



Journal of Philosophical Investigations



University of Tabriz

Beyond the Bodily View and Psychological View of Human Beings: Human Beings are Rational Animals

Khanh Trinh 

Professor at Devine Word Seminary in Manila & Ph.D. Candidate of Philosophy, De La Salle University, Philippine. Email: frkhanhtrinh@gmail.com

Article Info

Article type:

Research Article

Article history:

Received 30 November 2023

Received in revised form 20 December 2023

Accepted 21 December 2023

Published online 29 January 2024

Keywords:

animalism, psychological view, hylomorphism, persistence, identity.

ABSTRACT

We are... So, to reframe the inquiry: who are we on a metaphysical level? Which aspects of ourselves are the most universally representative of who we are? How do we fare in the face of the passage of time? For decades, philosophers have debated the concept of diachronic personal identity, which focuses on the question of what keeps us alive. An intricate debate has developed between those who hold the body view (animalism) and those who hold the psychological view (memory) on the question of who we are. The two groups will eventually become so firmly set in their views that they will be unable to compromise. Hylomorphic animalism, or the view that humans are rational animals, living bodies made of prime matter and a rational soul, is an alternative answer to this divisive question that I propose in this study, following in the footsteps of Aristotle and Aquinas. We only survive if matter and rational souls do.

Cite this article: Trinh, K. (2024). Beyond the Bodily View and Psychological View of Human Beings: Human Beings are Rational Animals. *Journal of Philosophical Investigations*, 17(45), 317-329. <https://doi.org/10.22034/JPIUT.2024.59858.3662>



© The Author(s).

<https://doi.org/10.22034/JPIUT.2024.59858.3662>

Publisher: University of Tabriz.

Introduction

What we are? There are various answers to this question, such as the bodily criterion, the brain criterion, various dualist theories, various neo-Lockean psychological views, and so on and so forth. Among them, psychological and biological answers are the most popular. According to the former view, psychological continuity keeps us alive. Thus, some psychologists believe that we consist of overlapping chains of strong psychological connectedness, itself consisting of significant numbers of direct psychological connections like memories, intentions, desires, and similarity of character. We are ceased to exist if we lose our memories, beliefs, and rationality. The foundation of the psychological view is that an account makes memory a necessary condition of personal identity, and it follows that a person cannot lose her memory yet continue to exist (Parfit, 1984; Schoemaker, 1984).

On the other hand, the biological view believes that the physical sustains us. Animalists believe we are numerically identical to biological organisms and only survive if they do (David Wiggins, 1967, 1980; William Carter, 1989; Eric Olson, 1997, 2003, 2007; Snowdon 1990). Animalism is the metaphysical thesis that "each of us is numerically identical with an animal: there is a certain organism, and you and it are one and the same" (Olson, 2007, 24). In other words, "we are identical with, are one and the same thing as, certain (human) animals" (Snowdon, 1990, 71). Then, an Animalist endorses pro-positions expressed by sentences of the form: "I am identical to an organism," "you are identical to an organism."

In this paper, I will contend that human beings do not consist of psychological and biological views; even though both views have some benefits, they also face some challenges. Following the footsteps of Aristotle and Aquinas, the hylomorphic animalism view, I propose another answer to what we are questioning. This view asserts that humans are numerically identical to rational animals, composed of prime matter and a rational soul. There are three sections to this paper. First, I discuss animalism's view on the persistence of an individual human being, in which I point out some benefits and raise some challenges from its point of view. In the second part, I contend that the psychological view on the persistence of an individual human being also faces some challenges. Then, in the third, I argue that the hylomorphic animalism view following the tradition of Aristotle and Aquinas is the view of our persistence. According to this view, rational animals—living bodies made of prime matter and a rational soul—are numerically identical to us. If matter and rational soul persist, we do too. I argue that hylomorphic animalism better explains certain contemporary personal identity thought experiments than animalism and psychological views.

