

## Abstract

This dissertation offers a critical examination of the metaphysical constitution of the human person, with a particular focus on the mind and body problem, adopting the relevant hylomorphism developed by the realist metaphysics of the Aristotelian-Thomistic tradition. The primary role of the formal cause is examined in order to highlight the philosophically advantageous results of a hylomorphic account as well as to show as far as is possible that this is really how facts are with the ontological constitution of the human person, hence the commitment to realist metaphysics. This research project, therefore, intends to defend the priority of form, understood in terms of both metaphysical and explanatory priority. In order for this examination to be a systematic one, contrasting accounts are also discussed, these being, primarily, dualistic theories as well as materialist approaches. A balance is struck between a historical and classical investigation into the way these theories accounting for the body and soul relationship were developed, on the one hand, and a more contemporary and scientifically informed approach to this widely discussed theme.

Since Aristotle's and St. Thomas's accounts of the human soul and its metaphysical relation to the body were the result of a critical response to theories that do not guarantee the ontological unity, integrity and completeness of the human person, such views are first examined in both their expression in classical philosophy as well as in their contemporary versions within the context of philosophy and of science.

Plato did not accept that true substances could be physical, unlike the eternal Forms which give intelligibility and meaning to the world. The classical formulation of substance dualism that is found in his *Phaedo* is based on an affinity with the Forms is presented. The soul is almost magnetically drawn to separate from the body and dwell with the Forms it apprehends. Another position is then presented from early Christianity and that was heavily dependent upon Neo-Platonist metaphysics, namely, St. Augustine. His complex anthropology reflects the different stages of his developing ideas. He saw his ontological dualism on minds and bodies as a response to materialism, the soul treated as an immaterial and Platonic substance exerting control over the body which is corporeal and fatally compromised by its fallen nature. Thirdly Richard Swinburne's theory of substance dualism is discussed since he is a representative of the analytic philosophical tradition and is a minority in embracing with elaborate consistency the view that soul and body are two distinct substances. While always having professed deep sympathy for substance dualism, he embraces this position with even greater commitment in the recent works discussed in this

thesis. By applying realist metaphysics as the main methodological tool, this research project shows why in each of these philosophical positions, substance dualism fails at some providing answers to many central questions, about the ontological unity of the human person, the causal interface between thought and physical movement and most of all the subjective identity of individuals.

This research project then examines how Aristotle's account of soul merges his realism from the philosophy of nature as well as from his metaphysical analysis in order to provide an account of the soul and the body in terms of his hylomorphism, his views on act and potency and his account of the substantial unity of the human person. His achievements are pluriform, some on the negative side, in demonstrating why atomism is false, and others positive, in showing how realist metaphysics establishes the philosophical coherence found in viewing the human person as a composite of matter and form, body and soul united within one substantial individual human person.

This thesis then devotes attention to the system of St. Albert the Great who attempts to blend Neo-Platonic with Aristotelian accounts of the world, nature and of the human person. The result of this analysis is that St. Albert's philosophical work is eclectic in nature and while he appreciates, at least partially, the novelty of the Aristotelian hylomorphic account, he still does not draw all the important results and consequences necessary to guarantee the ontological criteria of unity, identity and completeness of the human person.

The main focus then shifts to the analysis given by St. Thomas Aquinas in providing a critical analysis of both substance dualism as well as materialism. He achieves this with his theory of the soul as substantial form which is the principle of organisation and unity while also *qua* rational soul, an irreducible part of the human being. The peculiarity of Aquinas's realist metaphysics of persons is studied with reference to his work in the *Commentary on the Metaphysics* and his *Disputed Questions on the Soul*, in particular. The results of this metaphysical investigation analyse how Aquinas defends his view that the human person is an *unum simpliciter*.

The results of this analytical defense of hylomorphism within the aforementioned traditions are also engaged in a philosophical conversation with contemporary philosophical view of the mind and its relation to the body, applied to certain fallacies committed by scientific accounts of the brain as well as to the crucial matter of the irreducibility of the rational soul to an account of matter. This research project ultimately argues that while substance dualism and atomism fail to give a fact-based defense of the unity, integrity and identity of the human person, the Aristotelian and Thomistic realist metaphysics of form

achieves such a philosophical critique and a coherent account even within the context of contemporary philosophical and neuroscientific theories of the human person.