a way that the ys and the remnant of the xs constitute that life. Suppose that this sort of replacement happens a sufficient number of times that eventually none of the xs is caught up in the life that has evolved, by continuous (and "insensible," as Locke calls it) replacement of the xs, from the life that was once constituted by the activity of the xs. Is this life the life that was constituted by the xs?
>   In many cases, cases of the more usual sort, the answer is undoubtedly yes (van Inwagen, 1990, p. 149).

To illustrate how all of this (his account of composition, persistence, and part replacement) might all work together, van Inwagen offers the analogy of a storm. Just as a storm is a self-maintaining system that is in the constant process of sucking in new parts and spitting out old parts, and is constituted by different material bits from one moment to the next, a life does the same. He says, "If a life is at present constituted by the activities of the xs and was ten years ago constituted by

the activities of the *y*s, then it seems natural to identify the two events if there is a continuous path in space-time from the earlier to the present space-time location, along which the life of ten years ago has propagated itself" (van Inwagen, 1990, p. 87). Far more could be said by way of exposition of van Inwagen's view. But, this concise summary gives an outline of the major components of his view.

6.2.2 *Van Inwagen's Account of Postmortem Survival*

Needless to say, van Inwagen's account of composition, persistence, and part replacement over time has clear implications for the possibility of life after death. Given his insistence that, for lives to persist they must enjoy a continuous pathway of its existence, van Inwagen rejects the possibility of intermittent (gappy) existence. He makes this crystal clear in his famous 1978 essay "The Possibility of Resurrection" where he argues against the traditional model of resurrection via reassembly. There he uses the illustration of an Augustinian manuscript which was destroyed by fire and miraculously reassembled by God at some later time. Despite the confidence of the monks that the reassembled manuscript is numerically identical to the previous pre-burned manuscript, van Inwagen insists that this is incorrect. He says, "The manuscript God creates in the story is not the manuscript that was destroyed, since the various atoms that compose the tracings of ink on its surface occupy their present positions not as a result of Augustine's activity but of God's. Thus what we have is not a manuscript in Augustine's hand" (van Inwagen, 1978, p. 118). In short, van Inwagen rejects the numerical identity between the two manuscripts as each has a distinct causal pathway for their existence. One came about by the hand of Augustine. The second came about by the hand of God. And whereas persistence of identity requires ICC in van Inwagen's account, gappy existence and resurrection via reassembly are impossible.

Despite his skepticism regarding the possibility of reassembly and gappy existence, van Inwagen does offer one way whereby God might be able to accomplish our resurrection. In his 1997

postscript to his earlier famous "The Possibility of Resurrection", van Inwagen says that his goal has been "to tell a story, a story I hope my readers will grant was a metaphysically possible story" (van Inwagen, 1998, p. 50). In this account, van Inwagen argued for the following possibility:

> Perhaps at the moment of each man's death, God removes his corpse and replaces it with a simulacrum which is what is burned or rots. Or perhaps God is not quite so wholesale as this: perhaps he removes for "safekeeping" only the "core person"—the brain and central nervous system—or even some special part of it. These are details (van Inwagen, 1978, p. 121).

On this account, postmortem survival is achieved, not via some process of reassembly of previous material bits, but rather via the possibility of brain snatching. And because of this, the causal pathway required by his ICC account of persistence is fully maintained. Despite the departure from the more traditional teachings of Christianity, van Inwagen insists that his account is more preferable.

6.3 Concerns with van Inwagen's Account of Human Persons and Postmortem Survival

Van Inwagen's account of human persons is both interesting and powerful. As Jay Rosenberg noted, van Inwagen's account of human persons set forth in *Material Beings* "is a refreshing example of straight-on, full-speed metaphysics. Van Inwagen goes where his arguments lead him—and they lead him to some remarkable places indeed" (Rosenberg, 1993, p. 701). There are, however, a variety of ways that his views have been critiqued, or could be critiqued. Some, for example, have taken issue with the negative claims of his eliminativist account regarding the nonexistence of tables and chair.[25] Or, from a more traditional Christian perspective, one might offer criticisms of his account that focus on incongruities between his account and the teachings of the faith. For instance, given his rejection of immaterial souls, his account is rather straightforwardly at odds with (C1)—(C5). I shall explore that issue briefly in what follows, by arguing that (1) van Inwagen fails to satisfy the burden

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[25] See Persson (1993), Sider (1993), Toner (2006), and Korman (2009) as just a few examples. In these cases, they offer various objections to van Inwagen's negative "eliminative" claims.

of proof for his rejection of traditional models of resurrection, and (2) his account has a potential

duplication problem that arises from the possibility of body splitting.

6.3.1 *Van Inwagen, Resurrection, and the Burden of Proof*

Theologically speaking, one of the more important concerns with van Inwagen's account of human

persons revolves around his model for life after death. As a materialist about human persons, he

firmly rejects the existence of an immaterial soul and an intermediate state between death and

resurrection, and as such, offers an account of postmortem survival that only requires a material

body. As long as the material body continues to exist uninterrupted, then van Inwagen thinks

survival is possible. And, his "Brain-Snatching" model is designed to give us a "just so" story about

how that might be possible. But as argued in chapter 2, accounts such as these are clearly at odds

with the historic teachings of the Christian faith. By affirming ideas like (C1), (C2), (C4) and (C5),

Christianity has been committed to the idea that human persons are the composites of their material

body and immaterial soul, and that both body and soul are involved in the survival of death. As

such, I suggest that, unless Van Inwagen succeeds in disproving the more traditional models of life

after death—(C4) and (C5) as set forth in chapter 2—Christian philosophers should be reluctant to

embrace is model. So does he succeed? I contend that he does not.

As noted above, van Inwagen rejects the traditional model of resurrection via reassembly

because of its failure to satisfy ICC. He says, for instance, that "if a man does not simply die but is

totally destroyed (as in the case of cremation) then he can never be reconstituted, for the causal

chain has been irrevocably broken" (van Inwagen, 1998, p. 47). As such, if a later body at t_2 is

composed of all the same atoms as the original body at t_1, but has the property of "being caused by

God" whereas the earlier body had the property of "being caused by the original biological process",

then it is impossible for the later body at t_2 to be numerically identical to the original at t_1.

A simple question is worth asking at this point. Why should we prefer to say, as van Inwagen clearly does, that the causal process of a thing is essential to its numerical identity but that its material bits are not?[26] Perhaps van Inwagen is right to think this way, but he certainly has not demonstrated that he is. In light of cases where we are inclined to think that reassembly does achieve numerical identity, why not think that the material bits of an object and their arrangement are essential to it, and that it's causal process is accidental? Consider, for example, a toy puzzle that a mother gives to her son for Christmas. The boy opens the puzzle, spreads out all the pieces on the floor, puts it together, and then takes it apart and puts it back in the box. The next day the boy's friend comes over, takes the puzzle out, and puts it together. Is this not the same puzzle as the first, even if it was put together by two different people at two different times? It certainly seems so.

David Hershenov has raised similar questions. He says, "My contention is that while a manufactured object must be the result of someone's intention to be an artifact, and (most of) its original matter is essential to it, other causal facts and process responsible for the arrangement of its original material are not" (Hershenov, 2003, p. 27). In other words, in Hershenov's mind, the particular process involved in an organism's persistence is less important than the particular matter that composes the object. He then illustrates the point with the scenario of a prefabricated toolshed. He asks if it matters "if your delivery and assembly person is Smith rather than Jones?" and then wonders why we could not have "Smith assemble your toolshed on the showroom floor and then have Jones disassemble it, pack it up, and then reassemble it in your back yard without affecting the identity of your purchase?" (Hershenov, 2003, p. 28).

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[26] This is not to say that I do not take part replacement within material objects seriously. And it is likely that this issue is one of the key motivators for van Inwagen to reject a "material bits" view of numerical identity. Yet, as troubling as this issue may be, I will set forth in chapter 13 a model that allows for some kind of material continuity that potentially solves this vexing problem.

While Hershenov's identity scenario seems plausible, van Inwagen might simply insist that the analogy breaks down given that toolsheds are not like human beings in the relevant ways. But two things could be said response. First, if this criticism is successful against Hershenov's scenario, then it would also be successful against van Inwagen's original scenario of the Augustinian manuscript, as manuscripts are not like human beings. So if the analogy from the Augustinian manuscript succeeds in disproving the possibility of resurrection via reassembly, why would Hershenov's toolshed analogy not be successful in showing the possibility of identity persistence in the case of toolsheds? Second, even if the failure of the toolshed to be like human beings in the relevant ways is a problem for Hershenov's analogy, there is one other scenario that he can point to that would be far harder for van Inwagen to deny. Consider the case of human reproduction where a particular sperm (call it S_1) and a particular egg (call it E_1) come together to form a human person named Ryan. Now imagine $scenario_1$ where S_1 and E_1 came together under normal procreative circumstances of sexual intercourse. But could it have also happened, under $scenario_2$, that S_1 and E_1 come together to form Ryan in some other way? Perhaps S_1 and E_1 were harvested in an in vitro clinic and brought together by a technician named Danny.

In either scenario, would it not be the case that Ryan is the person that comes about and that his identity has nothing to do with the causal process involved? Scenarios like those I have considered here are certainly possible and they suggest that van Inwagen's insistence that the causal process of a person's persistence and postmortem survival may not be essential to their identity after all. If so, then it looks like van Inwagen has failed to give us good reason to reject the traditional teaching of the Christian faith. I contend, therefore, that Christian philosophers would be wise to reject his model.

6.3.2 **Van Inwagen and the Problem of Duplication**

Another possible problem with van Inwagen's account is that it may entail a duplication problem. This potential problem arises from van Inwagen's commitment to ICC that we saw above, and the principle of the Necessity of Metaphysical Identity. Following Joseph Baltimore's formulation, we can state this principle as follows:

> Necessity of Metaphysical Identity (NMI) = For any x and y, if x is identical to y, then, necessarily, x is identical to y (Baltimore, 2005, p. 419).

In other words, the identity relationship between x and y is one of necessity, not contingency. As Baltimore notes, this principle "claims that the relation of numerical identity is a necessary relation. That is, if $x = y$, then there is no possible world in which x is not y or y is not x" (Baltimore, 2005, p. 419–420). Because of this, it is not possible for some later object B at t_2 (or C at t_2) to be contingently identical to some earlier object A at t_1. If the two objects A at t_1 and B at t_2 (or A at t_1 and C at t_2) are identical to each other, then that identity relation is one of strict necessity. So given NMI, it is not possible that A *could be* identical to B and not to C, or that A *could be* identical to C and not B, since this would involve contingency. If A is identical to either B or C, it is identical to them necessarily. For now I shall not offer a defense of this NMI, as it has been widely accepted and because van Inwagen seems to affirm it.[27] Rather, I shall simply note that if this principle is accepted, then taken together with van Inwagen's commitment to ICC, a possible duplication problem emerges.

Other philosophers have noted this potential problem for van Inwagen's account.[28] Paul Anders, for example, suggests that on van Inwagen's view, the life of a person at death is compressed into a small set of the simples (the "naked kernel" or the "small pellet") from the original organism such that the life persists via that set of simples. He says, "The kernel of simples

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[27] Anders suggests that van Inwagen affirms this principle, see Anders (2011). And given van Inwagen's discussion on absolute identity in *Material Beings*, it appears that Anders is correct. See van Inwagen (1990, p.183).

[28] See Anders (2011) and Hershenov (2003).

that holds the person's suspended live [sic] allows for the necessary continuity of the strong multi-grade interrelations of simples that constitutes an organism, and so constitutes the ongoing life of a person" (Anders, 2011, p. 34). He then asks us to imagine the following state of affairs that would be in keeping with the naked kernel description above.

> Consider a secretive young man named Dave with an ill-fated enthusiasm for explosives. One day while alone on vacation Dave blows himself to bits in the middle of the Mojave Desert. Over the next few days all of the material simples that composed Dave at the time of the explosion are caught up in the lives of various reptiles, birds and rodents. On van Inwagen's proposal, a pallet of material simples will be formed whose internal (suspended) activity and structure constitutes the essential portion of Dave's suspended, compacted life. To bypass the question of animal minds, let's suppose another person, Steve, traps, kills and eats the snake in which Dave's kernel was residing. It is certainly possible on van Inwagen's account that Dave's kernel be caught up in the life of Steve. Let's further suppose that Steve dies of food poisoning while Dave is still caught up in Steve's life, and that Steve gets compacted into small pallets of simples that is Dave. This one material seed pellet is now both Dave and Steve, if indeed there is a Dave and Steve. One naked kernel is identical to two persons. However, Dave and Steve are clearly not identical to each other (Anders, 2011, p. 34–35).

Anders then goes on to claim that because of this possibility, "van Inwagen's account allows for the possibility that a single object, the naked kernel, be identical to two persons, Dave and Steve, who are not identical to each other. This is an impossibility. Van Inwagen's account entails the possibility of what is impossible" (Anders, 2011, p. 35).

In response to Anders, Thom Atkinson suggests that Anders mischaracterizes van Inwagen's account of the persistence of human persons and as a result, fails to produce an actual duplication problem. In short, Atkinson suggests that Anders mischaracterizes the way van Inwagen understands the persistence of a human person to take place. Van Inwagen, Atkinson tells us, does not envision persistence via some small set of parts *per se*—like the naked kernel or the small pellet eaten by a snake and then by Steve and Dave. Rather, Atkinson argues that what van Inwagen's account depends on is the "activity of the simples caught up in submicroscopic 'processes'" (Atkinson, 2015, p. 587). And more importantly, Atkinson argues that the process Anders describes in the above account is also inconsistent with the way that van Inwagen describes the persistence of

human organisms. "Van Inwagen, it seems, could argue that the naked kernel that God preserves is something else, something different from Anders' suggestion. Van Inwagen could argue, for example, that the kernel is the preserved functioning brain, or preserved functioning relevant part of the brain, of a human organism" (Atkinson, 2015, p. 589). If so, then he believes that "since there is an alternative description of what a naked kernel might be, van Inwagen need not accept Anders' account and the alleged impossibilities that come with that account" (Atkinson, 2015, p. 589).

I am inclined to agree with Atkinson that Anders' account of van Inwagen's supposed duplication problem fails to actually produce one. But, I am also inclined to believe that there is a different story we could tell that would succeed in producing a duplication problem for van Inwagen's account. If I am correct, then Ander's original concern that van Inwagen's view "entails the possibility of an impossible state of affairs" is right, rendering van Inwagen's view problematic.

If van Inwagen is committed to both ICC and NMI, and given his approach to lives as homeodynamic biological events, the following scenario seems possible. First, suppose from time t_1 through t_{24} that a given set of simples is caught up in the life of Bruce the way that van Inwagen describes in *Material Beings*. Bruce's life is a "reasonably well-individuated event" that persists via ICC over a "continuous path of space-time from the earlier to the present space-time" (van Inwagen, 1990, p. 87). Second, Bruce's life from t_1 through t_{24} is self-maintaining in that it does not depend on anything active from outside the organism to keep it existing. And third, the life of Bruce is a jealous event, meaning that it "cannot be that the activities of the *x*s constitute at one and the same time two lives" (van Inwagen, 1990, p. 89). If I understand van Inwagen correctly, this would satisfy his conditions for the life of some biological material being named Bruce. But now let us also suppose, the biological organism that composes Bruce experiences a genetic mutation such that his body experiences a fission event at some later time of its life at time t_{25} while Bruce is conscious and having a conversation with his wife. Perhaps this mutation that caused the fission at t_{25} came about

because Bruce's parents once drank radio-active particles that damaged their genetics in such a way that their offspring have the kind of genetic mutations I describe. Or perhaps such mutations are the natural progression of the evolutionary process and that Bruce's organism will be the first to experience this evolutionary mutation.

Now, from time t_1 through t_{24} of Bruce's life, his organism was a singular organism with a particular identity that was well-individuated, self-maintained, and jealous, but the genetic mutation present within his DNA causes a body-splitting event to occur at t_{25}. Now let us suppose once more that the sets of simples at t_{25} that result from Bruce's organism at t_{24} compose two phenomenologically identical, though numerically distinct, biological organisms that are caught up in two distinct lives Chuck and Keith. Interestingly, several things would be true of Chuck and Keith's bodies at t_{25}. First, each possess exactly 50% of the simples from Bruce's original organism at t_{24}. Second, the parts of Chuck and Keith's bodies at t_{25} come equally from each of the organs in Bruce's original organs. That is, each organ of Bruce (brain, heart, bones, etc.) was split up evenly amongst Chuck and Keith to compose the new organs in their bodies. And third, since Bruce was conscious during the fission event, both Chuck and Keith inherit a seamless stream of consciousness and first-person-perspective from t_{24} to t_{25}. That is, both Chuck and Keith experience the event in their first-person-perspectives that seamlessly connect and flow from Bruce's. In this scenario, the biological process of the simples that once allowed Bruce's life to persist followed a natural and seamless causal (a pathway in keeping with ICC) pathway into the two new lives of Chuck and Keith.

I shall make three claims about the above scenario. First, such body-splitting events seem to be logically, metaphysically, and nomologically possible. That we have never experienced such things, or that the above story is strange, is no reason to deny their possibility. Furthermore, such splitting events are already considered to be possible from other fission events described by

philosophers like Dean Zimmerman and Kevin Corcoran[29] with the falling elevator model of postmortem survival. I see no major differences in their accounts from what I have described here. In their stories, the fission event is brought about by God at the moment just before death. But in mine, the splitting event originates from within the life biological organism itself while he is conscious talking to his wife. Second, my genetic body-splitting event appears to be consistent with van Inwagen's account of human persons and his ICC. Specifically, the body-splitting event of Bruce into Chuck and Keith seems to be in keeping with everything that van Inwagen says about lives as homeodynamic events that are well-individuated, self-maintaining, jealous events that persist via ICC. The issue of ICC is crucial to observe. Notice in the body-splitting event I describe above that ICC is satisfied by the fact that both of the later material beings Chuck and Keith are immanently causally connected to Bruce. That is, the material beings Chuck and Keith at t_{25} are caused to exist by the material being Bruce and the homeodynamic event of his biological organism at t_{24}. These two numerically distinct persons are the biological continuation of the original life event called Bruce. Third, if I am right about these first two observations, then it looks like van Inwagen's account suffers from the duplication problem after all. Here's why.

A duplication event is an event where two numerically distinct objects B & C at t_2 each result from some earlier object A at t_1, such that both B & C at t_2 have an equal claim to being numerically identical with A at t_1. In light of what I argued above, such events violate the NMI principle. Since both of the resulting objects have an equal claim to the identity of the original, it is possible that the identity of the original could be passed to *either* of the later objects. But if this is true, then the later objects are at best only contingently identical to the original. And such seems to be the case with Bruce, Chuck, and Keith, as both Chuck and Keith at t_{25} are immanently causally connected to Bruce, they each have exactly 50% of Bruce's original parts, and arose during a process where Bruce

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[29] See Zimmerman (1999) and Corcoran (2002).

was awake and conscious during the event. And because of this, they both have an equal claim to the identity of Bruce at t_{24}, rendering whatever identity that is passed to one of them to be contingent. In modal terms, the body-splitting event of Bruce would make the following possible. In world W, Bruce's identity at t_{24} is passed to Chuck at t_{25}, whereas in W^*, Bruce's identity at t_{24} is passed to Keith at t_{25}. As such, Chuck is possibly identical to Bruce and Keith is possibly identical to Bruce. But neither Chuck nor Keith is identical to Bruce necessarily. But NMI forbids this as it states that "for any x and y, if x is identical to y, then, necessarily, x is identical to y" (Baltimore, 2005, p. 419).

I see no reason why such body-splitting events are not possible within van Inwagen's account of human persons and persistence. He might respond by saying that it is both metaphysically possible and nomologically possible for a body fission event to happen, but also deny that the Bruce's identity is not passed on to Chuck and Keith. But, if consciousness and first-person-perspective is maintained through the fission process I describe, it would look like van Inwagen has work to do make this work. If first-person-perspective is seamlessly maintained in Chuck and Keith from Bruce's first-person-perspective, then I do not see how this kind of "identity stopping" reply from van Inwagen would enable him to avoid my dilemma. I suggest, therefore, that despite the success of Atkinson's rebuttal to Anders, Anders' original concern remains. It looks like van Inwagen's account of human persons suffers from the significant metaphysical problem of duplication.

6.4   Conclusion

In this chapter I offered a concise overview of van Inwagen's materialist account of human persons and his account of postmortem survival. In addition, I also highlighted two concerns with his view, one theological and one metaphysical. Theologically speaking, his account of postmortem survival is at odds with Christianity's historical affirmation of (C1), (C2), (C4) and (C5). And because of this,

van Inwagen as a hefty burden of disproving the traditional accounts of resurrection via reassembly. And since he fails to do this, Christian philosophers should reject his account. Metaphysically, I argued that despite Atkinson's successful rebuttal of Ander's duplication problem, there is another story we can tell that may be more successful in showing a duplication problem.

Chapter 7

A Philosophical and Theological Critique of Christian Substance Dualism

7.1   Introduction

Substance dualism is one major conception of human persons that dominates much of

contemporary Christian thought in both theology and philosophy. On this view, two distinct

ontological claims about human persons are at play. According to the first claim, bodies and souls

are fundamentally different kinds of substances. Richard Swinburne illustrates this claim, contending

that human beings "have two parts linked together, body and soul. A man's body is that to which his

physical properties belong. If a man weighs ten stone then his body weighs ten stone. A man's souls

is that to which the (pure) mental properties of a man belong. If a man imagines a cat, then, the

dualist will say, his soul imagines a cat" (Swinburne, 2007, p. 145). I shall call this first ontological

claim STUFF DISTINCTION. According to STUFF DISTINCTION, bodies and souls are

fundamentally different kinds of substances; material and immaterial respectively.

The second claim is also central to substance dualism. According to this second claim,

human persons are identical to the immaterial soul. Put another way, bodies are only accidentally

parts of person, whereas the soul is the essential "part" of the person. Swinburne is again illustrative.

He says, "The body is separable from the person and the person can continue even if the body is

destroyed. Just as I continue to exist wholly and completely if you cut off my hair, so, the dualist

holds, it is possible that I continue to exist if you destroy my body. The soul, by contrast, is the

necessary core which must continue if I am to continue" (Swinburne, 2007, p. 146). I shall call this

second ontological claim PERSON-SOUL IDENTITY. According to PERSON-SOUL

IDENTITY, Human persons are identical to their immaterial souls.

There are, of course, slightly different nuanced ways of articulating substance dualism. As

J.P. Moreland, Scott Rae, and Charles Taliaferro contend, for example, substance dualism might also

be construed in such a more "holistic" way that identifies human persons with their body/soul unit.[30] Nevertheless, in this chapter I shall not treat these attempts as significantly different from the general account just described above. For one thing, the major expressions of substance dualism I consider in chapters 8, 9, and 10 clearly affirm substance dualism as I described it above, affirming both STUFF DISTINCTION and PERSON-SOUL IDENTITY. Furthermore, as I will show in the last section of this chapter, an inspection of what the more holistic accounts of substance dualism say about a person's survival of death—namely, that the person survives if the soul survives—suggests that the attempts to nuance substance dualism with the adjective "holistic" is misleading and unsuccessful. No matter what these accounts might insist upon in their general accounts of human composition, their accounts of death betray their attempts at "holism" and cause their view to collapse back into the more general claim of PERSON-SOUL IDENTITY described above. As such, I shall maintain that substance dualism is a view committed to two ontological claims about human persons: STUFF DISTINCTION and PERSON-SOUL IDENTITY.

In this chapter I offer some general reasons for concern with substance dualism for the Christian theist. While my own view set forth in chapter 13 has some things in common with substance dualism—specifically, STUFF DISTINCTION—I shall argue here that despite these commonalities, there are some problems with substance dualism, at least for those operating from within a Christian framework. Philosophically speaking, I argue that as an ontology, substance dualism fails to undergird the ethical convictions that many Christians claim are supported by this view. Theologically speaking, I contend that substance dualism fails to satisfy the criteria of a Christian anthropology set forth in chapter 2.

7.2   A Philosophical Critique of Christian Substance Dualism

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[30] See Moreland & Rae (2000) and Taliaferro (2014).

Substance dualism has had an overwhelming number of critics in its history. One very common objection—the mind/body interaction problem—suggests that given the impossibility of interaction between material and immaterial objects, substance dualism is simply false. While this objection is historically important,[31] it does not represent a concern I have with substance dualism. Moreover, I am inclined to think that the interaction problem is not a problem that is unique to substance dualism, or any other dualistic views more broadly. As such, I shall not consider the interaction problem here.

Instead, I shall attempt to offer here a unique concern of my own with substance dualism. That is, I wish to argue that despite the claim of some substance dualists that this view supports their ethical convictions on matters such as abortion, substance dualism actually fails to support their ethical concerns and is therefore problematic for Christian theists. I shall argue that substance dualism gives them no distinct advantage in these ethical debates, and even worse, may actually undermine the ethical positions they hold.

Consider, for example, the way J.P. Moreland and Scott Rae's bring their substance dualism to bear on the ethical issue of abortion. In their view, substance dualism allows us to solve "certain ethical dilemmas." Indeed, in their view, Christian intellectuals "have a moral and intellectual obligation to theorize about human persons in light of some version of substance dualism" (Moreland & Rae, 2000, p. 39). More specifically, given that substance dualism allows one to say that personhood begins at the moment of conception, they argue that "intentionally taking the life of the unborn is morally problematic" (Moreland & Rae, 2000, p. 260). In fact, for many who hold this view, abortion is often thought of as an act of murder. One way of representing this view from within a substance dualist ontology might be put as follows:

    (1)   Human persons are identical to their souls.

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[31] For an example of these discussions, see van Inwagen (2015), Kim (2011), and Murphy (2006b).

(2) Human souls are present within the unborn from the moment of conception.

(3) Thus, the unborn are human persons from the moment of conception.

(4) Therefore, abortion kills a human person.

Materialists and Thomists might attack (1) by arguing against the idea that the person is identical with their immaterial souls. Or, they might attack (2) by denying that the soul is present at conception, or by questioning our ability to say when a soul is present within the organism. I suspect that either approach would be worth pursuing. But, I shall refrain from these approaches to pursue a different concern. Rather, I want to suggest that the substance dualist's rationale for saying that "taking the life of the unborn is morally problematic" fails to support this conclusion, and may even work against their ethical concerns.

Kevin Corcoran has raised this concern. As he rightly notes, at the core of the substance dualist's case "is the intuition that a necessary condition for grounding our obligations to the unborn and other vulnerable human lives is the fact that persons are or have immaterial, substantial souls" (Corcoran, 2006, p. 87). Interestingly, however, Corcoran argues that, "dualism is not only not necessary for generating obligations and responsibilities to fetuses . . . but is also compatible with the belief that no abortion ends the existence of a human person" (Corcoran, 2006, p. 87). In other words, if substance dualist affirmations of PERSON-SOUL IDENTITY are correct, then it looks like abortion does not end a person's life after all. I suggest that Corcoran's intuition is correct. To see why, consider the following argument that could be constructed against substances dualists.

(5) It is wrong to kill a human person.

(6) According to substance dualism, human persons are identical to their immaterial souls.

(7) According to substance dualism, human persons are distinct from their physical bodies.

(8) Abortion kills and destroys a human body that is ontologically distinct from the person.

(9) Abortion does not kill a human person.

At first blush, it does not look like advocates of substance dualism would quibble with (5). And from the description of substance dualism set forth above, (6) and (7) are entailed in the claim of PERSON-SOUL IDENTITY. As for (8), it is supported by what we know about abortion—it kills and destroys human bodies. Thus, it looks like the substance dualist affirms (5-8), and that (9) follows from (5-8). If so, then it is hard to see how substance dualism actually provides moral support or moral obligation for the pro-life positions put forth by substance dualists. In fact, it looks like their affirmation of PERSON-SOUL IDENTITY actually makes the ethical situation worse for substance dualism, as this view entails that abortions are not acts of murder.

But how might a substance dualist go about rejecting the argument? Perhaps they may take issue with premise (8) and the way the word "kill" is being used throughout the argument. That is, they might contend that "killing" someone *is* a matter of disrupting an embodied life where the soul inhabits a body, and insist that it does not end the person's actual existence. And if so, abortion might separate a body and a soul, but it would not signal the cessation of a person's existence. They might, for instance, say that when a person is killed, he—the immaterial soul—is no longer living in a body, but still "exists" in heaven nonetheless.

In response, I think the distinction between "living" and "existing" is a fair distinction. My concern with this response is that I do not think that substance dualists opponents of abortion actually employ such distinctions in their arguments. What the substance dualist abortionist suggests is that abortion actually ends the life of the person. Simply saying that person still "exists" even if she is not "living" seems confusing on this view. If the person just is the soul, or is identical to the soul, then it would not seem that the person depends on her body for either her life or her existence. As such, I am not inclined to think that this response is actually helpful for the substance dualist.

Similar headaches arise for the substance dualist who insist that his ontology supports his ethical views on issues like embryology and stem cell research. If for example, the physical embryo is

ontologically distinct from the soul/person, then it is much harder to see how human persons are harmed by embryo research. In short, the fatal flaw of substance dualism comes from identifying human persons with their immaterial souls—PERSON-SOUL IDENTITY—and by claiming that persons are ontologically distinct from their material bodies.

Perhaps there are other ways that a substance dualist could support her ethical convictions on these matters. My concern here is not to say that it is impossible to support their ethical views within this system. Rather, my concern is to say that the way substance dualist *normally* support their ethical views fail. It is up to the substance dualist offer a better way. Or, perhaps they might adopt, as I will in chapters 12 and 13, a Thomistic view of human persons that maintains that human persons are identical with their hylomorphic composites of body and soul. For now, I suggest that substance dualism fails to support the ethical positions that many of its advocates and as a result, is problematic for Christian theists who hold these ethical views.

7.3   A Theological Critique of Christian Substance Dualism

In addition to the ethical concerns outlined above, I also contend that there are concerns with the way that substance dualism coheres with the criteria of a Christian anthropology outlined in chapter 2. Again, these criteria include the following five claims:

> (C1) Bodies and souls are distinct entities.
>
> (C2) Human persons are composed of bodies and souls.
>
> (C3) Human personhood begins at the moment of conception.
>
> (C4) At death, the body and soul separate with the body decomposing and the soul going to the intermediate state.
>
> (C5) At the end of this world, our souls will be rejoined to bodies that are numerically identical to our current bodies.

