

Scholastic Hylomorphism and Dean Zimmerman

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Abstract: I present Dean Zimmerman's conceptualization of the varieties of substance dualism. I then focus attention on a form of dualism that he has discussed briefly in a few places, Thomistic dualism as he calls it, or hylomorphic dualism, as I call it. After explicating hylomorphic dualism, I consider the two places where Zimmerman says the most about it, finding, in one case, a way to alleviate a worry he raises using the resources internal to hylomorphism, and, in the other case, a general agreement with his categorizing hylomorphic dualism as an intermediary position between substance dualism and materialism. Since hylomorphic dualism is something of an intermediary position between substance dualism and materialism, it stands to reason that it could be susceptible to attack from both sides. Thus, in the last portions of this article I consider the arguments Zimmerman answers against dualism and levels against materialism. I argue that the hylomorphic theorist can answer the charges against dualism at least as well as the other dualists can. I find that the main argument against materialism that Zimmerman provides, if sound, would also show any composite form of dualism to be false, too. Happily, the hylomorphic thinker has a method of denying the truth of the first premise of that argument, and so, of denying the soundness of the argument.

Keywords: Hylomorphism, Zimmerman, Thomism, Dualism, Materialism

Introduction

Dean Zimmerman has been at the forefront of discussions concerning the ontology of the human person for decades.¹ He is a long-time proponent of substance dualism,

¹ For just a subset of the works he has authored on the topic, see: (Zimmerman 2004; 2006; Van Inwagen and Zimmerman 2007; Zimmerman 2008; 2013; 2019).

which he defines as “the doctrine that each human person is an immaterial substance, a soul—or at least that each of us has a soul as a part” (Zimmerman 2004, 315). His championing of dualism has, reasonably, often focused on the most common forms of dualism in the contemporary literature. Aristotelian theories, being less common now than in ages past, receive mention but less detailed analysis.

In this paper, I take the insights Zimmerman has taught us about the ontology of human persons and apply them to a variety of dualism he has mentioned in some of his work, but not dealt with in great depth. He has referred to it as *Thomistic dualism* (Zimmerman 2006, 115; Van Inwagen and Zimmerman 2007, 21–22; Zimmerman 2013, 105; 133). We might broaden our naming convention just a bit, as the main contours of the view are held by scholastic thinkers outside the Thomistic school, and, indeed, ancient philosophers, as well. I will refer to it as *hylomorphic dualism*. It is a *dualism* concerning metaphysical parts of material substances, and it is *hylomorphic* insofar as the two metaphysical parts posited by the view are matter (*hyle*) and form (*morphe*).

In this article, I consider such a hylomorphic dualism, showcasing where and how Zimmerman has approached it in the past. As we shall see, Zimmerman, following Eleonore Stump (2005) and Brian Leftow (2001), places the hylomorphic view as an intermediary between substance dualism and materialism. In light of this placement, I go on to consider how the hylomorphic view fares with respect to the arguments against dualism and materialism that Zimmerman considers. While I provide no ultimate scorecard or official ranking of the three views, I hope to show that the hylomorphic view fares no worse than its rivals when considering the main objections they face.

Zimmerman on Varieties of Dualism

Substance dualism, for Zimmerman, is a thesis about the ontology of persons, and, often in particular, about human persons. I quoted Zimmerman’s definition of substance dualism in the Introduction. Giving more detail about the view, Zimmerman writes that:

(a) they believe that, for every person who thinks or has experiences, there is a thing—a soul or spiritual substance—that lacks many of the physical properties the body shares with unthinking material objects; and (b) they believe that this extra thing is essential to the person, and in one way or another responsible for the person’s mental life. (Van Inwagen and Zimmerman 2007, 19)

Zimmerman follows this quotation with a careful and illuminating discussion of what is required for (a) and (b)—how many and which properties can thinking things share with unthinking things?; How robust must the “responsibility” for a person’s mental life be for a view to count as substance dualism? Later we will see that (b) provides some impetus for Zimmerman to question whether hylomorphic dualism is really a species of substance dualism.

Zimmerman’s account of substance dualism, as spelled out, allows two different relations to hold between the person and the immaterial substance that dualism posits. The first he calls *pure dualism*, the defenders of which claim that “persons are entirely immaterial; they are identical with souls and are related to their physical bodies as pilot to ship” (Zimmerman 2006, 115). The second he calls *composite dualism*, which is the thesis that the person is the whole composed of a body and soul. These two varieties of substance dualism offer radically different views of what a human person is.

On the pure version, you, the person reading this paper, are wholly immaterial, piloting the reading eyes and the holding hands (pretend that you still read things on paper and are holding a journal issue). It is false that anyone has ever seen or touched *you*, strictly so called, though it is easy enough to provide a systematic paraphrase of such claims into claims about the body you pilot, and so to provide a way of understanding claims such as “I saw you yesterday at First Avenue” to be true.

On the other subspecies of dualism, composite dualism, you are not wholly immaterial. You yourself are seen and touched. You are, to use an image from Christina van Dyke (2000), a metaphysical amphibian.² Or to borrow an image from Brian Leftow (2001), a soul dipped in dust. You are something that is composed of parts or elements, some of which are material, some of which are immaterial. You, though, are the whole, not either part.

