

The Beginning of Human Life and Personhood:  
The Best Hylomorphic Position

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The purpose of this paper is to inquire into theories of when human life, personhood, begins and which theory is most in line with the thinking of St. Thomas Aquinas. In today's society, where there are more abortions than live births, it is important to discuss when does life truly begin.

I will begin my discussion by giving a working definition of what it means to be a person. I will try to give a definition that will shed light on the point of discussion. After that I will look at some of the veins of contemporary thought. I will be looking at three schools of thought on this current problem in philosophy today. The first position is represented in this paper William May, Stephen Heaney and Robert Joyce. These thinkers believe in immediate animation and hominization. They claim that personhood begins with, and at, the moment of conception. The second position is represented here by Joseph Donceel. This school adheres to delayed hominization. He argues that there is a succession of souls, used by St. Thomas. It is not until somewhere around the 14th day that there is rational ensoulment and personhood. The third position is represented in this work by Gabriel Pastrana. Pastrana argues That there is immediate animation and delayed hominization but, he does not believe that there is a succession of souls.

I will then reflect on these schools of thought and

argue why I think that it is the position of the first school of thinkers that is most in line with the true thought of Thomas and his hylomorphic view.

Personhood:

Before we can have any discussion on when personhood begins we must first have an idea of what personhood is. Person, human being, a being of moral worth, will, in the context of this paper, all have the same general meaning, and are to be considered interchangeable. The questions to be asked are; what is a person? What characteristic does a human have that makes him a person? What kind of concept is the idea of person? Is it a moral, philosophical, or legal one? I believe in truth, and for the purpose of this paper, that it is a philosophical notion first. It is its philosophical edge that gives all the other concepts their base for talking of persons.

A person is a being who has certain rights that are to be respected and protected by other beings who are capable of recognizing those rights. A person is one who has the natural capabilities to know, reason, love, desire, and recognize themselves and others as being individuals. All of the writers whom I shall look at can find this definition to be workable.

Heaney

We will begin by looking at Stephen Heaney. In his article "Aquinas and the Humanity of the Conceptus," Heaney addresses the question of when human life, ensoulment, takes place. Heaney points out that there are thinkers who believe that ensoulment cannot take place until there is sufficient development of the cerebral cortex; the usual focus is on cell differentiation. He also states how Thomas is often used against the Church teachings on abortion and related issues (64).

Thomas held that (1) a human, rational soul is created directly by God; (2) a material soul, which cannot exist without a body can, and is, generated materially by reproduction; (3) this is not the case with a spiritual, rational soul which can exist without a body; (4) the soul is infused within, created directly into, the embryo; (5) infusion does not take place at conception; (6) there is a succession of souls. To further understand this last point we must look at this Aristotlian argument more closely. Aristotle believed that in the development of higher life forms, like man, matter had different types of souls. In the first developmental stage, when there is first life, there must first be present a vegetive soul, after further development there is then an animal, sensing soul, and in the case of humans there is then a rational soul. The vegetive

and animal souls that are taken over by the rational soul just cease to exist (64-5).

According to this line of argument the embryo before infusion is not properly a human being but only potential human life. This would allow for circumstances that could warrant abortion.

Heaney argues that one can accept the hylomorphic and creationist view of the human soul, without espousing the position of the succession of souls. Heaney then asks; Why does Thomas propose this view of the succession of souls in the first place? The answer for him seems to lie in Thomas's attempts to keep in line with "known facts" of his time. As mentioned above, Aristotle, seen as the authority on the subject of biology at the time, considered the embryo as being animal before it is human. Thomas had to deal with the generally accepted theory of spontaneous generation of animals from putrefaction (65).

Heaney then asks if it is likely that Thomas would accept this theory and come to the same conclusion with twentieth century scientific knowledge of embryology and human development. He thinks it very unlikely. Today we can see the stages of embryonic development, we can see it as human. Heaney quickly points out that critics do not think that the embryo appears to be uniquely human. This theory

puts up two road blocks, as Heaney puts it, to this theory. The first is the lack of early cell differentiation, the second is the possibility of twinning and fusion during the early stages of development (66).