As noted in chapter 2, there are certainly outliers to each of these claims. Yet, based on the testimony of Christian scripture and the overwhelming number of supporters for these ideas in

Christian history, I suggest that (C1)–(C5) offer a plausible set of criteria for understanding the Christian view of human beings. If so, then any anthropological position that seeks to identify itself with the Christian tradition should seek to satisfy these criteria.

In what follows, I argue that, along these lines, substance dualism either satisfies, or has the potential to satisfy, three of the five criteria (criteria (C1), (C3), and (C4)), but fails to satisfy two of the criteria (criteria (C2) and (C5)). More specifically, I argue that substance dualism straightforwardly rejects (C2) and that there are no modifications a substance dualist could make to satisfy this criterion. The only way to satisfy (C2), I shall argue, is to abandon substance dualism in favor of Thomism. And regarding (C5), while it appears that a substance dualist might adapt or adjust their view to satisfy (C5), such modifications actually fail and the substance dualist is left with significant problem related to (C5). We begin with the criteria of a Christian anthropology that substance dualism can easily satisfy—(C1), (C3), and (C4).

In favor of substance dualism, criteria (C1), (C3), and (C4) can be satisfied rather straightforwardly. According to (C1), for instance, bodies and souls are distinct entities. This claim is easily satisfied by the substance dualists who contends that bodies and souls are not just distinct entities, but distinct substances, a claim which metaphysically speaking commits them to more than the concept of "entities". As E.J. Lowe concisely states it, and as is agreed on broadly by philosophers of the last few centuries, substance dualism "maintains that mental and physical substances are distinct" (Lowe, 2009, p. 66). As such, I suggest that substance dualists have no problems satisfying (C1).

According to (C3), personhood starts at the moment of conception. Philosophically speaking, there is nothing within the concept of substance dualism that prohibits its advocates from

endorsing (C3). Perhaps there are some substance dualist accounts that deny (C3),[32] but whatever grounds they would have for rejecting (C3), they would have to arise from something other than their commitments to STUFF DISTINCTION and PERSON-SOUL IDENTITY, as neither of these claims prohibits (C3). That is to say, there is nothing about (C3) that prohibits an advocate of substance dualism form endorsing it. And most often, Christian advocates of substance dualism have endorsed (C3). As Scott Rae, a substance dualist, puts it, "The general tenor of Scripture appears to support the idea that the unborn is considered a person by God, being described with many of the same characteristics that apply to children and adults" (Rae, 2009, p. 130). I suggest, therefore, that substances dualists have the ability to satisfy (C3).

According to (C4), at death, the body and soul separate with the body decomposing and the soul going to the intermediate state. Once again, this is not a claim with which Christian substance dualist should, or would, differ. Given the ontological distinction posited by substance dualism between bodies and souls, substance dualists who affirm the general contours of a Christian view of death would have no trouble endorsing (C4). Furthermore, as a matter of fact, most Christians that embrace substance dualism also explicitly affirmed (C4). For example, consider Gary Habermas and J.P. Moreland who clearly affirm that "substance dualism is the best view of the self and is most consistent with the preconditions of rationality" (Habermas & Moreland, 1992, p. 41). In addition to affirming substance dualism, Habermas and Moreland also endorse the idea that immediately "after death, a person will continue to be truly alive and conscious, even though transformed into a different mode of being" (Habermas & Moreland, 1992, p. 116). As such, I suggest that there are no concerns with substance dualism's ability to satisfy (C4).

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[32] Technically speaking, someone operating within an emergent dualist perspective—a view that is still clearly a version of substance dualism—could deny (C3), as they contend that minds/souls emerge from a sufficiently developed and functioning brain.

Such is the case for substance dualism's ability to satisfy (C1), (C3), and (C4). But what about

the criteria—(C2) and (C5)—that substance dualism fails to satisfy? I begin with (C2), the claim that

human persons are composed of bodies and souls. As I argued in chapter 2, (C2) suggests not

merely that human persons *have* a body and a soul, but rather that human persons *are* identical to

their body/soul composites. Moreover, I argued in chapter 2 that (C2) enjoys a rich heritage within

the Christian tradition. As Irenaeus, for example, said rather plainly: "Now the soul and the spirit are

certainly a *part* of the man, but certainly not *the* man; for the perfect man consists in the

commingling and the union of the soul receiving the spirit of the Father, and the admixture of that

fleshly nature which was moulded after the image of God" (Irenaeus, 2004, v.1, p. 531). And after

Irenaeus, (C2) was widely affirmed by theologians such as Tertullian, Justin Martyr, Cyril of

Alexandria, the Athanasian Creed, Augustine, Aquinas, Bavinck, and many other notable theologians

throughout history. (C2), therefore, rests on a fairly firm historical foundation and as I contend,

properly represents one of the central ideas of Christian anthropology.

Despite the rich historical heritage of support that (C2) enjoys, however, it is explicitly

rejected by substance dualism with its insistence on what I have called PERSON-SOUL

IDENTITY. Once again, PERSON-SOUL IDENITY is the claim that human persons are identical

with their immaterial soul. Interestingly, and perhaps due to the pressure to satisfy the holistic tenor

of the Christian tradition, numerous substance dualists attempt to qualify their view and distinguish

it from Descartes's "Cartesian" account of substance dualism by framing their view as a "holistic"

brand of substance dualism. Examples of this are numerous.[33] Two popular ways that advocates of

this view seek to develop a "holistic" account include making such a claim as (1) bodies are "part" of

the human person but only contingently (where the soul is an essential "part"), or (2) Human

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[33] See Taliaferro (2014), Cooper (2000), Swinburne (2007), and Moreland & Rae (2000).

persons are integrated "wholes" that function as a unity.[34] The problem for these attempts to incorporate holism into a substance dualist account arises with the way these advocates think about death. In their view, when the body and soul separate, the body goes to decay in the earth and the soul goes into the presence of God. So far, this simply sounds like an affirmation of (C4). But, as we examine more closely, it becomes explicitly clear that these thinkers identify the person with the soul and as a result, argue that the thing present with God in the intermediate state is the very person who died. In other words, despite protestations by these substance dualists that they are also "holists", their theology of death betrays their efforts to be holistic. In the end, we are left with an explicit endorsement of PERSON-SOUL IDENTITY and a denial of (C2). This, I contend, is problematic for a Christian anthropology.

I also suggest that there are problems for Christian substance dualists as it relates to (C5). According to (C5), at the end of this world, our souls will be rejoined to bodies that are numerically identical to our current bodies. Yet, given substance dualism's insistence that human persons are identical to their immaterial souls, substance dualists generally reject (C5) in favor of the claim that the resurrection body can be numerically distinct from the body of this life. As Jonathan Loose has noted, the "dualist's account of resurrection depends on the possibility that the identity of a person over time is preserved by the persistence of a simple immaterial substance with no necessary connection to a particular physical or psychological career" (Loose, 2018, p. 471–472). In other words, for the dualist, the numerical identity between a body in this life (time t_1) and the body of the resurrection (time t_2) is grounded in the particular soul present at both times, and has nothing to do with the material body that the soul is present within at those times. In short, substance dualism

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[34] For an example of the first see Swinburne (2007), and the second see Taliaferro (2018) and Moreland& Rae (2000).

rejects (C5) on the basis that it identifies persons with their souls, not their bodies. As such, I contend that this is problematic for the Christian substance dualist.

Substance dualist might, however, deny that their view of human persons entails a rejection of (C5). In an effort to satisfy the historical support in favor of (C5), for example, they might claim that they too are capable of saying that the resurrection body will be numerically identical the body that we currently possess, even if they maintain that identity is grounded in the immaterial soul. But we must remember the commitment Loose identifies in the substance dualists account of resurrection. As he puts it, substance dualism is committed to the idea that numerical identity has "no necessary connection to a particular physical" body or set of material. If, therefore, a substance dualist is to claim that they also embrace (C5), his reasons for doing so are merely historical and not metaphysical, having nothing to do with the issue of personal identity. As such, for the substance dualist that endorses (C5), the numerically identical body would show up in the resurrection and yet fail to be a part of what metaphysically grounds the identity of the human person. Substance dualists who might endorse (C5), therefore, would make the numerical identity of the body metaphysically superfluous. This would hardly satisfy the theologians of history who embraced (C5) for metaphysical reasons. Because of this, I suggest that a substance dualist endorsement of (C5) would be metaphysically useless. If so, then substance dualists still have a significant problem related to (C5).

7.4   Conclusion

In this chapter I offered a quick overview of two ontological commitments held by substance dualists. Additionally, I argued that philosophically speaking, substance dualism fails to provide the ontological support for some of the ethical positions that its advocates suggest that it has to offer. Theologically speaking, I suggested that while substance dualism might be able to satisfy three of the criteria for a Christian anthropology, it fails to satisfy two of the criteria, even with possible

modifications and adjustments. As such, I contend that substance dualism is problematic for those looking to for an anthropology adequate for Christian faith. In the next three chapters, I shall argue that in addition to these general philosophical and theological problems, some of the more popular articulations of substance dualism have unique philosophical problems of their own.

Chapter 8

An Analysis of Richard Swinburne's Substance Dualism

8.1   Introduction

In this chapter I explore Richard Swinburne's substance dualism and elaborate on my previously

published response to his work in 2014.[35] In his earlier book *The Evolution of the Soul*, Swinburne set

forth his case for substance dualism (Swinburne, 2007). But in his more recent book *Mind, Brain, and*

Free Will (Swinburne, 2013), Swinburne offers several unique arguments for the soul. As Swinburne

notes, *Mind, Brain, and Free Will* advances, develops, and occasionally re-directs many of the

arguments he first gave in *The Evolution of the Soul*. I shall focus predominately on his more recent

work *Mind, Brain, and Free Will*. Specifically, I will argue that there is one theological problem, and

several other philosophical concerns unique to his account.

8.2   Swinburne's Substance Dualism

In *Mind, Brain, and Free Will*, Swinburne's primary objective is to argue for a substance dualist

perspective of human persons. On this view, persons are pure mental substances (or souls), which

are distinct from any physical parts or properties and also distinct from any specific mental

properties. In his words: "Each person has a 'thisness', a uniqueness, which makes them the person

they are quite apart from the particular mental properties they have and any physical properties (and

any thisness) possessed by their body" (Swinburne, 2013, p. 165). On this view, the soul of a person

is her essential part, while the body is hers only contingently. He adds, "My soul therefore carries my

'thisness'. However—given the normal understanding of a human being on earth as constituted (in

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[35] See Dew (2014b). This chapter takes only part of the content of that article, elaborating on some
of what I previously argued, and redirecting my thought in other places.

part) by a body—it follows that humans, unlike other possible pure mental substances such as ghosts or poltergeists, each have their body as a contingent part" (Swinburne, 2013, p. 170).

Much more can and should be said about his view. Specifically, I must say something about the way that he understands person identity as it relates the soul and the body of the human person. I must also explain the way he understands personal identity as it relates the mental properties. But as these two aspects of his work also relate to my critiques of his view, I shall expound upon them more fully as I set up my critiques of them below.

8.3   Concerns with Swinburne's Substance Dualism

As one who comes from a Thomistic perspective, there is much to Swinburne's view with which I agree. For example, I too think that we really do have immaterial souls that are different from our physical bodies and that we are capable of some sort of disembodied existence and surviving death. I differ with Professor Swinburne, however, over what constitutes a person and the contingency of our bodies. In my view, substance dualism seems to diminish the important role of the human body.

For the remainder of this chapter, I will focus my comments on specific places in Swinburne's *Mind, Brain & Free Will* where I find myself unconvinced or having significant questions. Theologically speaking, I suggest that his view is guilty of the same kinds of concerns that I raised in chapter 7. Specifically, I argue that Swinburne's commitment to PERSON-SOUL IDENITY is evidenced by his "Gradual Brain Replacement" argument, and because of this puts him at odds with the traditional view of human composition affirmed by the Church. And philosophically speaking, I contend that his view on the irrelevance of mental properties and brain properties to personal identity raises some vexing concerns. First, there is an epistemic problem about our ability to know who we are. And metaphysically speaking, it looks as if his account may have a unique pairing problem. I will consider his "Gradual Brain Replacement" argument first, followed by his treatment of mental properties.

8.3.1 *Swinburne and Gradual Brain Replacement*

An important piece of Swinburne's case for substance dualism is his argument from the possibility

of gradual brain replacement over time. He asks us to consider the following possibility:

> Suppose that P_1 undergoes an operation in which a small diseased part of his or her brain (a tenth of the whole brain) is replaced by a similar part from another brain (perhaps that of a clone of P_1) . . . . But now suppose that each year a different tenth of P_1's brain is removed and replaced by similar parts from another brain (perhaps that of a different clone of P_1 on each occasion). At the end of ten years there is a person whose brain is made of entirely different matter. It seems at least logically possible that—because the process has been gradual and each new part has become integrated into the brain before a new operation is done—the resulting person is still P_1 (Swinburne, 2013, p. 155).

Swinburne then adds a further condition: "Now suppose that during each of the ten operations in

which brain parts are replaced, the patient remained conscious and has a series of overlapping

conscious experiences lasting for the whole operation" (Swinburne, 2013, p. 156). To clarify, we

could summarize it this way:

> At t_1, Bob is conscious and his brain is composed of 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, & 10.

Then,

> At t_2, Bob is still conscious, but his brain has part 1 replaced by part 11, such that his brain is now composed of 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, & 11.

Supposing this process repeated itself once every year for ten years as Swinburne suggests, ten years

later we would eventually end up with:

> At t_{11}, Bob is still conscious but his brain has part 10 replaced by part 20, such that his brain is now composed of parts 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, & 20.

It is important to note that Swinburne's thought experiment postulates a gradual replacement of a

brain over the course of ten years. During any given surgical procedure, Bob remains conscious and

has no more than a tenth of his brain removed and replaced. If this is really possible, then

Swinburne thinks that each of us "can continue to exist without any continuity of brain, memory, or

character. It follows that the simple theory of personal identity is true" (Swinburne, 2013, p. 158).

This is an intriguing thought experiment that—according to Swinburne—leads us to substance dualism. The reason for this is that over the span of ten years, the person's metaphysical identity is preserved while the material that constitutes his brain is completely changed. As such, the person must be something different from his brain. There is, however, a theological concern with this argument.

Theologically speaking this account says very clearly that bodies and brains are metaphysically irrelevant to the human person's identity. This is because the human person can exist with or without the specific body he possesses. But as I have argued in the last chapter, this immediately puts Swinburne's account at odds with the traditional teachings of the church. Specifically, the Christian church has argued for the following.

(C1)   Bodies and souls are distinct entities.

(C2)   Human persons are composed of bodies and souls.

(C3)   Human personhood begins at the moment of conception.

(C4)   At death, the body and soul separate with the body decomposing and the soul going to the intermediate state.

(C5)   At the end of this world, our souls will be rejoined to bodies that are numerically identical to our current bodies.

The problem for Swinburne's account arises from (C2). What his argument shows is that, despite what he may have said in other places about persons being the integrated body and soul, his account entails a strong affirmation of PERSON-SOUL IDENTITY.

But this is worth pausing to clarify and unpack. In his earlier work *The Evolution of the Soul*, Swinburne seems to speak in holistic terms about human beings. He says, for example, that "a man living on Earth is a substance which *consists* of two substances, his body and his soul" (Swinburne, 2007, p. 10).[36] Notice here that Swinburne speaks of human persons as "consisting" of body and

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[36] Emphasis added.

soul. Statements like this, along with his heavy emphasis on mind-body integration (Swinburne, 2007, p. 262–297), might give the impression that his account is an ontologically holistic account. But whatever Swinburne means by "consisting", it cannot mean that the human person is a metaphysical composite of body and soul. For as his "Gradual Brain Replacement" argument above makes clear, in Swinburne's account the human person is metaphysically identical to the immaterial soul. And, this is confirmed by him when he says that "the essential part of the man is his soul" (Swinburne, 2007, 10). So then, it is safe to say that Swinburne's account merely holds that human persons *have* a body and a soul and is holistic in the sense that he envisions the body and soul to be fully integrated with each other. While such affirmations are popular for substance dualists today, it does not satisfy the Christian tradition's affirmation of (C2)— human persons are composed of bodies and souls. As I argued in chapter 2, the Church understood body-soul composition in terms of metaphysical identity, not mere integration and function.

Before moving forward, there is one other concern with Swinburne's "Gradual Brain Replacement" argument. It seems as though he has not given sufficient attention to the ways that materialists might counter his argument. Specifically, materialists such as Peter van Inwagen have accounts that seem to allow for the very kind of part replacement and identity persistence that Swinburne envisions. Van Inwagen's approach allows for the parts of a material organism to change over time and for the organism—in this case a person—to persist throughout the change as long as at each successive stage of the process, the given parts are caught up into the same life as the original organism. He calls this the *Life* principle:

> If an organism exists at a certain moment, then it exists whenever and wherever—and only when and only where—the event that is its life at that moment is occurring; more exactly, if the activity of the xs at t_1 constitutes a life, and the activity of the ys at t_2 constitutes a life, and the organism that the xs compose at t_1 is the organism that the ys compose at t_2 if and only if the life constituted by the activity of the xs at t_1 is the life constituted by the activity of the ys at t_2 (Van Inwagen, 1990, p. 145).

Then, to clarify what *Life* would mean for the continuation of a particular material being, van

Inwagen says:

> Suppose that the activity of the *x*s constitutes a life at *t*; suppose that a few of the *x*s cease to
> be caught up in that life and that the remnant continue to be caught up in a life; suppose that
> those of the *x*s that have ceased to be caught up in that life are "replaced"—that certain
> objects, the *y*s, come to be caught up in the life the remnant of the *x*s are caught up in, in
> such a way that the *y*s and the remnant of the *x*s constitute that life. Suppose that this sort
> of replacement happens a sufficient number of times that eventually none of the *x*s is caught
> up in the life that has evolved, by continuous (and "insensible," as Locke calls it)
> replacement of the *x*s, from the life that was once constituted by the activity of the *x*s. Is this
> life the life that was constituted by the *x*s?
>
> In many cases, cases of the more usual sort, the answer is undoubtedly yes (Van
> Inwagen, 1990, p. 149).

Once again, this materialistic account of human persons allows for the gradual replacement

of parts over time and for a person to persist through all of the changes that take place within her

body. Because of this, I suspect that the thought experiment offered by Swinburne does not

establish substance dualism and that materialists would reject his overall argument. How Swinburne

might respond is unclear. But for his argument to work, it looks like van Inwagen's scenario needs

serious attention.

8.3.2 *Swinburne and Mental Properties*

I also raise concerns with Swinburne's account of personal identity as it relates to mental states.

Even if these concerns are not defeaters for his view, they are at least epistemologically worrisome.

As he makes clear in *Mind, Brain, and Free Will*, there are no physical or mental properties that are

essential to a particular person's identity. That is, if Wesley at t_2 is the same person named Wesley

that was once at t_1, then Wesley persists because he has the same "thisness" as the earlier person

named Wesley, and that "thisness" is not tied to any particular mental property (psychological

continuity) or physical property. He says, "I begin my defense of this position by arguing that it is

logically possible that some person P_2 at t_2 can be the same person as a person P_1 at t_1, even if he or

she does not apparently remember anything done or experienced by P_1 at t_1 or earlier and has an

entirely different character from P_1, and also has a largely different body (including brain) from P_1" (Swinburne, 2013, p. 151). He later adds:

> Hence, given that an earlier person who had all the same physical parts as me, and all the same physical and mental properties as me, could, it is metaphysically possible, not be me, and could, it is metaphysically possible, be me, it follows that the difference must consist in the presence or absence of some non-physical part. I must now have a non-physical part (i.e. a part which is a pure mental substance) which makes me me, which the earlier person (even if they were in all other respects the same) would not have had if they had not been me. We may call this non-physical part of me my 'soul' (Swinburne, 2013, p. 170).

So in short, Wesley's persistence over time does not require the preservation of any of her mental properties (memories, characteristics, dispositions, etc.) or physical properties (particular body, particular body parts, particular brain, size, shape, etc.) across time. He could lose all his mental properties and physical properties and still be the same person he was at an earlier time. What is more, Wesley's original physical and mental properties could appear later in some other person other than Wesley. As such, we could have the following situation. At t_1, Wesley—who has the "thisness" of Wesley—has the mental properties of 1, 2, and 3 and the physical properties X, Y, and Z. But, at t_2, Wesley—who still has the "thisness" of Wesley—loses all the mental properties 1, 2, and 3 and physical properties X, Y, and Z that she once possessed, only to have them replaced by mental properties 4, 5, and 6 and physical properties A, B, and C. Running along side Wesley's life, at t_1, Alex—who has the "thisness" of Alex—has mental properties 4, 5, and 6 and physical properties A, B, and C. Then at t_2, Alex—who still has the "thisness" of Alex—loses all the mental properties 4, 5, and 6 and physical properties A, B, and C that he once possessed only to have them replaced by mental properties 1, 2, and 3 and physical properties X, Y, and Z. So, just to clarify, we would have the following:

At t_1:

Wesley has mental properties 1, 2, and 3 and physical properties X, Y, and Z.

And,

Alex has mental properties 4, 5, and 6 and physical properties A, B, and C.

And then at t_2:

Wesley has mental properties 4, 5, and 6 and physical properties A, B, and C.

And,

Alex has mental properties 1, 2, and 3 and physical properties X, Y and Z.

Yet,

Wesley at t_1 = Wesley at t_2.

And,

Alex at t_1 = Alex at t_2.

This is far more drastic than what would happen in Locke's Prince and the Cobbler thought experiment. For on this account, persons may switch bodies (and thus physical properties), but they maintain all their mental properties (memories, dispositions, desires, etc.). And so, while the Prince may be terribly confused about how he got into the Cobbler's body (and vice versa), he is not confused about who he actually is. He remembers his life and possesses all the former mental properties that he once had. By contrast, Swinburne's approach makes it possible to lose both the physical and the mental properties, and for those physical and mental properties to appear in someone else. I can imagine that both Wesley and Alex at t_2 are deeply confident about who they are at those moments, even though they are actually horribly wrong in that moment. At t_2, Wesley is sure to think that he is Alex since he now has all of Alex's old mental and physical properties, and Alex is sure to think that he is Wesley for the same reason. Both have actually lost track of who they are due to the fact that their "thisness" stayed the same while losing all the physical and mental indicators of their identity. They are deceived into thinking that they are someone that they are not.

My concern here is not with Swinburne's contention that we have a "thisness" unique to each of us. My own Thomistic leanings incline me to think that we do have an immaterial soul, even

if Swinburne and I might differ over the nature of that soul and over whether or not "I" am identical to the soul. My concern is with, on his model, our complete inability to identify ourselves across time given the contingency of our mental and physical properties. If Wesley has a complete loss and replacement of his mental and physical properties between t_1 and t_2, such that he now has all of Alex's old mental and physical properties, then even Wesley will not be able to properly identify himself in the future. He will think he is Alex when in fact he is not. The same is true for Alex who would now have all Wesley's old physical and mental properties and be equally confused and deceived. As I mentioned earlier, this is certainly not a logical defeater for Swinburne's position, but it does seem to be a troubling and unfortunate consequence of it.

In reply to these concerns, Swinburne suggests that the problem I portray is "unreasonable". He says:

> But I have argued that under normal circumstances (i.e. when brains are not split, and memory and character are continuous) it is 'enormously probable' that I am the same person as any previous person who had the same brain. To ask for more is unreasonable. It is only under extremely abnormal circumstances that there will be a serious doubt about which previous person was me. And, as Dew admits, that there will be serious doubt under such circumstances is no argument against the theory (Swinburn, 2014, p. 61).

In response to Swinburne, I am happy to concede the rarity of the problem in question. In fairness to Swinburne, the kind of problem I portray seems to have a very low likelihood of ever obtaining. At the same time, I contend that Swinburne's response to the problem I have raised is dismissive and unsatisfying. After all, the problem in question arises from his argument about logical possibilities. In these cases, the probabilistic odds against something coming about are irrelevant. If the scenario I describe is possible, then it looks like his account if stuck with the problem I have raised.

But there is also a second concern for Swinburne's view about personal identity and mental properties. If it is possible for a person to swap bodies and mental states, then Swinburne seems to have a pairing problem unique to his account. To see this, consider Jaegwon Kim's original "Pairing

Problem" designed to show the impossibility of causal interaction between material bodies and

immaterial minds. Kim illustrates the way we understand causation in normal physical

circumstances. He says:

> A gun, call it A, is fired, and this causes the death of a person, X. Another gun, B, is fired at
> the same time (say, in A's vicinity, but this is unimportant), and this results in the death of
> another person, Y. What makes it the case that the firing of A caused X's death and the
> firing of B caused Y's death, and not the other way around? That is, why did A's firing not
> cause Y's death and B's firing not cause X's death? What principle governs the "pairing" of
> the right cause with the right effect? (Kim, 2011, p. 50–51).

In Kim's view, spatial location is required to govern the pairing between $A \rightarrow X$, and $B \rightarrow Y$. And

since, according to Cartesian substance dualism, immaterial souls do not have spatial location, this is

vexing problem for Cartesian substance dualism. Kim says, "If there are Cartesian minds, therefore,

they are threatened with total causal isolation—from each other as well as from the material world"

(Kim, 2011, p. 54).

So, does Swinburne have this problem? It does not appear that Swinburne has the specific

problem of causal isolation that Kim claims Cartesians have. But even if he does, I do not wish to

make that case here. Rather, what I want to suggest is that given what he says about the way that a

person can experience a switch of body and mental states with some other person as outlined above,

Swinburne's account leaves open the possibility that any particular mental state can bounce around

and interact with any particular body at a given time. Again, he says, "given that an earlier person

who had all the same physical parts as me, and all the same physical and mental properties as me,

could, it is metaphysically possible, not be me, and could, it is metaphysically possible, be me, it

follows that the difference must consist in the presence or absence of some non-physical part"

(Swinburne, 2013, p. 170).

If I am correct that an implication of this is that Wesley and Alex can switch bodies and

mental states from one moment to the next, then it is safe to say that mental states are also

untethered from any particular bodies or brain states. And if this is true, then it is hard to see how Swinburne might avoid the scenario where a mental state in one person might bounce from one body to a different body at the moment the mental state takes place. If this were to happen, then it looks like Wesley's mental state of scratching his nose that corresponds to his body lifting its arm to scratch his nose might also cause Alex's body to lift its arm and scratch his nose at the same time. Interestingly, this seems to be a problem that is unique to Swinburne given his insistence that a person's identity is not grounded in any particular brain or mental states, parts, or properties.

8.4   Conclusion

On the whole, Swinburne's work is helpful and constructive. And as I noted above, as a Thomist, I share his commitment to the existence of immaterial souls, even if I stop short of identifying the human person with the soul the way Swinburne does. In this chapter I have argued that there are some perplexing problems with his view on the whole. His commitment to PERSON-SOUL IDENTITY, evidenced by his "Gradual Brain Replacement" argument puts him at odds with the traditional teachings of the church. Philosophically, his treatment of mental properties creates the epistemic problem of any of us know who we are at any given moment, and may entail a unique form of the pairing problem.

Chapter 9

An Analysis of J.P. Moreland's Thomistic Substance Dualism

9.1   Introduction

Like other substance dualists, J.P. Moreland is committed to STUFF DISTINCTION—the idea that

bodies and souls are fundamentally different kinds of metaphysical stuff. He is also committed to

PERSON-SOUL IDENTITY—the idea that the human person is identical to her immaterial soul.

Interestingly, however, he has also argued in numerous places for a unique version of substance

dualism that he calls Thomistic substance dualism (Moreland & Rae, 2000), or what he has also

called Thomistic-like dualism (Moreland, 2018).

In this chapter I shall offer a brief overview of his Thomistic substance dualism, noting the

particular ways he sees his view as being like Aquinas's view. After this, I shall offer two general

critiques of his account. First, I will address some of the better arguments he puts forward for

substance dualism, arguing that none of them succeed in establishing his commitment to PERSON-

SOUL IDENTITY. Second, theologically speaking, I will argue that his functional holist account

fails to satisfy the traditional requirements of a Christian anthropology set forth in chapter 2.

9.2   J.P. Moreland's Thomistic Substance Dualism

So, what exactly is Thomistic substance dualism? Most generally, Moreland describes it as a view

that "takes the soul to be broader than the mind in containing not merely the capacities for

consciousness, but also those which ground biological life and functioning. On this view, the

(human) soul diffuses, informs (gives form to), unifies, animates, and makes human the body"

(Moreland, 2014, p. 118). In other words, on this view, in addition to grounding the intellectual and

cognitive capacities of the human being, the soul also gives biological life to the body. In this way,

Moreland affirms a distinction between the body and soul, but he also envisions a kind of unity

within the human person, such that he thinks of his account as holistic. While there is much that could be said of his view, I shall highlight three import concepts within his account that receive the majority of attention in his works: (1) PERSON-SOUL IDENTITY, (2) functional holism, and (3) soul as efficient cause of the body.

9.2.1 *Person-Soul Identity*

First, Moreland's Thomistic substance dualism is, like other more general versions of substance dualism, committed to PERSON-SOUL IDENTITY thesis, the idea that human persons are metaphysically identical to their immaterial souls. For example, in his early work with Gary Habermas, Moreland says that the "I" involved with statements about the self "refers to my own substantial soul. It does not refer to any mental property or bundle or mental properties I am having, nor does it refer to anybody described from a third-person perspective" (Habermas and Moreland, 1992, p. 35). Here Moreland rejects the idea that personal identity is grounded in material bodies or in psychological properties. For him, personhood is grounded purely in the spiritual soul of a person.

This is consistent with what Moreland would later endorse. On the basis of arguments from personal awareness, unity of consciousness, modality, free will, and persistence, Moreland claims to know that "I know that I am not identical to my body or my conscious states; rather, I am the immaterial self that has a body and a conscious mental life" (Moreland, 2014, p. 119–120). On the basis of the conceivability argument that I shall consider below, Moreland concludes that he is "a substantial soul or mind [that] could not exist without the ultimate capacities of consciousness" (Moreland, 2014, p. 126).