At the level of composite dualism, too, there is an important bifurcation. The two main theories here are divided by their answer to the following question: What, exactly, is doing the thinking? According to Zimmerman,

most composite dualists ascribe one’s mental properties to the soul and one’s physical properties to the body. On this version of composite dualism, a person is identical with a psycho-physical whole that includes the thinking soul as a part. (Zimmerman 2006, 115)

² Eleonore Stump (1995) uses the image of a metaphysical amphibian, too, but says that it is the human soul that is the metaphysical amphibian.

Zimmerman provides Richard Swinburne (1997) as a paragon example of this view. The second variant of composite substance dualism, as Zimmerman portrays it, is one attributable to St. Thomas Aquinas:

Following Aristotle, Aquinas calls the substantial forms of living things “souls”; the soul of a human being is responsible for its entire complex physical and mental nature. But it is not the soul that thinks or acts, it is the whole human being—a composite of matter and the soul or form that gives the matter its distinctively human structure. (Zimmerman 2006, 115)

The distinction between these two varieties of composite substance dualism, then, is a distinction between whether the immaterial part of the human person itself is a thinker, or whether it is not a thinker itself but instead *that in virtue of which* the person is a thinker.

I think that Zimmerman is right to find such a view in Aquinas, but the reader might inadvertently draw a false conclusion about the scope of the view from the conversational implicature with the name. The view here dubbed the ‘Thomistic view’ is far more widely held than merely among the Thomists, as Zimmerman makes explicit when saying that Aquinas is following Aristotle. While Zimmerman claims that most composite dualists subscribe to the Swinburne-style view, I think it fair to say that among the medievals and perhaps before them as well, the most popular view was this Aristotelian view. For that reason, and to avoid the interminable exegetical disputes concerning who has gotten Aquinas right, I will refer to this view as the ‘Hylomorphic view’ or ‘hylomorphic dualism’ rather than the ‘Thomistic view.’³

³ This second reason, I realize, is futile. There is no avoiding the debates about what Thomas *really* meant if one, like me, invokes his name. No need to say it thrice into a mirror. The debates find you. Why, I’ve been tucked into my marriage bed, lights out, frozen Minnesota tundra kept at bay behind locked doors and windows, and whispered to my wife, halfway to sleep, a passing thought about Aquinas on prime matter, only to have a Thomist slide out from under my bed, pointer finger in the air, Latin already rattling through his lips about how such a view *might* have been the Angelic Doctor’s in his first Parisian regency, but by the time that he left Orvieto, he surely had this *other* view, as evidenced by *this* oft-overlooked text from his *Summa Contra Gentiles*. Such a bold claim of revision in the thought of the master is, as everyone knows, a surefire incantation of Thomist-summoning, and so none of us should have been surprised to see the Dominican tumble in from the hallway, Marietti edition in hand, claiming five ways to show that the view of the *Sentence Commentary* matched perfectly well *thankyouverymuch* with the discussion in *Quaestiones disputatae de spiritualibus creaturis*. This not being our first impromptu Thomistic convention, my wife merely spoke, as Ea to the wall, that her first dissertation project, before switching to the problem of animal suffering, had been on the epistemology of William of Ockham. Both interlopers, aware of the ritual

The distinction that Zimmerman draws here between the two conceptions of composite substance dualism is structurally similar to the distinction drawn by Robert Garcia (2016) and adopted by others between *modular* and *modifier* tropes. Trope theory, the reader will recall, is a theory of the properties or features of an object whereupon a feature is an individual, particular thing. My individual shape; your individual temperament, etc. Trope theories are distinguished from other theories of properties in part because trope theory denies the shareability or multiple instantiability of properties. Moreover, trope theories have it that tropes are explanatory constituents of the objects in our everyday ontology: “Given trope theory, this rose is red because it is partly constituted by a redness-trope” (Maurin 2018). Tropes are *metaphysical parts* of whole substances.

The distinction between modular and modifier understandings of tropes comes down to the question of whether or not the trope itself has the feature which it confers to the whole of which it is an ontological part. A *modifier* trope confers a feature to a whole without itself having that feature. On this modifier conceptualization of tropes, Zimmerman’s mass feature isn’t itself massy; it is a mass feature only insofar as it is that in virtue of which Zimmerman the man himself is massy. A *modular* trope, on the other hand, confers a feature to the whole by itself being that way. On this modular conception of tropes, Zimmerman’s shape feature is itself shaped, and since it is a part of that whole man, Zimmerman himself, the whole is rightly said to be shaped. Similarly, a component of a whole computer has the ability to, say, burn a DVD, and so, as a result, the whole computer has that ability.

