



Material Continuity, Personal Survival, and the Resurrection of the Body: A Scholastic Discussion in Its Medieval and Modern Contexts

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Source: *History of Religions*, Vol. 30, No. 1, The Body (Aug., 1990), pp. 51-85

Published by: The University of Chicago Press

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1062792>

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Caroline Walker Bynum

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For Donald J. Wilcox

To twentieth-century non-Christians and Christians alike, no tenet of Christianity has seemed more improbable—indeed incredible—than the doctrine of the resurrection of the body. Easter sermons in both mainline Protestant and Catholic churches tend to allegorize the doctrine as a parable of the rebirth of the soul or draw on 1 Corinthians 15 to emphasize the radical change “body” must undergo when, “sown corruptible,” it rises “incorruptible.” Nonetheless, Christian preachers and theologians from Tertullian to the seventeenth-century divines asserted that God will reassemble the decayed and

I have considered some of this material from another point of view in “Bodily Miracles and the Resurrection of the Body in the High Middle Ages,” in *Belief in History*, ed. Thomas Kselman (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, in press). I am grateful to Steven Marrone, Guenther Roth, Robert Somerville, and Stephen D. White for their helpful readings of earlier drafts. This article is dedicated to Donald J. Wilcox, whose ideas about the resurrection of the body have influenced my research profoundly and whose friendship has sustained me intellectually over the years since we were graduate students together.

fragmented corpses of human beings at the end of time and grant to them eternal life and incorruptibility. In this article I wish to take seriously, rather than explain away, the medieval discussion of bodily resurrection. In doing so, I shall reinterpret a moment in the history of medieval philosophy and locate that moment in its context in religious practice. I shall also suggest that not only the basic concerns of the medieval discussion but even the materialistic details are relevant to modern problems in ways present-day preachers, believers, and skeptics have not understood.

THE MEDIEVAL DISCUSSION OF BODILY RESURRECTION

Through the doctrinal controversies of the second to fifth centuries C.E., the resurrection of the body was firmly established as an element of the Christian faith.¹ Medieval councils confirmed this. The Fourth Lateran Council in 1215 required Cathars and other heretics to assent to the proposition that "all rise again with their own individual bodies, that is, the bodies which they now wear," and the Second Council of Lyon in 1274 reaffirmed the requirement.² Conservative theologians charged with curtailing the more dangerous speculations of the university teachers of their day included among the propositions they condemned in 1277 the idea "that the corrupted body does not return one and the same, that is, does not rise numerically the same."³ If one argues, as scholars have recently done, that patristic and medieval polemics against heresy were less a quarrel with a clearly existent "other" than a process by which Christians defined themselves through creation of the "other," then one must say that theologians accorded importance, in eschatology, to the doctrine of

¹ See Gisbert Greshake and Jacob Kremer, *Resurrectio mortuorum: Zum theologischen Verständnis der leiblichen Auferstehung* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1986); A. Michel, "Resurrection des morts," in *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique*, ed. A. Vacant et al. (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1909-50) (hereafter *DTC*), vol. 13, pt. 2, cols. 2501-71; H. Cornelis, J. Guillet, Th. Camelot, and M. A. Genevois, *The Resurrection of the Body*, Themes of Theology (Notre Dame, Ind.: Fides, 1964); Ton H. C. Van Eijk, *La Resurrection des morts chez les Pères Apostoliques* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1974); R. M. Grant, "The Resurrection of the Body," *Journal of Religion* 28 (1948): 120-30 and 188-208; Henry Chadwick, "Origen, Celsus, and the Resurrection of the Body," *Harvard Theological Review* 41 (1948): 83-102; Joanne E. McWilliam Dewart, *Death and Resurrection*, Message of the Fathers of the Church 22 (Wilmington, Del.: Michael Glazier, 1986); and Gedaliahu G. Stroumsa, "Caro salutis cardo: Shaping the Person in Early Christian Thought," *History of Religions*, in this issue.

² Henry Denzinger, *Enchiridion symbolorum definitionum et declarationum de rebus fidei et morum*, 11th ed., ed. C. Bannwart (Freiburg: Herder, 1911), pp. 189, 202-3.