1. Animalism's account of personal identity: Biological theory continuity

Animalism is the view that contends that we are numerically identical to biological organisms¹ in a certain kind. According to animalists, our persistence is conditioned by an animal organism. We exist as long as this organism is alive, and our existence ends with its death (Olson, 1999, 2003, 2007; Blatti, 2012; Snowden, 1991). Two major claims can be drawn from the biological account of personal identity, also known as animalism (Olson, 1999, 17; Snowden, 1991, 111). The first is that at our core, you and I are both biological organisms belonging to the species *Homo sapiens*. This is not to imply that we are made up of animals, have a special relationship with them, or that our biological continuity can be traced back to only a Parfitian concern. Instead, we are numerically identical to a human organism, which means we can be found in it for as long as it survives. Animalists' second argument is that "psychological continuity is neither necessary nor sufficient for a human animal to persist through time." (Olson, 1999, 17) If an animal can maintain its life in a persistent vegetative state after its capacity for psychological features has been irretrievably lost, then the animal does not require psychological continuity, as explained by Eric Olson (Olson, 1999, 17). Psyche does not matter so long as homeostasis is kept and metabolic processes keep going. However, there are also several objections have been raised against animalism.

The first problem that is raised in opposition to animalism is the transfer problem – body transfer which is based on Locke's discussion of the prince and cobbler that invites us to imagine how a person could be taken from the animal body with which she/he is associated and put into a different animal body. This problem can happen in various ways, such as brain transplant, cerebrum transplant, and teletransportation scenarios. These scenarios seem to suggest that if we are not essentially animals, then our persistence conditions are not those of animals.

Brown and Johnson's case is the most well-known example of a typical brain transplant scenario (Shoemaker, 1963, 23-24). Brown and Johnson are identical twins who undergo a procedure in which their brains are removed, and Brown's brain is placed into Johnson's body. The person who results from the transplant—the person who results from the combination of Brown's brain and Johnson's body—is psychologically continuous with the Brown who existed before the operation. That is, presumably, this person has Brown's memories, beliefs, desires, etc., and there is a continuity of mental capacities between him and Brown, such as rationality and self-awareness. According to the psychological approach, if either continuity of memories, beliefs, desires, etc., or mental capacities such as rationality and self-awareness are sufficient for our survival, then the psychological approach says that the person who results from the transplant is numerically identical to the pre-operation Brown. This result of the psychological approach concerning brain transplants is consistent with the transplant intuition.

¹ In this paper the term animalism and the biological organism are used exchangeable.

Animalism also faces other problems, such as the remnant-person problem, the thinking parts problem, the corpse problem, and conjoined twinning cases (Olson, 2015, 21-40; Olson, 2004, 265-274; Olson, 2007, 216-219; McMahan and Campbell, 2010, 285-301). In these cases, the problem is that there is more than one thinking thing, like your body and your organism. Alternatively, the number of humans in the world does not match the number of humans that animalism predicts should be in the world. In cases of conjoined twinning, two human beings appear to exist for one human organism; however, according to animalism, if two numerically distinct human persons exist, then two human organisms exist.

In this section, I discussed the fundamental aspects of animalism, which hold that human persons are the same as other organisms. After that, I also present some common problems with the biological account of personal identity. These problems may lead the reader to the alternatives I will discuss later.

2. The psychological view on personal identity: Psychological theory continuity

The psychological approach asserts that human beings persist if and only if we have a psychological continuer. "Some psychological relation is necessary or sufficient (or both) for one to persist" (Baker, 2000; Parfit, 1984; Shoemaker, 1984). In this point of view, memory plays a crucial role "a person, x, existing at one time, t1, and a person, y, existing at a later time, t2, y is identical with x if and only if y remembers experiences had by x" (Blatti, 2014). In other words, any person who exists at one time is identical to something that exists at another time just in case the person is at that time-related in some psychological way to the other thing as it is at the other time. In this view, the facts about memory, beliefs, character, and other mental features and capacities will determine whether one survives or perishes.