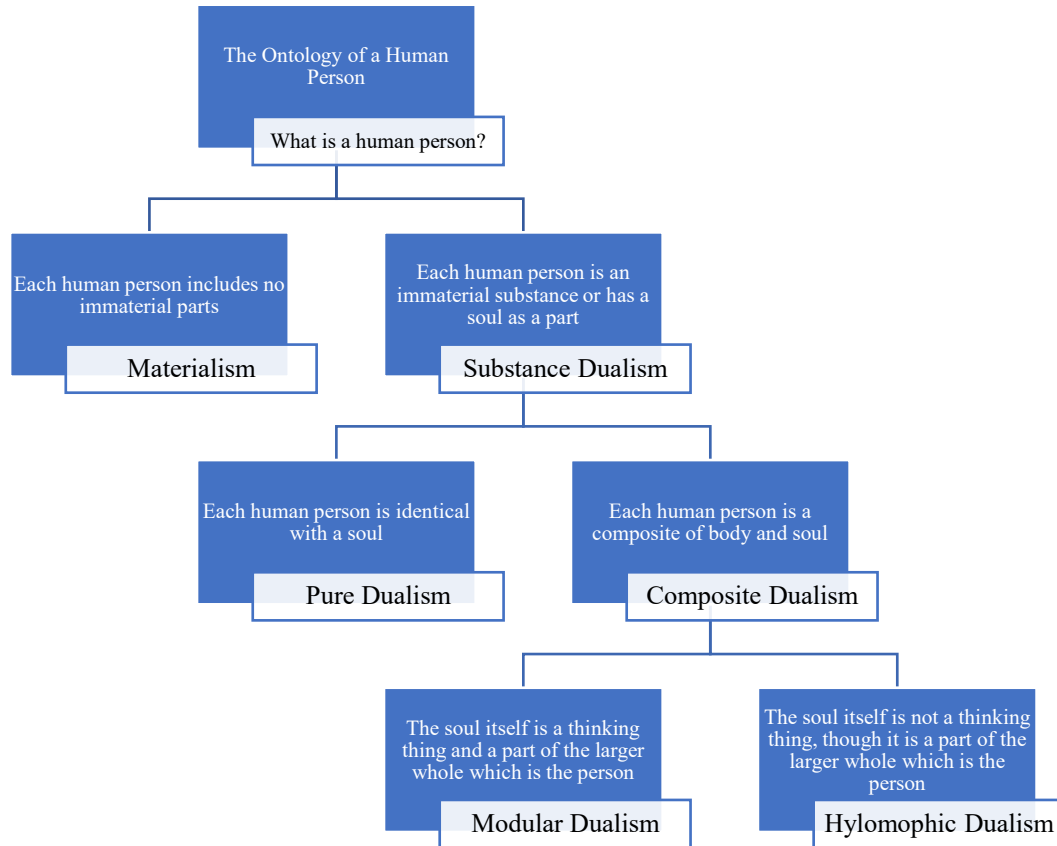
On the Swinburne-style view of composite substance dualism, the soul itself is a thinking thing and in virtue of having that soul the whole person is a thinker. In this sense, the Swinburne-style soul is similar to a modular trope. In order to have a name for this type of dualism that does not refer to it in virtue of a single exemplar, I will call it *modular dualism*. I *do not* mean to imply that souls are tropes. I simply mean to use the useful distinction between *modular* and *modifier* analogically in this conversation about other ontological parts.

On the Hylomorphic view of composite substance dualism, the soul itself is not a thinking thing, but rather merely the part in virtue of which the whole is a thinker. As Zimmerman says elsewhere: “The soul does not itself exemplify these powers (while the human person exists, at any rate), and so it does not confer them by simply having the powers and being a part of a human being” (Van Inwagen and

impurity to be avoided by contamination with unclean scholastic elements, excused themselves to continue the discussion in a musty library or bar.

Zimmerman 2007, 21). One could call this view *modifier dualism* if one wanted, but I see no reason to add yet another technical term when the old technical term still works well.

One might represent the distinctions drawn in this section in the following chart:



In what follows, I discuss Zimmerman’s assessment of these varieties of substance dualism, with special attention to both his claims about hylomorphic dualism and the arguments he gives for or against other forms of dualism and materialism.

Zimmermaniacal assessment of Hylomorphic Dualism

Zimmerman discusses substance dualism in a variety of publications and at various levels of detail, all depending on his argumentative goals, as one might expect. In some places, his discussion of substance dualism excludes hylomorphic dualism— and this level of precision makes sense, as the additional distinctions are extraneous to his goals. So, for instance, he writes in a recent publication, “I here, perhaps

unfairly, neglect an intermediate form of dualism—Thomistic dualism...” (Zimmerman 2019, 87). I don’t think it is unfair, given his dialectical goals.

When he does discuss the Thomistic view of the soul, he calls it “a borderline case of mind-body dualism” (Zimmerman 2006, 115). In such discussions, he focuses mainly on what he calls the majority composite view—modular dualism:

For present purposes, dualism will be restricted to theories like Plato’s pure dualism or Swinburne’s composite dualism: theories positing souls with mental states of their own, in this life. (Zimmerman 2006, 115)

Not only are such views the majority view, they are also

more full-blooded dualisms, according to which the immaterial part of a person is responsible for the person’s ability to think in virtue of being *itself* a thinking thing, here and now. (Van Inwagen and Zimmerman 2007, 22)

When Zimmerman does focus on hylomorphic dualism, he sometimes sounds uncertain that it is a viable theory. For instance, in multiple places he includes as a dubious antecedent “if one can wrap one’s mind” around a Thomistic metaphysics (2007, 21; 2013, 133). He reports that “Aquinas’s souls are notoriously hard to understand” (2007, 21). And on the same page he says of souls understood in a Thomistic sense that they convey powers “in a funny, ‘formal’ way.”

While Zimmerman has written a great deal of good work on different varieties of substance dualism, especially pure substance dualism, I only know of two places where he offers extended discussions of the Thomistic view: his solo-authored introduction to his co-edited book with Peter van Inwagen, *Persons: Human and Divine* (2007), and a brief section of his *Personal Identity and the Survival of Death* (2013). I turn now to those two sources.