³ See n. 71 below.

resurrection not because it was under attack but because they themselves chose to do so.⁴

In certain ways eschatology sat uncomfortably among other tenets of scholastic theology. Consideration of "last things" was tacked on at the end of Peter Lombard's basic textbook, the *Four Books of Sentences*, coming rather incongruously after the discussion of marriage. Therefore some later commentators (e.g., Giles of Rome) never reached the issue when they composed their Sentence commentaries. Some twelfth-century theologians (e.g., Robert of Melun) never considered "final things"; others (e.g., Honorius Augustodunensis) raised such issues but in ways which suggest that they did not find the doctrine of bodily resurrection completely compatible with other theological tenets.⁵ Thomas Aquinas did not treat eschatology in detail in the *Summa theologiae*, and modern theologians must turn to the *Supplementum* (put together by a disciple) or to his early Sentence commentary for a statement of his position. Almost all twelfth- and thirteenth-century theologians warned their readers that questions about what the resurrected body would be like might lead to idle, or even heterodox, speculation. As Jacques Le Goff and others have recently reminded us, discussions of bodily resurrection became less frequent as elaboration of the doctrine of purgatory and disputes over the beatific vision increasingly directed the attention of schoolmen and preachers to the state of the soul in the period between death and Last Judgment.⁶

Nonetheless, theologians of the high Middle Ages neither abandoned the doctrine nor ceased to discuss it. Several (e.g., Albert the Great and Giles of Rome) wrote treatises about it.⁷ Moreover, it came

⁴ For this interpretation of heresy for the medieval period, see R. I. Moore, *The Formation of a Persecuting Society: Power and Deviance in Western Europe, 950-1250* (New York: Blackwell, 1987).

⁵ On Robert, see Richard Heinzmann, *Die Unsterblichkeit der Seele und die Auferstehung des Leibes: Eine problemgeschichtliche Untersuchung der früh-scholastischen Sentenzen- und Summenliteratur von Anselm von Laon bis Wilhelm von Auxerre*, Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie und Theologie des Mittelalters: Texte und Untersuchungen 40.3 (Münster: Aschendorff, 1965), pp. 163 ff. Honorius Augustodunensis, *Elucidarium*, in *Patrologiae cursus completus: Series latina*, ed. J. P. Migne (Paris: Migne, 1841-64) (hereafter *PL*), vol. 172, cols. 1109-76, begins with an extremely materialist and literal consideration of last things, only to conclude his treatise by spiritualizing them to an astonishing extent.

⁶ Jacques Le Goff, *La naissance du purgatoire*, Bibliothèque des histoires (Paris: Gallimard, 1981). For a brief overview of the controversy concerning the beatific vision, see M. J. Redle, "Beatific Vision," in *New Catholic Encyclopedia* (Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America, 1967), 2:186-93.

⁷ Kieran Nolan, *The Immortality of the Soul and the Resurrection of the Body according to Giles of Rome: A Historical Study of a Thirteenth Century Theological Problem*, *Studia Ephemeridis "Augustinianum"* 1 (Rome: Studium Theologicum

up again and again in quodlibetal disputes (i.e., disputes by university students and masters on topics of current interest),⁸ and it provided the occasion for debating certain key philosophical issues raised by Aristotle, the most important being—as we shall see—the question of the unicity or plurality of forms.

What modern readers find most disturbing about medieval discussions is their extreme literalism and materialism. In order to illustrate these characteristics, I shall give a brief summary of the last section of Peter Lombard's *Sentences*, which determined the course of debate for hundreds of years. Although an overall principle of organization is difficult to discern in Peter's treatment, his emphasis is clear. He chose to consider final things in a way which gives pride of place to questions of the material reassemblage or reconstitution of the body.⁹

Beginning with the admonition (borrowed from Augustine) that not all questions can be answered, Peter devoted distinction (i.e., section) 43 of his fourth book to a discussion of the sound of the last trumpet, concentrating on the question whether those alive at that moment must die before being raised. In distinction 44, he turned to such questions as the following: What age, height, and sex will we have in the resurrected body? Will all matter which has passed through the body at any point be resurrected? Must bits of matter return to the particular members (e.g., fingernails or hair) where they once resided? Will the bodies of the damned as well as the saved rise with their defects repaired? Are aborted fetuses resurrected? How can the bodies of the damned burn without being consumed? Will demons (although incorporeal) suffer from corporeal fire in hell? Distinction 45, after considering where souls reside between death and resurrection and asserting (without explaining) that the blessed will experience an increase of joy in bodily resurrection, turns to lengthy consideration of the usefulness of prayers for the dead. Distinctions 46 and 47 explore in detail God's justice, especially the punishment of the damned. Distinctions 48 and 49 discuss specific questions concerning what we might call the topography and demography of blessedness: Where exactly will Christ descend as judge? Of what quality will light