The psychological view has a certain benefit that can solve the problem that the biological faces in the case of brain transplant involving Brown and Johnson, which is mentioned above. In this case, Brown's brain is removed from his body and put into Johnson's body (without the brain). In this scenario, the recipient of Brown's brain (Johnson) is assumed to inherit all of Brown's psychology which includes his memory, his beliefs, his desires, and his capacities such as rationality and self-awareness. Therefore, the persons who result from the transplants are numerically identical to the pre-operation Brown since the psychological account asserts that humans go wherever their memory goes. This result is consistent with our intuition about what happens in cases of brain transplants.

However, there are some problems with the psychological account. The first problem of the psychological account is that the memory criterion for personal identity is circular (Shoemaker, 1984, 88; Williams, 1973, 233). According to this theory, if a person remembers doing something, then she must have done it herself. Putting it another way, if A remembers A doing S, then A is the same as A since A cannot remember doing or perceiving something he did not do or perceive. It is

a tautology. Second, according to the memory theory, a person who loses his memory will cease to exist because his memory is an essential part of his identity. However, in reality, it does not make sense that someone loses his memory or forgets things that would be fatal.

The third problem of the psychological view is the problem of intransitivity. The psychological account asserts that if two things are identical to the third thing, then each of them will be identical to the other. In other words, if person A is identical to person B, and person B is identical to person C, then it follows that person A is identical to person C. However, Thomas Reid pointed out that if person A is directly psychologically connected to person B and person B is directly psychologically connected to person C, it does not follow that person A is directly psychologically connected to person C (Reid, 2002, 275-279). Too many-thinkers and the possibility for one person is psychologically continuous in two people are two other problems that the psychological view cannot avoid (Parfit, 1984, 199-201).

Lastly, from the psychological view, our persistence does not start out as fetuses, and we cannot survive in a persistent vegetative state since we are lacking the mental capacities and content mentioned above. These cases present complex ethical and legal dilemmas, such as whether or not to consider a person in a persistent vegetative state to be dead and whether we can remove his organs for transplant purposes. Do we have a responsibility to keep it alive for as long as possible? (Olson, 1999, 8) So, by the end of this section, I hope to have explained the many problems that a psychological theory continuity supporter must deal with in order to be consistent. This should be enough to convince the reader to look elsewhere for better options.

3. Hylomorphism account of personal identity: a composite of matter-form

In general, hylomorphism is the view that every material object is composed of two different parts: form and matter. Likewise, the human being is its form and its matter since we are too material objects. The hylomorphism as a theory of personal identity necessitates that every human has two components: each of us is a combination of matter and a certain type of form, which primarily explains our persistence over time. To make sense of a hylomorphic view of personal identity, we must first understand a general hylomorphic ontology's relevant terminology and metaphysical commitments. What are "matter" and "form" referring to? And what can they tell us about our enduring conditions? How can they solve the problems in the psychological view and the hylomorphic animalism? In this section, I will give a brief overview of these issues.

For Aristotle and Aquinas, matter is pure potentially to all forms and has no form of its own,¹ or "that which is in potential to receiving a form – namely, a being in potential." (Brower, 2014, 5)

¹ Aristotle, *De Anima*, 412a10-11: "Now matter is potentiality, form actuality . . ."; Aquinas, *Aristotle's De Anima with the Commentary of St. Thomas Aquinas*, 2.1.215: "Matter, then, differs from form in this, that it is potential being; form is the 'entelechy' or actuality that renders matter actual; and the compound is the resulting actual being."

It is the potential that the actuating form makes a thing what it is. The matter is that which can become a new substance. According to Aquinas, matter cannot exist on its own since matter does not have form in itself. Therefore, matter never exists without form; it must be created and informed by a form.¹ On the other hand, form is actuality,² or "that which actualizes the potential of matter – a being in actuality." (Brower, 2014, 5) Form is the "intrinsic constitutive element of the species ... in sensible entities."³ A hylomorphic compound or substance is formed when form inheres in matter. The new substance – the composite of form and matter, receives its act of being through the form.⁴