In the Introduction to *Persons: Human and Divine*, Zimmerman argues that the Thomistic view ought not to be categorized as a variety of substance dualism. Indeed, referencing his above-quoted, more detailed, account of what substance dualists believe, Zimmerman concludes his longest discussion of hylomorphism with the claim:

I conclude, then, that St. Thomas’s view about the way in which the soul is responsible for a human being’s ability to think is too indirect to decisively satisfy clause (b) [the soul “is essential to the person, and in one way or another responsible for the person’s mental life”]. Whatever its merits, Thomistic dualism is at best a borderline case of substance dualism. (Van Inwagen and Zimmerman 2007, 22)

First, a word about the reception of this conclusion; next, a word about the justification for it. This judgment would be welcome to a number of hylomorphic thinkers. For the metaphysical elements of form and matter on a hylomorphic view are most decisively *not* intended to be offered as two varieties of substance, as if there were a third substance, the whole person, composed of two other existing substances of form and matter.⁴ Thus, “substance dualism” may well be dubbed a misnomer for the view that it is better off without. On the other hand, though, “substance” has a general usage, and the claim that there are two different ontological categories of metaphysical component, form and matter, is certainly something that a hylomorphic thinker believes. So while the hylomorphic thinker may be inclined to jettison the name, “substance dualism,” she will want to keep the claim that the soul and the matter belong to two different categories of being.

Why, though, does Zimmerman think that the soul is responsible for thinking in a way too indirect to satisfy his second condition for dualism? The reasoning comes in two steps. First, note that the hylomorphic theorist claims that the soul itself does not think while the person does. The soul, instead of thinking, is itself something *in virtue of which the person thinks*.

the soul is introduced as the configuration or structure [of the material components] itself—a relatively abstract thing, at least when compared with the full-fledged human being, providing a relatively abstract explanation of how a thing can have these abilities [of thought and motility]. (Van Inwagen and Zimmerman 2007, 21–22)

The key point here is to note how relatively abstract the explanatory role the soul plays is.

Now, at a second step of the dialectic, if that’s the role the soul has—merely being that relatively abstract thing in virtue of which a person thinks—then we should be able to look at other cases where there’s a similarly abstract entity that plays the same role in the contemporary debate and see if we would call someone a dualist who affirms its existence. Zimmerman notes that the Platonists posit something abstract that plays an explanatory role in your cognition—universals—and yet someone who posits universals to explain abstractly your cognition but says you are

⁴ Though see Brower’s (2014, chap. 12) presentation of trileism – the view that “appeals to three different types of substance to explain the nature of human beings—namely, wholly material substances to explain their bodies, wholly immaterial substances to explain their minds (or souls), and complex substances of a further, distinct type to explain human beings themselves.”

composed of all and only material parts wouldn't be called a dualist. Zimmerman uses David Armstrong here as an example of one such thinker. "no one has ever called David Armstrong a dualist simply because he believes in universals" (2007, 22). So likewise, then, for Aquinas.

I agree with Zimmerman about much of this reasoning. No one has called Armstrong a dualist, to my knowledge, merely because he believes in universals. But there is that first necessary condition, too, for being a dualist, Zimmerman's (a), which says "for every person who thinks or has experiences, there is a thing—a soul or spiritual substance—that lacks many of the physical properties the body shares with unthinking material objects." The reticence to call Armstrong a dualist might well be due to the fact that he clearly and emphatically does not satisfy (a).

Even if the reticence to call Armstrong a dualist comes from the fact that he does not satisfy (a), I think Zimmerman is correct that mere acceptance of something doing the formal causal work that souls are meant to do on the hylomorphic theory is not sufficient for fulfilling one of the pertinent and distinguishing features of substance dualism. We get closer to fulfilling such a condition, though, when we add additional elements of the hylomorphic theory, which is why I believe that Zimmerman concludes, not that hylomorphic dualism *fails* to satisfy (b), but rather that it does not decisively satisfy (b). Make the thing playing the formal cause role particular, not a universal; make it located in space and time where the person is, not outside of space and time; make it tied to the human person who has it such that, necessarily, if that human person exists, then that formal element exists; make it able to exist beyond death, still empowering some psychological features the person had during life; make it (at least on some accounts) that in virtue of which the person, who now lacks all material parts, continues to be and continues to think. Make all these changes and you have a much stronger recipe for satisfying (b) than a recipe that merely includes the formal features that platonic universals provide.

In the end, the question Zimmerman is raising here is a terminological question about what to call the hylomorphic theory. If there's an ontological library of congress, the question is whether hylomorphic dualism should be shelved in the substance dualism section or in some other section. Wherever we do eventually shelve it, I think that Zimmerman is right that it is a distinctively unique theory that doesn't neatly and non-controversially fit into the standard usage of the terms "substance dualism" and "materialism."

In his *Personal Identity and the Survival of Death*, Zimmerman has a page-long discussion of hylomorphic views. There he again notes that the human person, on this view, is the composite of the body and soul, that is, the matter and form. And he notes again that it is the whole person who thinks, not just the soul. He then

rightly points out that contemporary thomists are divided on the ontological status of the person in the *interim state*, the state between the death of a human person and her resurrection. Some people, *survivalists*, claim that in the interim state the human person continues to exist. Others, the *corruptionists*, claim that in the interim state the human person does *not* continue to exist.⁵ The current debates are sometimes about the truth of the matter about the human person, sometimes about the truth of the matter about Thomistic Exegesis, and sometimes an admixture of the two.

Zimmerman claims that, of survivalism and corruptionism, were he a hylomorphic dualist, he would be a corruptionist. His reason for this claim is that were survivalism true, then

two things—me and my soul, after my death—could be intrinsically exactly alike, each of us having the soul as its one and only part; and yet we would somehow differ in kind. Some philosophers are comfortable with views according to which a pair of things can have all the same parts, arranged in the same ways, and yet differ radically from one another. They are free to take this route; but I am skeptical about these kinds of coincident entities. (Zimmerman 2013, 133)

So, if the human person persists in the interim state, there are objectionable coincident entities.