Augustinianum, 1967), pp. 69–75, 90–96, 105–13, 124–30, edits Giles's *Quaestiones* on the resurrection; see below, n. 67. Albert's *De resurrectione* is edited by W. Kübel, in Albert, *Opera omnia*, ed. Institutum Alberti Magni Coloniense, vol. 26 (Münster: Aschendorff, 1958).

⁸ See the indices to Palémon Glorieux's great study of quodlibetal literature: *La littérature quodlibétique de 1260 à 1320*, Bibliothèque Thomiste 5 and 21 (Le Saulchoir: Kain, 1925; Paris: J. Vrin, 1935).

⁹ Peter Lombard, *Sententiae in IV Libris Distinctae*, 4, dist. 43–50, ed. Collegium S. Bonaventurae, Spicilegium Bonaventurianum 4 and 5, 2 vols. (Grottaferrata: Collegium S. Bonaventurae ad Claras Aquas, 1971, 1981) (hereafter *Sentences*), 2:510–60. Peter's treatment is quite ad hoc and disorganized; even the summary I give here imposes on it a coherence it does not have.

be after the Last Judgment? Will all the elect shine with the same glory, see with the same clarity, and rejoice with the same joy? Distinction 50 returns to details of the condition of the damned and, after considering the question of how the finger of Lazarus (Luke 16:22–26) could touch the tongue of the rich man when both (having died) were without body, repeats Augustine's warning that certain answers cannot be discovered.

As even such brief summary makes clear, the Last Judgment is primarily, to the Lombard, a matter of punishment and reward of exactly the same material stuff that constituted the body during life. The discussion, although almost pictorial in its vividness, is highly unoriginal, mostly borrowed in fact from Augustine's *City of God* and *Enchiridion*, with bits from Gregory, Julian of Toledo, Jerome, Hugh of St. Victor, Honorius Augustodunensis, and the school of Anselm of Laon thrown in. Nonetheless Peter Lombard appears to have chosen from among the available authorities in such a way as to underline the corporeal experience of the resurrected body.

The Lombard was not alone among twelfth-century theologians in emphasizing the materialism of the risen body. Hugh of St. Victor wondered whether we shall be able to open and close our eyes after the resurrection.¹⁰ Honorius (and Herrad of Landsberg who borrowed his discussion) queried what color we will be in heaven and whether we will wear clothes.¹¹ Guibert of Nogent fulminated against the cults of the tooth of Christ and of the holy foreskin because they implied that Christ had not risen in total bodily perfection and that our resurrection might therefore be defective as well.¹² Several theologians debated whether food taken in by the body during its lifetime would become part of that body and rise at the end.¹³

Such discussion continued throughout the thirteenth century. Schoolmen queried whether the gift of *subtilitas* received by the glorified body meant that that body could be in the same place at the same time as another body. The conclusion that it could be was, of course,

¹⁰ Hugh of St. Victor, *De sacramentis*, 2, pt. 18, c. 18, *PL* 176, col. 616.

¹¹ Honorius Augustodunensis, *Elucidarium*, *PL* 172, cols. 1164–65, 1169; Herrad of Hohenbourg, *Hortus deliciarum*, chaps. 850–52, 855, 887, 1090; see *Hortus deliciarum: Reconstruction*, ed. Rosalie Green et al. (London and Leiden: Warburg Institute; University of London and Brill, 1979), pp. 423–35, 447, 481. See also the texts edited and discussed in Odon Lottin, *Psychologie et morale aux XIIe et XIIIe siècles*, vol. 5, *Problèmes d'histoire littéraire: L'école d'Anselme de Laon et de Guillaume de Champeaux* (Gembloux: J. Duculot, 1959), pp. 321, 374.