The human soul acts as the life principle of the body; It cannot provide human life or humanness to a lower level of material life. The cell differentiation, which is the sign of this higher life function, does not begin until about fourteen days. The embryo is seen as "from" a human being not a human being itself. It is the formation of a human body. This makes the embryo, to these proponents, radically and categorically different from that which is a human being. "The thrust of this argument, then, is that there can be no human rational soul in the unimplanted and undifferentiated conceptus because it is not ready for it, because it is not yet organized enough to receive such a form, according to Aquinas, cannot be the form of just any body, but only of matter suitably disposed to receive such a form" (67-8).

The possibility of twinning is the second road block, as stated above, that Heaney sees critics using. It is possible before the cell differentiation for there to be twinning or fusion to take place. This has been done in laboratory tests. Because of this possibility, critics say, there can not be an individual human being, for a human soul cannot

split or join together and fuse with another (68).

Heaney believes these arguments should not be taken lightly. To address them he gives an account of Thomas's understanding of the relationship between soul and body. "The theory of hylomorphism understands all material things as being the result of the conjunction of two metaphysical principles, form and matter (hyle = matter, morphe = form). The form is the actualizing principle of the substance. It makes the things to be, and to be this kind of thing, a kind of thing that exhibits these particular characteristics or activities. Primary matter is a metaphysical principle which contributes a things materiality, but nothing else. As matter, it has no characteristics, but is capable of receiving any form. Of course, in the actual world, we cannot encounter primary matter, because everything has some form. Therefore, we must be content with the observation that, in order to receive any particular new form, a body must be disposed to, or capable of receiving, such a form" (69).

Heaney points out that "it is the form which makes for the varying operations of material things, we can identify the form by the operations" (69). This same relationship of form to matter is also present in the relationship of soul to body, according to Heaney. It is through the types of activities that a creature exercises that we identify what

type of substance it is. Heaney states that Thomas only allows for one substantial form for any material being. With this in mind, "what makes us to be human beings is that which makes these operations possible: the human rational soul" (69).

It is important to Heaney to note how Thomas's theory is radically unlike the dualistic theories of other thinkers, such as Plato or Descartes. For dualistic thinkers, "the body exists independently of the soul, and the rational part is added to, and controls, the body" (70). For thinkers like these, the soul exists for the sake of the body, and is not helped by their union. Thomas sees this relationship as opposite, it is the body that exists for the soul. In this line of thinking, the construction of the body is so because it is necessary for the soul to perform its activities.

Heaney sees the operation of the conceptus to be, in a broad sense, the same of that of a later fetus, infant, or adolescent: to develop into a full grown, adult, human being. The reason that the embryo develops as it does, for Heaney, is for the sake of the soul. As the informing principle of these organs, the soul is responsible for their being continued, and more paramount, for their being at all. As Heaney puts it, "without the human rational soul's need, for example, for the types of sense and thought organs it has, there is no need for their development, they would have no



reason for being" (70).

It is Heaney's belief, as well as my own, that this explanation of how Thomas sees the relationship between body and soul, provides a formidable response to the various arguments that favor delayed hominization. It shows, for Heaney, "that the argument from organization fails because it does not account for the reason why the human organism develops as it does." In Heaney's words, "it puts the cart before the horse" (70).

"For those who suggest that a high level of organization is necessary before a rational soul can be infused by God, one must ask the question, how did this high level of organization come about? Nothing less than a human rational soul is necessary for such a properly-human physical organism to come to be at all. A highly-developed nervous system and brain - which as we know, develop in the human embryo and fetus in a uniquely human way - cannot be the result of a lower type of soul. The truly human soul must be there to make this organization possible" (70-1).

Heaney states an argument that others might use, that perhaps the point of this argument is what makes the point for the cell differentiation argument. Perhaps, until this point, there is no soul infused because the cell mass is not recognizably human, and that this is the point where the soul is infused. This cell mass is just like any other cell mass in the body: "identifiably from a human being, but not itself a human being" (71).