Moreland's endorsement of the PERSON-SOUL IDENTITY thesis is given significant treatment in *Body and Soul* (co-authored with Scott Rae). There Moreland says that "human persons are identical to immaterial substances, namely, to souls" (Moreland and Rae, 2000, p. 11). He then

later adds, "For the Christian theist who accepts the Thomistic substance view, the human person is identical to its soul, and the soul comes into existence at the point of conception either by direct act of God (creationism) or by transmission from parents" (Moreland and Rae, 2000, p. 205–206). Finally, in one of his most recent essays on the subject, Moreland has made his commitment to person-soul identity crystal clear. He says, "In my view, the human person is identical to his soul (the thin particular), which contains three metaphysical constituents—a human essence, exemplification, and a bare particular" (Moreland, 2018, p. 103).

9.2.2 *Functional Holism*

Second, while he is committed to the PERSON-SOUL IDENTITY thesis, Moreland has also made an effort to frame his Thomistic substance dualism as being "holistic". In his work with Scott Rae, for example, Moreland insists that his view can satisfy the traditional Christian view of human persons that understands persons holistically. Like other Christians that have typically thought that "a human being is a unity of two distinct entities—body and soul", Moreland affirms a version of holism (Moreland and Rae, 2000, p. 17).

But much more needs to be said to understand what Moreland means by "holism" within his account. Moreland distinguishes between two versions of holism: what he calls ontological holism[37] and functional holism. He says, "For the Thomistic dualist" such as himself and Rae, "the soul contains capacities for biological as well as mental functioning. Thus the soul is related to the body

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[37] Moreland and Rae suggest that ontological holism is committed to the idea that mental properties are inseparable from physical bodies (Moreland and Rae, 2000, p. 21). I want to suggest that this is a poor usage of the term "ontological holism", as I consider my own view to be a form of ontological holism and I would deny Moreland and Rae's notion of inseparability. On my view, ontological holism is a view that grounds personal identity, not just in function, but in the composite unity of a body and a soul. As they note, "Some Thomistic dualists identify the person with the whole body-soul composites." They ultimately reject this brand of Thomism, in favor of a view that identifies "the person with the soul, which contains a natural exigency for embodiement even while disembodied" (Moreland and Rae, 2000, p. 21).

more intimately and fully than by way of an external causal connection, as Cartesians would have it (Moreland and Rae, 2000, p. 21). In other words, what Moreland and Rae reject here is the Cartesian notion of a soul a separate entity being added in from the outside. Instead, they understand the soul to be, as I shall elaborate shortly, the efficient cause of the body, thus forming a deeply intimate connection between body and soul. They then add that, "According to functional holism, while the soul (mind) is in the body, the body-soul complex is a deeply integrated unity with a vastly complicated, intricate array of mutual functional dependence and causal connection" (Moreland and Rae, 2000, p. 21).

That Moreland denies ontological holism and embraces functional holism is clear from his work with Rae. But this is made even more clear in his more recent works on the soul. In *The Soul*, for example, Moreland explicitly affirms functional holism, saying that "A human being is a functional unity of two distinct entities—body and soul" (Moreland, 2014, p. 158) Then, in his essay in *The Blackwell Companion to Substance Dualism*, he adds that the "body is key for both the functioning of the thin particular's (soul's) powers and the actualization of its various capacities" (Moreland, 2018, p. 104). He then cites Dennis Des Chene approvingly who says, "The human soul is not merely joined with the body in fact. It is the kind of soul which, though capable of separable existence . . . nevertheless by its nature presupposes union with a body, and moreover with a particular kind of body, a body with organs, in order to exercise all its powers—even reason" (Des Chene, 2000, p. 71). It is clear then that the kind of holism Moreland has in mind is merely a form on functional holism, not ontological holism like I shall endorse in chapters 11 and 12.

9.2.3   *Soul as Efficient Cause*

A third major tenant of Moreland's Thomistic substance dualism is the claim that the soul is the efficient cause of the material body. According to Moreland, "it is the soul that is responsible for the development of the brain and the nervous system and, more generally, the body" (Moreland and

Rae, 2000, p. 200). He then adds that the "soul's essence guides the development of its body teleologically so as to realize the necessary bodily structure for the organism's functions to be actualized" (Moreland and Rae, 2000, p. 204). In other words, according to Moreland's Thomistic substance dualism, the soul is the efficient cause of the body that guides the process of biogenesis. As such, it is the immaterial soul that brings the material body into existence and provides it with the nature that it possesses.

More recently, Moreland has reaffirmed the soul as efficient cause of the body and further elaborated on his functional holism by noting that the soul is also the final cause of the body. He says, for example, that the "soul is the first efficient cause of the body's development as well as the final cause of its functions and structure, which are internally related to the soul's essence" (Moreland, 2018, p. 105). With this in view, Moreland notes that his account is closely associated with a medieval view known as organicism. According to Moreland, organicism includes six distinct affirmations:

> (1) The organism as a whole (the soul) is ontologically prior to its inseparable parts; (2) the parts of the organism's body stand in internal relations to other parts and to the soul's essence; they are literally functional entities (the heart functions literally to pump blood); (3) the body's operational functions are rooted in the souls internal structure; the internal structure or essence is the blueprint, the information responsible for the body's structure and functions; (4) the body is developed and grows teleologically as a series of developmental events occurring in a law-like way, rooted in the internal essence of the human soul; (5) the first efficient cause of the characteristics of the human body is the soul; various body parts, including DNA and genes, are important instrumental causes the soul uses to produce the traits that arise; (6) the body is a mode of the soul (the soul could exist without the body but not conversely, a body without a soul is a corpse); as such it is an ensouled physical structure; thus, there are two aspects to the body— a soulish, immaterial and a physical aspect (Moreland, 2018, p. 106).

Moreland's Thomistic substance dualism is an important version of substance dualism. Like more general substance dualisms, it affirms PERSON-SOUL IDENITY. On this view human persons are numerically identical to their immaterial bodies. In addition to this, he also insists that his view is holistic given the functional relationship between bodies and souls. And finally, given his

functionalism, he contends that the soul is both the efficient and final cause of the human body. Given the unique nature of his account, and its popularity with evangelical philosophers, Moreland's view deserves serious consideration.

9.3   Concerns with Moreland's Thomistic Substance Dualism

Moreland's attempt at providing a holistic account of substance dualism has been enticing to some Christian philosophers. This, no doubt, is due to the ways that his account seems to satisfy some of the traditional criteria of a Christian anthropology set for in chapter 2. Once again, these criteria include the following:

(C1) Bodies and souls are distinct entities.

(C2) Human persons are composed of bodies and souls.

(C3) Human personhood begins at the moment of conception.

(C4) At death, the body and soul separate with the body decomposing and the soul going to the intermediate state.

(C5) At the end of this world, our souls will be rejoined to bodies that are numerically identical to our current bodies.

I shall grant that Moreland's account is able to satisfy (C1) rather straightforwardly, even though I would not suggest that his approach is the only way of satisfying (C1). Indeed, I will argue in chapter 11 and 12 that a more traditional Thomistic account also satisfies (C1) without committing to the claim that bodies and souls are distinct substances. I shall also grant that Moreland's account can satisfy (C3), (C4), and (C5) without difficulty.

In what follows, I wish to consider two important questions about his account as it relates to (C2)—human persons are composed of bodies and souls. The first question arises from his endorsement of PERSON-SOUL IDENTITY and his functional holism. Does his affirmation of PERSON-SOUL IDENTITY (leading to a mere functional holism) satisfy the more robust ontological holism endorsed in the traditional account of (C2)? I shall argue that it does not. And

since it does not, Moreland must provide sufficient reasons for endorsing his view and departing from the more traditional account. The second question I wish to consider is whether or not he provides sufficient reasons for adopting his view, specifically his endorsement of PERSON-SOUL IDENTITY. I argue that his philosophical arguments in favor of PERSON-SOUL IDENTITY fail. As such, despite Moreland's *prima facia* fit with (C2), I contend that his view fails to satisfy (C2) and is therefore problematic for Christian philosophers. I will not entertain the question of whether or not his view is actually Thomistic, though I suspect that it is not.[38]

9.3.1   *Moreland's Functional Holism and the Christian Tradition*

In the next section of this chapter, I argue that Moreland's arguments fail to motivate us to accept the substance dualist thesis of PERSON-SOUL IDENTITY. That is, Moreland has not offered convincing reasons that we must identify the human person with the immaterial soul. Here, I will simply note that Moreland's functional holist view fails to satisfy the Christian tradition's metaphysical commitment to an ontological holist[39] position.

In chapter 2, I argued that despite particular outliers, the Christian tradition has generally been committed to (C2)— human persons are composed of bodies and souls. As Irenaeus puts it, "Now the soul and the spirit are certainly a *part* of the man, but certainly not *the* man; for the perfect man consists in the commingling and the union of the soul receiving the spirit of the Father, and the admixture of that fleshly nature which was moulded after the image of God" (Irenaeus, 2004, v.1, p. 531). Notice here that Irenaeus specifically denies Moreland's PERSON-SOUL IDENTITY claim, noting that the soul is part of man, but not the man himself. Likewise, in the Athanasian Creed (5th

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[38] For a good discussion on this question, see van Dyke (2009).

[39] As specified in an earlier footnote in the chapter, I use the term ontological holism differently than Moreland uses the term. I use the term to suggest that the human person is metaphysically identical to the composite of the body/soul unity.

century)[40], (C2) is affirmed by way of comparison to the union of divine and human natures in the person Jesus Christ. It says, "For as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man: so God and man is one Christ" (Athanasian Creed, 1931, p. 69). And as chapter 2 noted, there are numerous other thinkers from the 2nd through the 13th century that also deny PERSON-SOUL IDENTITY implied in Moreland's functional holism in favor of the more robust ontological holism.

Here I simply wish to suggest that functional holism does not adequately capture the commitments of the Christian tradition. Moreland's account may very well offer a way of explaining the functional relationship between the body and the soul, and it may be able to account for the possibility of life after death. I take no issue with either of these points. My major concern here is that it does those things in a way that does not reflect the traditional account of human persons. Putting all this together then, if his view is at odds with the Christian tradition, and moreover, he fails to establish PERSON-SOUL IDENTITY, then Christian philosophers should reject his view. In what follows, I shall now argue that Moreland fails to establish PERSON-SOUL IDENTITY.

9.3.2   *Evaluation of Moreland's Arguments for Substance Dualism*

In a number of places, Moreland makes various arguments in favor of substance dualism. In *The Soul*, for example, he offers arguments from the basic awareness of self, unity of consciousness, conceivability, free will, and sameness of self over time, (Moreland, 2014, p. 117–133). And along with Scott Rae, he makes the same arguments in *Body and Soul* (Moreland and Rae, 2000, p. 121–228). Given the space limitation of this chapter, I will not consider each of his arguments, but will focus only on his arguments that, if they were successful, would seem to entail substance dualism.[41]

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[40] Though the creed bears Athanasius's name, most scholars agree that it likely was not penned by Athanasius himself.

[41] To clarify, I contend that some his arguments—such as those from free will and the unity of consciousness—may succeed in demonstrating that human persons are more than just their material bodies. Nevertheless, I also contend that they fail to demonstrate the human person is numerically identical to her soul. In other words, even if they succeed as arguments for STUFF

Specifically, I will consider his persistence argument from sameness of self over time and his modal

argument from conceivability.

First, I consider his persistence argument from sameness of self across time. According to

this argument, human persons persist as the same numerical beings across time, even though their

bodies are constantly changing parts. And since there are no common material parts present for the

entire duration of the life the persisting person, something else like an immaterial soul is necessary to

ground the identity of the person through the change. Moreland puts the argument this way:

> (1)   If something is a physical object composed of parts, it does not survive over time as
>   the same object if it comes to have different parts.
>
> (2)   My body and brain are physical objects composed of parts.
>
> (3)   Therefore, my body and brain do not survive over time as the same objects if they
>   come to have different parts.
>
> (4)   My body and brain are constantly coming to have different parts.
>
> (5)   Therefore, my body and brain do not survive over time as the same objects.
>
> (6)   I do survive over time as the same object.
>
> (7)   Therefore, I am not my body or my brain.
>
> (8)   I am either a soul or a body or a brain.
>
> (9)   Therefore, I am a soul (Moreland, 2014, p. 132–133).

One concern with this argument is a vagueness present within several of the premises

(premises (1) and (3)–(6)) surrounding the concepts of "same" and "different". For example, in

premise (1)—If something is a physical object composed of parts, it does not survive over time as

the same object if it comes to have different parts—we are left to wonder whether or not he

envisions a scenario where only some of the parts are replaced over time, or if he envisions a

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DISTINCTION, they fail as arguments for PERSON-SOUL IDENTITY. And since they fail to
establish PERSON-SOUL IDENTITY, I will not consider them in this chapter.

scenario where all the parts are replaced with a completely "different" set of parts from the previous set. I contend that either way he means these terms to be taken, there are problems for this argument.

Consider the implications for the former—taking "same parts" to refer to a very specific set of parts, and "different parts" to refer to the change of any one particular part. If this is what Moreland means, then his argument entails a commitment to mereological essentialism, the thesis that all of a particular set of parts are essential to an object such that with the change of just one part, the object ceases to exist and a new object comes into existence. Consider for example a baseball used in a particular game. Once the ball receives its first scuff, it ceases to exist and a new baseball takes its place in the same spatio-temporal location. Given the counterintuitiveness of mereological essentialism, metaphysicians are generally inclined to regard this view as absurd or something close to it.[42] Moreover, even if this were not so, the suggestion that only some parts get changed overtime would prevent the argument from succeeding, as there would then be a continuous set of material bits present within the material body for the duration of its existence which would be capable of grounding the identity of the body in question. So then, for Moreland's argument to work, it must be committed to saying that a "different set of part" refers to a "completely different set of parts".

But what if we understand his argument to assume complete part replacement over time? Does the argument succeed in this case? I suggest that if this is what he means by "different", we could represent the intuition of the argument better with the following scenario. Imagine the persistence of a person named Art over time, even while his body constantly replaces its parts and eventually comes to be composed by a completely new set of parts. We might call this the "persisting Art" scenario.

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[42] For a helpful discussion on this matter, see Chisholm (1989, p. 65–82).

(t_1) Art exists in 1976 and his body is composed of parts A, B, C.

(t_2) Art exists in 1980 and his body is composed of parts B, C, D.

(t_3) Art exists in 1984 and his body is composed of parts C, D, E.

(t_4) Art exists in 1988 and his body is composed of parts D, E, F.

Therefore, given (t_1-t_4), if Art in 1988 is the same person as Art in 1976, Art is distinct from his body.[43]

Under this scenario, though the process is gradual, the final result is that Art survives a process whereby he comes to possess and inhabit a body that is composed of a completely new set of parts (parts D,E,F) from the original parts (A,B,C) that once composed his body. Yet, if Art persists through the process, then it looks like Art must be something other than the material body that changes over time. For Moreland's argument above to work, it seems that something like the complete part replacement represented in the "persisting Art" scenario would have to be what is in view. The argument seems to work only if one can say that all the parts get replaced over time. If that were to happen, there would be no continuous material bits to ground the identity of the person. This seems to be what Moreland envisions, as he suggests that the immaterial soul is the thing present for the entire duration of a person's life that is capable of ground the person's identity.

But there is at least one problem with this account. As will be set forth later in chapter 12, it looks like the total part replacement envisioned by the "persisting Art" scenario is not what actually happens in the case of human body tissue replacement. As it turns out, there are actually a large number of material bits that persist and are present within the brain and neurological system of the human body for the entire duration of the bodies life.[44] If so, then there is actually a set of material

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[43] See Dew and Gould (2019) for an example of how such scenarios might be used by substance dualists to defend the existence of the soul.

[44] See Bhardwaj, Frisén, et. al., (2006).

bits that can ground the person's identity over time. Because of this, I contend that Moreland's persistence argument from the "sameness of self over time" is unsuccessful in establishing the substance dualist view of PERSON-SOUL IDENTITY.

Before moving forward, however, an important clarification in in order. In chapter 4, I offered a similar persistence argument in my critique of Lynne Rudder Baker. There I argued that such an argument would be successful in showing that her view entails substance dualism. Here, however, I have argued that Moreland's version is not successful. Why the difference? In short, in Baker's case, the scenario in question actually produces a complete part replacement over time while the person remains the same numerical person through the whole process. This complete part replacement is achieved in that case because of the non-natural surgical process that ensures all the previous parts get replaced. In Moreland's case, by contrast, the process is one that is completely natural, where the part replacement process happens by normal metabolic design. What I contend here is that such natural metabolic process does not actually achieve complete part replacement, and as such, Moreland's process cannot give us the kind of part replacement necessary for his argument to work. As such, I am inclined to accept a part replacement argument presented against Baker, and to reject the version offered by Moreland.

There is, however, a second major argument that Moreland offers. Like the first, if this argument is successful, it would establish the substance dualist thesis of PERSON-SOUL IDENTITY. In *Body and Soul*, Moreland and Rae offer a "modal argument" argument from the conceivability of disembodied existence. This argument is based on the conceivability of disembodied existence and has great similarities with other conceivability arguments as far back as Descartes. Simply put, they argue that the human person is not identical to her material body, and thus by implication, is identical to her immaterial soul. They say, "In these thought experiments someone argues in the following way: Because a certain state of affairs *s* (Norris's existing

disembodied) is conceivable, this provides justification for thinking that *s* is metaphysically possible.
Now if *s* is possible, then certain implications follow about what is and is not essential to personal
identity" (Moreland and Rae, 2000, p. 172). And so, as is often argued in modal arguments, the
conceivability of something is suggestive about what is possible.

Before offering their argument, they provide one a clarification about the difference between
strong and weak conceivability. They say:

> Something is *weakly conceivable* for a person when she reflects on it and sees no reason to
> believe it to be impossible. Something is *strongly conceivable* for a person when she judges that
> it is possible on the basis of a more positive grasp of the properties involved and of the
> compatibility of what she is conceiving with what she already knows. If something is weakly
> conceivable, one sees no reason for thinking it is impossible. If something is strongly
> conceivable, one sees good reason for thinking it is possible (Moreland and Rae, 2000, p.
> 173).

With these clarifications in mind, they offer the following argument for substance dualism:

(10) The law of identity: If *m* is identical to *n*, then whatever is true of *m* is true of *n* and
vice versa.

(11) I can strongly conceive of myself as existing disembodied.

(12) If I can strongly conceive of some state of affairs *s* such that *s* possibly obtains, then
I have good grounds for believing of *s* that *s* is possible.

(13) Therefore, I have good grounds for believing of myself that it is possible for me to
exist and to be disembodied.

(14) If some entity *m* is such that it is possible for him to exist without *n*, then *(a)* *m* is not
identical to *n* and *(b)* *n* is not essential to *m*.

(15) My body is not such that it is possible to exist disembodied; that is, my body is
essentially a body.

(16) Therefore, I have good grounds for believing of myself that I am not identical to my
body and that my physical body is not essential to me (Moreland and Rae, 2000, p.
173).[45]

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[45] Also, see Moreland (2014), where he makes the same argument.

Premise (11) and (12) are the key premises of their argument, and Moreland and Rae

recognize them as such. In Moreland and Rae's view, if our conceivability is "strong" as opposed to

"weak", then this seems to assure us that conceiving of disembodied existence guarantees the actual

metaphysical possibility of disembodied existence. As such, they defend premise (11) with the

following.

> [T]here are a number of things about ourselves and our bodies of which we are aware that
> ground the strong conceivability expressed in (2). One is aware that one is unextended (one
> is "fully present" at each location in one's body as Augustine claimed); that one is neither a
> complex aggregate of separable parts nor the sort of thing that can be composed of physical
> parts but rather that one is a basic unity of inseparable faculties that sustains absolute
> sameness through change (one is an entity per se); and that one is not capable of gradation
> (one cannot become two-thirds a person) (Moreland and Rae, 2000, p. 174).

To summarize, the case for strong conceivability, and thus the argument from conceivability to

substance dualism, hinges on us having some awareness that:

(a) we are aware that we are unextended,
(b) we are a simple unity as opposed to a complex aggregate, and
(c) given (b) we are incapable of become 2/3 of ourselves.

Thus, Moreland and Rae seem to say that (a), (b), and (c) give us the ability to "strongly conceive" of

disembodied existence, as opposed to mere weak conceivability, and that strong conceivability

entails the actual metaphysical possibility of disembodied existence.

I offer two points of concern in response. First, it is not exactly clear that (a), (b), and (c) are

actually true. For instance, regarding (a), Moreland and Rae do not explain their rationale for saying

that "we are aware that we are unextended." Why would we think that is true? Moreland and Rae fail

to explain this claim. I, for one, am inclined to say the opposite—we are aware that we *are extended*.

Here it seems that Moreland and Rae are simply question begging. And regarding (b), I do not

dispute that our phenomenal consciousness is experienced in unity. And with Moreland and Rae, I

am inclined to think that this is strongly suggestive that there is more to us than just our material

bodies. That is, I take it that unified conscious experience provides us with reason to think that

immaterial souls do exist. But what is not clear to me, however, is why we are then expected to identify the human person with the immaterial soul? In short, unified conscious experience might help us in affirming STUFF DISTINCTION, but it does not demonstrate PERSON-SOUL IDENTITY. As such, (b) is also not obviously true. And if we have no reason for thinking that either (a) or (b) is true, then we also have no reason for thinking that (c) is true. In fact, according to Thomistic accounts of human persons and life after death, partial existence may very well be what is entailed with this view. So then, Moreland and Rae fail to justify (11), weakening any support it is supposed to give to premise (12).

Second, even if there were no concerns with premise (11), there would still be significant concerns with premise (12) on its own. Like other philosophical argument, premise (12) contends that conceivability entails metaphysical possibility. Yet, such a move is controversial, and some philosophers question whether or not conceivability really does give us "good grounds for believing of s that s is possible." Just because we can conceive of disembodied existence, does it follow that such existence is a real metaphysical possibility?

I, along with a variety of philosophers, am not convinced.[46] The fact is, we seem perfectly able to conceive of a wide variety of things that are logically possible but may or may not be metaphysically possible. E. J. Lowe, for example, argues that premises like (12) lead us to surmise that there could be real states of affairs where no physical objects exist, but where we and our mental states still do exist. He notes that such inferences are coherent, but not obviously or necessarily correct. He says:

> The trouble, I think, is that we simply don't know whether or not it could be correct, because there may, for all we know, be some reason why it couldn't be correct—a reason that we haven't yet thought of. For instance, it might be that there simply couldn't be a world containing no physical objects, whether or not it also contained me and my mental states (Lowe, 2009, p. 70).

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[46] For discussion surrounding the important details of the discussion, see Stoljar (2006) and Gendler and Hawthorne (2002).

William Jaworski offers a very similar response to such conceivability arguments. He notes

how prior to the discovery that water is H_2O, many might have defined water in a wide variety of

ways that did not include this basic description of its molecular structure. They might have said, for

example, that water is liquid we drink, something we bathe in, or something that turns to ice when it

gets too cold. But they would not have defined it as H_2O. In fact, it would have been possible for

them to conceive of water as existing without H_2O. But of course, once the atomic content and

molecular structure of water was discovered, we now know that it is impossible water to exist

without the particular atoms and structure that it takes. Water is H_2O and cannot exist without it. As

a result, though coherent, prior conceivabilities about water turned out to be false. As such, it is not

clear that our ability to conceive of some state of affairs *s* entails that *s* is a genuine metaphysical

possibility. Jaworski then notes how such might also be applied to persons and their bodies. He says:

> How do we know whether it is metaphysically possible for persons to exist without bodies?
> If the case of persons and bodies is similar to the case of water and H_2O, then we can know
> this only a posteriori, only by studying the world and acquiring information about what
> properties persons and bodies essentially have. And this, critics claim, is a problem for
> exponents of the conceivability argument. Exponents of the conceivability argument assume
> that we are able to determine the truth of the claim that persons can exist without bodies
> purely conceptually, without undertaking any empirical investigation into the nature of
> persons and bodies. But what justifies this assumption? Exponents of the conceivability
> argument appear to say nothing in its favor. They appear to take it for granted that our
> conceptions are a reliable guide to metaphysical possibility however, uninformed by
> empirical considerations those conceptions may be (Jaworski, 2011, p. 47–48).

Lowe and Jaworski raise important questions for arguments like the one put forth by

Moreland and Rae. Just because we can conceive of something, it does not follow that such is a real

metaphysical possibility. As such, we should have pause regarding (12) and by inference, the truth of

(13) which states:

> (13) Therefore, I have good grounds for believing of myself that it is possible for me to
> exist and to be disembodied.

While some philosophers are inclined to accept that conceivability does entail metaphysical possibility, not everyone is convinced. Objections like those I have raised here suggest that the troubles with (12) render (13) questionable. If so, then Moreland's argument has an uphill struggle to succeed. I suggest then that there are substantial concerns with Moreland and Rae's conceivability argument in favor of PERSON-SOUL IDENTITY and by extension, substance dualism.

Interestingly, Moreland and Rae admit that "conceivability is not an infallible test for possibility" (Moreland and Rae, 2000, p. 175). As they note, that is has been "pointed out that we can be mistaken in thinking that what is conceivable is, in fact, possible. I may imagine that is possible for Muhammad Ali to be in a room while Cassius Clay is not, even though Ali is identical to Clay" (Moreland and Rae, 2000, p. 175). But while they admit this possibility, they insist that "it is not easy to see where the source of error is in the dualist modal argument" (Moreland and Rae, 2000, p. 175). I contend that the problem they fail to see with their argument is that premise (12) entails a logical leap from conceivability to metaphysical possibility.

9.4   Conclusion

In this chapter I offered a concise overview of J.P. Moreland's Thomistic substance dualism. Amongst other things, Moreland's view is committed to (1) the PERSON-SOUL IDENTITY thesis, (2) functional holism, and (3) the soul as efficient cause of the body. In response, I argued that his functional holism fails to satisfy the commitments of Christian theism regarding human persons, and that his arguments which for PERSON-SOUL IDENTITY ultimately fail. As such, I contend that his view in inadequate for the Christian theist interested in preserving the traditional Christian account of human persons.

Chapter 10

An Analysis of William Hasker's Emergent Dualism

10.1   Introduction

In the last three chapters I offered reasons for rejecting various substance dualist accounts of human

persons. In chapter 7, for instance, I offered some general theological and philosophical concerns.

In chapters 8 and 9, I considered Richard Swinburne and J.P. Moreland's views respectively, arguing

that in addition to the general theological and philosophical problems associated with their views,

they also have some unique philosophical problems with their accounts.

In this chapter I will consider William Hasker's unique account of human persons known as

emergent dualism. I shall first set forth a basic outline of his view, and will then argue that, despite

the seeming advantages his account has over more general substance dualist accounts, it too has

significant philosophical problems. The problems I raise are not unique to me, but have been

offered by other philosophers in response to Hasker.

10.2   Hasker's Emergent Dualism

By most lights, William Hasker's account of human persons is worthy of serious attention. To

understand his unique theory of mind/soul[47], it will be helpful to set it against the back drop of two

views that he rejects. On the one hand, Hasker firmly rejects the materialist views of mind/soul that

cannot adequately account for the phenomena of mind. He says of materialism, for example, that

over "the past several decades we have seen a profusion of efforts by materialists to account for the

phenomena of the mind. . . . Yet signs are not lacking that we may have here a research program

which is degenerative rather than progressive" (Hasker, 2001, p. 108). On the other hand, he is

equally critical of what he calls "creationist" substance dualist views. To be clear, since his own view

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[47] In Hasker's various works, he tends to refer to the immaterial substance with the terms mind and
soul. As he uses these terms interchangeably, I reference this as mind/soul in numerous places.

is technically a version of substance dualism, it is important to note how his view differs from creationism. According to Hasker, "creationism" is the view that suggests that the mind/soul is an immaterial substance that is created by God separately from the physical organism, and is "added in from the outside" (Hasker, 2018, p. 65). Specifically, it is the notion of being "added from the outside", not the notion of the mind/soul as an immaterial substance, that Hasker firmly rejects.

The idea of creationism is, according to Hasker, what most traditional substance dualists have affirmed that he explicitly rejects. What he wants is "a middle way in the philosophy of mind, a perspective which reduces the gulf between mind and matter without doing violence to the nature of either" (Hasker, 2001, p. 114). Elsewhere he says, "Anyone who finds traditional dualisms implausible, yet is unsatisfied with eliminativist or strongly reductive views of the mind, is likely to find congenial the idea that somehow or other the mind emerges from the functioning of the brain and nervous system" (Hasker, 1999, p. 171). I begin with the concept of emergence itself.

10.2.1   *The Concept of Emergence*

The concept of emergence is not original to Hasker. Philosophers like Wilfred Sellars, Roger Sperry, Karl Popper & John Eccles, and John Searle have developed the idea for several decades.[48] As Hasker explains:

> The basic idea of emergence is that, when certain elements are assembled and related to each other in a certain way, something new and surprising can appear—something we would not have anticipated, merely on the basis of what we knew beforehand about the elements. Yet the new thing is not 'added from the outside,' as is the case with creationism; rather, it appears as a natural consequence of the elements in their combination and relationship (Hasker, 2018, p. 65).

Elsewhere he adds, "It 'emerges,' comes into being, through the operation of the constituent elements, yet the new thing is something different and often surprising; we would not have expected it before it appeared" (Hasker, 2005, p. 76).

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[48] See Sellars (1971), Sperry (1983), Popper & Eccles (1977), and (Searle (1992).

Such is the general account of emergence. But as Hasker goes on to show, there are actually multiple ways—or perhaps levels—of thinking about emergence. As an example of the kinds of discussions on the matter, Hasker considers John Searle's taxonomy of emergence,[49] noting that Searle suggests four distinct kinds of emergence: $emergent_0$, $emergent_{1a}$, $emergent_{1b}$, and $emergent_2$.

$Emergent_0$ is sometimes referred to as "logical" emergence. This kind of emergence refers to "the system features that are explainable merely in terms of the features of the elements and the way they are arranged" (Hasker, 1999, 173). An example of this would be "the complex and beautiful properties exhibited by fractal patterns, which surely are wondrous enough in spite of being 'mere' logical consequences of the equations that generate the patterns" (Hasker, 1999, p. 173).