¹² Guibert of Nogent, *De pignoribus*, *PL* 156 (Paris, 1853), esp. bk. 1, cols. 611–30. On Guibert's treatise, see Caroline Walker Bynum, "Bodily Miracles and the Resurrection of the Body in the High Middle Ages," in *Belief in History*, ed. Thomas Kselman (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, in press).

¹³ See Heinzmann (n. 5 above), pp. 148–55; Lottin, 5:35, 265–66, 320–21, 393–96, and 4, pt. 1:55; and Nolan, pp. 116–23.

suggested by gospel stories of Christ passing through closed doors after his resurrection.¹⁴ Theologians also asked whether we will smell sweet odors or touch other bodies in heaven. Will we eat or taste? The latter question was an extraordinarily difficult one; the indignities of digestion could hardly be ascribed to a glorified body endowed with *impassibilitas*, yet the resurrected Christ had, according to Luke 24:42–43, eaten boiled fish and honeycomb with his disciples.¹⁵

The question of cannibalism and the resurrection, debated at least since the second century and engaged in new ways in the thirteenth, has seemed to modern commentators the most extravagant and offensive of such materialistic considerations. If human remains were eaten by other human beings, in which person would the common matter rise? By the time of Thomas Aquinas the discussion had become remarkably elaborate. A consensus had developed that digested food does become “of the substance of human nature” and rise at the end of time. Thus, eaten human remains will be resurrected in the person to whom they first belonged; the missing matter will be made up in the second person from the nonhuman stuff he or she has eaten. But what (hypothesized Aquinas) about the case of a man who ate only human embryos who generated a child who ate only human embryos? If eaten matter rises in the one who possessed it first, this child will not rise at all. All its matter will rise elsewhere: either in the embryos its father ate (from which its core of human nature, passed on in the semen, was formed) or in the embryos it ate. Although the cannibalism question had been considered seriously at least since Tertullian (d. ca. 220), the issue did not remain the same. To the early fathers such questions were challenges raised by the enemies of Christianity, against whom one asserted, in answer, the absolute power of God to supplement missing matter in any way he chose. Aquinas, in contrast,

¹⁴ Hermann J. Weber, *Die Lehre von der Auferstehung der Toten in den Haupttraktaten der scholastischen Theologie von Alexander von Hales zu Duns Scotus*, Freiburger Theologische Studien (Freiburg: Herder, 1973), pp. 331–32.

¹⁵ Thomas Aquinas held that risen bodies will have the capacity for touch; see *Summa contra Gentiles*, bk. 4, c. 84, in *Sancti Thomae Aquinatis Opera Omnia . . .*, vols. 13–15 (Rome: Apud Sedem Commissionis Leoninae, 1918–30) (hereafter *ScG*), 15:268–69. Risen bodies will not, however, eat: see *ScG*, bk. 4, c. 83, in 15:262–66. In *Quaestiones disputatae de potentia*, q. 6, art. 8, in *Thomae Aquinatis . . . Opera omnia*, ed. S. E. Frette (Paris: Vives, 1875), 13:205, Aquinas argues that Christ willed to eat after the resurrection in order to show the reality of his body; see also Thomas, *Summa theologiae*, ed. Blackfriars, 61 vols. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964–81) (hereafter *ST*), 3a, q. 55, art. 6, in 55:56–65. Albert the Great (*De resurrectione*, tract. 2, q. 8, art. 5, p. 278) argues that, in order to demonstrate his resurrected body, the resurrected Christ ate without the food becoming of his substance; we too could eat that way in the glorified body but have no need to, since we need not demonstrate the resurrection. H. J. Weber, pp. 259–60, shows how thirteenth-century theologians vacillated in their treatments of whether there is tasting in heaven. Basic principles conflicted: on the one hand, vegetative functions were seen as eliminated in heaven; on the other hand, as Albert said, “Nulla potestate nobili destituentur.”

insisted on tracking the bits of matter as far as possible through the processes of digestion, assimilation, and reproduction before resorting (as he also had finally to do) to divine power to make up the difference.¹⁶

THE MODERN DEBATE OVER PERSONAL IDENTITY AND SURVIVAL

Medieval debates about the resurrection of foreskins or eaten embryos have baffled modern historians and theologians.¹⁷ Deeply embarrassed by such materialism and literalism, they have occasionally cited the debates in order to shock or titillate their colleagues,¹⁸ or have, like Renaissance polemicists, used them to illustrate and condemn scholastic obscurantism. Most frequently, however, scholars have expressed their bewilderment and frustration with medieval arguments by trying to sweep away the offensive details while salvaging something of importance.¹⁹ Twentieth-century treatments of the resurrection usually assert that, while particular aspects of the scholastic debate may be jejune or scientifically outdated, basic questions were at stake.²⁰