He does not believe that this argument can hold. He points out that these other cells are, and become, parts of a larger whole, where the the conceptus is not a part, but is a whole being, not yet complete, but it still is not a part. If other cells from humans fail to become a part of a whole or cease being a part, they die. The orientation of the conceptus is different from theirs: it is to become a fully developed human being. Heaney argues that the argument put forth, that the change that takes place at differentiation is a radical one, is contrary to biological evidence. The radical change takes place at the moment of conception, when the sperm and ovum unite. It is at that moment that they cease being what they were and become something new. "All changes after fertilization take place from within the entity" (71).

It appears to Heaney that, with modern embryological knowledge, Thomas would have recognized that at the moment of

conception, this entity, is a uniquely human being. In quoting Thomas from the Summa, Heaney points out that Thomas does not mean that no soul can be present until the body is formed, when he agrees with Aristotle. "Whence it is clear that when the soul is called the act, the soul itself is included; as when we say that heat is the act of what is hot, and light of what is lucid; not as though lucid and light were two different things, but because a thing is made lucid by the light. In like manner, the soul is said to be the act of a body, etc., because by the soul it is a body, and is organic, and has life potentiality [ie., has the capability of performing living operations]. (S. Th. I 76, 4, ad 1.)

In addressing the argument based on twinning and fusion Heaney states, that it is obvious that a person cannot split, nor can souls fuse. This does not mean, for Heaney, that material stuff cannot be split between two or more souls.

In his article "What Makes A Human Being To Be A Being Of Moral Worth?" William May means a being of moral worth to be "an entity that is the subject of inalienable rights that are able to be recognized by other entities capable of recognizing rights and demand legal protection by society... an entity that is valuable, precious, irreplaceable just because it exists" (416).

May believes human beings to be beings of moral worth. He points out that though there are those who do not agree with this, it is at the heart of Christian faith and is central to the American Proposition. The Supreme Court, in the cases of Roe vs. Wade and Doe vs. Bolton, both cases on the constitutionality of abortion, have as their governing principle, that a human being is an entity of moral worth. The Court held that a fetus is not such an entity. May points out that the Court did declare that it had no intention of deciding when human life begins. May further shows, that the Court did declare that the fetus is "potentiality of life", and as May reminds us, if something is in potentiality of something it cannot be in actuality of it. He gives the example of his son: his son is potentially a father, but is not a father now, if he were a father now he could not be potentially a father, but actually one.

According to May, some contemporary thinkers make a distinction between a human being and a person or a human

being who is meaning-fully human. May takes up the position of Daniel Callahan as paradigmatic of the of these contemporary writers; "we can take nuanced distinctions among human beings, judging some as subjects of rights protectable by society and others as not being such subjects" (May, 420).

For May the basic problem with this position is where does one get the criteria of what makes a human being a entity of moral worth if it is distinct from their being human? Some thinkers have for criteria IQ. scores, the sense of time, capability to relate to others, etc. May points out author Michael Tooley, who denies that membership in the human species is of moral significance. For thinkers like Tooley, the reason a human being is an entity of moral worth does not lie in their being human.

May's Thesis is that "the reason why a human being is a being of moral worth is rooted in his membership in the human race" (421). Humans are different in kind from other living beings. There is something rooted in being human that makes them beings of moral worth. May gives some of the names that have been used throughout history for this something; rauch in the Old Testament, pneuma in the New testament, nous poitikos to Aristotle and, anima subsistens in Thomas. To May this something is "a principle of immateriality or of transcendence from the limitations of materially individuated existence" (425).

May goes on to use scientific data to give in-depth background on what "minded entities" means in this discussion. He shows that, "our being minded entities and moral beings cannot be sufficiently explained in terms of these indispensable conditions" (441). By "indispensable conditions" May means, the possession of a functioning brain of a certain degree of complexification and the existence of a cultural environment. May feels that for any definition of our being minded and moral to be adequate, there must be inferred "the presence, within our own being as humans, of an entitative component that is the antecedent condition for the possibility of our becoming minded and moral" (441-442). This component is "a nonempirical, nonobservable, yet rationally inferable and real component of our humanity" (442). May states that, it is through our being part of a race that we are minded and moral, and for this reason every member is of moral worth and so deserves respect and has rights. According to May, our being minded should be seen as a gift. This gift is proximately given to us by each other as human beings. Ultimately it is a gift we receive from our Creator, God.