$Emergent_{1a}$ are what might be called "ordinary causal emergents". These refer to those scenarios where biology and chemistry "enable us to explain and predict what occurs on the biological level; the 'causal interactions among the elements,' described according to the ordinary laws of physics and chemistry, suffice to explain life as well as everything that happens on the pre-biological levels. Whether or not this is true about life, we are confident it is true of solidity and liquidity" (Hasker, 1999, p. 174). But in addition to solidity and liquidity, in Searle's taxonomy, $Emergent_{1a}$ also accounts for consciousness. Hasker says that according to Searle, things like "liquidity, solidity, transparency—and consciousness" are the kinds of things that must be "explained in terms of the causal interactions of the elements" (Hasker, 1999, p. 173).

$Emergent_{1b}$ refers to something causally richer than $emergent_{1a}$, and tends to be more controversial. It refers to emergent laws that come in conjunction with emergent causal powers associated with consciousness. He says that on this scenario,

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[49] See Searle (1992, p. 111-112). Elsewhere, however, Hasker offers a simpler taxonomy of emergence that he categorizes as "logical emergents", "causal emergents", "emergent laws", and "emergent individuals" (Hasker, 2005, p. 76-77).

the processes of life would indeed be explained by causal interactions among the elements, but the laws that govern these interactions are different because of the influence of the new property that emerges in consequence of the higher-level organization. So if (for example) consciousness is emergent in this sense, the behavior of the physical components of the brain (neurons, and substructures within neurons) will be different, in virtue of the causal influence of consciousness, than it would be without this property; the ordinary causal laws that govern the operations of such structures apart from the effects of consciousness will no longer suffice. If, then, the behavior of the system continues to be law-governed, we will have to reckon with the existence of emergent laws, laws whose operation is discernible only in the special sorts of situations in which the higher-level emergent properties manifest themselves (Hasker, 1999, p. 174).

Emergent$_2$ takes the notion of emergence found in emergent$_{1b}$ a step farther. While emergent$_{1b}$ accounts for the emergent laws, emergent$_2$ accounts for the libertarian freedom of an agent. He says, "The most plausible example we have seen of an emergent$_2$ property is libertarian free will, and it seems clear that this cannot be a property that consists of the properties of and relations between, the parts that make up a system of objects (Hasker, 1999, p. 178). He then adds, "If we are to include libertarian freewill as an attribute of persons, it seems we shall need to recognize persons, or minds, or souls, as unitary subjects, not analyzable as complexes of parts. And if creationist versions of dualism are rejected, as the previous chapter suggests they should be, this means we shall have to acknowledge the existence of minds as emergent individuals" (Hasker, 1999, p. 178).

10.2.2   *Emergent Dualism*

Hasker's account of emergent dualism builds on some of the most important concepts in Searle's taxonomy outlined above. Like other advocates of emergentism, he suggests that "consciousness, thought, rational volition, and so on make their appearance naturally as a result of the structure and function of the human brain and nervous system" (Hasker, 2018, p. 65). In contrast to the "creationism" of Cartesianism, Hasker says:

we implicitly affirm that the human mind is produced by the human brain and is not a separate element "added to" the brain from outside. This leads to the further conclusion that mental properties are "emergent" in the following sense: they are properties that manifest

themselves when the appropriate material constituents are placed in special, highly complex relationships, but these properties are not observable in simpler configurations nor are they derivable from the laws which describe the properties of matter as it behaves in these simpler configurations. Which is to say: mental properties are emergent$_{1b}$; they involve emergent causal powers that are not in evidence in the absence of consciousness" (Hasker, 1999, p. 189-190).

But in addition to affirming emergent$_{1b}$ properties, Hasker's account also affirms emergent$_2$—the emergence of libertarian freedom. His account is "a theory of the mind which makes the mind both emergent$_{1b}$, since it is endowed with novel causal powers, and also emergent$_2$, since it possesses libertarian free will" (Hasker, 1999, p. 188).

Hasker's affirmation of emergent$_{1b}$ and emergent$_2$, however, is not necessarily what makes his account unique. What differentiates his account is the way he expands the concept of emergence to include, not just causal powers and libertarian freedom, but also individuals. That is, on Hasker's emergentism, *individual persons* also emerge from the brain when it is arranged and developed properly. The emergent individual is the "person". He says, "it is this mind—the conscious self— that thinks and reasons and feels emotions and makes decisions; it is the central core of what we mean by a 'person'" (Hasker, 2005, p. 78). But it is important to ask why Hasker takes the concept of emergence this far.

In short, Hasker believes that the notion of emergent individuals is a natural extension from the reality of conscious experience—specifically, the unity of consciousness. Hasker, for example, asks us to consider the unity of a particular thought: "Nonreductive physicalism is not adequate as a theory of mind." Noting the various parts of the brain that play a part in thinking the thought "Nonreductive physicalism is not adequate as a theory of mind", he asks, "but in which of these events does my thinking that thought consist?" (Hasker, 2018, p. 68). He then suggests that what "we need is a single thing that grasps and affirms that thought—and as yet, nothing of the sort has come into our view" (Hasker, 2018, p. 68). Persuaded by Leibniz's famous complex machine example, he says:

> The problem does not lie in the pushes and pulls but rather in the *complexity* of the machine, the fact that it is made up of many distinct parts, coupled with the fact that *a complex state of consciousness cannot exist distributed among the parts of the complex object*. The payoff of the argument comes in its final sentence: "it is in this simple substance, and not in the composite or in the machine, that one must look for perception." This is the *unity-of-consciousness argument*, and it poses a serious problem for views which . . . affirm that human beings are composed of physical stuff and nothing else" (Hasker, 2018, p. 69).

Elsewhere he summarizes the "unity of consciousness argument" by saying that a "conscious experience simply is a unity, and to decompose it into a collection of separate parts is to falsify it. So it is not enough to say that there are emergent properties here; what is needed is an *emergent individual*, a new individual entity which comes into existence as a result of a certain functional configuration of the material constituents of the brain and nervous system" (Hasker, 2001, p. 116). Thus, it is the emergence of consciousness and libertarianism, combined with the argument from the unity of consciousness, that leads Hasker to the idea that what emerges is not just a property, but rather an individual mind/soul, which is the person. He says the unity-of-consciousness argument "claims that these properties cannot be explained in terms of—that is, they are not logical consequences of—any combination of properties o and relations between, the material constituents of the brain" (Hasker, 1999, p. 190).

But is such a view plausible? Hasker suggests that the plausibility of his account is at least partially supported by way of analogy from the emergence of magnetic fields from iron deposits in the ground. He describes it in the following way:

> As an analogy which may assist us in grasping this notion, I suggest the various "fields" with which we are familiar in physical science—the magnetic field, the gravitational field, and so on. A magnetic field, for example, is a real, existing, concrete entity, distinct om the magnet which produces it. (This is shown by the fact that the field normally occupies—and is detectable in—a region of space considerably larger than that occupied by the magnet.) The field is "generated" by the magnet in virtue of the fact that the magnet's material constituents are arranged in a certain way—namely, when a sufficient number of the iron molecules are aligned so that their "micro-fields" reinforce each other and produce a detectable overall field. But once generated, the field exerts a causality of its own, on the magnet itself as well as on other objects in the vicinity. (In an electric motor, the armature moves partly because of the magnetic fields produced by itself.) Keeping all this in mind, we can say that *as a magnet generates its magnetic field, so the brain generates its field of consciousness*. The

mind, like the magnetic field, comes into existence when the constituents of its "material base" are arranged in a suitable way—in this case, in the extremely complex arrangement found in the nervous systems of humans and other animals. And like the magnetic field, it exerts a causality of its own; certainly on the brain itself and conceivably also on other minds (telepathy) or on other aspects of the material world (telekinesis)" (Hasker, 1999, p. 190-191).

Hasker is careful, however, to note that the magnetic field analogy is helpful to illustrate the concept of emergent individuals, but that it cannot, by itself, fully support his view. He says, "it is only an analogy, and as such it can't bear the full weight of the theory, which must rather commend itself in virtue of its inherent advantages over both materialism and Cartesian dualism" (Hasker, 1999, p. 192).

Such is Hasker's account of emergent individuals, or what he calls emergent dualism. As he sees it, emergent dualism is a mediating position between materialism and creationist substance dualism. He says, "Unlike reductionists, emergentists do not seek to "reduce" mental phenomenon to their material base, in the process of depriving them of much of the significance we ordinarily take them to possess. But unlike creationists, emergentists do not view the mind and its powers as being, as it were, injected from outside into the human biological system" (Hasker, 2018, p. 65). Against both of these views, he argues that "the soul appears naturally, given the appropriate physical orientation and function of the body and brain" (Hasker, 2018, p. 65).

Because of these differences, Hasker insists that his account is not just a mediating position between creationist substance dualism and materialism, but that, as a result, it is also superior to both of these views. As a superior view to creationist substance dualism, Hasker suggests that his account: (1) does not struggle against Kim's "Pairing Problem"; (2) is better able to make sense of the way in which interaction is possible (given the way he believes minds emerge from brains); (3) is not embarrassed by the possibility of divided brains and divided consciousnesses as Cartesianism is; (4) is not embarrassed on the possibility of animal souls; (5) has no problem with evolution (Hasker, 1999, p. 192-197). And against certain brands of materialism, Hasker sees some advantages as well.

First, compared to Eliminativism and strong reductive views which are embarrassed by the phenomena of consciousness, his approach is able to take the facts of consciousness seriously (Hasker, 1999, p. 193). Second, compared to mind/body identity theory and supervenience theory, his view takes teleology seriously and as basic (Hasker, 1999, p. 193-194). As Hasker insists, the advantages of his view far out weight the costs that come with it. He says, "So far as I can tell, there is only one major cost involved in the theory, but some will find that cost to be pretty steep. The theory requires us to maintain, along with the materialists, that the potentiality for conscious life and experience really does exist in the nature of matter itself" (Hasker, 1999, p. 194).

10.3   Concerns with Hasker's Emergent Dualism

As the conclusion of the last section noted, Hasker's account of minds and human persons as emergent individuals does have advantages over creationist brands of substances dualism and certain kinds of materialism. Despite these strengths, however, it is not without problems of its own. In the following section, I wish to raise three specific problems with his account. My concerns are not specific to me in particular. Rather, building on the work of others like Dallas Willard, Brandon Rickabaugh, and Kevin Corcoran, I wish to argue that, whatever strength Hasker's account may have, it fails to offer a plausible account of emergent individuals, it undermines its own account of mind dependence on the brain, and that it has a unique problem within its account of postmortem survival.

10.3.1   *The Mystery of Emergent Substances*

In Searle's taxonomy of emergence noted above, several distinct levels, or kinds, of emergence were defined and described. Generally speaking, there is little debate or controversy surrounding the first two kinds of emergence: emergent$_0$ and emegernt$_{1a}$. That features such as solidity and liquidity, or that biological life, is able to emerge from the presence and arrangement of material objects is not

surprising. However, taking the concept of emergence beyond that—to include such things as causal powers and libertarian free will—is more contested and controversial. As such, those who wish to extend the concept of emergence to include those features have typically needed to offer a robust philosophical or scientific account of just how it is that such features might emerge from material structures.

Here is where a particular weakness within Hasker's account arises. To state it plainly, Hasker fails to give us an actual account for his controversial claim that immaterial minds can emerge from brains. To be clear, Hasker's account goes even further than merely suggesting that already contested features such as causal powers and libertarian free will (though his account certainly includes these) emerge from physical structures. Hasker makes the extraordinary step of suggesting that emergence can also account for immaterial mind/souls that constitute individual persons. And yet, if casual powers and libertarian free will are controversial and require substantial philosophical argumentation, would Hasker's greater claim not also require that much more? To find his account plausible, one would hope to find an extended and rather vigorous case being made in its defense. But this is not what we get with his account. Rather, what we are given is a simple analogy that, despite his protestations and qualifications that it is not meant to bear the full weight of supporting his view, ends up having to do just that. That is, to explain how his view might work, Hasker merely gives us an analogy and as a result, fails to properly account for his view. He says, "As a magnet generates its magnetic field, so an organism generates its conscious field. Arrange an assemblage of iron molecules in the right way, and something new appears: a magnetic field. Arrange an assemblage of neurons in the right way, and another new thing appears: consciousness, the mind" (Hasker, 2005, p. 78).

Numerous philosophers have noted this problem within Hasker's account. Dallas Willard, for example, said "we do have a pretty good story about what the atoms, molecules, etc., do to

produce solidity, liquidity, boiling of the H₂O. But in the case of the brain and its alleged emergent

properties of consciousness, there is just no story it all. At best we have a rather crude set of brute

correlations indirectly established" (Willard, n.d.). Likewise, Brandon Rickabaugh has suggested that

"there remains an explanatory gap between how molecular states of H₂O produce solidity and how

brain states produce mental states, much less a soul" (Rickabaugh, 2018, p. 77). He then adds, "we

have absolutely no theory independent knowledge that the soul emerges from the brain. . . . In fact,

I am inclined to think that talk of emergence is merely a label for the problem to be solved and not

itself a solution" (Rickabaugh, 2018, p. 78). Nancey Murphy has also raised this concern. She says, "I

am satisfied with asserting, in the case of human beings, the emergence of new cultural powers. I

would argue that [Hasker] has simply gone too far (further than one needs to go and further than his

arguments warrant) in postulating the mind or soul as an emergent entity" (Murphy, 2005, p. 105).

Hasker's account is truly unique, and in many ways, rather ingenious. But as I have argued

here, despite his clever and unique account, he has not offered a sufficient philosophical account

that his controversial view seems to require. Of course, this does not necessarily mean that his view

is wrong. It simply means that we have not yet given a positive case for believing that it is true.

Unfortunately, however, as I shall argue in the next two sections, there are other difficulties with his

account that further weaken his account.

10.3.2 *Death, Soul Survival, and Brain Dependence*

One of the major advantages that Hasker notes about his view is that it makes sense of the mind's

dependence on the brain by suggesting that minds/souls are not been added "from the outside" to

the body. His rejection of creationist accounts of substances dualism is essentially a way of insisting

that minds depend for their existence and function on the brain. And, in his view, this dependence is

a virtue, if not *the* virtue, of his account. He says, "A strong point of this theory is that it immediately

establishes a close connection between the mind/soul and the biological organism, a connection that

in some other forms of dualism is far more tenuous" (Hasker, 2005, p. 78). Elsewhere, he suggests

that while the traditional mind/body interaction problem is not a genuine problem for more general

brands of substance dualism, the close correlation and dependence of minds on brains does pose a

problem for such accounts. He says:

> But while the bare fact of mind-body interaction does not pose a serious problem for
> creationism, the *intimate and pervasive dependence* of mental processes on one's bodily condition
> is harder to reconcile with that view. It is easy to see that, if the body or nervous system are
> impaired, that mind might be lacking in sensory input, or might not be able effectively to
> control the muscles that produce movement. By (*sic*) why should *consciousness itself* be
> interrupted by a blow to the head, by the action of an anesthetic? And why should damage
> to the brain produce major alterations (as sometimes happens) to a person's character and
> personality? Creationists have yet to produce a convincing explanation for this pervasive
> dependence of mind upon body, a dependence which from their point of view was hardly to
> be expected (Hasker, 2018, p. 63-64).

He then adds that the "generation of the mind by the brain makes it much easier to understand the

intimate, fine-grained dependence of mind on brain that we find to be the case, as compared with

the situation for creationism" (Hasker, 2018, p. 65). And because of this, Hasker is inclined to think

that the dependence of the brain for mental processes, fits "quite naturally into the theory of

emergent dualism" (Hasker, 2005, p. 79).

As these passages make clear, Hasker suggests that the major virtue of his view over the

creationist substance dualist account—that see the soul as something added in from the outside—is

that on his view, since minds emerge from brains arranged in a particular structure, then they are

also dependent on their brains from their existence and function. As such, the "fine-grained

dependence of mind on brain" that we find in the world can be accounted for on his view.

Hasker's account of brain dependence in the case of ordinary human life seems plausible.

Yet, he seems to undercut his case with what he has to say about the possibility of a soul's survival

of death after its brain has been destroyed. As Hasker admits himself, his account appears to have

trouble answering the question of how a soul can survive death within his view. He says, "on the

face of it, emergent dualism seems less well placed than either Cartesian or Thomistic dualism to

return a favorable answer: a soul which emerges from the functioning of a biological organism, and is itself unable to function without support from the organism, seems a dubious candidate for immortality" (Hasker, 1999, p. 203). And again he says, "If the mind/soul depends on the brain and nervous system ports and continued existence, it would seem that destroying the brain would destroy the mind as well" (Hasker, 2005, p. 81).

As such, one might expect that as an entailment of his view, he would have to say that minds/souls cease to exist at the moment of death. Interestingly, however, Hasker insists that by divine power, souls are able to survive the death of the body and the brain. He says, "But there is little doubt that an omnipotent God could, for example, annihilate all of the electromagnets in a particle accelerator, and instantaneously replace them with others, while causing the identical field to persist in being. Alternatively, he could directly sustain the field by his own power, without the need for a material "generator" of any kind" (Hasker, 1999, p. 233). In fact, he thinks that both of "these scenarios model possible ways in which God could sustain the lives of human persons after their biological death. It seems clear, then, that emergent dualism is far better placed than any kind of materialism in accounting for the survival of persons" (Hasker, 1999, p. 233).

The concern here is not with the way Hasker relies on divine intervention to preserve the existence of the mind. Rather, the concern comes from the fact that what he says here about the mind's survival betrays and undermines his account of mind dependence and "fine-grained dependence of mind on brain." We must remember that one major criticism that Hasker makes against Cartesian creationism is that on this account, minds—as entities added to the body from the outside—have no causal dependence on brains that they embody. In fact, given what we now understand regarding the correspondence between consciousness and mental content and the particular brain states that support them, Hasker in quite critical of creationist views of the mind. And yet, when it comes to his own view, he is quite willing to accept that there are indeed certain

moments of existence—death and postmortem survival—where no such brain dependence is required. In short, it appears that Hasker applies a double standard between his view and the creationist accounts he rejects. Yet, if the lack of brain dependence is a problem for the creationist, it would also seem to be a problem for his view in the case of death and the mind's survival. Stewart Goetz has made this point very well. He says:

> [I]n light of the Cartesian claim that "[t]he defining property of mind is the potentiality (at least) for conscious experience, . . . [w]hy, then, do we find that, under the conditions of embodiment, the mind requires the assistance of all this cerebral apparatus in order to perform its inherent function?" (156). Hasker believes that the Cartesian has yet to provide a plausible answer to this question. Given this criticism of Cartesian dualism, one might think that an implication of emergent dualism is that the mind cannot function without the physical basis of its brain. Hasker, however, advocates no such view. According to him, God can sustain the minds existence and actual functioning absent any physical base (232-5). If this is possible, it certainly seems to be the case that if Hasker's question which I quoted at the outset of this paragraph cuts against the plausibility of Cartesian dualism, then it cuts just as much against plausibility of emergent dualism. Hasker criticizes the Cartesian duelist for maintaining two-week of a connection between the mental and physical, but in the end he appears to advocate just as week of a connection between them. Both the Cartesian dualist dualist and the emergent dualist maintain that as things presently are constituted, there is a close but contingent tie between the mental and the physical world which can be broken. Once again, therefore, I fail to see why an emergent dualism is the superior form of dualism" (Goetz, 2000, p. 180-181).

Once again, the problem here is not with the possibility that God might act to sustain the mind's existence after death. That is perhaps the kind of task that an omnipotent God described by Christianity can indeed do. Rather, the problem is with the double standard that Hasker applies to the mind's dependence on the brain. In one case, he insists that views which suggest no such brain dependence are problematic and deficient. Yet for his own account, he is quite willing to accept that no such dependence is necessary in order to allow for life after death. It seems that he must choose one of the two possibilities. Hasker must either accept that minds/souls depend on brains for their function and therefore reject the possibility of a mind's survival after death, or deny that brain dependence is necessary in the first place and forfeit the strength of his view as a result.

10.3.3 **Body, Soul, and the Resurrection**

A final concern with Hasker's account of human persons arises from his attempt to reconcile emergent dualism with the Christian doctrine of life after death, specifically the bodily resurrection of the dead. According to Christianity, life after death is accomplished by way of a disembodied existence after death (often referred to as the intermediate state), and by the coming bodily resurrection of the dead. Both ideas Hasker affirms. As such, the problem with his account is not that he denies one of these doctrines, but rather from a particular state of affairs that is suggested by his view.

We must remember that, on Hasker's account, immaterial minds/souls emerge from the human brain at a certain point of structure and development. With this in mind, and considering the Christian account of bodily resurrection, it seems as though Hasker's account might have a problem of "double-souling" in the case of resurrection. Like other Christian views, Hasker is committed to the idea that immaterial minds/souls continue to exist after the death of the body. And, like other Christian accounts once more, Hasker also believes that these minds/souls will be rejoined to a material body in the resurrection. In support of both of these ideas, Hasker says:

> "If the emergent mind can survive the death of its body, it can also be resurrected in a new or restored body. To be sure, not just any body would do. Dualists sometimes supposed souls could freely exchange bodies, as in John Locke's story of the prince and the cobbler. But a new body for an emergent soul would have to be precisely tailored to fit the soul in question; otherwise, the activity of the body and sustaining the soul would clash with the already established character of the latter" (Hasker, 2005, p. 82).

But as Kevin Corcoran has noted, there seems to be a problem for his account at this point. If brains within a human body, once structured and developed a certain way, produce a mind/soul, would the body in the resurrection not also produce a mind/soul of its own? And if so, now that the new soul of the resurrection body is present, what would become of the soul that survived death and awaits the resurrected body? Corcoran makes the point well.

> I think there is a real difficulty in the doctrine of resurrection for the emergent dualist, one that Hasker has not done enough to address. If what is required for the emergence of a soul is a suitably complex configuration of neural circuitry (or its functional equivalent), then

should one not expect the resurrection body God creates to generate its own soul? Does God prevent that natural emergence of a soul in the next life in order to "add from the outside" the persisting soul of the individual? And if God "adds from the outside" in the next life, is it such a leap to think that God doesn't here, too" (a la Cartesianism)? Perhaps Hasker will insist that the resurrection body is the previously deceased but restored body that originally generated the now disembodied soul. Fair enough. But why, then, does that restored body not generate another soul? (Corcoran, 2005, p. 112).

This objection is not lost on Hasker. In his *Emergent Self*, he anticipates it and offers a quick response to it. He says:

> "One question that has been raised is this: Wouldn't the newly formed resurrection body generate its own field of consciousness, and thus be unavailable to the self in need of reembodiment? It seems that this would indeed be the case, if we suppose that the body is first created, with its vital functions energized, before the "infusion" of the disembodied self. Rather, we must imagine the new body created from the very beginning as the body of this very soul; the renewed self must be "in charge" of the resurrection body right from the start" (Hasker, 1999, p. 235).

In other words, Hasker is inclined to think that this problem of "double-souling" can be resolved simply by suggesting that the creational direction of brains and bodies can be reversed. In other words, in the normal cases of human persons, the creational direction moves from brains to minds/souls as minds/souls emerge from the brain at a certain point of structure and development. But now in the case of resurrection, things seem to go in reverse. Now, it seems as though Hasker wants to say that mind/soul is "in charge" of the process, shaping the formation and development of the body. Perhaps this is not what Hasker intends to say, but I find no other way of interpreting him here. If this is what Hasker means to say, then I contend that he has once again undermined one of the central ideas that grounds his entire ontological enterprise. Hasker's entire project is designed to suggest that the immaterial mind/soul emerges from the material brain. But when his theory faces the problem of "double-souling", Hasker is quite willing to go the completely opposite direction. How seriously then should we take the notion of emergence in the first place?

10.4 Conclusion

In this chapter I have offered a concise overview of Hasker's emergent dualism. Following this, I offered three criticisms of his account, suggesting that he fails to offer an actual explanation of how minds/souls could emerge. All we are given is an analogy, and despite his claim that the analogy does not bear the full weight of supporting his view, he offers nothing else beyond it to do the difficult work of grounding his account. Furthermore, I also argued in the chapter that Hasker undermines one of his major advantages within his proposal. While he insists that his view is superior to creationist accounts of the soul because of his view of emergence from the brain and causal dependence on it, he later undercuts his view by suggesting that there is no brain dependence of the soul in the intermediate state. Finally, I argued that his account of bodily resurrection faces the problem of "double-souling" and as a result, seems implausible.

Like other substance dualist accounts of human persons, Hasker's account faces difficulty with regard to the Christian criteria of human persons set forth in chapter 2. But as I have argued here in this chapter, I also suggest that his account has its own unique philosophical problems outlined above.

Chapter 11

A Thomistic Account of Human Persons

11.1   Introduction

In the previous sections and chapters, we considered Christian materialism and substance dualism in general, and some specific versions of each. For philosophical and theological reasons, I argued in those sections that Christian materialism and substance dualism fail to satisfy the criteria for a Christian anthropology. In addition to the general philosophical and theological problems that these anthropologies face, I also argued that the various specific versions of each have philosophical problems of their own.

In this chapter I shall introduce Thomism, the anthropological views associated with Thomas Aquinas, as a superior anthropology to both Christian materialism and substance dualism. But I shall not argue that Aquinas's account of human persons is problem free. Rather, I shall suggest that, while his account better satisfies the criteria of a Christian anthropology, it does not perfectly satisfy these criteria. As such, I shall suggest that some modifications to his view are necessary. In the following chapter, I will endorse what I call Modified Thomistic Holism as the most coherent and consistent brand of Christian anthropology.

11.2   An Account of Aquinas's Philosophical and Theological Anthropology

Aquinas's anthropology is uniquely situated between materialist and dualist accounts of human persons. As Robert Pasnau and Christopher Shields put it, "In Aquinas's schema of the created universe, human beings straddle the profane and the divine as no other creature above or below. . . . Humans owe their special status to their being rational animals, where this implicates them in being both spiritual, since rational, and corporeal, since animal" (Pasnau & Shields, 2004, p. 153). Other philosophers, such as Brian Leftow, make similar observations, noting that "Aquinas believes that

humans are material things and that humans have souls, which are immaterial things." (Leftow, 2001, p. 120). Noting the influence of Aristotle on Aquinas, and the subtle differences between the two thinkers, F. C. Copleston suggests that Aquinas's view is often thought of as a "middle position" between materialism and dualism. As such, many have thought that his account "amounts to an attempt to combine the Aristotelian psychology with the demands of Christian theology" (Copleston, 1955, p. 158.)

But what is it about Aquinas's view that situates it between materialism and dualism? In the section below, I shall try to answer this question by setting forth what I consider to be an accurate account of Aquinas's philosophical anthropology, giving special attention to the writing of Aquinas himself. Specifically, I shall explore the way he understands the nature of bodies and souls, his holistic account of human persons and substances, the fetal development of the fetus in the womb and at what point it becomes a human person, and what he has to say about the life of a person in death and resurrection. As there are numerous areas of interpretive dispute about Aquinas's views, I shall not try to settle such matters here. Rather, I seek simply to represent his account of human persons as I understand it from his writings. We begin with his hylomorphism.

11.2.1   *Aquinas's Hylomorphism: Body and Soul*

Following Aristotle, Aquinas adopts a view known as hylomorphism. Though, as we will see, he does adapt and develop this view (especially with regard to the way he understands the concept of "form") in ways that are unique to him and to Christian theism. Roughly, hylomorphism is the idea that substances are composed of matter (*hyle*, Greek for wood or matter) and form (morphe, Greek for form). That is to say, substances are not just things that *have* material and formal components. Rather, substances are those things that *are* material and formal composites. In other words, according to hylomorphism, matter and form are essential to substances. In *On Essence and Being*, he says, "the being that a composite substance has is not the being of the form alone nor of the matter

alone but of the composite, and it is essence according to which a thing is said to be. So the essence, according to which a thing is called a being, cannot be either the form alone or the matter alone, but both, though form alone is in its own way the cause of this being" (Aquinas, 1968, p. 36).

In the case of human beings, hylomorphists like Aristotle and Aquinas rejected Plato and the substance dualists position that we *are* souls that *have* a body. Rather, they insisted on an ontologically holist view of human persons that maintains that we *are* a composite of body and soul. And as an anthropological position, this understanding of human beings as body/soul composites means that hylomorphism is a brand of animalism. Patrick Toner notes:

> Animalism is the doctrine that we human beings are—are identical with—animals. Hylemorphism is a form of animalism. Consider the traditional Aristotelian definition of human: rational animal. This definition gives an account of our nature or essence: it asserts that we are animals. It doesn't assert that we are souls that bear some kind of causal relation to animals. It doesn't assert that we are constituted or composed by human animals. It says we are human animals (Toner, 2014, p. 76).

But a note of clarification is in order here. Unlike more contemporary animalists positions that are materialistic in nature,[50] Aquinas's animalism cannot be reduced to a form or materialism. In his view, persons are composed of both bodies and souls. Eleonore Stump notes the implications of this account. She says, "Consequently, in the ranking of forms, the human soul is located right at the boundary between the material and the spiritual. For this reason, the soul partakes of some of the features of the spiritual world, but it is also able to be in contact with matter, so that the body informed by the soul is the highest in the order of material objects" (Stump, 2005, p. 205).

Yet, as we shall see momentarily, Aquinas's hylomorphic account builds on very specific ideas about the body, the rational soul, the composite relationship that they have to each other, and what this means for the fetal development in the womb and body after death. I will consider each of these issues in what follows below.

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[50] For an example of this see Eric Olson (1997).

11.2.2 *Aquinas on the Human Body*

We begin with what Aquinas has to say about the human body. Hylomorphists in general, and Aquinas in particular, holds to a unique view of human bodies. According to Aquinas, "human" bodies do not exist apart from the substantial form—the soul—that inform them. That is, if one were to point to an object otherwise recognizable to an observer as a lifeless human body, Aquinas would insist that the object in question is not a "human" body, much less some particular person's body, given that the body is not informed by a human soul at that moment. In his view, human bodies are merely potentially human and only potentially have life (Aquinas, 1948, v.1, p. 376-377). In *Questions On the Soul* he says, "Each being achieves its species through its essential form. Now a human being is human insofar as he is rational; therefore, a rational soul is the essential form of a human being" (Aquinas, 2009a, p. 45).