¹⁶ Michael Allyn Taylor, "Human Generation in the Thought of Thomas Aquinas: A Case Study on the Role of Biological Fact in Theological Science" (Ph.D. diss., Catholic University of America, 1982); on thirteenth-century discussions of the cannibalism problem, see also Nolan (n. 7 above), pp. 114–23.

¹⁷ A good deal of modern scholarship on the resurrection question has been deeply influenced by the work of the Swiss theologian, Oscar Cullmann, who argued that immortality (a Greek concept) and resurrection (a Judeo-Christian concept) are fundamentally incompatible in the history of Christian thought; see Cullmann, *Christ and Time: The Primitive Christian Conception of Time and History*, trans. F. Filson, 3d ed. (London: SCM, 1962), *Unsterblichkeit der Seele oder Auferstehung der Toten?* (Stuttgart, 1964), "Immortality and Resurrection," in *Immortality and Resurrection*, ed. Krister Stendahl (New York, 1965), pp. 9–53, and "Immortality of the Soul or Resurrection of the Dead? The Witness of the New Testament," in *Immortality*, ed. Terence Penelhum (Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth, 1973), pp. 53–84. For discussions of medieval thought influenced by Cullmann, see Heinzmann; H. J. Weber; and Greshake and Kremer (n. 1 above). I have chosen to ignore Cullmann's concerns, which are not relevant to the issues I raise in this article.

¹⁸ For example, Herbert Thurston, *The Physical Phenomena of Mysticism* (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1952); and Piero Camporesi, *The Incorruptible Flesh: Bodily Mutation and Mortification in Religion and Folklore*, trans. T. Croft-Murray and H. Elsom (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

¹⁹ Occasionally also scholars have defended the doctrine of resurrection by insisting that it involved a positive assessment of the body and even of sexuality; see Frank Bottomley, *Attitudes toward the Body in Western Christendom* (London: Lepus, 1979). See also Prudence Allen, *The Concept of Woman: The Aristotelian Revolution, 750 B.C.–A.D. 1250* (Montreal and London: Eden, 1985), which views the rise of Aristotle as a victory for sexism but argues that medieval teaching on the resurrection of the body, with its assertion that human beings will rise in two sexes, undercuts the negative Aristotelian position.

²⁰ For disapproving assessments of the medieval interest and the suggestion that modern scholars should turn their attention not to the offensive examples but to the fundamental issues behind them, see H. M. McElwain, "Resurrection of the Dead,

At first glance, this approach seems promising. The distasteful details of medieval discussion can indeed be stripped away to reveal perennial questions. The doctrine of bodily resurrection does involve fundamental issues of survival and identity still moot in philosophical circles. Nonetheless, further consideration of this tactic suggests that it is misguided. We will not understand either medieval positions or their relevance for modern theological discussion if we strip away the materialist detail. The details of the medieval discussion are exactly the point. I can explain this more clearly if I turn for a moment to modern philosophical discussion.

When we consider current discussions of personal identity and survival, we find that they too involve lengthy consideration of cases even their investigators admit to be bizarre. The two most common examples used in philosophical discussions over the past two or three decades are “teletransportation” (the mode of travel used in the TV series “Star Trek,” whereby a person’s body pattern is beamed through space in order to rematerialize on another planet) and the operation that we may alternatively call a “brain-” or a “body-transplant.”²¹ (How we label it, of course, turns out to make a good deal of difference to what we think happens.) One of the most gripping and accessible recent explorations of questions of survival is John Perry’s *A Dialogue on Personal Identity and Immortality*, which purports to be a deathbed conversation with a philosophy teacher from a small midwestern college who has refused a body transplant operation after a motorcycle accident because she claims “she” will not survive if her brain occupies a new body.²² Another such accessible exploration is Robert Nozick’s discussion in *Philosophical Explanations* of audience reaction to the film *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*. Nozick points out that viewers see the pods which reproduce and replace the former

Theology of,” in *New Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967), 12:425; and J. A. MacCulloch, “Eschatology,” in *Encyclopaedia of Religions and Ethics*, ed. J. Hastings (New York: Scribner’s, 1914), 5:386, 391.