It would be of no help to the hylomorphic survivalist if we treated the body as a conglomerate of substances rather than a single entity. For at death, he loses all material parts. And so, if the only parts are material and the soul, then after death there would still be a case of coincidence.

One could posit some additional ontological doodad that's added as an additional part to the person at death. Perhaps it receives an ontological voucher for either a banquet or a haunted house metaphysically stapled to his soul-lapel. Then we'd say that the dead man in the survivalist interim state is composed of soul&voucher, so there's no coincidence. Medieval *Universal Hylomorphic* thinkers affirmed that any non-divine substance is composed of form and matter.⁶ Even spiritual beings included some *spiritual matter*. At death, the separated soul would inhere in spiritual matter and so not be coincident with just the soul. Universal hylomorphic thinkers

⁵ For some discussion of survivalism and corruptionism, see Eberl (2009), Nevitt (2014; 2016), Stump (1995; 2005, 50–54; 2006; 2011) and Toner (2009; 2010; 2012a; 2012b). For a helpful resource for other authors who discuss these issues, see Nevitt (2016), especially footnotes 2 and 3.

⁶ For contemporary discussions of universal hylomorphism, see Brower (2014, 194–99) and Stump (2005, 16; 198). Their footnotes yield fruit for those more interested in the topic. For a view that postulates souls themselves composed of matter, see Jacobs (2012).

would receive the benefits of an added ontological doodad, though they would rightly eschew the silly voucher explication of the ontology.⁷

Spiritual matter is one way to avoid the coincidence worry that Zimmerman raises, a way that hylomorphic dualists, though not Thomists, have taken in the past. Yet another way to respond to these objections is to question the initial assumption that the person is composed of only two parts: the body and the soul. If, even during life, the person is composed of more parts than the body and the soul, then at death there's no guarantee that the person and the soul will be metaphysically "intrinsically exactly alike" in the interim state. The person could be composed of the soul and some other objects that composed the person during life, whereas the soul itself is not composed of itself and those other objects. What parts, then, might we add to the pre-death story?

There's a textual backstory to be told for the following view, though I will skip it here.⁸ I will say merely that a hylomorphic thinker *could* offer a theory like the following. The person, on this hylomorphic view, is an ontological whole that is composed, during life, of body (matter), soul (substantial form), and accidental features (accidental forms). When the person dies, one could claim that the whole remains but ceases to have its material elements and whatever accidental features necessitate material elements (e.g., mass or shape). Since the persisting person on a survivalist view would have additional ontological features above and beyond the soul, there would be no coincidence of soul and person. Just as the rose, to return to an earlier quotation, has a redness trope as a constituent and so is red, so likewise the living human has matter, the soul, and accidental features as real constituents. When she dies, on a survivalist telling, she retains more than just her soul as constituent parts, since there are some accidental truths that can be said of her in that state, and some of those truths require constituent metaphysical parts to make them true. For instance, she retains her virtues and vices, which are accidental to her, and which require constituent ontological parts in her. The rose is red because it has a redness constituent; the person is courageous because she has a courage constituent. But then the person and the soul are not coincident.

One finds related views presented in neoscholastic metaphysical manuals from the middle of the 20th century. They ask, "what differentiates two souls in the interim state?" Some answer: my soul in such a state has the accidental feature of having

⁷ Maybe we can synergize the voucher account with scripture and spiritual matter by having the ontological doodad take the form of a wedding garment, at least, for those allowed to stay at the feast (Matthew 22:1-14).

⁸ To see it, look at Pawl (2016, chap. 3).

once been an ontological constituent of *me*, and no other soul has that.⁹ If we add to this story the claim that a whole remains, composed of soul and accidental features, then we can account for the differentiation of (1) my soul and yours, but also of (2) my soul and the whole me.

Thus, there's a hylomorphic way to see things in this discussion such that the person, the whole composite, can continue in the interim state and nevertheless not run afoul of Zimmerman's coincidence beliefs. That doesn't prove the view to be true, not by a long shot. But it does, to my mind, show that there's a method to be employed, already in this school of thought, for avoiding these particular worries.

My goal in the remainder of this article is to see how this hylomorphic theory stands against the objections that Zimmerman considers against both dualism and materialism. Zimmerman does a good job of presenting the main arguments in a number of publications, sometimes weighing them against each other. Here I will do similarly, adding in this hylomorphic view as a third candidate. Since hylomorphic dualism is an intermediary, it stands to reason that it must be assessed in light of the objections to both materialism and dualism. In the next section, I consider the objections and replies that Zimmerman gives to the dualisms he considers, showing that the hylomorphic variety fairs no worse than the dualisms Zimmerman focuses on. In the section after that, I consider his primary objection to materialism which is equally suited to criticize hylomorphic dualism, showing that the hylomorphic thinker has a way out of the problem.

Responding Zimmermanly to Objections to Dualism

Zimmerman often considers three main objections to dualism. As he writes, "Most objections to dualism fall under one of three heads: problems of interaction, epistemological worries, and application of Ockham's Razor" (Zimmerman 2006, 116). In this section, I consider each objection and his preferred dualist reply, then show how the hylomorphic dualist has no greater problem here than the pure or modular (Swinburnian) dualist does in answering these objections.