Joyce

Robert Joyce in his article "Personhood and the Conception Event " claims that "a conceptus or human zygote is essentially a human person" (97). His claim is that the zygote is just as much a person as you and I, but is just not as developed. Joyce does not offer this as a just a possibility, but as reasonable certainty. Joyce argues that, though it is not certain when a particular conception event takes place, there is definitely a moment of conception, and at that moment human life begins (97).

Joyce gives this as his basic format of his argument: "Every living individual being with the natural potential, as a whole, for knowing, willing, desiring, and relating to others in a self-reflective way is a person. But the human zygote is a living individual (or more than one such individual) with the natural potential, as a whole, to act in these ways. Therefore the human zygote is a actual person with great potential" (97).

Joyce, in his discussion, sees it as necessary and helpful to give his definition of person. This definition is that a person is a "whole individual being which has the natural potential to know, love, desire, and to relate to self and others in a self-reflective way" (98). Joyce does comment that it is possible to phrase this definition

differently depending on what you find important to emphasize. But lists it as crucial to recognize a person as a natural being, and not just a functional being. This distinction prevents one from slipping into subjective elitism which would allow for those who are comatose, senile, retarded and even sleeping as non-persons. It is important to remember that one does not need to have functional abilities only natural abilities to be recognized as a person. Joyce argues that the position of the elitist is not in tune with the human condition and has no essential value in our knowing and/or judging who is and who is not a person. For Joyce, even though there may be difficulty in seeing the personhood in some one who cannot function in those ways we normally expect, that does not make it the case that they are not persons. The difficulty lies in us as persons not in them (98-9).

In an example, to show his point, Joyce uses a human embryo compared to the embryo of a rabbit. In this case neither have the capacity to think, will, desire, love, etc. They are radically different in the fact that the human actually has the natural capacity to act in these ways while the rabbit does not. Joyce has great insight in stating that the "developmentalist approach fails to see the actuality upon which these potentialities are based. Every potential is itself an actuality" (100). I have the potential to drink a glass of ice tea, that is an actuality that my plant does



not have. Joyce uses the example that a woman has the potential to become a mother, that is an actuality that a man does not have.

Joyce argues that there is but one reasonable time to acknowledge the coming into existence of a human, individual, person, and that time is conception. For it is, as Joyce writes, at this moment that the fertilization process is finished. Before the sperm penetrates the ovum, both are, as Joyce puts it, "body-parts." It is after they have come together that the zygote emerges as a whole body in itself. Joyce claims that the sperm and ovum themselves are not potential life, they are potential causes of a new human life.

Joyce points out that fertilization is a process that, when it ends in the resulting zygote, can be called the conception event. Joyce clarifies that the sperm and ovum are specific causes, while the man and woman are the agents. It is the man and woman who cause the actual, not just potential, existence of a person in the space-time world.

In doing what they do, when they come together, the ovum and the sperm cease to be, they do not unite, for uniting implies that they remain and form a larger whole. "They are neither sperm nor ovum once the process of interaction is completed, even though cytoplasmic matter from the ovum

remains. It is really a misleading figure of speech to say of the ovum that it is 'fertilized' by the sperm, passively as a farmer's field is fertilized. It is proper to speak of the sperm-ovum interaction process. There is no such thing as a 'fertilized ovum'" (102).

Joyce states that once any living substance, no matter what it be, human or not, is either alive or it is not at any given moment. From that first moment that "it is alive, it is totally there as this particular actual being, even though it is only partially there as a developed actuality." According to Joyce "every living thing is thoroughly actual, with more or less potential: actuality itself; potentially more or less expressive of itself." This makes the zygote a single cell individual, just as actual as any one else, as yet, much less functionally expressed (102).