²¹ For teletransportation, see Robert Nozick, *Philosophical Explanations* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1981), pp. 29–70, esp. pp. 41–42, 58–59; Derek Parfit, *Reasons and Persons* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), pp. 199–347, esp. pp. 199–204, 241–42; Thomas Nagel, *The View from Nowhere* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), pp. 28–53, esp. pp. 42–44. For brain transplants, see Sydney Shoemaker, *Self-Knowledge and Self-Identity* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1963), pp. 23 ff.; Bernard Williams, *Problems of the Self: Philosophical Papers, 1956–72* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), pp. 46–63; George Rey, “Survival,” in *The Identities of Persons*, ed. Amelie O. Rorty (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), pp. 41–66; John Perry, “The Importance of Being Identical,” in Rorty, ed., pp. 67–89. The works of Nagel, Parfit, and Nozick just cited as well as the essay by Perry cited in the note below also use brain transplant examples.

²² John Perry, *A Dialogue on Personal Identity and Immortality* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1978).

bodies of characters (but without their emotions), not as murderers of the old selves but as continuers of them which alter *them* in some fundamental and sinister way.²³

Brain transplants, interstellar beaming of a body pattern, pods generated by invaders from outer space—speculation about such cases is perhaps no less odd than speculation about the resurrection of Christ's foreskin, about the "teletransportation" of glorified bodies, or about the fate of eaten embryos. And the oddness has been noticed. The philosopher J. L. Austin has described discourse in his own discipline as the "constant and obsessive repetition of the same small range of jejune examples."²⁴ Nancy Struever has said of Bernard Williams's *Problems of the Self* (one of the very best of recent books on the survival question): "[It is] in many ways a wise book, but it is stuffed, literally stuffed, with bizarre examples: there are split personalities, amoebalike fissions of the body, nuclear fusions of minds, brain transfusions—a monstrous zoo seems to be the proper arena of discovery."²⁵

Yet odd though these examples are, they cannot simply be discarded while we seek the perennial questions that lie behind them. This is so for three reasons. First, the examples used in philosophical investigation are sometimes the most time-bound elements of the debate.²⁶ They may also be the place where popular assumptions and academic discourse touch each other most closely and most specifically. Thus, the historian of contemporary issues may find, in the particular illustrations chosen, the most telling information about historical context. Second, the bizarre examples are part of the discussion; often they bear the weight of the argument. For example, it is only by careful consideration of the case of "teletransportation" that we learn whether the philosopher using the example thinks personal identity depends on transported molecules or only on a

²³ Nozick, pp. 58–59.

²⁴ J. L. Austin, *Sense and Sensibilia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1962), p. 3, quoted in Nancy Struever, "Philosophical Problems and Historical Solutions," in *At the Nexus of Philosophy and History*, ed. B. Danenhauer (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1987), p. 76. Parfit, p. 200, points out that Wittgenstein and Quine have similar doubts about whether we learn anything from these science fiction stories. (Parfit rejoins that what is important is the fact that we have reactions to them; therefore they help us think about what we think we are.)

²⁵ Struever, p. 76.

²⁶ Although I wish to argue that this is true for medieval examples as well, I should point out here that the classic examples in medieval philosophical discussion had, in some cases, a long history. The example of the statue, melted and reforged, came into medieval discussion via Peter Lombard from Augustine's *City of God* and came to Augustine, of course, from the common fund of Greek philosophy. Tracing how the example is used, however, tells us, as we shall see below in n. 59, precisely how identity theory changes and fails to change in the late thirteenth century.

transferred pattern or form. Third, it is in the examples that we see that current philosophical discussion clings, almost in spite of itself, to the issue of material continuity. It is therefore in the examples more clearly than in the articulated positions that we see the essential similarity of medieval and modern discussion.

Medieval and modern theories of survival are not the same, to be sure. All medieval thinkers held a soul-body dualism; few modern thinkers do. But recent philosophical discussion, unlike that of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries but like that of the Middle Ages, seems to find it almost impossible to envision personal survival without material continuity. It is the examples chosen by philosophers that make this clear.