This does not mean, however, that the material that composes the body in question is insignificant to Aquinas's account of human persons. If the soul—substantial soul—is that by which a human person is a human person, the material body is that by which a person is an individual person. In other words, Aquinas seems to understand the material body as the principle of individuation for human persons. In *On Being and Essence* he says, "matter is the principle of individuation" (Aquinas, 1968, p. 36).

Yet, Aquinas is actually much more specific than this. As he goes on to clarify, it is not matter in general, or in the abstract, that individuates a particular person. Rather, it is some particular set of matter—sometimes referred to as signate matter, designated matter, or individual matter—that individuates particular individual human beings. He says,

> "What we must realize is that the matter which is the principle of individuation is not just any matter, but only designated matter. By designated matter I mean that which is considered under determined dimensions. This kind of matter is not part of the definition of man as man, but it would enter into the definition of Socrates if Socrates could be defined" (Aquinas, 1968, p. 36–37).

What Aquinas suggests here is that there is a particular set of matter which goes into particular body that allows for the individuation of the person. So then, Bruce is individuated from Keith, and vice-versa, by the particular set of matter that composes their respective bodies. It is these particular sets of matter that fall "under determined dimensions." In other words, it is "this" particular set of parts in "this" specific space with "these" dimensions that individuate Bruce from Keith, and "those" particular set of parts in "that" space with those dimensions that individuate Keith from Bruce. As such, while bodies in general are only potentially human without the soul, they nevertheless play a central role in the composition of our person as the principle of individuation for human beings. It is because of this that Aquinas can still insist that we are material beings.

11.2.3 *Aquinas on the Rational Soul (Immaterial, Subsistent, Form)*

But if Aquinas understood the body to be the individuating principle of a human being, what did he believe about the soul? Generally speaking, his account of the soul receives most of the attention and discussion on his view. According to Aquinas, the soul is an immaterial entity that he describes as a substantial form. He states this rather bluntly in the *Summa Theologica*, saying, "I answer that, The soul has no matter" (Aquinas, 1948, v.1, p. 367). His rationale for this is quite simple. According to Aquinas, the material objects we call human bodies—that is, bodies without the souls that inform them—are simply not the kinds of things capable of thought and intellect. As such, the soul, which is the intellectual principle of the human being, must be something that is immaterial. In *Questions on the Soul*, he extends this point. He says, "However, it is essential to consider something further with respect to a rational soul, for not only does it acquire intelligible species, free from matter and the conditions of matter, but also in its essential operation no bodily organ has any share" (Aquinas, 2009a, p. 46). Likewise, in the *Summa Theologica* he adds, "Therefore the intellectual principle which we call the mind or the intellect has an operation 'per se' apart from the body" (Aquinas, 1948, v.1, p. 364).

Building on this notion of the soul as an immaterial entity that has an intellectual operation *per se*, Aquinas goes on to argue that the soul is also a subsistent entity—an entity capable of existing apart from the physical body. If the soul, as the intellectual principle of the human being, carries out its functions *per se*, then the soul does not stand in need of the physical body for its existence. He says, "it must be said that the soul has subsistent actual being, inasmuch as its own actual being does not depend on the body, seeing that it is something raised above corporeal matter" (Aquinas, 1949, p. 37). He makes this same point more clearly elsewhere, saying a "soul is an entity and subsists *per se* since it operates *per se*; for the action of understanding does not take place through a bodily organ, as is established in Book II of the *De Anima*. Therefore a human soul is both an entity and a form" (Aquinas, 2009a, p. 45).

Once again, Aquinas's point here is a simple extension of his rationale for the soul's immateriality. If the operations of the soul are achieved without a dependence of the material body, then the soul does not need the physical body for its existence. As such, he believes that we "must assert that the intellectual principle which we call the human soul is incorruptible" (Aquinas, 1948, p. 368).

Finally, we must note one of the more important tenants of Aquinas's account of the soul. In his view, it is this immaterial and subsistent soul that informs human bodies, making it a human body that has life. Put another way, the soul is that by which a human is human. He says, "For through form, which actualizes matter, matter becomes an actual being and this particular thing. Anything that comes after that does not give matter its basic actual being, but rather a certain kind of actual being, as accidents do, whiteness for example making something actually white" (Aquinas, 1968, p. 35). Later in his *Summa Contra Gentiles*, he elaborates further saying:

> "Now, that the soul is united to the body as its proper form is proved as follows. That by which something becomes a being in act from a being in potency is its form and act. But it is through the soul that the body becomes a being in act from being potentially existent, for living is the being of the living thing. Now, the seed before animation is living only in

> potency, and, through the soul, becomes living in act. Therefore, the soul is the form of the animated body" (Aquinas, 1975, v.2, p. 172)

Likewise, in his *Commentary on Aristotle's De Anima* he notes, "But what our premises compel us to say is that it is one and the same substantial form that makes a man a particular thing or substance, and a bodily thing, and a living thing, and so on." He then adds, "We must not think, therefore, of the soul and body as though the body had its own form making it a body, to which a soul is super-added, making it a living body; but rather that the body gets both its being and its life from the soul" (Aquinas, 1994, p. 75).

What is important to note here is that Aquinas's hylomorphic account of body and soul gives both the body and the soul an important role to play in the composition of a human person. It is the soul that actualizes a body as human and makes it a living being, but it is the signate matter of a body that individuates a person from other persons. Aquinas summarizes this concisely in *On Being and Essence*. He says:

> It is clear, therefore, that the difference between the essence of Socrates and the essence of man lies solely in what is designated and not designated. . . . The essence of the genus and the essence of the species also differ as designated and undesignated, though the mode of designation is different in the two cases. The individual is designated with respect to its species through matter determined by dimensions, whereas the species is designated with respect to the genus through the constitutive difference, which is derived from the form of the thing (Aquinas, 1968, p. 37–38).

In other words, what Aquinas suggests here is that both body and soul contribute to the composition of a human being. Humans are designated as humans by virtue of the rational soul which classify them within the species of "human". But individual human beings are distinguished from each other by their bodies which individuate them. As such, the human person, Bruce, is a "human" because he has a rational soul, and he is the individual "person" that he is because of the specific material body that is informed by the soul. As we will see in the next section, this allows Aquinas to navigate away from the substance dualism of Plato and towards a view that is best described as ontologically holist in nature.

11.2.4   *Aquinas on Persons and Substances*

As we have seen, Aquinas believed very specific things about the material body and the rational soul individually. But as of yet, I have said very little about what he believed about persons and substances more broadly. To understand his account, it is best to set it against the backdrop of both materialist and substance dualist accounts of human persons, both views Aquinas firmly rejects. According to materialism, human beings are purely physical entities that lack immaterial spirits or souls. Some materialist accounts seek to be non-reductive in their account by allowing for a dualism of properties, but in the end, all versions of materialism reject the immaterial soul and argue that human persons are one and the same with their physical bodies or are at least caused to exist by their physical bodies. Alvin Plantinga puts it this way: "According to materialism, human persons are material objects. They are not immaterial things, or objects, or substances; neither do they contain as parts immaterial selves or souls or entelechies. Their parts are material: flesh and bones and blood, molecules, atoms, electrons, and quarks (if in fact there are such things)" (Plantinga, 2007, p. 99).

By contrast, substance dualists affirm a dualism of substances. In this view, human persons have material bodies and immaterial souls with each being a substance in their own right. Yet, as we have seen, substance dualists make an additional ontological claim about human persons. While they affirm that human persons have bodies and souls, substance dualists insist that human persons are identical with their souls. As Richard Swinburne has put it, "Each person has a 'thisness', a uniqueness, which makes them the person they are quite apart from the particular mental properties they have and any physical properties (and any thisness) possessed by their body" (Swinburne, 2013, p. 165).

As has already been noted, Aquinas's hylomorphic view attempts to land somewhere between these two perspectives by (1) affirming the existence of both material bodies and immaterial souls, but (2) insisting on a holistic view of human persons that takes the body/soul composite to be

a single substance. By affirming the distinction between bodies and souls, Aquinas seems to side

with the substance dualists. There are indeed, in his view, two separate entities, or things, that we

refer to as bodies and souls. As Stump notes, because of this we could "categorize Aquinas as a non-

Cartesian substance dualist and put him in the camp of those opposed to physicalism" (Stump, 2005,

p. 212). But it is also clear that Aquinas accepts only one small part of the substance dualists account

and that he rejects some of their central tenants. By affirming a holistic view of human persons,

Aquinas makes it clear that his view differs significantly from substance dualism. To see this

difference within his account, we shall consider his holistic claims about human persons followed by

his understanding of persons as single substances.

That Aquinas affirmed a holistic view of human persons is clear from numerous writings

where he dealt with the question. For example, in *On Spiritual Creature*s, Aquinas considers Plato's

substance dualist view saying, "Plato used to say, as the aforesaid Gregory relates, that man is not

something that is composed of soul and body, but is a soul using a body, so that he is understood to

be in a body in somewhat the same way as a sailor is in a ship" (Aquinas, 1949, p. 35). He then

critiques the view saying:

> But for the invalidation of this argument one point suffices . . . if the soul were not united to
> the body as a form, it would follow that the body and its parts would not have specific actual
> being through the soul; and this is seen to be obviously false: because once the soul departs,
> one does not say eye or flesh or bone, save equivocally, as one says painted eye or eye of
> stone. And hence it is obvious that the soul is the form and 'the essence of this body', that is,
> that form which this body has the character of its species" (Aquinas, 1949, p. 36).

In other words, if the soul is not the form of the body, the body could not be a human body.

Aquinas's point here is similar to what we have already seen about the role that the body and the

soul play in the composition of a person. A body is a human body by virtue of the human soul that

informs it. And, the person is individuated from other persons by virtue of the particular set of

matter that composes their organism.

Aquinas continues his critique of Plato and his insistence on the holistic nature of human persons in the *Summa Contra Gentiles*. Arguing that Plato's position "is shown to be impossible", he says, "For animal and man are sensible and natural realities. But this would not be the case if the body and its parts were not of the essence of man and animal . . . It is therefore impossible that man and animal should be a soul using a body, and not a thing composed of a body and a soul" (Aquinas, 1975, v.2, p. 169). To say that animals and men are "sensible" realities is to say that they are the kinds of beings capable of sensation, something which requires a physical body to facilitate such perceptions. To say that they are "natural" realities is to say that they are like other material objects found in nature. With that in mind, it is important to notice something subtle about what Aquinas thinks about this. He does not say simply that man "has the ability for sensation." Rather, he says that "animal and man *are* sensible and natural realities." In other words, the physical mechanism that makes these capacities possible are part of the ontological composition of human beings.

Along those same lines, Aquinas makes a clear affirmation of ontological holism in the *Summa Theologica*. Again referencing Plato and the substance dualists that follow him, he says, "forasmuch as some held that the form alone belongs to the species; while matter is part of the individual, and not the species. This cannot be true" (Aquinas, 1948, v.1, p.366). What exactly is the idea that Aquinas rejects here? It is the idea held by substance dualists that form (or in this case souls) is all that counts towards the nature of a species (in this case human beings). If that view were right, he notes that this would mean matter is simply something possessed by the individual, but is not part of his species. In short, it would be mean that matter is non-essential to human persons. But again, Aquinas insists that this "cannot be true." But why? According to Aquinas, it cannot be true for the following reason:

> For to the nature of the species belongs what the definition signifies; and in natural things the definition does not signify the form only, but the form and the matter. Hence in natural things the matter is part of the species; not, indeed, signate matter, which is the principle of individuality; but the common matter. For as it belongs to the notion of this particular man

> to be composed of this soul, of this flesh, and of these bones; so it belongs to the notion of man to be composed of soul, flesh, and bones; for whatever belongs in common to the substance of all the individuals contained under a given species, must belong to the substance of the species (Aquinas, 1948, v.1, p. 336).

Aquinas's point here is again, like what we saw above in the *Summa Contra Gentiles*, that our definition of sensible creatures like human beings signifies not just the form, but the matter as well. Because of this, Aquinas must insist that "matter is part of the species." That is, material is not just something that man *has*, it is part of what man *is*. As a result, Aquinas insists that "that man is not a mere soul, nor a mere body; but both soul and body" (Aquinas, 1948, v.1, p. 336).

So far I have highlighted Aquinas's holistic understanding of human persons, but have not discussed how this relates the issue of substance. This is an important matter, however, as it is one of the more significant ways in which his account differs from substance dualism. Specifically, Aquinas rejects the "dualism" of substances articulated by substance dualists. In other words, he explicitly denies that bodies and souls are two distinct substances and instead insists that in the case of human persons, there is but one single substance composed on body (matter) and soul (form). He states this rather plainly in the *Summa Contra Gentiles* when he says, "body and soul are not two actually existing substances; rather, the two of them together constitute on actually existing substance" (Aquinas, 1975, v. 2, p. 207). Furthermore, he affirms this again in *On Being and Essence*. For example, he says, "It remains, then, that in the case of composite substances the term 'an essence' signifies the composite of matter and form" (Aquinas, 1968, p. 35). In other words, the composite substance of a human person is a substance with a particular nature or essence that contains both body and soul. And more explicitly, he says, "Form and matter are found in composite substances, as for example soul and body in man. But it cannot be said that either one of these alone is called the essence" (Aquinas, 1968, p. 34).

Aquinas's rationale for articulating a single substance view of human persons is similar to his rationale for holism itself. Just as he thinks that matter and form are signified in the nature of

persons, he also thinks that matter and form are signified in the composite substances called human persons. He says:

> Neither can the form alone of a composite substance be called its essence, though some want to assert this. It is evident from what has been said that the essence is what is signified through the definition of a thing. Now the definition of natural substances includes not only form but also matter; otherwise there would be no difference between definitions in physics and in mathematics. Nor can it be said that the definition of a natural substance includes matter as something added to its essence, or as something outside its essence. This is the kind of definition proper to accidents; not having a perfect essence, their definition must include their subject, which is outside their genus. It is evident, therefore, that essence embraces both matter and form (Aquinas, 1968, p. 34).

In Aquinas's thinking, if matter were merely an accident of the substance, then human persons would be identical to their immaterial souls and would have their bodies only accidentally. But as he makes clear, this is not the way he understands persons or substances. In his view, human persons are substances that are composed of bodies and souls. The body and the soul are not themselves individual substances. Rather, bodies and souls are what composes the composite substance of a human person.

11.2.5 *Aquinas on the Beginning Life*

If, as Aquinas insists, human persons are composed of bodies and souls, what does this mean for the developing fetus in the womb of a pregnant woman? Where do souls come from? Are they created directly by God at a particular point? Or, do they "arise" out of the physical development of the body? Additionally, at what point in gestation is the developing fetus a person? Is it at the moment of conception, the moment the brain is fully developed, or some other moment? How Aquinas answers this question is dictated by when it is that he thinks the rational soul—the substantial form of the person—appears. I will first outline the way Aquinas answers the question about where the soul comes from.

Regarding the origination of the soul, Aquinas rejects a traducian model of the soul in favor of a creationist account. According to traducianism, the soul is transmitted to the fetus naturally

through the procreative act of sex and the natural development of the human being. On this account, human souls arise from, and within, the biological organism that grows in the womb of a pregnant mother. In the *Summa Contra Gentiles*, Aquinas considers this view at great length before rejecting it in favor of creationism, the view that God creates souls directly and places them within the embryo in the womb at some point during gestation. There in *Summa Contra Gentiles*, Aquinas contends that traducianism cannot be true as this view would preclude the soul from being the form of the body. He says, traducianism "is impossible in view of the fact that, since the soul is united to the body as its form" (Aquinas, 1975, v.2, p. 300). In other words, he seems to think that if souls were produced by a natural bodily process, then soul would be dependent on the physical body for their existence. This would be in conflict with the idea that the soul is the form of the body and that by which the body is a human body. Furthermore, in the *Summa Theologica*, Aquinas notes the immaterial nature of souls and suggests that it is impossible for material objects to create immaterial entities. He says, "Moreover, since [the soul] is an immaterial substance it cannot be caused through generation, but only through creation by God" (Aquinas, 1948, v. 1, p. 575).

Accordingly, Aquinas makes it very clear throughout his works that souls are created directly by God and infused within the body at a particular point of gestation. In the *Summa Theologica*, he says, "On the contrary, It is written (Gn. 1:27): 'God created man to His own image.' But man is like to God in his soul. Therefore the soul was created" (Aquinas, 1948, v.1, p. 459). He then immediately notes the difference this implies from the forms of other physical objects. He says, "I answer that, the rational soul can be made only by creation; which, however, is not true of other forms. The reason is because, since to be made is the way to existence, a thing must be made in such a way as is suitable to its mode of existence. Now that properly exists which itself has existence; as it were, subsisting in its own existence" (Aquinas, 1948, v. 1, p. 459).

While passages like these make clear that Aquinas affirms a creationist account of the soul, he is also quick to point out that God's creation of the soul takes place within the body itself. Aquinas seems to hold this view for at least two reasons. First, as he sees it, if the creation of the soul took place outside of the body, it could not be said that the soul is the form of the body. He says, for example, "The proper act is produced in its proper potentiality. Therefore since the soul is the proper act of the body, the soul was produced in the body" (Aquinas, 1948, v.1, p. 460). Second, while he contends that the soul is created directly by God, he is also inclined to think that the soul cannot achieve perfection unless it is united to the thing it was created to inform. As such, he says, "Now the soul, as a part of human nature, has its natural perfection only as united to the body. Therefore it would have been unfitting for the soul to be created without the body" (Aquinas, 1948, v.1, p. 461).

A second major question relating to Aquinas's view of fetal development and personhood is this: at what point in the development is the fetus a person? Is it a person at the moment of conception, the moment when the brain is mostly developed, or at some other time? Aquinas scholars generally agree that Aquinas rejected the idea that the fetus was a person from the moment of conception. Instead, like many medieval theologians and philosophers, he adopted a delayed-humanization view which suggests that the fetus becomes a human fairly late in the gestational process. This is because, on his view, the presence of a rational soul requires a biological organ, in this case the brain, capable of facilitating the intellectual functions of the human being. And, since the brain is not developed until well after conception, the rational soul cannot be present. As Robert Pasnau points out, "Aquinas believes we can say in at least rough terms when the human soul is infused: it is infused at that point when the fetus is sufficiently developed, in its brain and sensory systems, to support the soul's intellectual operations" (Pasnau, 2002, p. 111). Pasnau's take on Aquinas seems to be right, as Aquinas himself says, "the intellectual soul had to be endowed not

only with the power of understanding, but also with the power of feeling. Now the action of the senses is not performed without a corporeal instrument. Therefore it behooved the intellectual soul to be united to a body fitted to be a convenient organ of sense" (Aquinas, 1948, v.1, p. 378). Aquinas is not exactly clear about when this happens, but there is some reason to think that he thinks this takes place somewhere between forty to ninety days of gestation.[51]

With this in mind, an interesting question now arises for Aquinas's account. If the fetus is not a human person prior to the appearance of the rational soul, then what is it? According to Aquinas, prior to the coming of a rational soul, the fetus is informed by a different kind of soul that the rational human soul will replace. He says, "The embryo has first of all a soul which is merely sensitive, and when this is removed, it is supplanted by a more perfect soul, which is both sensitive and intellectual" (Aquinas, 1948, v.1, p. 376). But what kind of soul is this first soul, and what would this mean that the fetus is? Stump suggests that the first soul is an animal soul, meaning that the fetus is simply a kind of animal. She says, "Aquinas thinks that a human being is generated when the human soul replaces the merely animal soul of the fetus in the womb and that a human being is corrupted or decomposed when the human soul leaves the body and is replaced by whatever other substantial form is in the dead corpse" (Stump, 2005, p. 203). Stump's understanding of this seems to be right as Aquinas suggests that the soul present within the body prior to the coming of the rational soul is capable of facilitating vital functions. He says, "Furthermore, in the embryo before the coming of the rational soul, vital functions are manifest. . . . But vital functions come only from the soul. Therefore another soul exists in the body before the coming of the rational soul" (Aquinas, 1949, p. 43). Yet, in his view, the rational soul that replaces the mere animal soul is one that has the capacity for all aspects—intellective, sensitive, and nutritive—of human life. He says, "We must

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[51] See Pasnau (2002, p. 419), specifically footnote 13. Pasnau references an untranslated passage from Aquinas's *Commentary on The Sentences* (III.3.5.2c).

therefore conclude that in man the sensitive soul, the intellectual soul, and the nutritive soul are numerically one soul" (Aquinas, 1948, v.1, p. 376).[52]

11.2.6 *Aquinas on the End of Life and Resurrection of the Dead*

Before we evaluate Aquinas's account of human persons, there is one final question that must be answered. What does Aquinas have to say about death and resurrection? In short, Aquinas believes that at death, the body is separated from the soul, the body ceases to be human, the soul continues to exist as a subsistent entity, and will be resurrected to a body that is numerically identical to the body it informed in this life. But as we will see, Aquinas has a very unique way of understanding numerical identity between our present and resurrected bodies. I shall take each of these components on his view in turn.

To begin with, Aquinas thinks that at death, human persons are corrupted as the body and to soul are separated. For example, in *On Questions on the Soul*, he says, "That which undergoes corruption in the proper sense is not the form nor the matter nor the act of exiting but rather the composite. The body's existence is said to be corruptible insofar as the body through the process of corruption loses that act of existing which was shared by it and the soul, and which remains in the subsistent soul" (Aquinas, 2009a, p. 50). It is important to note here that Aquinas does not simply think of death as a separation of body and soul. He actually sees this as the corruption and destruction of the person himself, as the very composite that is the person is no longer composed. Because of this, despite what we will find him saying later about the persistence of the soul, technically speaking, on his view the human person ceases to exist at death, even if she will live again in the resurrection.

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[52] Here Aquinas, along with Aristotle, is pushing back against Plato who argued for numerous souls present within a human being. Each soul contributing to the vital functions of the person.

Furthermore, and as a result of this, Aquinas also thinks that the dead body is no longer a human body or the body of the particular person it once embodied. He says, in his *Commentary on Aristotle's De Anima*, "Therefore, when life departs the body is not left specifically the same; the eyes and flesh of a dead man. . . . are only improperly called eyes and flesh. When the soul leaves the body another substantial form takes its place; for a passing-away always involves a concomitant coming-to-be" (Aquinas, 1994, p. 75). That is, Aquinas does not deny that the corpse is not a body, he simply denies that it is a "human" body at that moment. After death it is a body informed by a different kind of form.

But what about the soul? Does it cease to be after death? One might think that his view requires this conclusion given what he has to say about gestation and delayed-humanization. If the soul requires a biological organism to facilitate its sensitive operations, would this mean that the soul would cease to be without the brain? In response to such questions, Aquinas is very clear that this is not the case. First, this would be a misunderstanding of his view. As we have seen, since God is the one that creates the soul, Aquinas does not believe that the brain is necessary for the existence, or the intellectual operations, of the soul. In fact, as noted above, he believes that material objects cannot bring immaterial entities into existence and therefore the soul does not depend for its existence on the brain. How then should we understand his account of the soul's "dependence" on the brain during gestation? It is perhaps best to say that, on his view, the brain's formation and presence is what allows the soul to "move into" the human organism during the developmental process. Second, Aquinas makes very clear that the soul has a unique status as a form. The soul, as a substantial form created by God, has the ability to exist apart from the body and survive death. Again he says, "Now a soul is an entity and subsists *per se* since it operates *per se*; for the action of understanding does not take place through a bodily organ" (Aquinas, 2009a, p. 45).

As already noted, to say that the soul survives death does not mean that, in Aquinas's view, the human person survives. In keeping with his compositional understanding of human beings, if a person is a composition of her body and her soul, then both the body and the soul are essential to her person. If in death this composition is destroyed, then the human person cannot survive.[53] As Brian Davies describes Aquinas's view, "So the survival of Fred's soul is not the survival of the human being we call 'Fred'. Or, as Aquinas puts it, 'my soul is not I'. People, for him, are very much part of the physical world. Take that world away and what you are left with is not a human person" (Davies, 1993, p. 216).

Now if on Aquinas's view human persons—in the full and complete sense of persons—cease to be at death, does this mean that death signals the end of the human being? If it did, this would be a significant point of departure from the Christian tradition that Aquinas operates within. The short answer is, no, Aquinas does not think that death signals the end of the human person. Two things could be said in response to this question. First, Aquinas does hold to what has often been called the intermediate state for the soul between death and resurrection. That is, while he does not think that the surviving soul is the complete person, he does believe that the soul is a part of the person and that it least partially carries on, in some important sense, the life of the person. Towards the end of the *Summa Theologica*, for example, he says:

> Even as in bodies there is gravity or levity whereby they are borne to their own place which is the end of their movement, so in souls there is merit or demerit whereby they reach their reward or punishment, which are the ends of their deeds. Wherefore just as a body is conveyed at once to its place, by its gravity or levity, unless there be an obstacle, so too the soul, the bonds of the flesh being broken, whereby it was detained in the state of the way, receives at once its reward or punishment, unless there be an obstacle. Thus sometimes venial sin, though needing first of all to be cleansed, is an obstacle to the receiving of the reward; the result being that the reward is delayed. And since a place is assigned to souls in keeping with their reward or punishment, as soon as the soul is set free from the body it is

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[53] There is a tremendous amount of debate in the literature on what happens to the person at death in Aquinas's thought. For a selection of some of the more important works, see Bynum (1990), Stump (2006), Toner (2009a), Toner (2009b), Toner (2010), Van Dyke (2007), Van Dyke (2012), and Van Dyke (2014).

either plunged into hell or soars to heaven, unless it be held back by some debt, for which its flight must needs be delayed until the soul is first of all cleansed. This truth is attested by the manifest authority of the canonical Scriptures and the doctrine of the holy Fathers (Aquinas, 1948, v.5, p. 2818–2819).

As this passage makes clear, Aquinas believes that when the soul departs from the body it is taken to either heaven or hell. This soul may not be the complete person, but it is still appropriate in his mind to reference it as the person. Stump suggests that the "disembodied soul after death is consequently something like the mirror image of a human being who is in a persistent vegetative state" (Stump, 2005, p. 211).

Second, Aquinas also goes to great lengths to affirm the resurrection of the dead and the numerical identity between the person in this life and the person in the resurrection. Regarding the resurrection of the dead, he says:

> "I answer that, The same reasons by which we have shown (A1) that all rise again from death prove also that at the general resurrection all will rise again from ashes, unless the contrary, such as the hastening of their resurrection, be vouchsafed to certain persons by a special privilege of grace. For just as holy writ foretells the resurrection, so does it foretell the reformation of bodies (Phil. iii. 21). And thus it follows that even as all die that the bodies of all may be able truly to rise again, so will the bodies of all perish that they may be able to be reformed. For just as death was inflicted by Divine justice as a punishment on man, so was the decay of the body, as appears from Gn. iii. 19, "Earth thou art and into earth shalt thou go" (Aquinas, 1948, v.5, p. 2875).

That this is the numerically same person in the resurrection is clear from what Aquinas says next. He says, "It is written (Job xix. 27): 'Whom I myself shall see … and not another,' and he is speaking of the vision after the resurrection. Therefore the same identical man will rise again" (Aquinas, 1948, v.5, p. 2879). He then adds:

> I answer that, The necessity of holding the resurrection arises from this——that man may obtain the last end for which he was made; for this cannot be accomplished in this life, nor in the life of the separated soul, as stated above (Q75, AA1,2): otherwise man would have been made in vain, if he were unable to obtain the end for which he was made. And since it behooves the end to be obtained by the selfsame thing that was made for that end, lest it appear to be made without purpose, it is necessary for the selfsame man to rise again; and this is effected by the selfsame soul being united to the selfsame body (Aquinas, 1948, v.5, p. 2879).

As these passages make clear, Aquinas believed in the resurrection of the dead and that, the persons in the resurrection are the "selfsame" persons as those that walked the earth prior to their death. Or in philosophical terminology, the persons of the resurrection are numerically identical to the persons who lived on earth once before. For this to be the case, two things must be true of his account: (1) The bodies in the resurrection must be informed by the numerically same soul that once informed the bodies in this life, and (2) the bodies themselves must be numerically identical the previous bodies of this life. Otherwise, it would seem impossible for the later persons in the resurrection are numerically identical to the persons of this life. Aquinas makes this point very clearly in the *Compendium of Theology*. He says:

> But particular matter and a particular form are included in Socrates and Plato. And so, as the notion of human being is derived from the fact that a human being is composed of body and soul, so, if Socrates were to be defined, the notion of him would be that he is composed of particular flesh and bones and a particular soul. Therefore, since humanity is not another form in addition to the soul and the body but something composed of both, it is clear that there will be the numerically same humanity if the same body has been restored, and if the same soul abides (Aquinas, 2009b, p. 120).

On the face of it, it seems as though Aquinas does affirm both numerical identity of the soul in the resurrection and the numerical identity of the body in the resurrection. Regarding the numerical identity of the soul that informs the resurrection body, Aquinas makes it clear that the selfsame soul remains in existence through death, intermediate state, and resurrection. He says, "since the rational soul remains, no substantial form of the human body falls away into complete nonentity" (Aquinas, 1948, v.5, p. 2879). Regard the numerical identity of the body, Aquinas says, "For we cannot call it resurrection unless the soul return to the same body . . . And consequently if it be not the same body which the soul resumes, it will not be a resurrection, but rather the assuming of a new body" (Aquinas, 1948, v.5, p. 2878). He then adds, "the matter that will be brought back to restore the human body will be the same as that body's previous matter" (Aquinas, 1948, v.5, p. 2878). On the face of it then, Aquinas seems to affirm what is necessary to achieve what the

Christian tradition requires for postmortem survival in the resurrection. If this is the case, resurrection would be the reconstituting of the numerically same body from the previous life in the resurrection followed by the re-informing of that body with the same numerical soul that informed it once before. This is what Aquinas seems to affirm. But as we will see in the next section of this chapter, there is some ambiguity about what he means by "numerically same bodies" that may endanger his account of bodily resurrection.