The human zygote is part of a unique species of being. "It is not a genus, to which a species is gradually attached. Such a process of attachment can occur in the mind of the observer; but not in the reality of the observed." Joyce makes claim that a living body cannot become a person unless it already is a person. Nothing can become something other than it already essentially is (103).

Joyce answers the usual objections of twinning and fusion much the same way as Heaney. When answering the

objections raised by developmentalism Joyce lists three counts of how it fails. It fails on the first count because it tends to confuse the process in the collective with process in the individual. This first process is of the cosmos, that which causes individuals to exist in time and space, ie., God. The other process is that which occurs in the individual itself. In this view Joyce sees the individual in the womb as being in charge of the pregnancy. It confuses two different types of potency. It tends to confuse the potency to cause something to come into existence with the potency for the new being to become fully what it is. The sperm and ovum exemplify the first type of potency. It is the zygote that best exemplifies the second (104-5).

The second major flaw is its projection, subtle or not so subtle, of a mechanistic model of development onto an organically developing reality. It does not distinguish between natural process and artificial process. It is only things like clocks and cars that come together part by part. Living things come into being all at once and then unfold to the world and to themselves what they already are. Developmentalist sometimes use the analogy of a blue-print to characterize the zygote. What they forget to note is that the blue print does not become a part of the house (106).

The third weakness of the gradualist approach is the notion that man is a rational animal. Man is no more a

rational animal than an animal is a sentient plant. Joyce points out that humans are animal-like, plant-like, rock-like and God-like in many ways. We digest food like animals, fall like rocks, and in our better moments contemplate like God. We are essentially wholly different than animals; even more different than they are from plants (107).

Donceel

In his article, "Immediate Animation and Delayed Hominization," Joseph Donceel argues for the idea of delayed hominization. By delayed hominization what is meant is that the fertilized ovum does not, at the moment of conception, immediately have a soul. It first has a vegetive soul, then an animal soul, then over time, acquires a human soul. Immediate hominization, as one might guess, means that, at the moment of conception the fertilized ovum is a human being complete with a human soul (76).

Donceel turns to Aristotle as he begins his argument. Aristotle, in his work, On the Generation of Animals, the question of the status of the embryo seems to have first come up. Aristotle believed that the embryo of a human is first animated by a vegetive or nutritive soul, which is then followed by a sensitive or animal soul, which, when the embryo is sufficiently organized, is succeeded by a rational, human soul (76-7).

Donceel points out that, as a rule, the Greek Fathers held that a human soul is present at the moment of conception, though this was not unanimous. One of the Fathers that defended the position of delayed hominization was Theodoret. Donceel tries to show that most the Latin Fathers, or at least those of them who mention the problem,

preferred the theory of delayed hominization. This is so, Donceel believes, because they thought it "quod est nimis absurdum" that every embryo that died soon after conception would be damned forever, since it could not be reconciled with Christ. Though Donceel does not claim this, I believe this position is due to an Augustinian view of Original Sin (77).

According to Donceel Thomas took over the view of Aristotle. Thomas argued that "in the generation of an animal or a man in which the form is most perfect, there are many intermediate forms and generations" (78). Donceel argues that there is erroneous biological information in the full argument of Thomas, but he does believe that there too is a sound philosophical argument as well. He states the main philosophical principles to be: the soul is the substantial form of a human: a substantial form can exist only in matter capable of receiving it; and that the human soul can exist only in an organized body. Donceel states that these principles are free from the connection to primitive medieval biology and that it properly represents Thomas's hylomorphic conception of man (78-9).

Donceel goes on to argue that modern biology supports Thomas's view of delayed hominization. For at the start of pregnancy there is not yet a fully organized human body. This view, combined with Thomas's hylomorphic conception of

man, is enough to firmly base Thomas's position of delayed hominization for Donceel. He prefers Thomas's position "because it is based on undeniable, and pre-scientific knowledge, and because it agrees best with the Catholic philosophy of man" (79-80).