By and large, in modern discussions, "soul" has been discarded. Even those, such as Richard Swinburne, who retain a dualist (i.e., a body-and-soul) position seem to hold what Swinburne calls "soft dualism"—that is, a position which argues that soul is not reducible to body but does not survive without it.²⁷ Recent anthologies on the survival question put together for undergraduates represent the "soul position" with the same old article from the 1950s—an article that cites psychic research done in the 1930s or earlier.²⁸ Apparently, two theories are viable today: one a version of the memory theory that goes back to John Locke ("I am my continuous stream of memory");²⁹ the other a theory of material continuity ("I am my body" or—and this is clearly a very different sort of material continuity—"I am a particular part of my body: my brain").³⁰ While no one thinks that a self is only a body, recent discussion seems to find it difficult to account for identity without some sort of physical continuity.

What is characteristic of both sides in the current discussion is their fascination with the body and with transfer of body parts. Today's philosophers wonder, for example, why we tend to assume that "we" survive if our body is replaced little by little in organ transplants but not if our entire body is replaced at once. They hypothesize experiments in which we are told that the body we occupy will wake

²⁷ Richard Swinburne, *The Evolution of the Soul* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), pp. 7–10, 298–312; see also Sydney Shoemaker and Richard Swinburne, *Personal Identity* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1984).

²⁸ H. H. Price, "Survival and the Idea of 'Another World,'" and "Mediumship and Human Survival" (originally published 1953) used in Penelhum, ed. (n. 17 above), pp. 21–52, 103–18. The same articles are used in Peter A. French, ed., *Philosophers in Wonderland: Philosophy and Psychical Research* (St. Paul, Minn.: Llewellyn, 1975), pp. 297–308; and see French's prefatory note, pp. 289–96.

²⁹ For explanations of Locke's argument, see Swinburne, "The Dualist Theory," in Shoemaker and Swinburne, pp. 8–10; or Perry, *Dialogue*, pp. 314–20, 325.

³⁰ For readable summaries of recent debate that suggest the prominence of these two theories, see Perry, *Dialogue*; Penelhum, ed. (n. 17 above), introduction; or Rorty, ed. (n. 21 above), introduction.

tomorrow devoid of memory and then be subjected to intense pain; they ask whether, under these circumstances, we are afraid for ourselves and conclude that, since we do feel fear, we must assume in some sense that the body is our "self." Drawing on science fiction, they imagine cases in which a body pattern is beamed to another galaxy and rematerialized but the original body is left behind; which of the resultant entities (they ask) is the self? In contrast, the sort of evidence that fascinated people at the turn of the century and that could be adduced today (evidence from parapsychological research, for example, or from the near-death experiences documented by E. Kübler-Ross) seldom finds its way into philosophical debate. Whatever money there is to be made in "new age" products or scientology, indications that disembodied spirits survive death arouse little philosophical interest. Even elaborators of the memory theory either content themselves with answering the difficulties in Locke's formulation pointed out by Joseph Butler in the eighteenth century,³¹ or in fact expend much energy discussing brain transplants and DNA extractions—that is, material continuity—as a way of explaining or questioning continuity of consciousness. Some recent theorists (e.g., Derek Parfit and Robert Nozick) hold that there are a number of hypothetical cases in which I cannot decide whether "I" survive or not. But this latter group of thinkers tends also to devote extensive attention to cases having to do with bodily continuity.³²

Thus the most commonly examined and apparently pertinent examples in current philosophical discussion of identity and survival have to do with the place of body. And are these examples really so outré or jejune? I think we can say so only in a rather special sense of the word outré, for these cases are familiar. They are the stuff of popular culture—of TV shows and movies, of articles in the *New York Review of Books* and letters to Ann Landers. Oliver Sacks's superb popularization of research on mind, *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat*, has become not only a bestseller but also an opera.³³ The products of yellow journalism sold in supermarkets

³¹ See Perry, *Dialogue*, p. 325.

³² See the works of Parfit and Nozick cited in n. 21 above. Charles Coburn, "Personal Identity Revisited," *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 15, no. 3 (1985): 379–403, disagrees with Nozick's "closest continuer" theory by arguing that the notion of personal identity is simply unanalyzable; identity cannot be reduced to some element of continuity. Even Coburn, however, spends a great deal of time discussing brain transplant operations, which appear to him the best argument against his position. It is also worth noting that Swinburne, who argues for soul, devotes much attention to brain transplant cases; see *Evolution of Soul*, pp. 299–301.