According to Aquinas, there are two kinds of matter: prime or primary matter and secondary matter (Browner, 2014, 12). Together with two types of matter, there are two kinds of form: substantial form and accidental form (Browner, 2014, 12). It follows from this that there are two types of hylomorphic compound: substances and accidental unities. Substances are composed of prime matter and substantial form; accidental unities are composed of substances of accidental form and secondary matter. As mentioned above, according to Aristotle, in the strict sense, only prime matter is matter, which is pure potentially, having in itself no actuality. Secondary matter, as such, is not pure potentially, but it qualifies as matter in the sense that it has the potential to receive a form.⁵ Only when a substantial form is added to prime matter a new substance is made; indeed, the prime matter acts as a substratum for the substantial form.⁶

3.1 Human being as a compound of soul and body: Aquinas on the nature of human beings

The above explanations of form and matter can apply to the soul and body. The form of the body is what the soul is. The soul is what gives the body existence, unity, and identification as a member of the genus and species of the composite. "The body is not of the essence of the soul, but the soul by the nature of its essence can be united to the body, so that, properly speaking, not the soul alone, but the composite, is the species."⁷ Indeed, Aquinas maintains that the rational soul is the principle of life (Kretzmann, 1993, 128) and as the substantial form of the body, which makes a human being their composite. "A human being is said to be from soul and body as a third thing constituted from two things neither of which he is, for a human is not soul nor is he body." (Aquinas, 1998, 36). It

¹ Aquinas, *De Principiis Naturae (De PN)*, 14.

² Aristotle, *De Anima* 412a10-11: "Now matter is potentiality, form actuality . . ."; Aquinas, *Sentencia libri De anima Commentary on Aristotle's De Anima*, 2.1.215; Aquinas, *De PN*, 1.35-43: ". . . so also everything from which something has existence whether that existence be substantial or accidental, can be called form . . ."

³ Aveling, F. (1909). Form. In *The Catholic Encyclopedia*. New York: Robert Appleton Company. Retrieved July 15, 2023 from New Advent: <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06137b.htm>.

⁴ Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentile (SCG)*, II.55.2; *Summa Theologica (ST)*, 1.77.6.

⁵ Aquinas, *De PN*, 1.20-24.

⁶ Aristotle, *De Anima*, 412a19-27.

⁷ Aquinas. *ST* 1.75.7.

is because of the human soul – the rational soul¹ is both human and animal (it will be explained below – three kinds of souls). Some kind of form actualizes the body to be a particular kind of body. Therefore, all living things consist of two parts: soul and body. According to Aquinas, although the body exists through the soul, both soul and body share one existence: composite. Indeed, they (composite of soul and body) are one being, one existence, and one substance, not two separate beings and substances.²

Regarding living things, Aristotle and Aquinas maintain that material substances can be divided into two groups: those that are alive and those that are not. The source of life for all and only those material things that belong to the class of living things is their substantial form or soul.³ In the same way that each material thing can have only one substantial form, each living thing can possess only one soul. Aristotle divided material objects into groups depending on the kind of souls which each of them (material things) receives. For him, there are three kinds of souls. The vegetative soul is the source of the vegetative functions of organisms, such as growth and reproduction.⁴ The sensitive soul is the source of the sensitive function of organisms like appetites, pain, pleasure, imagination, and memory.⁵ The rational soul has functions for growing, sensing, and thinking.⁶ There are no separate souls for all of these powers in each living thing. Organic things like flowers, moss, and grass only have a vegetative soul. An animal has a sensitive soul, which includes the capacity of both vegetative and sensitive. A human being has a rational soul which is capable of rational sensitive, and vegetative functions. The higher souls contain almost all of the characteristics that are associated with, the lower souls.⁷

Following the steps of Aristotle and Aquinas from these analyses, we can conclude according to hylomorphic animalism. First, a human being is a composite of form (or soul) and matter (or body). "The body is not of the essence of the soul, but the soul by the nature of its essence can be united to the body, so that, properly speaking, not the soul alone, but the composite, is the species."⁸ Indeed, no human being can exist without a body. The human soul, the substantial form, and the human body are not two separate substances.⁹ A human person is necessary for a composite of body and soul, as Aquinas insists: "Body and soul are not two existing substances, but from these two is made one actually existing substance."¹⁰ If human persons are identical to the composite,

¹ Hereafter, the terms soul, human soul, rational soul and intellectual soul are used interchangeably in this paper.