First, consider *interaction problems*. Interaction problems question whether the interaction of material and immaterial things in general or this body and this soul in particular create problems for dualism. Zimmerman considers three types of worries under this broad heading (Zimmerman 2004, 317–19; 2006, 116–17).

First, how do things of such disparate ontological types—material bodies and immaterial souls—causally interact at all? Here Zimmerman reminds the readers

⁹ See, for instance, Klubertanz (1963, 108) for this variety of view.

that we already thought that disparate things such as fields and particles causally interact. Is there reason to think that material and immaterial substances have a harder time interacting than fields and particles? If so, what is it? Moreover, why think that only things that aren't ontologically disparate can interact with one another?

Note that a hylomorphic thinker can make these same points in response. Indeed, the hylomorphic thinker might well deny the initial supposition that the soul and the body are causally interacting in the sense the objector means in the first place. For, on the hylomorphic view, it isn't that the soul, say, chooses to get a soda and then the body is directed toward the fridge. Rather, the human person, the whole, chooses the soda and then moves towards the fridge. The hylomorphic thinker who affirms a traditional theism, though, will not put too much stock on this denial of causal interaction between soul and body, since she believes in a God and perhaps other supernatural agents (e.g., angels) who interact with material things without themselves being material. So, even if humans do not raise the worry of the causal interaction of disparate types of things, the worry is still there for the theistic hylomorphic dualist.

As a second interaction problem, one might well question the ability for dualism to provide law-like explanatory regularities between the mental and the physical. Physical regularities have a simple, law-like regularity to them. Add in souls and the ability to give simple, law-like regularities between the phenomenal and the physical is in jeopardy.

In reply, Zimmerman (2006, 318) notes that there are *already* powerful arguments independent of substance dualism that show that phenomenal states are irreducible to physical states. If that's right, then the dualist should not be surprised that the law-like regularities are unable to be given on a supposition of dualism. Suppose materialism and the prospects are no better! Anyone who is a property dualist has the same problem here (2006, 117). And anyway, Zimmerman reasons, western theists already had grounds to deny that mental states are derivative on physical states, as they accept the existence of non-physical thinkers.

The hylomorphic thinker can appeal to those same arguments against reduction to show that the inability to provide law-like regularities is not unique to dualism. Anyone who affirms the existence of non-material thinkers, whether human or not, and anyone who is a property dualist, will have the same problem in giving law-like explanatory regularities between the mental and the physical. If property dualists, theists, and substance dualists all have the same problem, then we all take the same hit in the cost/benefit analysis. From the perspective of these three theories, the real

problem is the dubious expectation that one could give such law-like regularities between the mental and the physical.

The third and final interaction problem is what's usually called the Pairing Problem. There's my body and soul, and then there's your body and soul. My two bits interact in this special way with each other, but not with yours, and yours interact with each other and not with mine. What, though, explains this? To use the standard example in the literature (Zimmerman 2004, 318), when gun A hits target B and gun C hits target D, we explain which hits which by their spatial relations to one another. But souls, being immaterial, lack spatial relations. What, then, can be used to explain the pairings?

Zimmerman articulates two potential responses. First, one could claim that laws and powers are not all general, but rather, some include reference to a particular entity. So the law isn't whenever some soul or other fulfills this condition, it interacts with this body, but instead, the law states that this particular soul, S1, can affect this particular body, B1. If one says that, then the pairing happens at the law- or power-level and we need not look for an additional relation that pairs all and only this soul and this body.

As a second response, Zimmerman notes that while some dualists do affirm that the soul lacks all spatial location, not all do. And if the soul is in space and located where the body is, then spatial relations *can* account for why my soul, which is where my body is but not where yours is, affects my body but not yours. In particular, Zimmerman articulates and defends a view often called *Emergent Dualism*, which is a form of pure dualism that he presents as affirming that "Organisms having nervous systems complex enough to generate conscious states automatically *also* generate nonphysical subjects for those states" (Zimmerman 2004, 317). Where are those nonphysical subjects? They are "in space, presumably within the heads that generate them" (2004, 319) and "located within the brains with which they interact" (Zimmerman 2006, 117). On this view, spatial relations *can* ground the pairing.

The hylomorphic dualist could put forward either of these two responses as well. While there might be independent reasons to deny particularized powers or laws, nothing makes such powers or laws *more* improbable on hylomorphism than on other varieties of dualism. Concerning spatial relations, the hylomorphic thinker claims that the soul is, not merely where the thinking occurs, but where the *living* occurs. The ontological relational story between the soul and the material elements is different for an emergent dualist and a hylomorphic thinker. The emergentist claims that the soul is caused by a complex organism. The hylomorphic thinker claims instead that the soul is a constituent ontological part of the organism. In both cases, the thinker has an additional route open for grounding the pairing through a

relation that only this particular soul bears to this particular body. The emergentist can point to ontological dependence or causation—this soul, and only this soul, depends upon the organism. The hylomorphic thinker can point to ontological constitution—the organism has as an ontological part this soul, and no other soul. In either case, though, provided that no soul bears the relevant relation to two bodies and no body bears the relevant relation to two souls, such relations can ground the pairing of this particular soul to this particular body.

Thus far, considering only interaction problems, we see that there's no problem that is larger for the hylomorphic thinker than it is for the other varieties of dualism.