Donceel explains that the hylomorphic conception of man is not a form of Cartesian dualism. The hylomorphic theory claims that, because man is composed of spiritual soul and prime matter, the body, then, is the first result of the union of soul and prime matter; man is a unity. The dualism of Plato and Descartes see man more as a couple than an unity. Donceel feels it important to mention that the features of the body are derived from the soul not from man's materiality. He asks how could pure potentiality cause anything. Donceel believes that it is a misunderstanding and confusion of Thomas's hylomorphism, with the Platonic-Cartesian dualism that is the reason behind why so many thinkers have given up Thomas's theory of delayed hominization. Donceel also believes that hylomorphism cannot admit that the fertilized ovum, the early embryo, is animated by a rational soul (80-2).

Donceel claims that to say the spiritual soul is virtually present in the fertilized ovum is to say that the soul is an efficient cause; that the soul is capable of producing, or developing into this thing, by an imminent

activity. To propose this for Donceel, is to say something that is not reconcilable with hylomorphism (84).

Donceel agrees with, and goes onto explain, Teilhard de Chardin's theory of embryonic development. This theory hinges on the concept of creative transformation. Creative transformation is a position that lies in between the notion of creation (making out of nothing), and that of transforming (modifying that which exists). The following is an explanation that Donceel gives of Karl Rahner's position: "...God enables the secondary causes to transcend their own virtualities, inserting, as it were, His divine causality within their own causality without becoming a constitutive element of their being, In this conception the creatures are more than instrumental, less than material, causes for God" (85).

With this in mind, what happens in embryonic development is on going creation: God continues to create, He did not stop on the sixth day.

In addressing proponents of immediate hominization, Donceel asks why, if the early embryo is to be considered a person, is not a heart that is taken out of an adult to be considered one too? He assumes, correctly that, the proponents of immediate hominization will claim that the early embryo is a potential full functioning adult, while



the heart is not. He claims if that is the criteria, then, every cell is then to be considered a person, for during this early stage, all the cells are capable of becoming a full grown adult these cells are totipotent, meaning they can, if separated early enough, turn into a human being (97-8).

If this same criteria for personhood is kept, Donceel argues that one day the "unfertilized ovum is a person" (99). This is so because it seems very possible that experiments that have worked on lower animals, have been able to induce animal organisms (99).

Donceel believes that many answers to this problem may be solved by evolution. Like evolution, which is a gradual process, so too, hominization may be a gradual process. "Yet in this long gradual process [evolution] there are thresholds. We may be unable to pinpoint them. But we can definitely say when some phenomenon was not yet present and when it was present on earth... [W]e do not know when a child is first capable of making a free moral choice, but we are certain that he is not yet capable of such a choice during the first year of life. Likewise, I [Donceel] do not know when the human soul is infused into the body, but I, for one, am certain that there is no human soul, hence no human person, the first few weeks of pregnancy" (101).

Pastrana

Gabriel Pastrana, in his article "Personhood and the Beginning of Human Life," addresses the questions of what is a person and when does human life begin? In starting his discussion he argues that the question of personhood is, at its core, neither legal or moral, but that it is a philosophical one.

Pastrana, after he gives an over view of current thought on the subject, looks at the biological data for an insight into the beginnings of human life. While doing this he makes a distinction between when life begins and when human life begins. During this discussion he gives an explanation of what goes on biologically during the first stages after fertilization. Pastrana points out the important special roles, characteristics, and behaviors that take place in the biological progress of the product of conception. "First of all, the fertilized egg is assured of automatic development unless untoward events occur, a characteristic not found in the individual ovum or sperm, which left to themselves inevitably die" (275). Another is cell division. A new genetic package is made up, primarily of genetic material provided by the female. According to Pastrana all of this activity does not necessarily mean that individuation has taken place yet (274-5).

Pastrana then goes on to discuss the phenomena of twinning and fusion. "These phenomena of twinning or recombination point to the fact that a good deal of organizing is going on in the new organism and that until this is completed, irreversible individuality is not settled" (275-6). As the zygote is going through these early stages of development, the cells are totipotent: ie., capable of becoming any type of cell. Tests have shown that until differentiation takes place these cells can, if separated, become parts of different individuals, ie., twinning can take place, or they can fuse with an other. Pastrana believes that differentiation reveals much about the formation and behavior of the zygote (276).