² Aquinas, *SCG* II. 69.2 ; *Questiones Disputatae De Anima (Q. De Anima)*, 1.1.ad.13.

³ Aristotle, *De Anima* 412a18-412a26, 413a21; Aquinas, *ST* 1.75.I.

⁴ Aquinas, *ST* 1.78.2.

⁵ Aristotle, *De Anima*, 414a29-415a12; 413b14-413b24.

⁶ Aristotle, *De Anima*, 413a21-413b13; 414a29-415a12; Aquinas, *ST* 1.76.3.

⁷ Aquinas, *ST* 1.76.3, 1.76.4; *De Unitate Intellectus (De UI)*, 1.49.

⁸ Aquinas. *ST* 1.75.7.

⁹ Aquinas. *SCG* II, chap. 69.

¹⁰ Aquinas. *D'UI* 3.

ceasing to be of the composite is sufficient for the ceasing to be of the human person. Secondly, human beings do not possess three souls but one—a rational soul, which is the source of vegetative, sensitive, and rational functions.¹ Human beings are identically composed of primary matter and a substantial, rational soul.²

Human beings do not possess three souls but one—a rational soul, which is the source of vegetative, sensitive, and rational functions.³ Human beings are identical to rational animals and composed of primary matter and a substantial, rational soul.⁴

Now let us see how a hylomorphic account of personal identity solves the problems that come from both biological and psychological views and how it can retain the benefits of animalism that we once were early fetuses prior to possessing the capacity for rationality, consciousness and mental content such as memories, beliefs, desires; we can continue to exist in a persistent vegetative state.

3.2 Hylomorphic animalism beyond the psychological view and animalism

Following these explanations, one crucial point that hylomorphic animalism proposes is Aquinas' so-called "unicity doctrine" (Brown, 2005, 84-87; Oderberg, 2005, 81-85). According to this doctrine, each material substance has only one substance form. In the case of humans, for example, there is not a separate substantial form that first brings about the body, another that brings about the body as a living thing, and a third that brings about the rationality of the living body. Instead, only one substantial form makes all of a person's functions and parts work. This is the rational soul of a person. The entailments of the unicity doctrine can be used to solve many of the problems that proponents of a biological account of personal identity face. (Toner, 2011, 73)

Following Aquinas, according to the hylomorphic animalism account, the persistence condition for human beings is the composite of matter and form – body and soul. In this view, human persons are identical to matter-form composite, and they exist if and only if the matter-form composite to which they are numerically identical persists (Edwards, 1979, 89-97). The existence of the soul or the body cannot maintain the persistence of human beings. To explain, Aquinas maintains that after the composite's death and the soul's departure, the body is not really a body, and the body's parts are no longer those same parts.⁵ At the soul's departure, the body is then only called the body equivocally. The hand of the corpse is no more than that of a statue. This is because they no longer have their functions which belong to the soul. They can do nothing. The soul is the one that makes the body a real body and the parts of the body, such as the eye, hand into a real thing. The union between the soul and the body is not the relationship between the ship and the sailor. This union

¹ Aquinas, *ST* 1.76.3.

² Aquinas, *ST* 1.76.1.

³ Aquinas, *ST* 1.76.3.

⁴ Aquinas, *ST* 1.76.1.

⁵ Aquinas, *SCG* II.57.10; *ST* 1.76.8; *Q. De Anima* 1.c, 10.c ; *De UI* 3.78

makes up one substantial being; therefore, the soul cannot make up that being by itself. The body must be a part of it. This indicates that without the soul, there is no real "body" in the strict sense. At this point, Aquinas ruled out the problem of the dead body that the rival of animalism, the psychological view, proposed.