Next, consider *epistemic problems* (Zimmerman 2004, 319–20; 2006, 118). Zimmerman puts the problem as follows:

If persons were identical with souls, it would be reasonable to be skeptical about whether we are dealing with the same persons from one minute to the next. Since this is *not* reasonable, a person is not a soul. (Zimmerman 2004, 319)

Zimmerman's reply here—again, friendly to the hylomorphic theorist—is, as he says, a *tu quoque* (2006, 118). Such skeptical scenarios are not constrained to dualism. One could just as easily consider a sneaky body-switcher as a sneaky soul-switcher. And so, the mere possibility of such a skeptical situation on dualism should be as reasonable to worry about as one on materialism. The opponent, then, is free to set our level of panic. And since the opponent doesn't panic over the possibility that the material bits are being switched surreptitiously, the dualist, including the hylomorphic dualist, will likewise take it easy.

Finally consider the objections from *Ockham's razor* (Zimmerman 2004, 321; 2006, 118). Are these souls worth the ontological cost? It might seem that they are not, as they seem to be unable to provide for some of the main afterlife goods for which dualists most often posit them. Zimmerman writes:

What kind of afterlife could emergent souls look forward to? If they're completely dependent upon functioning nervous systems, then none, barring the miraculous. But even if God sustains them, and even if he creates bodies upon which they may once again come to depend, wouldn't they lack all memory of a past life? ... Could such souls be justly rewarded or punished for characters they'd helped to create, even if the primary "carrier" of that character (the original brain) were long gone? (Zimmerman 2004, 321)

Two problems arise here, one with respect to memory, and one with respect to character. First, would a disembodied soul even remember anything? Second, could

such souls be justly punished or rewarded, given that the real “carrier” of the character, the brain, does not exist in the interim state?

To the first problem, the one concerning memory, Zimmerman says that, in addition to sustaining the soul in existence apart from a functioning nervous system, God can also ensure that the souls have reliable and trustworthy inputs of information such that they accurately remember what happened to them. Interestingly enough, this line of thought is anticipated by medieval hylomorphic thinkers. Medieval theories of the mechanisms of cognition and the cognitive abilities of the soul in the separated state are subtle and nuanced. One thing is clear, though: on some accounts, including that of Aquinas (*ST I*, q. 89 a. 4 *resp*), some knowledge is gained in the separated soul by God’s infusing the relevant additional things (*species*) into the thinker. Other knowledge, on this view, remains in the soul from the current life (*ST I* q.89 aa.5-6).

Consider next the question of character. I don’t see why we should say that the brain is the carrier of character. A person’s character includes things like her courage, trustworthiness, etc., and it is the *person*, not the brain, that has those features. That said, suppose with Zimmerman that it was the original brain that was the primary carrier of character. That brain is disintegrated by natural processes while the soul continues on. What sense does it make to punish or reward that soul when the primary character haver is not there? Here Zimmerman says that he does not see why it would be unjust to punish the soul alone. He offers some intuitive support: “we wouldn’t think that taking a pill that you knew would cause you to lose your memories and change your character would suffice to absolve you of guilt” (Zimmerman 2004, 321). So likewise, the soul is just as guilty or blameworthy.

It strikes me that this response has its predecessors in hylomorphic thought. The corruptionists face a question, though not about brains. The corruptionist claims that the human person does not exist between death and the final resurrection, though the person’s soul exists. One objection to corruptionists is that it makes it hard to understand how interim reward and punishment could be justified. Suppose for the moment that there’s a purgatory (one could make the same point with heavenly reward or hellish punishment). I die and my soul goes to purgatory and faces the trials and travails of a painful purging of sinful inclinations. Happily, that sufferer is not *me*. I’ve got no need to fear the fires of purgatory, since I will never be there to feel them. The corruptionist shares Zimmerman’s (2004, 321) answer to the question of whether this is just: “I don’t see why not.” It is not unjust to punish the soul alone, even if the primary carrier of the moral character, the brain, or the person, is no longer there. Here I am merely reporting, not endorsing, this judgment.

This concludes my discussion of the three main objections to dualism, Zimmerman's responses to them, and potential hylomorphic responses to them. I have argued that the hylomorphic theorist has no harder time answering these objections than other dualists do.

Zimmermannish objections to Materialism

What of Zimmerman's arguments against materialism? It could be that the arguments against dualism, as I've argued, fail against hylomorphic dualism at least as much as they fail against the other varieties of dualism. But since hylomorphic dualism is an intermediary between materialism and substance dualism, it might still be that the arguments from the other side, those against materialism, cause problems for it.

One main argument against materialism that Zimmerman provides is Chrisholm's "*entia successiva*" argument (Zimmerman 2004, 321–27). This argument focuses on the fact that materialists typically claim that we are *entia successiva*, that is, "things that gain and lose parts over time" (2004, 321). Zimmerman (2004, 322) provides the argument as follows:

1. If I am a thing that gains or loses parts, such as a brain or a human body, then, each time I undergo a change of parts, there is another thing where I am, a mass of matter distinct from myself but having all the same intrinsic characteristics—e.g., size, shape, mass, and even mental states, like feeling sad.
2. But it is false that, where I am, there is something else with all the same intrinsic characteristics; there is only one thing here that feels sad, not two.
3. So I am neither a brain nor a human organism nor any other thing that changes parts.¹⁰

Now, it is true that the vast majority of materialists claim that human persons are things that gain or lose parts. But then it is *also* true that composite dualists of either sort do so as well. Thus, this argument, were it successful, would be equally successful against any non-pure form of dualism that Zimmerman distinguishes. What, then, can a hylomorphic dualist say against it?