A very important occurrence, for Pastrana, is the appearance of the primary organizer in the blastocyst stage. If this organizer does not appear no differentiation will occur, if it does no twinning and / or recombination can occur. Pastrana agrees with what scientist James Diamond said: "the scientist has an almost insuperable inclination to identify hominization as being positable no earlier than the blastocyst stage; for it is at this stage that the hominizable products of fertilization and the non-hominizable products of fertilization are distinguished... only the characteristics of the subsequently hominizable entity(ies), the hominization and individualization of which cannot be posited until late-second or early-third week after

fertilization" (Pastrana 277).

Pastrana believes, that philosophically, individualization takes place "the period from the second to the third week (14th to 22nd day) after fertilization as the time of the appearance of the biological individual human being, or, more strictly, indicating its non appearance before that time, will also be valid from a philosophical point of view" (282). To Pastrana ensoulment, hominization, personhood, does not take place until after differentiation. It is of import to Pastrana that his philosophical position is based solidly on biological fact.

Pastrana does not agree with Donceel's use of the succession of souls, he argues that it is unnecessary. He is in more agreement with the notion of the product of conception as animated by a "transient form." For him, "what takes place during the process of 'generation' and what kind of entity goes through that process are better understood philosophically by what that entity is tending to or is going to be than by what it is when undergoing the process of change" (283).

Now that we have looked at the different positions on when human life, personhood, begins we should now look at which is most in line with the thought of St. Thomas.

As I said in the beginning of this paper, I believe that it is the first school, that of May Joyce and Heaney, that is most in line with the hylomorphic outlook of St. Thomas. The idea of succession of souls, even though St. Thomas was forced to use it himself, is inadequate. I agree fully with Heaney when he states that: "nothing less than a human soul is necessary for such a properly-human physical organism to come to be at all" (Heaney 70). Though I believe that the position of Donceel needs to be carefully looked at, I also believe that only a human soul could organize the cells in such a way as to make them receptive and functional for the capacities of a reasoning, knowing, loving, etc., human being.

A closer look at the relationship of body and soul, one that a person finds in St. Thomas, will show that this objection can be overcome. As stated earlier, for Thomas body exists for the soul (S. Th. I, 51, 1, corp.; 76, 3, corp; 89, 1, corp.). For this reason the body is the way it is, and has what it has, because it needs it to act. In looking at the argument from differentiation the objection that a soul cannot be there because it is still not

recognizable as human, it is not itself of whole being. Perhaps it is just a cell mass, that it is not until the primary organizer appears that it becomes one, that at that moment ensoulment takes place. Until this takes place it is identifiably from a human being, but not itself a human being.

This argument too, is not good enough, for "unlike the conceptus, these other human cells are, and become, parts of a whole" (Heaney 71). The zygote is a whole it is not going to be come a part. The orientation of the conceptus is radically different from the other cells. Even as Pastrana states; "the fertilized egg is assured of automatic development," the only way it will not become a full grown adult is if something outside of itself prevents it from doing so. It is self directed (Pastrana 275). All of its operations are directed for development, "are its ways of reaching its goal" (Heaney 71). "All changes after fertilization take place from within the entity- development of the blastocyst, appearance of the primary organizer, differentiation of cells. These changes are part of the developmental process. It does not become a different entity, only a more mature one" (Heaney 71).

In dealing with the objection raised by twinning, it is not too difficult in arriving at a satisfactory reply. Proponents of delayed hominization are correct when they

claim that persons cannot split or fuse together. What they don't realize is that there is nothing in Thomas's hylomorphism that says that the materiality cannot be divided into two, or, for that matter, more souls. If the material stuff combines into one, it is just the case that one of them died and the other is now using the remaining material. I believe, as Heaney states, given modern science, Thomas would have recognized this entity as a human from the moment of conception.

In conclusion, I believe that the position taken by Heaney, Joyce and May is best able to answer objections to its theory, and that it is more compatible with the whole hylomorphic position of St. Thomas.

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