The problem of two-many thinkers

As mentioned above, both psychological views and animalism seem to face two-many thinkers' problems. The problem is that there is more than one thinking thing, like your body and your organism in animalism; the cerebrum transplant in the psychological view.

Aquinas asserts that memory, imagination, and emotion do not just belong to the body as a part of the human being, nor only to the soul, even though they are the functions or powers of the soul. But they belong to the self – the living body, in which the soul is a part of the self and performs its functions or powers. In the same way, intellectual and willingness are not done by the soul but by the human composite of the soul and the body, although the soul does not depend on the body. It is not correct to say that the intellect thinks or the soul thinks; instead, we can say that Aquinas thinks or Aristotle thinks – this man, Aristotle or Aquinas, is composed of this body and this soul.¹ Even though the soul or the intellect's operation does not need the body, it naturally depends on phantasm (which belongs to the body) for its knowledge.² Through phantasm, the soul knows its objects by abstracting universals from them. The phantasm is formed through sensation and in the brain. The intellect needs the phantasm to know the universal. Moreover, without body-senses, the intellect cannot know the individual things.³ It is because the singular thing, such as the dog Mike and the cat Bella, consists of matter, which is unintelligible to the intellect. Only the senses – the body can know particular things. Indeed, without a body, the intellect cannot know individual things. These analyses show that the problem of too-many thinkers does not happen in hylomorphic animalism's account since the act of thinking belongs to the composite of the body and the soul – the person, not the soul or the intellect – "my soul is not me."⁴

The transfer problems

One of the counterexamples of animalism is the cerebrum transplant. My cerebrum was carefully removed in the hospital, leaving a living animal on the table where I lay down. That cerebrum is then transplanted into a living human animal without a cerebrum on another table. Later, that living human animal wakes up with all my attitudes, memories, inclinations, and loves. Where am I?

¹ Aquinas, *ST* 1.76.1.c.

² Aquinas, *SCG* II.60.16,18, 73.41; *ST* 1.84.7,8.

³ Aquinas, *ST* 1.86.1.c.ad3.

⁴ Aquinas, *Super I Epistolam B. Pauli ad Corinthios lectura*, chap. 15.

Aquinas maintains that a human soul cannot enter a dog's or a chimpanzee's body since human souls can only inform human bodies, and the particular soul can only inform its one particular body.¹ The reason for it is that the body has the potential to be a human body only in its human form. Acts are in direct relation to their potencies. Therefore, the human soul only actualizes a body that is capable of being actualized by it, which is why only human bodies are. According to Aquinas, it is true for a particular individual. Brian's soul can only inform its body – Brian's body. Brian's soul cannot enter or inform Peter's body since it (a soul) can only actualize the body which is capable of being actualized by it. Therefore, only Brian's body has the potential to be actualized by his soul.

It is, then, impossible for the soul of a dog to enter the body of a wolf, or for a man's soul to enter any body other than a man's. But the proportion between man's soul and man's body is the same as between this man's soul and this man's body. Therefore, the soul of this man cannot possibly enter a body other than his own. (Aquinas, *SCG* II.73.4.)

This analysis shows that Aquinas ruled out the transfer problem from one body to another.

In addition, in *De Principiis Naturae*, Aquinas claims that two things are identical in species if they have the same kind of form and the same kind of body.² Therefore, two animals are both human animals if and only if both of them have a human soul and a human body. This is because, for Aquinas, identity is tied to essence which is composed of body and soul. Now, we can go back to the case of cerebrum transplant between Brown and Robinson. According to the same principle or the unicity doctrine, we cannot have two or three Brown, even Brown's brain, with his relevant psychology put into Robinson or Smith. This is because two people are the same numerically identical human person if they have the same body and soul. Brownson and Brownsmith do not have the same body and same soul as Brown. It is impossible that Brownson and Brownsmith are identical to Brown. For hylomorphic animalism, the transplant is not a big deal.