It strikes me that the hylomorphic dualist ought to affirm the truth of 2. There is nothing here that feels sad—or excited to be writing this paper about the excellent

¹⁰ The same argument is also given in Zimmerman (2005, 494–95). The conclusion, which I have numbered 3 here, had no number in either original publication.

metaphysician, Dean Zimmerman—other than me. For the hylomorphic thinker, and unlike the modular (Swinburnian) dualist, my soul does not feel sad or excited. And my brain alone does not, either, nor does all the matter I am composed of prescinding from the soul which inheres in it. Even if there is a thing here, my matter all by itself and without any forms—and we are already stepping away from Aristotle and his lineage by positing unformed matter—that unformed matter would not itself have the intrinsic characteristic of feeling sad.

In addition to affirming 2, a hylomorphic dualist affirms that he is a thing that changes parts. He gains or loses material parts from the embryonic stage to the terrible twos, to the angsty teens, and on through life. Thus, he affirms the truth of the antecedent of 1 and denies the truth of its consequent, as the consequent is the denial of 2, and he affirms 2. The culprit, then, for the hylomorphic thinker, must be premise 1.

How does Zimmerman respond to those who deny 1? He writes, referring to matter which is infinitely divisible, the sort of matter that Aristotle believed in and which, for all we know, might be the actual sort of matter in our universe:

As shown earlier, matter of this sort must be treated as a physical object in its own right, not a mere set or collection of particles. How could there be just one thing where the creature is? There would seem to be just two options: Either there are not two things here, because the living body *is* the mass of matter and was scattered a short time ago and will become scattered again (an option I said was no easier to believe than emergent dualism); or the once scattered matter that comes together to form the body literally *ceases to be* when, as we would normally say, “it” constitutes the body. (Zimmerman 2004, 326)

He then goes on to show additional problems with the second of these options.

I do not intend to get into the nuances of the discussion concerning whether matter is infinitely divisible.¹¹ I will concede for argument’s sake that such matter must be treated as a physical object in its own right. If I do so concede and I additionally allow that there is, as Zimmerman claims, a second thing there—the matter, prescinding from the soul—have I committed myself to the truth of premise 1? Not that I see. For the consequent of 1 is this claim: “there is another thing where I am, a mass of matter distinct from myself but having all the same intrinsic characteristics.” So far, even if we have a mass of matter distinct from me existing here, we don’t yet have the same intrinsic characteristics had by it.

¹¹ To see Zimmerman on this topic, see Zimmerman (1995; 2005).

Moreover, the hylomorphic thinker has reason to deny that the human and the matter are intrinsically the same. On hylomorphic dualism, the matter-alone lacks the ontological constituent in virtue of which the human thinks—it lacks a soul. A rose lacking a constituent redness trope would not be red (assuming a trope-theoretic metaphysics for example, of course). If I asked you to consider the rose *prescinding from its redness trope* and determine whether it is red, your answer should be “no.” For, if a thing is red, then it has a redness trope; this thing, if such there be—the rose-prescinding-from-its-redness-trope—does not have a redness trope. So it is not red. A similar story is true for souls, again reiterating that I am not claiming that souls *are* tropes, but rather that we can understand this aspect of souls by analogy to the ontological explanatory work of modifier tropes.

If someone responds and says that it isn’t just matter alone, but matter doing all this intricate stuff that the matter is doing—all those acts of a living and cognizing organism—that is thinking, then I reply that he has secretly snuck the soul back into the picture. He has asked me to consider the matter without the soul, then told me that this matter has “all the same intrinsic characteristics” as the composite of the matter and form. If the hylomorphic thinker were content to allow matter alone to be intrinsically just like the hylomorphic composite of matter and form, the hylomorphic thinker would be proffering grounds that than which none greater could be conceived for a trip to Ockham’s barber shop. This hylomorphic thinker, at least, has grown attached to his beard. Or perhaps it is the other way around.

Conclusion

In this article, I have presented Dean Zimmerman’s analysis of the varieties of dualism. I then focused attention on a form of dualism that he has discussed briefly in a few places. This dualism, Thomistic dualism as he calls it, or hylomorphic dualism, as I call it, contends that the human person is, at least in this life, a whole composed of matter, soul, and accidental features. Importantly, on this view, and unlike other kinds of composite dualism, the soul itself is not a thing that thinks. Rather, it is the human who thinks in virtue of the soul. Thus, there is but one thinker there, the human person, even if we sometimes speak of the soul thinking in an analogous way, as the eye sees or the ear hears by being that in virtue of which the human sees or hears.

After explicating hylomorphic dualism, I considered the two places where Zimmerman says the most about it, finding, in one case, a way to alleviate a worry he raises about coincident entities using the resources internal to hylomorphism,

and, in the other case, a general agreement with his categorizing hylomorphic dualism as an intermediary position between substance dualism and materialism.

Since hylomorphic dualism is something of an intermediary position between substance dualism and materialism, it stands to reason that it could be susceptible to attack from both sides. Thus, in the last sections of this article I considered the arguments Zimmerman answers against dualism and those leveled against materialism. I argued that the hylomorphic theorist can answer the charges against dualism at least as well as the other dualists can. And I found that the main argument against materialism that Zimmerman provides, if sound, would also show any composite form of dualism to be false, too. Happily, the hylomorphic thinker has a method of denying the truth of the first premise of that argument, and so of denying the soundness of the argument.

Thus, from neither direction is hylomorphic dualism more susceptible to the objections than its neighbor. Hylomorphic dualism is in no worse shape than its opponents with respect to these main objections.

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