11.3   An Evaluation of Aquinas's Philosophical and Theological Anthropology

In the previous section I offered a basic sketch of what Aquinas thinks about human persons. There we saw that Aquinas defends a hylomorphic account of human persons that understands human persons as rational animals. Specifically, his account affirms the following propositions about human persons: (1) The human body is only potentially human apart from being informed by the rational soul, while nevertheless being the principle of individuation in the case of human persons; (2) The rational soul is the substantial form of the human body, making the person both living and human; (3) The human person is a substance composed of both form and matter, not the conjoining of two distinct substances; (4) The human soul is directly created by God and "deposited" within the developing fetus at a certain point of gestation; (5) Human fetuses begin to develop at the moment of conception, but do not become human persons until the rational soul—the substantial form—is present within the fetus well after the moment of conception; (6) At death the body and soul are separated, destroying the composition of a human person, resulting in a soul that subsists and survives, but a body that ceases to be human and ultimately decomposes; (7) In the resurrection God raises a numerically identical body and units it to the numerically same soul that once informed it, rending the survival of the numerically same person in the resurrection.

In this section I shall evaluate Aquinas account against two popular objections that have been leveled Aquinas's view, arguing that neither of these objections succeeds against it. Specifically,

I will explore the objections that (1) Thomism is really just another form of materialism or that (2) it is really just another form of substance dualism. Further, as in previous sections of the thesis where I evaluated Christian materialism and substance dualism, I shall evaluate his account against the criteria for a Christian anthropology set forth in the first section (chapter 2) of the thesis. I will argue that, while Aquinas's anthropology better satisfies the criteria for Christian anthropology, it does not do so perfectly. Finally, I will identify particular aspects of his view that do not seem to satisfy the criteria of a Christian anthropology. This serves as the basis for the next chapter where I offer some modifications to his view that allow it to satisfy the criteria.

11.3.1 *Whether Thomism is Just a Form of Materialism or Substance Dualism*

As is widely acknowledged, Aquinas's account of human persons seems to stand somewhere between the views of materialism and substance dualism. As Stump notes, "Aquinas's account of the soul, therefore, suggests that to make progress on a philosophical understanding of the nature of the mind (as distinct from a biological understanding of the mechanisms by which the mind operates), it would be good to break down the dichotomy between materialism and dualism that takes them to be incompatible positions" (Stump, 2005, p. 216). Because of this, Aquinas's hylomorphic account is criticized from both sides of the spectrum, as dualist critics suggest that his account is really just a brand of materialism and materialist critics suggest that it is really just a form of substance dualism. I shall deal with each of the objections in order to show that neither objection is correct.

According to some critics, like Bernard Williams, for example, "hylomorphism emerges as just a polite form of materialism" (Williams, 2006, p. 224). More specifically, he thinks that hylomorphism might be better thought of as a form "non-reductive materialism" (Williams, 2006, p. 223). Suggestions like these tend to arise from the way that some advocates of hylomorphism understand the concept of form. For example, according to some portrayals of hylomorphism, "form" seems to be understood as nothing more than shape, structure, or organization. If form is

nothing more than shape and structure, then it looks like the soul is not an actual entity or "thing itself." And as a result, human persons do not possess any distinct stuff beyond the material that composes their bodies. On this account, the human person's really are just material beings.

Consider, for instance, E.J. Lowe's description of form. He says, "The doctrine of hylomorphism seems to be that every individual concrete thing is, in some sense, 'combination' of matter and form. A standard example is that of a bronze statue, whose matter is bronze and whose form (it seems) is a certain shape imposed upon that bronze" (Lowe, 1999, p. 6). Notice in Lowe's account of hylomorphism, form is nothing more than "a certain shape imposed upon" the bronze. That he understands form merely as "shape" is confirmed later when he adds that the "hylomorphic theory, it seems, conceives of a things form as the way in which its proximate matter has to be organized or arranged in order for a thing of that kind, made of that matter, to exist. Thus, a piece of bronze has to be shaped in a certain way in order for a statue, made of that bronze, to exist" (Lowe, 1999, p. 7).

Lowe's appraisal of hylomorphism is not unfounded, as indeed, some hylomorphists envision form to be precisely this—shape, structure, and organization—and nothing more.[54] As William Jaworski—a hylomorphist much more in line with Aristotle than Aquinas—contends in the opening pages of his book *Structure and the Metaphysics of Mind*:

> This book is about hylomorphism, and hylomorphism is about structure. Hylomorphism claims that structure is a basic ontological an explanatory principle. . . . You and I are not mere quantities of physical materials; we are quantities of physical materials with a certain organization or structure. That structure is responsible for us being and persisting as humans . . . and it is responsible for us having the particular developmental, metabolic, reproductive, perceptive, and cognitive capacities we have (Jaworski, 2016, p. 8).

Notice in this passage, that Jaworski envisions the concept of form to be that of "a certain organization or structure." Elsewhere he adds, "hylomorphism and denies the human bodies are

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[54] In addition to William Jaworski, see also Koslicki (2008).

mere collections of fundamental physical materials; they are instead collections of fundamental physical materials that are *organized* or *structured* in a distinctively human way. That way of being structured is what distinguishes humans from the rest of the physical universe in respect to both of what they are and of how they behave" (Jaworski, 2011, p. 290).

So does this mean that Jaworski strips the concept of the form of any kind of spiritual aspect? In short, yes, his account of form (and soul) lacks any spiritual freight that might allow us to think of them as spiritual entities. For him, form is nothing but structure and organization. This is evident from his comments on Aristotle himself. He says:

> Aristotle claimed that *psyche* was a living things' organization or structure. The term *psyche* is technically translated 'soul', but this translation is misleading. Since the seventeenth century and perhaps for much longer, talk of souls has been closely associated with substance dualism or views like it. Consequently, this translation suggests that according to Aristotle soul is something that is capable of existing independent of a body. This is not the case. According to Aristotle, soul is the organization or structure that distinguishes a living thing from non-living ones (Jaworski, 2011, p. 281–282).

So what shall we make of the concern that, given the concept of form, Aquinas's hylomorphic account of human persons may be, after all, a version of materialism? It seems as though we could respond it two ways. First, we must make clear that there are indeed at least two major ways to think about the concept of form within hylomorphism, one that follows more closely with Aristotle and one that follows more closely with Aquinas. Concerns like those expressed by Williams may very well apply to Aristotle's and Jaworski's accounts, but would not apply to Aquinas's account. Consider the way that Jaworski understands the concept of form. Whether or not Jaworski is right that Aristotle does not see the soul as a spiritual or intellectual entity is a matter of dispute that need not trouble us here, though I suspect that he is incorrect on this matter. What is important for now is simply to note that Jaworski's account of form is indeed very different from that of Aquinas, as Jaworski denies that form is an entity itself and Aquinas insists that it is. As such, even if William's concerns apply to Aristotle and Jaworski, they would not apply to Aquinas and his

account of forms given the fact that for Aquinas, the substantial form (otherwise known as the soul) is far more robust than Jaworski's, in that it is clearly a spiritual and intellectual entity. That is, for Aquinas, the soul is an actual "thing" that exists, it is not just the shape and structure found within material objects.

That Aquinas understands the soul this way has already been argued above, but by way or reminder, consider again the kinds of things that Aquinas says about the soul. Regarding the soul's ability to operate *per se*, he says, "Thus it is necessary that an intellective soul operate *per se,* inasmuch as it possesses an essential operation in which the body does not share. And because each being acts insofar as it is actual, it is necessary that an intellective soul possess an independent *per se* act of existing which is not dependent on its body" (Aquinas, 2009a, p. 47). In the *Summa Theologica*, he says, "I answer that, it must necessarily be allowed that the principle of intellectual operation which we call the soul, is a principle both incorporeal and subsistent" (Aquinas, 1948, v.1, p. 364). Immediately following this, while again noting the soul's ability to operate *per se*, he adds:

> Therefore the intellectual principle which we call the mind or the intellect has an operation "per se" apart from the body. Now only that which subsists can have an operation "per se." For nothing can operate but what is actual: for which reason we do not say that heat imparts heat, but that what is hot gives heat. We must conclude, therefore, that the human soul, which is called the intellect or the mind, is something incorporeal and subsistent (Aquinas, 1948, v.1, p. 364).

What Aquinas makes clear here is that the substantial form of a human being, what he refers to as a soul, is a spiritual and intellectual entity that really exists and is able to exist apart from the body. As such, whatever it that Jaworski and other hylomorphists like him want to say about form, their construal is significantly different from Aquinas's. And, as the concern over whether or not hylomorphism collapses into a form of materialism seems to be directed at those hylomorphic accounts that understand the form merely as structure and organization, I suggest that such concerns are of no significance to Aquinas's account of the hylomorphism in general, and his account of the forms in particular.

Another objection to Aquinas's hylomorphism goes in the opposite direction. According to

some thinkers, his account looks to be just another version of substance dualism. Philosophers who

interact with Aquinas's work typically note important technical difference between Aquinas's view

and substance dualism. Nevertheless, it is also common to find that they sometimes suggest his view

is, after all, substance dualistic. This tendency is due to the fact that, on Aquinas's account, there are

still two distinct ontological entities involved in the composition of human persons, an idea that is

quite compatible with substance dualism's insistence that bodies and souls are ontologically distinct

things called substances. For example, As Kevin Corcoran puts it:

> "I believe there are several insurmountable problems confronting compound dualism. First,
> Aquinas's conception of form or soul is that of an incomplete substance, a 'configured
> configure,' as Stump calls it. But the soul is still, for all of that, a substance, albeit an
> incomplete one. Moreover, the soul is an immaterial (incomplete) substance. Therefore, no
> matter how we slice it, Aquinas's view of persons is still a version of *Substance Dualism*"
> (Corcoran, 2006, p. 39).

As Corcoran points out, souls cannot be thought of, on Aquinas's view, as complete substances.

Yet, since they are thought of as distinct ontological entities, Aquinas's view is best thought of as a

kind of substance dualism. Corcoran is not the only one to associate Aquinas's account to substance

dualism. This impression is drawn at least in part from the fact that some substance dualists tend to

associate their view with Aquinas. As we saw in chapter 10, J.P. Moreland and Scott Rae have labels

their view Thomistic Substance Dualism (Moreland & Rae, 2000). Yet, they insist that "human

persons are identical to immaterial substances, namely, to souls" (Moreland & Rae, 2000, p. 121).[55]

As such, it is not uncommon for some to object to Aquinas's account by saying that it is just a

version of substance dualism.

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[55] More recently, Moreland has acknowledged that is account is often noted to be different from
Aquinas in important ways. He says, "I confess, I am, indeed, a Peeping Thomist. That is, as
Thomistic purists always remind me, my view is not Aquinas's own view; indeed, mine departs from
his at crucial points. Even So, I believe my view does stand, in important ways, within a Thomistic
framework or is its near cousin." See Moreland (2018, p. 102).

So how should we respond to this accusation? I think there are two things important to note in response. First, there really are genuine similarities between the two views. In both accounts, bodies and souls are different ontological entities. It is true that each account calls these entities different things, but the similarity is notable. Even Stump, who ultimately rejects the notion that Aquinas's view is reducible to substance dualism, notes that "Aquinas seems clearly in the dualist camp somewhere since he thinks that there is an immaterial and subsistent constituent of the subject of cognitive function" (Stump, 2005, p. 212).

Second, however, we must insist that, despite the similarities, Aquinas's hylomorphism is notably different from substance dualism in at least two important ways. These differences come from the way that Aquinas understands the (1) singularity of substance in the case of human persons, and (2) his holistic account of them. As this has already been covered in some detail above (12.2.4), I will simply offer a quick reminder of what he thinks here. Regarding the singularity of substances in the case of human persons, Aquinas says "Now the soul, although it is incorruptible, is nevertheless in no other genus than the body because, since it is a part of a human nature, to be in a genus or in a species or to be a person or hypostasis is not characteristic of the soul, but of the composite" (Aquinas, 1949, p. 40). This is not just a semantic difference between Aquinas and the substance dualists. Where the substance dualist affirms a dualism of substances, Aquinas rejects this dualism and affirms that human persons are single substances composed of body and soul. In his view, while the body and the soul are both thought of as distinct entities, neither of them is to be thought of as distinct substances. It is only when the two entities of body and soul come together that the human being, a single substance, comes into being. And he insists that man is not to be identified with the immaterial soul. He says that "man is not a mere soul, nor a mere body; but both soul and body" (Aquinas, 1948, v.1, p. 336). In fact, one could argue that Aquinas's entire anthropological project is designed specifically to differ with Plato on this point. Where Plato thinks

that human persons are identical to their souls, and merely possess their material bodies, Aquinas insists the opposite. In his view, human beings are the composite of their bodies and souls.

So then, it does not appear that either objection to Aquinas's view succeed against him. Those who tend to fear that his view of form causes his account to collapse into a version of materialism fail to understand the way that Aquinas differs with Aristotle on the nature of the form. And, those who tend to fear that his approach is just another version of substance dualism fail to see the significant differences between the two accounts. That his account seems unhindered by these objections does not mean, however, that his account is problem free. To see where his approach might be vulnerable, we now turn to evaluate how well his account satisfies the criteria of a Christian anthropology outlined in chapter 2.

11.3.2 *How Thomism Satisfies the Criteria of a Christian Anthropology*

In chapter 2, I set forth what I call the criteria for a Christian anthropology. I suggested that, for a particular anthropology to be counted as a "Christian" anthropology, there are several criteria that must be satisfied. Drawing from biblical and historical considerations, I attempted to set forth what appears to be a core set of teachings from the Christian tradition about the metaphysics of human beings. There I suggested that, at minimum, a Christian anthropology must make the following affirmations:

(C1) Bodies and souls are distinct entities.

(C2) Human persons are composed of bodies and souls.

(C3) Human personhood begins at the moment of conception.

(C4) At death, the body and soul separate with the body decomposing and the soul going to the intermediate state.

(C5) At the end of this world, our souls will be rejoined to bodies that are numerically identical to our current bodies.

In chapters 4 (section 2), I evaluated Christian materialism against these criteria to show that, ultimately, this family of positions fails to offer a view of human persons that is coherent with this set. Further, in chapters 5-7, I suggested that some of the better expressions of Christian materialism have unique philosophical problems of their own that compound the difficulties with Christian materialism, such that Christian materialism should be rejected. In chapter 8 (section 3), I turned to evaluate substance dualism and drew the same conclusion. Like Christian materialism, substance dualism fails to offer a view of human persons that is coherent with this set of criteria. And once again, like the best materialist anthropological expressions, the best versions of Christian substance dualism also have unique problems that once again compound the difficulties for this family of views. As such, I rejected both Christian materialism and substances dualism.

I shall now evaluate Aquinas's account of human persons against the same set of criteria, suggesting that his account is far superior to the previous accounts and offers an anthropology that is consistent with the Christian tradition's teaching on the matter. At the same time, his account does not perfectly satisfy the criteria set forth above, and as such, must be modified in some manner. Specifically, with regard to criteria (C1), (C2), and (C4), Aquinas's account coheres very clearly. With criteria (C3) and (C5), however, some difficulties arise that call for an adjustment to his account.

I begin with those criteria that Aquinas's account seems to satisfy with ease. Consider criteria (C1)— bodies and souls are distinct entities. As suggested in chapter 2, the Christian tradition affirms an ontological distinction between bodies and souls, such that it views the two as unique ontological entities. Biblically speaking, this is seen in passages like Ecclesiastes 12:6-7, Matthew 10:28, and II Corinthians 5:6-8. As a quick example, Jesus says, "And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell"

(NKJV, 1982).[56] In addition, as noted in chapter 2, this idea is also found regularly throughout the history of the church. Gregg Allison summarizes the point well:

> The church has historically maintained that human nature is complex, a composite of material and immaterial elements. Apart from a very few exceptions, the church has affirmed the reality of the human body, though it has also wrestled with views that disparage the body and treat it as being inherently evil. Also, the church has affirmed the reality of the human soul or spirit" (Allison, 2011, p. 321).

So how well does Aquinas's account satisfy this aspect of the Christian tradition's teaching? From what I have argued above, it appears that his view has no difficulty here. On his account, bodies and souls are, in fact, distinct entities. He understands the body to be the material entity that individuates a particular person from some other person, and the soul to be that entity which makes the person a human person. In this regard, Aquinas's account appears to satisfy criterion (C1) of a Christian anthropology.

Consider criteria (C2)— human persons are composed of bodies and souls. Again, in chapter 2 I argued that the Christian tradition is also committed to the idea that, while there is an ontological distinction between bodies and souls, the human person is a composite of both. That is, this tradition rejects the idea that the human person is identical to either body or the soul individually, and affirms that human persons are both together in unity. For instance, in Genesis 2:7 where the Bible speaks about the creation of man, it says, "And the LORD God formed man *of* the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being."[57] Here the idea is that God created man by uniting the body with the spirit. Building on this, John Hammett notes that this has in fact been the "traditional Christian understanding of humans." He says that on this view, "our complex constitution includes both material aspect (which we call

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[56] All biblical references taken from the New King James Version (NKJV).
[57] As noted in chapter 2, the Bible uses the terms soul and spirit somewhat interchangeably throughout.

the body) and a nonmaterial aspect (which we call the soul but could equally call the spirit)"

(Hammett, 2014, p. 317).

Once again, Aquinas's account of human persons appears to satisfy the tradition. As noted

above, perhaps no other idea within his anthropology has more force than this one. As he insists in

his rejection of Plato's substance dualism, human persons are not identical to their immaterial souls.

Rather, his hylomorphism maintains that they are the composite of their immaterial soul and

material body.

Finally, regarding those criteria that Aquinas's account seems to satisfy, consider criteria

(C4)— at death, the body and soul separate with the body decomposing and the soul going to the

intermediate state. As argued in chapter 2, criteria (C4) seems to be a rather straightforward criteria

set forth by the Christian tradition. In Ecclesiastes, for example, the Bible says:

> Remember your Creator before the silver cord is loosed
> Or the golden bowl is broken,
> Or the pitcher shattered at the fountain,
> Or the wheel broken at the well.
> *Then the dust will return to the earth as it was,*
> *And the spirit will return to God who gave it* (NKJV, 1980).

Here the writer employs a metaphor to describe what happens at death. He speaks of the body as

"dust" (and illusion back to Genesis 2 that speaks of bodies this way), and notes how the body and

spirit separate at death. Here he understands the body and soul to be two separate distinct things

that are capable of being united and of being separated. Once that separation occurs, the body

returns to the ground from where it came and the spirit goes back into the presence of God.

Passages like these have been used by Christians to make these very points. And, as I further noted

in chapter 2, this view fairly represents that way the church has generally understood what happens

between death and resurrection. According to the *Westminster Catechism*, for example, "The bodies of

men, after death, return to dust, and see corruption; but their souls (which neither die nor sleep),

having an immortal subsistence, immediately return to God who gave them" (Schaff, 1996, v. 3, p. 670).

As with the first two criteria, Aquinas's account accommodates and satisfies (C4) with relative ease. On his account bodies are given back to the ground and the soul is "plunged into hell or soars to heaven" (Aquinas, 1948, v.5, p. 2819). That is, in keeping with the Christian tradition that he subscribes to, Aquinas believes that bodies and souls separate at death and souls await God's final judgement at the coming of Christ in the Eschaton. From all this, it seems safe to say that Aquinas's account of human persons satisfies criteria (C1), (C2), and (C4). But, this does not mean that his account perfectly satisfies everything that it needs to.

11.3.3   ***How Thomism Does Not Satisfy the Criteria of a Christian Anthropology***

Despite Aquinas's ability to satisfy criteria (C1), (C2), and (C4), it does seem that his account has difficulty with criteria (C3) and (C5). Consider, for example, criteria (C3)—human personhood begins at the moment of conception. As argued in chapter 2, despite the various moments of debate and occasional voice of difference, the church has traditionally held that human personhood begins at the moment of conception. Biblically speaking, this idea comes from passages like Jeremiah 1:5 which says, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; Before you were born I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations." Here God speaks about Jeremiah as a human person with a future and purpose even while being formed in the womb. Likewise, passages like Job 3:3 come to bare which states, "May the day perish on which I was born, And the night *in which* it was said, 'A male child is conceived." As Scott Rae notes about this passage:

> This poetic passage employs what is called synonymous parallelism, in which the second line of poetry restates the first one, essentially saying the same thing in different language. This type of parallelism suggests that the child who was "born" and the child who was "conceived" are considered the same person. In fact, the terms "born" and "conceived" are used interchangeably here, suggesting that a person in view at both conception and birth. What was present at birth was considered equivalent to what was present at conception (Rae, 2009, p. 128).

In other words, implied within texts like Jeremiah 1:5 and Job 3:3 is the idea that human personhood begins at the very moment of conception. The conclusion that Rae, a Protestant, draws here are in line with the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church on this matter. According to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, for example, "Human life must be respected and protected absolutely from the moment of conception. From the first moment of his existence, a human being must be recognized as having the rights of a person—among which is the inviolable right of every innocent being to life" (Date 1994, p. 2270).

As noted above, Aquinas's understanding of personhood during gestational development is that the fetus in the womb becomes a human person at some point within the fetal development (somewhere between 40-90 days after conception), but not at the moment of conception. His reason for this is that the human soul is rational and requires a brain to facilitate rational function. And since the brain is not present at the moment of conception, Aquinas is not inclined to think that personhood starts at conception. Scientific and political debates aside, it is clear that what Aquinas says on this matter falls outside what have become the official teachings of the Roman Catholic Church as well as the majority position of the Protestant Church. For those concerned to maintain both (1) a Thomistic perspective of human persons, and (2) a view within the bounds of the official teachings of the major Christian traditions, some adjustments will have to be made.

As such, I contend that, despite the other aspects of Aquinas's account that satisfy the criteria of a Christian anthropology, his views on gestation and personhood represent at least one place where his view needs to be modified. Specifically, it appears that those who want to hold to Aquinas's account and maintain traditional views must insist that Aquinas was wrong about the moment that personhood begins. The traditionalist simply must insist that person begins at the moment of conception. Nevertheless, a difficulty arises at this point for the traditionalist who also want so to follow Aquinas. The difficulty can be put like this: If human persons are the composite

of their body and soul, how is it that the human person exists at the moment of conception when the body has yet to be formed? Indeed, at the moment of conception a human body does not yet exist, and as such, it seems impossible to say that personhood has begun. The traditionalists who wants to follow Aquinas, therefore, has to have some unique way of saying both (1) that personhood begins at conception, and (2) that human persons are composites of a body and soul. In the next chapter, I shall offer at least one possible way to reconcile the two claims.

Finally, consider also, criteria (C5)—at the end of this world, our souls will be rejoined to bodies that are numerically identical to our current bodies. That (C5) is what the Christian tradition has held to historically was argued in chapter 2. In Isaiah 26:19, for example, the Bible says:

> "Your dead shall live;
> Together with my dead body they shall arise.
> Awake and sing, you who dwell in dust;
> For your dew *is like* the dew of herbs,
> And the earth shall cast out the dead."

Furthermore, as passages like I Corinthians 15:35-38, for example, have often been taken this way. It says, "But someone will say, 'How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come?' Foolish one, what you sow is not made alive unless it dies. And what you sow, you do not sow that body that shall be, but mere grain—perhaps wheat or some other *grain.* But God gives it a body as He pleases, and to each seed its own body." Using the metaphor of a seed that dies in the ground only to come back to life and grow into a plant, Paul suggests an ontological continuity between the body that dies and the body that God resurrects. Because of passages like these, the Church has historically affirmed that, in the resurrection of the dead, the bodies we receive back are numerically identical to the bodies we currently possess. As Trenton Merricks puts it, "the overwhelming majority of theologians and philosophers in the history of the church have endorsed the claim of numerical identity. Historical debates surrounding the resurrection were over *how* (not whether) a dead earthly body would secure identity with a resurrection body" (Merricks, 1999, p. 268). He then

adds that theologians and philosophers "throughout the history of the church presupposed this because . . . this seems to be what scripture teaches" (Merricks, 1999, p. 268).

Interestingly enough, as noted above, Aquinas does officially agree with criteria (C5)—the requirement of numerically identical bodies in the resurrection. As such, I do not wish to dispute what he officially holds. Rather, I want to suggest that, despite his official endorsement of (C5), his view actually ends up undermining (C5) in his explanation of what is required to secure numerically identical bodies in the resurrection. In other words, despite what he says, the process(s) he thinks God uses to bring about numerically identical bodies in the resurrection would fail to achieve (C5).

As noted above, that Aquinas affirms (C5) is evident in a variety of places. In the *Summa Theologica*, for instance, he says, "For we cannot call it resurrection unless the soul return to the same body, since resurrection is a second rising, and the same thing rises that falls: wherefore resurrection regards the body which after death falls rather than the soul which after death lives. And consequently if it be not the same body which the soul resumes, it will not be a resurrection, but rather the assuming of a new body" (Aquinas, 1948, v.5, p. 2878). Likewise, in the *Compendium of Theology*, he says, "as there ought to be the specifically same matter for the specifically same form, so there ought to be the numerically same matter for the numerically same form" (Aquinas, 2009b, p. 118).

Passages like these make it clear that, at least on the surface of it, Aquinas affirms (C5). Nevertheless, to better understand what he means by this, there is a critically important question that we must ask. What is required for a body in the resurrection to be numerically identical to a body in this life? This question is important in light of what happens to bodies after death. If human bodies are destroyed, decomposed, or consumed by other animals such that they entirely cease to exist and their component parts also cease to exist, then it looks like there is a major difficulty for resurrection if it requires numerically identical bodies. And despite his brilliance, this was clearly a problem that

Aquinas struggled to answer coherently. As Antonia Fitzpatrick puts it, "Aquinas would appear to have been pushed to his intellectual limits by the problem of accounting for the continuity of the matter particular to individual bodies between their death and the end of time" (Fitzpatrick, 2017, p. 164).

Nevertheless, Aquinas does attempt to answer such questions. Determining just what his final answer to the question is, however, is a matter of difficulty. Before we consider what Aquinas says, consider again the question and three possible ways of answering it. The question is, what is required for a body in the resurrection to be numerically identical to a body in this life? Three possible answers to that question could be:

(V1) Same Material Bits View = Two bodies separated by time are numerically identical if they are composed of the numerically same bits of material at both times.

(V2) Same Structure View = Two bodies separated by time are numerically identical if they possess the same numerical bodily structure and organization at both times.

(V3) Same Soul View = Two bodies separated by time are numerically identical if they are informed by the same numerical soul at both times.

Perhaps there are other possibilities, but at least these three are plausible from within Aquinas's hylomorphic account. But what does he say?

Regarding (V1)—the same material bits view—it is not at all clear that Aquinas would accept this account of the body's numerical identity. There are places in his writings where he gives the impression that he does accept it. For example, in the *Compendium of Theology* he says, "If the same matter remains, if divine power has restored the human body out of it, and if the rational soul, which remains the same because it cannot pass away, has been united to the same body, then the numerically same human being is restored" (Aquinas, 2009b, p. 119). Despite this claim, however, in the *Summa Contra Gentiles*, he seems to reject this view entirely. There, while dealing with the question about which exact bits of matter must be restored for the resurrection body to be

numerically identical with the body of this life, Aquinas denies that there are any specific bits of matter that must be present in the resurrection body. He says:

> For what is no obstacle to a man's numerical unity while he continues to live manifestly cannot be an obstacle to the unity of one who rises. But in the body of man, so long as he is alive, it is not with respect to matter that he has the same parts, but with respect to his species. In respect to matter, of course, the parts are in flux, but this is not an obstacle to his being numerically one from the beginning of his life to the end of it (Aquinas, 1975, v.5, p. 301)

In other words, what Aquinas points to here is the fact that, in this current life, our bodies change their parts and remain numerically identical throughout the process. As such, he suggests that numerical identity for our bodies cannot depend on any specific set of bits of matter that compose them. If this is true for our bodies in this life, then it must be true for our bodies in the resurrection as well. So then, whatever it is that he meant by "the same matter" in the *Compendium of Theology*, it seems safe to say that he did not mean "same material bits." As such, it seems like Aquinas rejects (V1).

If, in fact, Aquinas rejects (V1), he still has at least two other options for grounding the numerical identity of the body in the resurrection: (V2) and (V3), or what I shall call the quantitative and qualitative approaches respectively. (V2)—the same structure view—can be referred to as the view that depends on the quantitative structure found within a material being like a human person. There is reason to think that this is in fact they way that Aquinas understands the idea of "same matter" in the *Compendium of Theology*. In the passage just prior to the previous quote from this work, he says, "the numerically same matter remains, inasmuch as we understand it as quantified" (Aquinas, 2009b, p. 119). Understanding what Aquinas means by the notion of quantification is key to understand how this approach to numerical identity works. Fitzpatrick offers a helpful description to that end. Noting that Aquinas is borrowing from his Aristotelian roots, she says, "Quantity (*quantum*), Aristotle writes, can be either discrete, like numbers, or continuous, like lines, surfaces, bodies, time, and place" (Fitzpatrick, 2017, p. 54). That is, the notion of quantity is not limited to

numbers, but extends to include dimensions, lines, and surfaces, all things that human bodies have as distinct features of their organism. She adds, "So, according to Aristotle, 'body' considered in a mathematical way, or body as defined in the category of quantity, is a finite structure, spatially extended and divisible in three dimensions, with parts that are distinguishable from and continuous with one another, each of which has a definite position relative to other parts" (Fitzpatrick, 2017, p. 55).

So then, on this way of understanding the numerical identity of a body, two bodies separated by time are numerically identical to each other if they possess the same structure, dimensions, and spatial extension. As Fitzpatrick suggests, "For Aquinas, the particularity and identity of a person's matter is guaranteed not by their soul, nor by any persistent core matter in their body, but by the individual dimensive quantity that physically configures their body, giving to it its organic structure" (Fitzpatrick, 2017, p. 170). In short, the quantitative view simply endorses (V2) as a way of grounding the numerical identity of the body in the resurrection. Fitzpatrick may be right that this is Aquinas's view. In response to an objection to numerically identical bodies in the resurrection, again based on the fact that after death bodies are destroyed or fully decompose into nothing, Aquinas seems to suggest something along these lines. He says:

> Reply OBJ 3: That which is understood as though it were in matter before its form remains in matter after corruption, because when that which comes afterwards is removed that which came before may yet remain. Now, as the Commentator observes on the First Book of *Physics* and in *De Substantia Orbis*, in the matter of things subject to generation and corruption, we must presuppose undeterminate dimensions, by reason of which matter is divisible, so as to be able to receive various forms in its various parts. Wherefore after the separation of the substantial form from matter, these dimensions still remain the same: and consequently the matter existing under those dimensions, whatever form it receive, is more identified with that which was generated from it, than any other part of matter existing under any form whatever. Thus the matter that will be brought back to restore the human body will be the same as that body's previous matter" (Aquinas, 1948, v.5, p. 2878).