The problem of intransitivity, circulation

In Aquinas's account, the sameness principle can solve the intransitivity circulation problem in the psychological view. According to the same principle, the person named Peter in 1982 is numerically the one called Peter in 2023 if Peter in 2023 has numerically the same soul and the same body as Peter in 1982. Following this explanation, Peter in 2023 is still the same Peter in 1982 if they have the same soul and the same body, even though he can lose his memory and personality traits. The numerical identity of the vegetative or sensitive functions is not necessary

¹ Aquinas, *ST* 1.75.4.c; *SCG* II. 73.4

² Aquinas, *De PN* 35.

for personal identity. Psychological traits, such as memory, belief is not sufficient for personal identity as the psychological view propose. Consequently, there is no more problem of intransitivity or circulation.

The problem of human beings in a vegetative sense and at early birth (fetus)

What can the hylomorphism say about whether or not humans may survive in a persistent vegetative state and fetus? In my view, a human being exists if and only if the compound of matter and form to which he is identical exists. If there is evidence that the matter-form composite can survive in a persistent vegetative state, then this is evidence that a human being can survive in a persistent vegetative state. Is there such a piece of evidence? Yes. According to Aquinas' hylomorphism, a human being's soul is in charge of all of his or her functions, including the vegetative, sensitive, and rational ones. Also, a person's soul gives him or her the active potential to do these things. So, if certain functions continue in the individual's organic body, whether vegetative, sensitive, or rational, this is proof that the soul continues to exist in the individual's matter and, therefore, that the human being exists. This is because a human has a rational soul capable of rational, sensitive, and vegetative powers. The higher souls contain virtually whatever belongs to the lower souls.¹

First, in the case of vegetative states, the person named Peter lying on the bed in a vegetative state is numerically to the person named Peter in 1982 since both of them have the same soul and the same body. We know that Peter's soul is the rational soul, which has full functions of being rational, sensitive, and vegetative. Peter cannot think when he is in a vegetative state, but that does not mean that his human soul, which is a rational soul, has left his body. His human soul is still there and working perfectly in his body. It is the foundation of his existence. Peter does not think this means that his rational functions are not working; meanwhile, his other functions, such as his sensitive and vegetative ones, are still active and working. So, as long as Peter, which is made up of his soul and body, still exists, he is still a person, no matter if his rational soul is capable of rational, sensitive, and vegetative functioning or not.

Secondly, at the very beginning of the fetus, when a human embryo develops, it has a vegetative soul. The embryo continues to develop to a certain period when it is ready for the sensitive soul. The embryo continues to develop until the rational soul informs it.² Following the development of a human embryo and fetus, some people say that it seems three kinds of souls exist in a human being. Aquinas maintains that there is only one soul exists in a human being. The rational soul comes into existence at the same time it begins to inform the embryo.³ However, the rational soul,

¹ Aquinas, *ST* 1.76.3.c., 1.76.4.c; *De UI* 1.49.

² Aquinas, *ST* 118.2.ad 2; *De Potentia* 3.9.ad 9.

³ Aquinas, *ST* 1.90.3.c, 4.c.

with three kinds of function: rational, sensitive, and vegetative, will appear at a specific time during the embryo's development. Furthermore, the lower soul will disappear when the higher soul – a perfect form appears.

We must therefore say that since the generation of one thing is the corruption of another, it follows of necessity that both in men and in other animals, when a more perfect form supervenes the previous form is corrupted: yet so that the supervening form contains the perfection of the previous form, and something in addition. (Aquinas, *ST* 118.2.ad2.)

Therefore, hylomorphic animalism, following Aquinas, rules out the struggle for the psychological view and maintains the benefits of animalism on the state of a person at early birth and a person in a vegetative state.

In this section, I have given the fundamental tenets of hylomorphic animalism, founded on the contention by Aristotle and Aquinas, respectively, that human beings are rational animals composed of matter and form. After analyzing hylomorphic animalism, which focuses on Aquinas's account, I also argue for a hylomorphic account of personal identity by showing how it can solve problems that the two main views discussed in the previous sections are unable to do. I also contend that the hylomorphic animalism view is open to discussing the human being in a vegetative state and at early birth (fetus).