Notice here that Aquinas points to dimensions that "still remain the same." He suggests that there is a continuity within the dimensions of the body before the body was informed by the soul, while the

body was informed by the soul, after the soul departs from the body, and are again present within the resurrected body once the soul re-informs the body.

Because of passages like this, there is some reason to think that this is the way that Aquinas tries to handle questions about the numerical identity of bodies in the resurrection. Yet, there is also reason to be cautious about assigning this to Aquinas as "his view". As Fitzpatrick admits, Aquinas is a bit vague here and does not make himself perfectly clear. She suggests that "Aquinas would appear then to have been moving tentatively towards" this idea, but that he also "failed to be up front about the extent to which he was moving towards a position in any way similar to Averroes' on matter in his later work on resurrection" (Fitzpatrick, 2017, p. 165). Furthermore, in addition to this vagueness in Aquinas, there is also reason to think that he rejected (V2) in favor of (V3).

(V3)—the same soul view—is the view which suggests that numerical identity is accomplished for the resurrected body by way of the soul that informs it. In other words, it is the soul which informs the body that also grounds the identity of the body. If a body in the resurrection is informed by the same soul that informed the original body in this life, then the later body is numerically identical to the body of the previous life. All that is required of the body itself in the resurrection is that it be of the same quality and kind—hence the reference to this view as a qualitative view. It is not required that this later body be composed of the same bits or have the same basic structure as the previous body. On this view, it is possible to have a phenomenological duplicate body to the body of this life in the resurrection. But, if as long as that body in the resurrection is informed by the same soul from this life, numerical identity is achieved. According to both Stump and Pasnau, this is the way that Aquinas grounds the numerical identity of the body in the resurrection. Stump says:

> But the soul can also account for the sameness of the resurrected body. Since the soul was what made unformed prime matter this human being by configuring it in such a way that the matter is this living animal capable of intellective cognition, presumably in the resurrection of the body the soul can again make the unformed matter it informs this human being.

> Preservation of identity will not have to be guaranteed by recomposing the human being of the same bits of matter-form composites, such as atoms, as before; and puzzles about what happens when the same atoms have been part of more than one human being are avoided (Stump, 2005, p. 208).

Likewise, Pasnau contends that Aquinas argues that in the case of the resurrected body, "matter is the same inasmuch as it is taken up within the same form" (Pasnau, 2002, p. 392). He then adds, "The underlying matter can change constantly and thoroughly, just as long as it remains properly proportioned to the form. There is therefore no need for the matter to remain numerically the same, or even for its different stages to be continuous. What matters is that the form be joined to matter that is qualitatively the same as the matter the soul originally informed" (Pasnau, 2002, p. 392).

That Aquinas may have held this view is possible. Just after denying that the numerical identity of bodies is grounded in a particular set of material bits, for instance, he goes on to suggest that it is the form—the substantial soul—of the man that grounds the identity of the body. He says:

> But in the body of man, so long as he is alive, it is not with respect to matter that he has the same parts, but with respect to his species. In respect to matter, of course, the parts are in flux, but this is not an obstacle to his being numerically one from the beginning of his life to the end of it. An example of this can be taken from fire: While it continues to burn, it is called numerically one because its species persists, yet wood is consumed and new wood is applied. It is also like this in the human body, for the form and species of its single parts remain continuously through a whole life; the matter of the parts is not only resolved by the action of the natural heat, but is replenished anew by nourishment (Aquinas, 1975, v.5, p. 301).

Notice here that Aquinas suggests that because the "form and species" remain the whole time, the human body is able to persist. As such, some like Stump and Pasnau suggest that Aquinas accepts (V3).

So then, it is a matter of some dispute as to how Aquinas would answer the question about what grounds the numerical identity of the body in cases of bodily corruption and later resurrection. Nevertheless, it appears that Aquinas rejects (V1) in favor of either (V2) or (V3). Yet, I suggest that either view is problematic and that Aquinas should have rejected both (V2) and (V3) and should have accepted (V1). Regarding (V2), if this is what Aquinas settles for, then it seems as though his

account would be vulnerable to the objection raised above that his account is really just another version of materialism, as structure, shape, and organization are what ultimately grounds identity after all. By affirming (V2), it seems like Aquinas would have to now deny (C1)— the claim that bodies and souls are distinct entities. Furthermore, it also seems that his account would be subject to the same kinds of duplication objections that van Inwagen's account is subject to (chapter 7). If shape, dimensions, and structure are all that is required for numerical identity, then it seems like there could be two (or three or a million) physical organisms in the resurrection with the exact same physical dimensions and structure, rending each an equal claim to the identity of the previous body in this life.

Regarding (V3), if Aquinas is committed to grounding the numerical identity of the body in the soul that informs the body at both times, would this not undermine his insistence in *On Being and Essence* (Aquinas, 1968, p. 36) that human persons are individuated, not by their souls, but by the particular set of material bits that constitute their bodies? By affirming (V3), would this not require Aquinas to say that souls are what individuate bodies as the particular bodies that they are? It certainly seems that it would. Furthermore, it also seems that adopting (V3) would be a major step back towards substance dualism. According to substance dualism, what makes a person the person that he is is the soul and nothing more. On that view, the resurrection does not require a specific body that is numerically identical to the body of this life. Carbon copies or phenomenological duplicates are perfectly acceptable. But this seems to entail a denial of (C5)—at the end of this world, our souls will be rejoined to bodies that are numerically identical to our current bodies. And if (C5) is a criterion for a Christian anthropology, as I have argued, this seems to be a problem for Aquinas's view. As Caroline Walker Bynum puts it, "If the nature of body is carried by soul and can be expressed in any matter that soul activates . . . then one cannot hold that a person's body or matter waits to be reassembled after death" (Bynum, 1995, p. 259). So then, if Aquinas accepts (V3),

then it looks like he is accepting the Substance dualist's view of personhood after all and undermines his hylomorphic account.

11.4   Conclusion

As such, I suggest that by accepting either (V2) or (V3), Aquinas undermines his account of human persons, or at least the possibility of surviving death. Therefore, for those that want to follow him, as I do, some modifications are needed. On this specific point, it seems that his view must be modified in such a way that it embraces (V1)—the view that grounds the identity of the body in the specific material bits that compose that body. But as we will see, this comes with challenges of its own.

In the next chapter, I outline the modifications to Aquinas's account that I endorse and believe help solve the concerns I have raised. Specifically, it will offer a modification that contends for the inclusion of essential parts within the human body that makes it possible to adopt Aquinas's hylomorphism and also satisfy the criteria of a Christian anthropology.

Chapter 12

Modified Thomistic Holism

12.1   Introduction

In the last chapter I surveyed Aquinas's hylomorphic account of human persons. There I noted that,

according to Aquinas, human persons are the composites of form and matter, or more specifically,

bodies and souls. As some scholars have noted, Aquinas's view is often thought of as being

somewhere between materialism on the one hand, and substance dualism on the other. After a quick

survey of this account, I dealt with some common objections to it, and evaluated his account against

the criteria of a Christian anthropology. There I argued that the objections to his account that it is

really just a form of materialism, or substance dualism, are based on misrepresentations of his view.

Regarding the criteria of a Christian anthropology, I suggested that his account succeeds in satisfying

three criteria:

(C1)   Bodies and souls are distinct entities.

(C2)   Human persons are composed of bodies and souls.

(C4)   At death, the body and soul separate with the body decomposing and the soul going
to the intermediate state.

Despite the ease with which Aquinas's view can satisfy (C1), (C2), and (C4), I also argued that his

account does not satisfy, at least as it stands without modifications, the following criteria:

(C3)   Human personhood begins at the moment of conception.

(C5)   At the end of this world, our souls will be rejoined to bodies that are numerically
identical to our current bodies.

In this chapter I will address the concerns with Aquinas's account of human persons as it

relates to (C3) and (C5). I will then set forth one possible way of modifying his view so that it

satisfies (C3) and (C5). Generally speaking, my view—what I call Modified Thomistic Holism—

follows Aquinas's more general account of the vast majority of what Aquinas says. Yet, the

modification I offer to his view of the human body, specifically what grounds its metaphysical identity, is significant and unique. After an overview of my modifications to his view of the human body, I will then deal with objections that are unique to my own account that I call Modified Thomistic Holism.

12.2   Modified Thomistic Holism

According to (C3), personhood begins at the moment of conception. Aquinas, along with some other medieval theologians,[58] rejected this view, suggesting rather that the fetus becomes a human person at some later point in the gestational process when the brain is developed sufficiently for the soul to "arrive" and inform the body (Aquinas, 1948, v.1, p. 376). But as argued in chapter 2 and reviewed briefly in the last chapter, (C3) appears to represent the final teachings and opinions of both Protestant and Catholic traditions. Consider what I call the traditionalist Thomist.[59] He is a traditionalist in that he wants to follow the official teachings of the Catholic and Protestant churches about personhood starting at the moment of conception. Yet, he is a Thomist in that he also wants to follow affirm the basic contours of Aquinas's thought about human persons as metaphysical composites of a body and a soul. It looks like the traditionalist Thomist has a problem on his hands. Namely, how do we affirm that human persons are the composite of their body and soul, and also affirm that human personhood begins at the moment of conception? This combination of beliefs appears to be problematic since the human body is not formed sufficiently until well after the moment of conception. In short, Aquinas accepted the following beliefs:

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[58] For a through treatment of where most medieval theologian philosophers stood on this issue, see Dales (1995).

[59] I use this phrase here for a lack of better terms. The phrase "traditionalist Thomist" can be misleading and therefore needs clarification and explanation. I do not mean by this phrase what might be expected by the words "traditional Thomist", as this might signify someone that follows perfectly within the tradition of Aquinas himself. Rather, as noted above, the term "traditionalist" here refers to the one who wants, contra Aquinas, to follow the traditional teaching of the Catholic and Protestant churches regarding personhood starting at conception.

(1)   A human person is the metaphysical composite of her body and soul.

(2)   A human body is not sufficiently formed until well after the moment of conception.

(3)   Therefore, human personhood does not begin until well after the moment of conception.

As documented in the least chapter, it is clear that Aquinas accepts (1)–(3). Furthermore, it appears that (3) follows from (1) and (2). As such, the traditionalist Thomist has a problem. If he, like Aquinas, accepts (1) and (2), then it looks like he cannot simply reject (3) in favor of (C3)—one of the criterion for a Christian anthropology. It states:

(C3)   Human personhood begins at the moment of conception.

If it is true that persons are the composite of their body and soul then the body is an essential component of a human person. And, since the body is not present until some later time in gestation, then (C3) must be false and (3) must be true instead. Therefore, those who follow Aquinas's account of human persons but also want to affirm (C3)—that personhood begins at the moment of conception—must offer some way of modifying either (1) or (2) above.

Yet, (C3) is not the only criterion that presents problems for Aquinas's account. There is also a concern regarding criterion (C5). According to (C5), the body in the resurrection must be numerically identical to the body of this life. As I noted in the last chapter, Aquinas officially endorses and agrees with (C5). The problem, however, arises from the way he suggests that God brings about a numerically identical body in the resurrection. Three possible ways were mentioned:

(V1)   Same Material Bits View = Two bodies separated by time are numerically identical if they are composed of the numerically same bits of material at both times.

(V2)   Same Structure View = Two bodies separated by time are numerically identical if they possess the same numerical bodily structure and organization at both times.

(V3)   Same Soul View = Two bodies separated by time are numerically identical if they are informed by the same numerical soul at both times.

If (V1) is correct, then in the resurrection God would need to reassemble the very same bits of material that once composing the body of this life. If (V2) is correct, then in the resurrection God would only need to give the body of the resurrection the same numerical structure and organization as the original body. Or, if (V3) is correct, then in the resurrection God would only need to inform the body with the same numerical soul that once informed the original body.

In the last chapter I argued that it seems fairly clear that Aquinas rejects (V1) in favor of (V2) or (V3). Determining exactly which view he held, (V2) or (V3), is not important for my purposes here, as I argued that either approach is problematic for Aquinas. If he adopts (V2), then perhaps his view really is just a version of materialism as the form really is nothing more than shape and structure. Moreover, it seems like Aquinas's account would also be subject to duplication objections and have a significant metaphysical problem on its hands. If, however, he accepts (V3), then Aquinas seems to contradict his insistence that the material body, or more specifically a particular set of material, is the principle of individuation for a particular human being. Furthermore, by adopting (V3), it looks like Aquinas's account fails to sufficiently differentiate itself from substance dualism, as the personal identity is grounded in nothing more than the immaterial soul. So then, if Aquinas affirms (V2) his account may collapse back into materialism after all. And if accepts (V3), his view might collapse into substance dualism. Since Aquinas insists on avoiding these two views, he should have therefore rejected both (V2) and (V3) in favor of (V1).

But there is also another problem with Aquinas's rejection of (V1) and acceptance of either (V2) and (V3). In this he seems to go against the traditionally accepted teachings of Christianity throughout the history of the church. As argued in chapter 2, it looks like the majority of the early church fathers held to (C5), and more specifically, they affirmed (V1) as the proper way of grounding the numerical identity of the body and bringing about numerically identical bodies in the resurrection. In other words, they thought not just that our bodies in the resurrection had to be

numerically identical to our present bodies, they also thought that numerical identity in this case was accomplished by those bodies having the same actual matter as our current bodies. In fact, as we saw in chapter 2, in many cases the early and medieval fathers of the church often charged those who denied (V1) with heresy. Because of these concerns with (V2) and (V3), I argued in the last chapter that, despite what Aquinas appears to have affirmed, he should have affirmed (V1)—the view that bodies separated by time are numerically identical if they are composed of the numerically same bits of material at both times. On this view, for God to bring about numerically identical bodies in the resurrection, he would have to locate, collect, and then reassemble the same numerical material bits that once composed the person's body and reassemble them.

Yet, holding such a view seems problematic given what we know about the destruction and decomposition of material bodies after death. This view also faces some famous philosophical objections like the cannibal objection. Moreover, there is also the puzzle of knowing precisely which set of parts it is that God must re-collect and reassemble in the resurrection. Is it the set of parts that composed the body at birth, at the age of twelve, eighteen, or at the last moment of a person's life? Since our bodies change parts throughout the course of our lives, we are left wondering which set of material bits are the ones that God needs to put back together again in the resurrection. To affirm (V1) as a way of accomplishing (C5), as I argue we should, one is required to offer an account that can mitigate against these questions and concerns. In what follows, I offer one possible way of doing just that.

12.2.1 *The Doctrine of Essential Parts*

There may be multiple ways of dealing with the problems mentioned above. As such, I do not suggest here that my account is the only possible way forward. Rather, I wish to suggest a novel way of handling these problems. My modifications to Aquinas's account of human persons depends on a distinction between the kinds of material bits that ground the metaphysical identity of the human

body of a particular person. Borrowing from Aristotle's distinction between essential and accidental

properties, what I wish to suggest is the possible distinction between a particular body's essential and

accidental parts.

A distinction between essentials and accidentals is not new to metaphysics, though it is

normally a distinction employed to demarcate the kinds of properties a thing may possess. Brian

Garrett offers one straightforward way of making the distinction. He says:

> The distinction between essential and accidental properties derives, like so much in
> metaphysics, from Aristotle. The idea is that some of the properties of an object or natural
> kind are essential; others accidental. So it may be that Socrates is essentially human but
> accidentally bald, or the tigers are essentially animals but accidentally striped. It is part of the
> identity and nature of Socrates that he is human, but not that he is bald. It is part of the
> identity and nature of tigers that their animals, but not that they are striped. Intuitively, if x is
> essentially F then x is necessarily F, and if x is accidentally G then x is contingently G (i.e., x
> is G but might not have been) (Garrett, 2011, p. 38).[60]

In the cases of Socrates and the tiger, the properties of being human and an animal are essential to

each respectively. Yet, the properties of being bald and striped are merely accidental to each

respectively. From this, one general way of noting this distinction is by saying that an essential

property is a property that a thing has *and it has to have* in order to be that thing. By contrast, an

accidental property is a property that a thing has *but does not have* to have in order to be that thing. As

such, essential properties are those properties that must be present within the object for that object

to exist.

While metaphysicians regularly make a distinction between these kinds of properties, I want

to explore the possibility that we can make the same kind of distinction between the material parts

of an object, particularly in the case of a human body. But before we offer such an account, more

must be said about the concept of essential and accidental parts itself. To illustrate the concept,

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[60] This distinction is rather well entrenched within the history of metaphysics. Nevertheless, since
the time of Quine there have been some debates about the distinction's legitimacy. For good
discussions on this see Garrett (2011) and Koons & Pickavance (2015).

consider an example from a politically controversial item in American life: the AR15 riffle (the much debated riffle involved in numerous school shootings). Imagine that a person wanted to build an AR15 as opposed to buying one already assembled. This should not be a big problem for the builder given the fact that it is possible to buy all the parts necessary for its construction. Moreover, it is also the case that the vast majority of the parts for building that gun can be bought from any business or person that sells the parts, even if those businesses or persons are not federally licensed to sell the parts. The gun builder could buy the parts from his neighbor or co-worker if they had them available. There is one part, however, that cannot be bought this way. Namely, the lower receiver for the gun (the part that composes the grip and the trigger housing of the gun). For this particular part, the person who wants to build an AR15 is required by US law to purchase that part from a federally licensed gun dealer. Regarding the identity and number of the gun, in the eyes of the US government, this particular part is, technically speaking, the gun. The rationale for this is not arbitrary. The reason for this is that without this particular part, it is impossible to assemble all the other parts of the gun into an actual weapon. Without this part, all the other parts are just a random collection or parts that fail to compose an actual gun. As such, in the eyes of the US government, the lower receiver of an AR15 constitutes an actual gun and is the essential part of the riffle itself. All other parts are incidental and interchangeable, or in philosophical terms, accidental to the riffle. If the gun is to exist, the lower receiver must be present within, and connected to, all the other parts of the gun. The moment it is present, the gun technically exists. And the moment that it is removed, the gun ceases to be.

The lower receiver of an AR15, and all the other parts which will go into the building of the gun, are a good illustration of how the concept of essential and accidental parts might work. There are, however, some clarifications that need to be made about this concept before moving forward. First, the concept of essential parts is primarily intended to account for the metaphysical identity of

the material object in question. In other words, according to an essential parts model of composition, the numerical identity of a material object is grounded in the presence of a specific set of parts found within the object. In the case of biological organisms, while vital function may not be possible with these parts alone, the presence of these parts is sufficient to ground the material object's identity. As such, the presence of the essential parts is a sufficient condition for the object's metaphysical identity. Second, in addition to being a sufficient condition for the identity of the material object, the essential parts are also necessary, though insufficient, for the vital function of the material object. In the case of the lower receiver of the AR15, the gun could neither be, nor function, without this particular part. So then, essential parts are those parts that are sufficient for metaphysical identity of a material object, and necessary for its vital function. Finally, if these parts are indeed "essential" to the material object, then it must also be true that their presence within the object is required for the duration of the object's life. In other words, these would be parts that have to be there within the object the whole time that object exists. As soon as those parts are present and assembled correctly, the material object in question exists. And, as soon as those parts are removed, the object ceases to be.[61] Form this, we could define essential parts as follows:

> Essential Parts = A specific set of material bits that (i) are a sufficient condition for the numerical identity of the material object, (ii) are necessary (though not sufficient) for vital function of the material object, and (iii) are present within the material object for the entire duration of the object's life.

Such is the concept of essential parts. But how might this concept be employed with regard to the material organism of a human person, and to Aquinas's account of the body? More specifically, how might this concept apply to the developing fetus in the womb, and to the numerical identity of the

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[61] Of course, one might also offer a modal definition of essential parts. On this account, to say that a particular part P_1 is essential to a material object O_1 is to say that in every possible world where O_1 exists, it has part P_1.

body in the resurrection which, according to what I have argued in previous chapters, must be numerically identical to the body of this life?

Applying the doctrine of essential parts to Aquinas's view results in a modification to his account of human bodies. On this modification, the body of a composite human person is metaphysically identified by a particular set of material bits that are essential to that organism. When those essential parts are present and assembled properly, metaphysically speaking, the body of a particular person is present, even if it is not biologically viable with these parts alone. And, as long as those parts remain in the organism, that organism can be identified as the organism of a particular person.[62] But in the case of essential parts of a human body, there are several important questions that immediately arise. How many parts are there that are essential? How big are these parts? And, where are these parts located? While I will say more about these questions below, given the theoretical nature of my proposal, it is impossible to answer these questions with any precision. Nevertheless, as a tentative proposal, if these parts exist, I contend that they are very small in number (small enough to all be present within a zygote at the moment of conception), very small in size (something along the lines of philosophical simples), and that throughout the life of the human body they are located in the brain (specifically within the cerebral cortex). I contend that material bits of this quantity, size, and location provide us with a unique way of modifying Aquinas account and satisfying (C3) and (C5).

To illustrate how this could work, consider a man named Bruce. According to Aquinas, Bruce is the composite of his body and his soul. On my modification, there is a particular set of material bits (philosophical simples) that grounds the metaphysical identity of Bruce's material body. Modifications of this nature allow one to say with Aquinas that Bruce is the composite of his body

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[62] To clarify, the essential parts are sufficient to ground the identity of the body of the person, not the person herself, as she is a composite of both body and soul. So then, discussion throughout this chapter about the essential parts are discussions about the identity of the body only.

and his soul, but would now specify exactly what is meant by "this body". On this account, references to "this body" would reference not the full organism capable of vital function. Rather, it would reference a specific set of material bits within Bruce's body that (i) ground its metaphysical identity, (ii) are necessary (though insufficient) for the body's vital function, and (iii) are present the entire duration of the body's life. Parts that meet these three criteria are referred to as his body's essential parts. Like the lower receiver above of the AR15, Bruce's body's essential parts are insufficient to enable biological and vital function, but they are sufficient to ground the metaphysical identity of his body and are there the whole time, and every time, his body exists. The question remains, however, as to how exactly this doctrine might be incorporated as a modification of Aquinas's view to address concerns with (C3) and (C5). To this I now turn.

12.2.2   *Essential Parts and (C3): Personhood and Conception*

Though Aquinas rejected the idea that personhood began at the moment of conception, it is not uncommon for Catholics, and Protestants, to differ with Aquinas on this point.[63] Again, Aquinas believed the following about personhood and gestation:

(1)   A human person is the metaphysical composite of her body and soul.

(2)   A human body is not sufficiently formed until well after the moment of conception.

(3)   Therefore, human personhood does not begin until well after the moment of conception.

While many traditionalists agree with Aquinas about (1) and (2), they tend to reject (3) in favor of (C3)—one of the criterion for a Christian anthropology. It states:

(C3)   Human personhood begins at the moment of conception.

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[63] See Haldane & Lee (2003a), Pasnau (2003), and Haldane & Lee (2003b) for an example of the some of the more contemporary debates surrounding this issue.

But as I have argued earlier in this chapter, things are so easy for the traditionalist Thomist. It does not look like he can follow Thomas on (1) and (2) and reject him on (3), as (3) seems to be entailed from (1) and (2). Moreover, as argued above, (C3) seems to be incompatible with (1) and (2). So then, it looks like the traditionalist Thomist needs some way of modifying either (1) or (2) in order to accept (C3).

I contend that the problematic idea in Aquinas's understanding of human persons, and the point where modification is needed, is (2). If (2) is correct, then personhood could not begin until the brain is sufficiently formed. I suggest that, if a "human body" is understood as a macro-organism (an organism fully developed with its own homeodynamic integrity), (2) seems to offer an accurate account of the human body. Nevertheless, I question whether or not (2) is the only way that we might understand what we mean when we refer to "the body" of a human being? I contend that we might take a more modest view of "the body" that does not require us to reference a fully developed biological viable organism, but only requires us to account for the body's metaphysical identity and the original bits that initiate its biological development. If this is all that is required when we refer to the "body" of a human person in these discussions, then perhaps we can reject (2) in favor of an alternate concept. For example, by modifying Aquinas's view to incorporate an essential parts model of the human body, it looks like a traditionalist Thomist could now reject (2) in favor of (2'). (2') states:

> (2')   A human body is metaphysically identified by the essential parts that are present from the moment of conception and are necessary for the vital development of the organism.

What (2') allows the traditionalist Thomist to do is reject the idea that bodies do not exist until well after the moment of conception. On an essential parts model of the human body, the body is metaphysically identified with the parts that are essential to it, not with the fully developed macro-organism that comes after significant amounts of time of gestation.

With (2'), the traditionalist Thomist appears to have everything he needs to offer a coherent view of human persons that is still Thomistic in nature, but also follows the traditional teaching of the church. He would affirm the following set of beliefs without contradiction:

(1)   A human person is the metaphysical composite of her body and soul.

(2')   A human body is metaphysically identified by the essential parts that are present from the moment of conception and are necessary for the vital development of the organism.

And also:

(C3)   Human personhood begins at the moment of conception.

Thus, by adapting the way we think about human bodies and employing an essential parts model, the traditional Thomist is able to stay within a Thomistic framework, modified though it may be, as well as follow the traditional teaching of the Catholic and Protestant churches. As a result, Modified Thomistic Holism can satisfy (C3) whereas Thomism more general defined cannot.

12.2.3   *Essential Parts and (C5): Resurrection and Numerical Identity*

Aquinas very clearly affirms the need to have numerically identical bodies in the resurrection. The problem, as I have argued, is in the way he envisions this coming about. Specifically, he rejected the idea that numerical continuity is accomplished by virtue of the numerically same material bits. Instead, it seems he affirmed that numerical identity is achieved by virtue of either (V2) or (V3). I contend, however, that adopting either (V2) or (V3) is problematic for his view, and that he should have adopted (V1). But, there is good reason why Aquinas and many others have been inclined to reject (V1). In short, it seems impossible that the bodies in the resurrection could have the same material bits as our current bodies given what we know about bodily corruption and destruction after death. How could God give us back the same material bits if those bits get destroyed? Moreover, there are puzzles about exactly which set of parts are needed for the resurrection. How might we employ an essential parts model to modify Aquinas's account and address these concerns?

According to Modified Thomistic Holism, Bruce's body is metaphysically identified with a specific set of parts that serve as his body's essential parts. Once those parts are present and assembled properly, his body technically exists, even if it lacks all the other parts that might also be necessary for it to have vital function. As such, the difficulties with (V1) described above seem to be rather simple and straightforward to solve. Regarding the trouble relating to bodily corruption and decomposition, what would be required for numerical identity in the resurrection is certainly not a complete set of parts of an organism that once composed a body in this life. Rather, if (V1) is required for achieving (C5), and if human bodies have a set of parts that are essential to them, then all that is necessary is for God to do in the resurrection is reassemble a body's essential parts. The material bits that are essential to the body are not specific organs, large sized chunks of tissue, or even particular cells. Rather, they are an incredibly small set of small sized bits, something along the lines of philosophical simples that can withstand annihilation over time after the body's death, that must be present within the organism. Once those parts are present and assembled properly within the body, then the resulting body in that moment is numerically identical to the body of the previous life. Interestingly, this approach allows for, and endorses, the possibility of gappy existence for a material object.[64] This, however, is not different from what Aquinas already accepts.[65] What is different here is the way an essential parts view of the body grounds the metaphysical identity of a body and accounts for numerical identify in the resurrection. So then, regarding bodily corruption and destruction after death, by modifying Aquinas's view with an essential parts model of the body, the Thomist can now endorse the possibility that the philosophical simples which serve as the body's essential parts are what is necessary for reconstruction in the resurrection. And since these

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[64] This is, of course, a bit controversial. Some, van Inwagen (1978), have suggested that gappy existence is impossible. I remain unpersuaded by their arguments and see no reason why it is impossible.

[65] For a helpful discussion on this, see Toner (2015).

parts are philosophical simples, they would be incapable of destruction or decomposition. Such modifications appear to make it possible for him to affirm (V1) as the way in which God brings about (C5).

But what about the puzzle over exactly which set of material bits are necessary from the person's life are necessary for reassembly in the resurrection? If Bruce's body changes parts over time, is it his first set of parts, the parts he had at the age of eighteen, the last set of parts, or some other set of parts that God must use in the resurrection? As noted above, vexing questions like these seem to have played a part in Aquinas's rejection of (V1). As noted in the last chapter, the fact that "the parts are in flux" throughout the body's life, growth, and development was one of the reasons that he adopted either (V2) or (V3) (Aquinas, 1975, v.5, p. 301). While this concern is understandable, I contend that such concerns can be satisfied by modifying Aquinas's account of the human body with an essential parts model. On my account, there is no mystery over which set of parts God needs for the resurrected body. It is certainly not the full set of parts from any particular moment or age. Rather, God simply needs the philosophical simples that serve as the body's essential parts.

The doctrine of essential parts is a novel approach, not just to our understanding of the human body, but also to the metaphysics of composition, vagueness, and persistence. Given the novel nature of this proposal, there are aspects of the concept that call for attention, discussion, and debate. But for now, I suggest that the concept is coherent, and if so, might be employed to solve some of the concerns with Aquinas's anthropology that do not seem to satisfy the criteria of a Christian anthropology.

12.2.4 *Essential Parts and Aquinas's Principle of Individuation*

There is at least one other point worth mentioning before summarizing the contours of Modified Thomist Holism. The modifications offered above concern the way Aquinas thinks about the

human body. Though Aquinas does not think a collection of material bits that lacks a human soul can be consider a human body (Aquinas, 1948, v.1, p. 376-377), he insists in *On Being and Essence* that bodies are the principle of individuation of a particular person (Aquinas, 1968, p. 36). In other words, it is a specific set of matter that makes Bruce a different person from Keith. Yet, as we have seen above, when it comes to bodily resurrection, he seems to deny (V1) as the basis for securing numerically identical bodies in the resurrection. I suggest that his refusal to accept (V1) undermines his stance bodily individuation. If we deny that a specific set of material is what makes a particular body the body that it is in the resurrection, how can we insist that it is a specific set of material in this life that makes Bruce the person that he is? It seems as though affirming signate matter in the case of individuation carries with it the need to also affirm signate matter in the case of bodily resurrection and numerical identity.