Conclusion

In sum, what we are questioning is not easy to answer. Many discussions among philosophers about this topic have produced many different or even contradicting opinions that could be divided into two views: on the one side, animalists believe that human beings are numerically identical to biological organisms. The animal organism conditions our persistence. On the other side, psychologists argue that human beings persist if we have psychological continuer. Our persistence depends on our memory. However, the argument of each side does not convince the other side. Each of them has some problems which cannot satisfy the other. After looking at both sides and analyzing the evidence and arguments, I contend that hylomorphic animalism is preferable to the psychological approach and other forms of animalism because it more closely aligns with our intuitive notions of what is necessary for survival. Since hylomorphic animalism is consistent and makes intuitive sense, it is an appealing explanation for our long-term survival.

References

- Aquinas, *De Principiis Naturae (De PN)*.
Aquinas, *Sentencia libri De anima Commentary on Aristotle's De Anima*.
Aquinas, *Super I Epistolam B. Pauli ad Corinthios lectura*.
Aquinas, T. (1998). *On Being and Essence: Select Writing*, (R. McInerny, Trans.). Penguin.

- Aquinas. (1993). *Selected Philosophical Writings*, edited by T. McDermont, Oxford: OUP.
- Aquinas. *De Anima*.
- Aquinas. *De Potentia*.
- Aquinas. *De unitate intellectus (De UI)*.
- Aquinas. *Questiones Disputatae De Anima (Q. De Anima)*.
- Aquinas. *Summa contra gentile (SCG)*.
- Aquinas. *Summa Theologiae (ST)*.
- Aristotle. (2014). *The Complete Works of Aristotle: The Revised Oxford Translation*, ed. Jonathan Barnes.
- Aveling, F. (1909). Form. In *The Catholic Encyclopedia*. Robert Appleton Company. Retrieved July 15, 2023. <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06137b.html>
- Blatti, S. (2012). A new argument for animalism. *Analysis*, 72(4), 685–690. <https://doi.org/10.1093/analys/ans102>
- Bollingen Series
- Brower, J. E. (2014). *Aquinas's Ontology of the Material World: Change, Hylomorphism, and Material Objects*. Oxford University Press.
- Brown, C. M. (2005). *Aquinas and the Ship of Theseus: Solving Puzzles about Material Objects*. Continuum.
- Edwards, S. (1979). Saint Thomas Aquinas on 'The Same Man.' *The Southwestern Journal of Philosophy*, 10(1), 89–97. <https://doi.org/10.5840/swjphil19791018>
- Kretzmann, N., & Stump, E. (1993). The Cambridge companion to Aquinas. In *Cambridge University Press*.
- Oderberg, D. S. (2005). Hylemorphic Dualism. In E. F. Paul & F. D. Miller (Eds.), *Personal identity* (pp. 70–99). Cambridge University Press.
- Olson, E. T. (2003). An Argument for Animalism. In J. Martin & J. Barresi (Eds.), *Personal Identity*. Blackwell.
- Olson, E. T. (1999). *The Human Animal: Personal Identity Without Psychology*. Oxford University Press.
- Olson, E. T. (2007). *What Are We? A Study in Personal Ontology*. Oxford University Press.
- Parfit, D. (1984). *Reasons and Persons*. Oxford University Press.
- Reid, T. (2002). On Mr. Locke's Account of Personal Identity. In K. Haakonssen (Ed.), *Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man* (Vol. 6). Edinburgh University Press.
- Shoemaker, S. (1963). *Self-knowledge and self-identity*. Cornell University Press.
- Shoemaker, S. (1984). Personal Identity: A Materialist's Account. In *Personal Identity*. Oxford Press.
- Snowdon, P. F. (1990). Persons, Animals, and Ourselves. In C. Gill (Ed.), *The Person and the Human Mind: Issues in Ancient and Modern Philosophy*. Clarendon Press.
- Toner, P. (2011). Hylemorphic Animalism. *Philosophical Studies*, 155, 65–81.
- Williams, B. (1973). Personal Identity and Individuation. In *Problems of the Self*. Cambridge University Press.