One way that Aquinas could avoid this problem is by endorsing my modified view where the metaphysical identity of the body is grounded in a set of essential parts. On my view, we can say both (1) that signate matter (understood as a set of essential parts) is what individuates Bruce from Keith in being the specific person that he is, and (2) that it is signate matter again that accomplishes numerical identity in the resurrection. As such, I contend that my modifications below offer a more coherent and consistent way of maintaining Aquinas's principle of individuation.

12.2.5 *Contours of Modified Thomistic Holism*

With the concept of essential parts defined and described, and with a quick overview of how it might be employed to modify Aquinas's account of the human body such that we can now satisfy (C3) and (C5) of a Christian anthropology and his insistence that bodies are the principle of individuation, it is now time to give a brief overview of the overarching ideas endorsed by my Modified Thomistic Holism. In many respects, my account affirms the major ideas of Thomism outlined in the last chapter. But with regard to what it is that constitutes a human body, as I have

described above, my own account modifies his view by adopting an essential parts model of the metaphysical identity of the human body.

I begin with those aspects of Aquinas's thought that I endorse without modification. Like Thomism in general, my Modified Thomistic Holism affirms hylomorphism. With Aquinas, it rejects the substance dualists view that human persons are identical with their immaterial souls. Likewise, it also rejects materialist views of human persons that deny the existence of an immaterial soul. Rather, it maintains that both bodies and souls exist, that they are distinct metaphysical entities (even if neither is a complete substance apart from each other), and that the human person is a metaphysical composite of both, and as a result, a substances composed of body and soul. With Aquinas, Modified Thomistic Holism also maintains that the soul was created directly by God and is the form of the human body. Regarding the body, with Aquinas I affirm that it is the principle of individuation for the human person. As such, both body and soul are ontologically necessary for the existence of a particular human being named Bruce. As such, this account is "holistic" in nature. That is, the human person is a rational animal that is a composite body and soul. For the person to exist, both now and in the resurrection, the specific body/soul composite must be present and conjoined to each other as a hylomorphic substance.

In addition to these points of agreement with Aquinas, Modified Thomistic Holism also affirms that the soul is subsistent, capable of existing apart from the material body and surviving death. And yet, again with Aquinas, given the composite nature of a human being, it does not say that in death the person, Bruce, exists. Rather, it affirms that Bruce's soul survives the process and awaits the resurrection of the material body at the end of time, where the numerically identical body will be resurrected, the soul will re-inform that body, and the numerically same person we know as Bruce will live again.

Such are the aspects of Modified Thomistic Holism that fall into agreement with a more general Thomistic account of human persons. But what about the points of difference where the modifications come into play? In short, the modifications concern the composition, persistence and identity of the human body. Where my account differs from Aquinas is that he rejects the idea that our body's identity is grounded in a specific set of material bits, and my own account affirms this. According to an essential parts model, our bodies have a specific set of material bits that (i) ground its metaphysical identity of the human body, (ii) are necessary (though insufficient) for the body's vital function, and (iii) are present the entire duration of that body's life. This, I have argued, allows us to satisfy the specific criteria of a Christian anthropology that Aquinas's more general account has trouble satisfying. There are, however, a variety of possible objections that Modified Thomistic Holism must address. In the next section, I consider some possible objections.

12.3   Objections and Responses

Modified Thomistic Holism follows most of the general contours of Aquinas's more general account of human persons. It offers, by contrast, a modified view of the human body's metaphysical identity. In the last chapter, I surveyed some possible objections that were germane to Aquinas's own account. In the section below, I consider several more objections that are unique to my own modifications outlined above. Specifically, I address what I call (1) the material flux objection, (2) the arbitrary objection, (3) the identity theft objection, (4) the cannibal objection, and (5) the my momma is a cannibal objection.

12.3.1   *The Material Flux Objection*

One possible objection that my account faces is what I call the material flux objection. According to this objection, there cannot be any "essential parts" since the material bits of our bodies are always in a state of flux. That is, the fact that our bodies replace old parts with new parts over time would

make it impossible for our bodies to have one set of parts that are there for the entire duration of the body. As such, we must consider whether or not there reason to think that our bodies actually have essential parts. Or, are all the parts of our bodies merely superfluous or accidental?

We cannot say for sure that there actually are essential parts within our bodies, but there is reason to think that it is at least possible, as some recent scientific evidence is consistent with this idea. How could we show this? Perhaps the best way is by process of elimination. That is, we would need to first eliminate all the parts that we can say for sure are not essential parts of our bodies. For example, we can note that any part (philosophical simple, atom, or molecule) of person's body that is replaced over time cannot be an essential part of that person's body, since there are times when the person's body exists but does not possess those particular parts. But what if all the parts of our body get replaced over time? As is often said, every atom and molecule in our body is replaced with new atoms and molecules every 7 to 10 years. If this is true, this would mean that there are no essential parts to our bodies.

The idea that we replace every atom and molecule of our body every 7 to 10 years is a very popular idea. And I should admit, if it is actually true, then this would be a problem for any claim about our bodies having essential parts. Unfortunately for this objection, however, there is significant scientific data that suggests it is untrue. Swedish stem cell researchers Ratan D. Bhardwaj, Jonas Frisén and their colleagues recently discovered that—while the vast majority of the molecules of our bodies do replace themselves over time—most of the molecules in the cerebral cortex never change over the course of a person's life.[66] Now to clarify, this does not necessarily mean that the atoms and molecules of a person's cerebral cortex are actually the essential parts of a person's body. But, the fact that they are there for the duration of a body's life does at least make these molecules good candidates for being essential parts. At minimum, their presence within the brain for the

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[66] See Bhardwaj, Frisén, et. al., (2006).

duration of the brain's life defeats the material flux objection. As such, I am inclined to say it is at least plausible that our bodies have essential parts.

12.3.2 *The Arbitrary Objection*

Another possible objection to my view is what I call the arbitrary objection.[67] According to this objection, the doctrine of essential parts, and its employment in Modified Thomistic Holism, seems to be rather arbitrary. That is, it seems that there is no good reason for labeling one set of parts to be essential, and another set of parts to be accidental. If there are no good reasons for doing this, then the move is arbitrary and therefore seems *ad hoc* and implausible. Consider two distinct material bits found within Bruce's body: part P_1 is an essential part, and apart P_2 is accidental. Why is it that one of those parts is essential to Bruce's body, and the other is merely accidental? Could it have been the case that things were the other way around; that P_2 is essential and P_1 is accidental? If so, then classifying P_1, as opposed to P_2, as essential to Bruce's body is arbitrary. How could an essential parts modification answer such questions and avoid the concern that it is arbitrary?

In response, I suggest that, rightly understood, the move to classify one set of parts (say P_1 in this case) as essential, and another (say P_2) is not arbitrary in the slightest. In fact, I think there are good *non-ad hoc* reasons for making this move. I contend that there is something ontologically significant about the first simples, atoms, molecules, cells, or bits (whatever we want to call them and at whatever level we want to put them) that the soul joins itself to (or in Aquinas's terminology—the material that the soul informs). In other words, those material bits that were the very first to "receive" the soul would be those bits that are essential since they are the only material bits that could be in the body for the entire duration of its life. All later bits and parts thereafter are accidental, as the body already existed prior to the arrival of these parts.

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[67] Special thanks to Yujin Nagasawa for bringing this objection to my attention.

A metaphor may help to illustrate. Consider the creation and life of some social group called the "Pizza lovers". Let us say that in 2010, the group "Pizza Lovers" does not exist. But in January of 2011, three pizza loving friends name Larry, Moe and Curly decide to create the social group and bring it into existence. Part of their charter for the organization is that it can exist only as long as the three of them remain a part of it. Since so many people love pizza, the group grows from the original 3 in 2011 to thousands of members by 2018. In this case, Larry, Moe, and Curly are the charter members of the group. All later members are genuine members, but are nevertheless not charter members.

There is a difference between the group's charter members and its subsequent members. Physically and phenomenologically, you may not be able to tell which are which. But, there is still an important distinction between them based on who were the original members—the charter members. This way of stipulating which parts are essential is not arbitrary as it does so by grounding their identity in temporal duration of their presence within the body. In the case of the philosophical simples that ground the metaphysical of a body, qualitatively speaking, the difference between the essential and accidental parts may be indistinguishable. That is, under a microscope, you may not be able to tell which is which. But, this is an epistemic problem, not an metaphysical problem. There is still a real metaphysical distinction between them as some parts are "charter members" and all the later parts are not. And, it is not just that they were there first, it is also that, as those which were there first, they were the "first to be informed" by the soul.[68] As such, I contend that the move to label one set of parts as essential and all others as accidental is not an arbitrary move.

12.3.3 *The Identity Theft Objection*

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[68] The concept of "being informed by the soul" is a thoroughly hylomorphic idea. For Aristotle and Aquinas, the human soul is the form of the body, such that it informs the material body and is that by which the body is now both human and living.

Another possible objection that is unique to my view is what could be called the identity theft view.[69] According to this objection, the follow circumstance seems possible, which might render my view implausible. It seems possible on my view for a person to remain alive after having his essential parts removed from the brain, resulting in (1) the continuation of the living organism, and (2) that the organism would no longer be identical to itself from an earlier moment since one of the metaphysical components of the person has been removed. In short, a person could have his metaphysical identity stolen (by virtue of having his essential parts removed—since they are so small and so few of them), and survive to tell the story. This seems like it entails a contradiction.

In response, it is important to note that I see the essential parts of the person's body as being located in the brain itself. While I am not sure how many parts there are (though I think they are very few), or how big they are (though I think they are very small), if they are within the parts that compose the brain, then in addition to being essential to the body's metaphysical number, as I have argued above, they are also part of the most vital organ of the body and are necessary (though insufficient) for vital function. As such, by removing those parts, the organism loses both its essential parts which ground the metaphysical number of the body, and also a necessary chunk of material that allows the body to continue to live. Although they are incredibly small, they act as a biological kill switch that ends the life of the organism in the event they are removed. So in short, if you remove those parts two things happen: (1) the body ceases to be that particular body, and (2) the person dies. As a result, you cannot have your essential parts removed (identity theft) and live to tell the story. I contend, therefore, that this objection does not defeat my account.

12.3.4 *The Cannibal Objection*

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[69] Once again, special thanks to Yujin Nagasawa for seeing this concern and for articulating it to me with clarity and force.

One of the most significant objections to my view is known as the cannibal objection. Though it is not original to my view, it would seem that it applies to my view, as my view advocates for a reassembly model of numerical identity in the resurrection. This objection against reassembly goes all the way back to the second century. Because of this, I will need to say a bit more about this objection than some of the previous objections. In short, this objection imagines the possibility of a cannibal eating a person's body at death, and then considers the difficulties that this would raise for the resurrection of the body. According to this objection, in the event that our bodies were eaten by cannibals, God would not simply be able to resurrect our bodies by reassembling the original parts that once constituted our bodies. Since those parts now constitute the cannibal's body, and God would also have to resurrect his body as well, then God cannot reassemble my body and the cannibal's body at the same time and with the same parts.

Reassembly advocates have responded in a variety of ways. Athenagoras, for example, responded to this objection by claiming that human flesh was not digestible such that the atoms of an eaten body never become part of the cannibal.[70] This response, and others like it, makes it easy to dismiss the resurrection via reassembly. In contemporary philosophy, philosophers like Kevin Corcoran and Trenton Merricks have noted this was a major reason for them rejecting reassembly.[71] Corcoran, for example, puts the objection this way:

> Suppose your body becomes the tasty morsel of a cannibal, and some of the atoms that made up your body at death are also a part of the cannibal's body at death. How can God see to it that both you and the cannibal get reassembled, since now the very atoms in question have two equal claimants? It would seem that God cannot resurrect both of you, since some of the atoms that composed your body at death composed the cannibal's body at death, and in order for God to resurrect either of you, God must reassemble all of the atoms that belonged to your respective bodies at death (Corcoran, 2006, p. 124–125).

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[70] See Athenagoras (2004, p. 151).
[71] See Merricks (2001, p. 186–187).

Thus, according to these philosophers, it looks like reassembly will not work for the resurrection of our bodies.

Despite the initial appeal of this objection, there is reason to think it fails against my account, even if it succeeds against different accounts of reassembly. To begin with, the traditional cannibal objections to reassembly seem to assume that a reassembled body must have *all and exactly* the same parts that it once had in the original existence of a body. Corcoran describes this view as saying that God "gathers together *all of the smallest bits* (the atoms, say) that compose a body at death and reassembles them and causes them to be propertied and *related in exactly the way* those atoms were propertied and related at the time of death. The resulting object, on this view, is the previously existing body" (Corcoran, 2002, p. 416). As Corcoran explains it, reassembly requires all the same atoms to return and be reassembled in precisely the same way that they once were. Merricks seems to share the assumption that the resurrected body must share all the same original parts as the original body. He says, "Resurrection as reassembly involves Resurrection Day reassembly of *all the parts* at a certain level of decomposition—such as *all the atoms*—that composed the person at the time of her death" (Merricks, 2001, p. 186). We could illustrate this line of thinking as follows:

(B1)   At t_1, a body B is composed of parts 1, 2, 3, 4, . . .

(B2)   In order for body B' at t_2 to be numerically identical to B at t_1, then B' must also be composed of parts 1, 2, 3, 4, . . .

If this is what the cannibal objection assumes, and it seems that it does, then two problems arise. First, it appears that this account of resurrection assumes a set of persistence conditions that makes any kind of persistence of a human body impossible, even in this life. If the account of the cannibal objection given in (B1) & (B2) is true, then this would mean that (B3) is also true:

(B3)   For B at t_1 and B' at t_2 to be numerically identical, then B and B' must possess all and exactly the same parts (i.e. 1, 2, 3, & 4, . . .).

But if (B3) it true, then we have a major problem. In short, the truth of (B3) would mean that none of our present bodies—in this lifetime—persist from one day to the next, or from one year to the next. For example, consider the changes in our bodies throughout this life. Today my body consists of a given set of parts (1, 2, 3, & 4, . . .). But over the next few weeks and months I will eat various meals that will add new parts to my body (parts 5, 6, 7, & 8, . . .). With these additions, my body will now be composed of parts 1-8. But during this time, my body will also lose some parts. I will get a haircut, brush my teeth, clip my toe nails, and much more. Thus, there will likely be some parts that I once possessed that I lose. As such, it looks like my body will now be composed of parts 3-8.

Now, if (B3) is true—for B at t_1 and B' at t_2 to be numerically identical, then B and B' must possess all and exactly the same parts—then my body does not persist from one month to the next since it was first composed by parts 1-4 and is now composed by parts 3-8. (B3) requires us to think that two bodies separated by a temporal gap cannot be numerically identical if there is variation in their parts. This would apply for bodies in this lifetime just as much as it would apply to bodies in the resurrection. As such, the cannibal objection sets up a position that forces us to think of our bodies as entities that last for just a single moment and are then quickly replaced by a new body that is numerically distinct from previous bodies.

A second, but closely related, problem with the cannibalism objection is that it fails to allow for the possibility of there being essential and accidental parts of a person's body. On my view, with something that is distinct from other models of reassembly throughout history, it is not necessary for *all and exactly* the same set of the parts that once composed a body in this life to reappear in the resurrected body in order to achieve numerical identity. At most, all that is necessary for the later body at t_2 to be numerically identical to the previous body at t_1 is that the later body at t_2 possess all the essential parts of the previous body at t_1. The cannibal argument against reassembly seems to

suggest that resurrection is only possible if a person's body can possess *all and exactly* the same set of the parts present at the moment of death. I see no reason, however, for accepting this "*all and exactly*" idea and good reason for rejecting it. In short, this once again amounts to saying that every part of our body is essential to our body.[72] A quick reflection on the way our bodies change over time will show that this idea is false.

12.3.5   *The My Momma is a Cannibal Objection*

One final objection that causes potential problems for my view is what we could call the "my momma is a cannibal" objection.[73] As a reformulation of the previous argument, this objection considers what might happen if a pregnant mother eats a person's body. More specifically, what if her digestion of the human flesh happens in such a way that the essential parts of the victim are metabolized and then deposited inside the developing body's cerebral cortex and as such, become the essential parts of the developing fetus in the womb? If this were to happen, it looks like the victim and the developing baby would both have their essential parts composed of the exact same set of material parts. In this case, even a partial reassembly model like mine would be impossible for God since both bodies cannot be composed of the same essential parts.

Admittedly, this objection is a bit more vexing than the original cannibal objection. Interestingly, Aquinas himself seems to have anticipated a similar objection in the *Summa Contra Gentiles*. He says, "It happens, occasionally, that some men feed on human flesh, and they are nourished on this nutriment only, and those so nourished generate sons. Therefore, the same flesh is

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[72] This view amounts to a view known as mereological essentialism. The view was considered extensively by Roderick Chisholm and ultimately rejected by him as it renders persistence impossible. See Chisholm (1979) and Chisholm (1989).

[73] Once again, special thanks to Yujin Nagasawa for offering this important objection. I consider this to be perhaps the most difficult of all the objections to my view.

found in many men. But is it not possible that it should rise in many" (Aquinas, 1975, v.5, p. 301). In response to this objection, Aquinas argues the following:

> For in the resurrection this situation will obtain: If something was materially present in many men, it will rise in him to whose perfection it belonged more intimately. Accordingly, if something was in one man as the radical seed from which he was generated, and in another as the superfluity of nourishment, it will rise in him who was generated therefrom as from seed. If something was in one as pertinent to the perfection of the individual, but in another as assigned to the perfection of the species, it will rise in him to whom it belonged as perfection of the individual. Accordingly, seed will rise in the begotten, not in his generator; the rib of Adam will arise in Eve, not in Adam in whom it was present as in a principle of nature. But, if something was in both in the same degree of perfection, it will rise in him in whom it was the first time (Aquinas, 1975, v.5, p. 307).

Interestingly, Aquinas comes close to affirming something along the lines of an essential parts model here. Aside from this, however, it does not look like his response would work for my model. In short, despite his language that the material bits are in one man as "the radical seed from which he was generated" and in another later man as "the superfluity of nourishment", Aquinas ultimately contends that the shared material bits "will rise in him in whom it was the first time." The problem with this response is simple. If the parts are, as the "my momma is a cannibal" objection states, essential to both bodies, then it cannot be so simple that God just gives the essential parts back to the one who had them first. By doing this, God would thereby eliminate the resurrection of the second possessor of those parts, as those parts are essential to his body. And since God must raise them both in the resurrection, it looks like we have a version of the cannibal objection that just might render my account implausible.

So then, if Aquinas's response proves difficult to maintain, how might we resolve the "my momma is a cannibal" objection? I suggest that two theological points should be kept in mind as we work towards a plausible solution. First, we should remember that since we are dealing with the resurrection of our bodies, we are already talking about a miraculous act of God. Therefore, deferring to divine intervention here does not seem to be an *ad hoc* move. Second, Christianity teaches that God intends to preserve our lives and our bodies in the resurrection. Yet, if God allows

another body to possess the same essential parts as my body, this would make it impossible for God to also reassemble my body in the resurrection. Thus, I contend that this is a state of affairs that God would have sufficient motivation to prevent. So what could God do?

Perhaps it is the case that once a set of material bits is designated as being "my essential parts", God sees to it that those same parts will never be designated as someone else's essential parts. One possibility for how he could ensure this suggests a process within God's creative work in the original design of creation. Perhaps on the front end of creation, God so creates the world that when Bruce's soul informs a particular set of material bits, as the "charter members" of Bruce's body, those bits receive an ontological marking of sorts, such that they are always and forever marked as Bruce's essential parts. As a result, while they may become part of another body's accidental parts, they never become that body's essential parts. This would prevent Bruce's essential parts from also becoming essential parts of a baby being formed in the womb of a cannibal mother. Bruce's essential parts may become accidental parts of the baby in her womb, but they would never become essential parts of the baby's body. If so, then there is at least one plausible way to overcome the "my momma is a cannibal" objection. I contend, therefore, that it the problems presented to my model by the "my momma is a cannibal" objection are the kinds of problems that God has sufficient motivation to prevent, and that he has the resources available to him to prevent. As such, suggest that the "my momma is a cannibal" objection does not defeat my view.

12.4   Conclusion

In this chapter I have offered a way to modify Aquinas's account of human bodies in order to satisfy criteria (C3) and (C5) of a Christian anthropology. Specifically, I have put forth the doctrine of essential parts to help us reimagine what grounds the metaphysical identity of a person's body. If, as I have argued, our bodies have a set of parts (philosophical simples) that are essential to them, then

this enables us to simultaneously affirm that human personhood begins at the moment of conception and that human persons are the metaphysical composite of body and soul.

In addition to this, the doctrine of essential parts allows us to affirm that God brings about numerically identical bodies to the bodies we currently possess. More specifically, I argued that God does this by reassembling a very small set of parts that are essential to our bodies and that ground their metaphysical identities as a material objects. In this chapter I have also offered a brief response to what I see to be the most significant objections to my view. In the end, I remain unpersuaded that any of them are defeaters to my account.

Chapter 13

Final Thoughts on a Case for Modified Thomistic Holism

13.1   Where Have We Been?

In this thesis I have surveyed seven distinct philosophical and theological views of human persons,

arguing against materialism and substance dualism along the way. Both materialism and substance

dualism have a rich heritage in the philosophical and theological worlds. They also enjoy an army of

able defenders. As such, I do not wish to belittle or ridicule the various brands of each of these

views. I do, however, wish to differ with them.

The work of this thesis for the past few years has given my thought the chance to adapt,

modify, and expand. I started this journey as a militant substance dualist, deeply bothered by the

concept of "Christian materialism." And while I still reject this view, I have come to be far more

open to its prospects, and to hold a deep respect for its advocates. My views regarding substance

dualism have also changed. Once a loyal advocate, I have come to reject this view as well. With

substance dualists, however, I continue to maintain the distinction between, and existence of, bodies

and souls. But because of the theological and philosophical concerns raised in chapters 2 and 7, I

can no longer endorse a central tenant of this view that I have called PERSON-SOUL IDENTITY.

Along the way on this journey, as my thought changed towards both materialism and substance

dualism, I began looking to Thomas Aquinas, and his specific version of the hylomorphic tradition,

as a model for understanding human composition. From this, I am now persuaded that human

persons are composite beings of body and soul. But even here, I do not think that Aquinas's account

is perfect. His denial of (C3) and (C5) is cause for concern for me. Yet, I have argued that one can

modify his account with my doctrine of essential parts and this will solve the concerns.

These transitions resulted from three distinct ideas that started as what I often referred to as

"hunches". Through my research these past few years, my "hunches" evolved into full blown

convictions. First, there was a growing inclination to think that, given the testimony of Christian scripture, and given what the church fathers and medieval thinkers taught about human beings and the resurrection of the dead, the resurrection body must be numerically identical to the body that we currently possess. From this a second idea evolved into a conviction. Namely, if the Christian faith requires numerically identical bodies in the resurrection, then this is strongly suggestive that these bodies are essential to our identity. And if this is true, then the PERSON/SOUL IDENTITY claim made by substance dualists must be false. If bodies are essential to our identity, then some form of what I now call ontological holism is needed. With these first two convictions in mind, a third idea evolved into a full blown conviction. Namely, there was an ever increasing disposition to think that Aquinas's account of human persons was far more likely to be correct than either materialism or substance dualism. Such was my philosophical and theological journey away from substance dualism and into Thomism. But within this thesis, how have I made this case? A review of my formal argument throughout the thesis is as follows.

13.2   Overview of the Argument of the Thesis.

In part 1, I dealt with introductory matters. In chapter 1, I introduced the questions driving the thesis and offered an overview of my goals, methods, and structure. In chapter 2, I set forth what I called the criteria of a Christian anthropology. These include:

(C1) Bodies and souls are distinct entities.

(C2) Human persons are composed of bodies and souls.

(C3) Human personhood begins at the moment of conception.

(C4) At death, the body and soul separate with the body decomposing and the soul going to the intermediate state.

(C5) At the end of this world, our souls will be rejoined to bodies that are numerically identical to our current bodies.

There I argued that these five ideas represent some of the most important metaphysical claims about human persons that have been widely, in some cases overwhelmingly, held by Christian thinkers. While none of these ideas enjoys universal ascent, each idea enjoys such strong support that it is plausible to take them together as the criteria for a Christian anthropology. This means that any account of human persons that might fall under the label of "Christian" needs to have a concern for satisfying them.

In section 2, I considered materialism in general and then three distinct brands of Christian materialism. In chapter 3, I argued that phenomenal consciousness presents a major metaphysical problem for materialism, and that theologically speaking, it cannot satisfy any of the criteria of a Christian anthropology. In chapter 4, I considered Lynne Baker and Kevin Corcoran's respective accounts of constitutionalism, suggesting that each, for different reasons, collapses into a form of substance dualism. Moreover, I also raised several other unique problems that each of their views may have. In chapter 5, I evaluated Nancey Murphy's non-reductive physicalism and made the case that her reasons for rejecting substance dualism—the mind/body interaction problem—entail a problem for her theism. In chapter 6, I engaged Peter van Inwagen's eliminativism and suggested it suffers from a duplication problem relating to possible fission events. The net effect of these chapters was to suggest that materialism is deeply problematic for expressing our philosophical and theological anthropology.

In section 3, I gave similar consideration to substance dualism. In chapter 7, I suggested that there are philosophical problems with substance dualism as it relates to its inability to undergird the ethical convictions that many of its advocates suggest that it provides. Moreover, I made the case that, while it can satisfy criteria (C1), (C3), and (C4), it cannot satisfy, even with modifications, (C2) and (C5). In chapter 8, I explore Richard Swinburne's Cartesian view, arguing that one of his most important arguments fails to establish substance dualism. I also suggest that if his account is true, it

would entail some very puzzling scenarios about identity. Namely, it looks like two people could not only swap bodies, they could also simultaneously swap personalities. In chapter 9, I examined J.P. Moreland and Scott Rae's "Thomistic Substance Dualism", arguing that none of the major arguments utilized to defend it actually succeed. And in chapter 10, I addressed William Hasker's emergent dualism. There I argue that he fails to offer a plausible account of just how an emergent entity such as a mind/soul could actually come about, that his account of mind/soul dependence on the brain make soul survival impossible (or vice versa, if the mind/soul can function without the brain then it is not really dependent on the brain after all), and that if his account of mind/soul emergence could work, then this would entail some very damning problems from his account of resurrection.

Finally, in section 4, I explored Thomism in general and then defended a modified version of Aquinas's view of my own. In chapter 11, I offered an exegesis of Aquinas's view and then defended it against some common objections. I also evaluated it, as I did with materialism and substance dualism, against the criteria of a Christian anthropology set forth in chapter 2. I concluded that Aquinas's account easily satisfies (C1), (C2), and (C4), but that his view fails to satisfy (C3) and (C5). Then in chapter 12, after introducing a unique metaphysical concept of my own—the doctrine of essential parts—I argued that Aquinas's view of the body can be modified in such way that his account could then easily satisfy the remaining two criteria. I then considered several unique objections to my own view, arguing that none of them are successful in defeating my view.

In light of this trajectory, I now offer a final statement of my conclusion. I contend that my doctrine of essential parts affords some unique benefits to Aquinas's view, and that with them in place, an advocate of Modified Thomistic Holism, such as myself, has a superior philosophical and theological view of human composition to both materialism and substance dualism. With Aquinas, I contend that the soul is the substantial form of the body, by which a person is human and living.

With Aquinas, I also contend that the body is the principle of individuation of particular human persons. And with Aquinas, I contend that a human person is the hylomorphic composite of her body and soul. Of course, there is more to this, but these represent some of the most important issues. Contrary to Aquinas, however, I suggest that a particular set of material bits are what grounds the numerical identity of a particular human body. I contend that this particular set of material bits is present within the organism for the entirety of its existence, and that these material bits serve as the essential parts of the organism. These places of difference from Aquinas constitute both my unique philosophical contribution to the discussion, and the content of my modification to Aquinas's view. With this, I argue that Modified Thomistic Holism is a superior metaphysic of human persons.

13.3   Issues for Further Study.

In any thesis, it is impossible to address every important question that might arise. This thesis is no different. I set this work aside with a deep sense of excitement of what I have argued, but with a whole new set of questions burning in my mind. Specifically, in light of what I have argued here, three distinct philosophical or theological questions are worth noting.

First, how might my account of bodily resurrection be used by materialists to offer an alternative to van Inwagen's brain snatching events, or to Corcoran and Zimmerman's fission events? In agreement with these philosophers, I suspect that their accounts are indeed logically possible. But I also find them to be unsatisfying. Having argued what I have in chapter 12, I am left wondering if a materialist could take my doctrine of essential parts and my partial reassembly model of resurrection to articulate a purely materialist account of postmortem survival. I see no *prima facia* reason that they could not. While I may be inclined to think that such attempts would still be incompatible with a "Christian" anthropology, I am also inclined to think that such accounts would be far more interesting than the current materialists offerings.

Second, I have a deep interest in exploring the implications of my own view for Christology and the hypostatic union. According to Christian theism, the person Jesus Christ possessed two distinct natures, divine and human. And, these two natures are conjoined together in such a way that they are forever inseparable, yet remain distinct and unmixed in their essence. If so, how does this relate to what I have argued in chapters 11 and 12? Specifically, are there Christological issues lurking at the door for my view? Is there something within the doctrine of the hypostatic union that will cause deep and vexing problems for my account? With these questions in mind, I am intrigued to engage more with the Thomistic tradition to see what needs to be addressed on these fronts.

Finally, I am inclined to think that what I have said here regarding the doctrine of essential parts has a far greater reach beyond the issue of anthropology. Specifically, I am inclined to think that one might be able to extract the doctrine of essential parts from my work to explore its application in the broader metaphysical discussions on composition, vagueness, and persistence of ordinary physical objects. I am curious to see just how my idea might be able to answer the general question of composition. I suspect that it can answer this question with great eloquence and can solve some of the big metaphysical puzzles. I also suspect that it could do this with the related metaphysical questions of vagueness and persistence. But like both of the previous two areas for further study, this will have to be left for another day as the focus of the thesis is on philosophical anthropology, not metaphysics *per se*.

13.4   Conclusion

In this thesis I have argued against materialism and substance dualism. I have also argued that a view I call Modified Thomistic Holism is superior to both of the former perspectives. Like all other philosophical views, my own account will surely have its critics. And like all philosophers, I will surely struggle to answer them all. Such will be the case in all philosophical matters. For now,

however, I conclude that a modified version of Aquinas's view of human persons comes awfully

close to saying what needs to said.

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