³³ Oliver Sacks, *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat and Other Clinical Tales* (New York: Summit, 1985). See also Oliver Sacks, "Tics," *New York Review of Books* (January 29, 1987), pp. 37–41; and Jonathan Glover, "Am I My Brain?" *New York*

feature stories of organ recipients who feel invaded by the persons whose body parts they receive; and responsible medical sociologists take seriously the problems raised by such feelings. The sensationalist plot of a novel published in early 1989, *Broken-Hearted*, revolves around the case of a woman who falls in love with the recipient of her late husband's heart.³⁴ Many recent movies and TV programs deal with identity and survival, not through stories of ghosts and parapsychic phenomena nor through high-minded tales of heredity and morality, but through fantasies of body exchange and rejuvenation: "The Brain," *All of Me*, *Maxie*, *Like Father Like Son*, *The Man with Two Brains*, *Heaven Can Wait*, *Chances Are*, "Max Headroom," etc.³⁵

What is significant about the attitudes revealed in today's newspaper stories and movies is the underlying assumption that in some way the body is the self. Renée Fox and Judith Swazey's research on the sociological and psychological context of transplants has turned up repeated cases of persons who are convinced that identity is in some way transferred with organs.³⁶ They report the following remark, made by the father of a boy heart donor to the father of the young girl who received the organ: "We've always wanted a little girl, so now we're going to have her and share her with you."³⁷ Crammond's study of kidney recipients reports a donor's reaction to the recipient's decision to return to work: "He's being unfair to himself and to me. . . . After all, it's my kidney. . . . That's me in there."³⁸ In the winter of 1987-88, Los Angeles was shocked by stories of a cryonics group that froze heads with the hope of thawing them later and cloning bodies to accompany them. Accusations were made that the group had actually murdered an elderly woman by turning off life-

Review of Books (April 9, 1987), pp. 31-34, a review of Nagel's *View from Nowhere* that makes issues of bodily continuity even more central in Nagel's discussion than I think Nagel does. A recent work in psychology that stresses, in revolutionary ways, the "embodied-ness" of knowing is George Lakoff, *Women, Fire and Dangerous Things: What Categories Reveal about the Mind* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987).

³⁴ Nancy Weber, *Broken-Hearted* (New York: Dutton, 1989); and see nn. 36-39 below.

³⁵ The September 25, 1987, episode, "Deities," of "Max Headroom," in which Christian ideas about resurrection of the body are parodied through depiction of a group like the Los Angeles cryonics sect, is a particularly good example.

³⁶ Renée C. Fox and Judith P. Swazey, *The Courage to Fail: A Social View of Organ Transplants and Dialysis*, 2d ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), pp. 27-32; Renée C. Fox, "Organ Transplantation: Sociocultural Aspects," in *Encyclopedia of Bioethics*, ed. W. T. Reich (New York: Free Press, 1978), pp. 1166-69.

³⁷ Fox and Swazey, p. 32.

³⁸ W. A. Crammond, "Renal Homotransplantation: Some Observations on Recipients and Donors," *British Journal of Psychiatry* 113 (1967): 1226; quoted in Fox and Swazey, p. 27.

support systems at the optimum moment for severing and freezing her head. Cryonics adherents claimed, however, that thawing the head now to ascertain whether murder had in fact been committed would murder the woman for all eternity by denying her hope of revival. To such a sect, bodily survival *is* resurrection.³⁹

Moreover, none of the repetitive and by no means consistently entertaining movies I list above suggests that the occupation of a body by another personality is simply the substitution of one person for another. Such a plot would imply that the memory/personality is the person. Rather there is, in these fantasies, something disturbing about the new conjunction of mind and body exactly because characters in the film (and presumably the audience) see the body that continues as in some sense the person, who is invaded and threatened by another set of characteristics and memories.

In their fascination with the bodily aspects of survival and identity, contemporary philosophers are just like the rest of us. Indeed, many of their most bizarre hypothetical cases come from mass culture. The now famous essay on survival by John Perry, for example, is based not only on John Locke and Bernard Williams but also on a popular novel from 1972 about a brain transplant.⁴⁰ Moreover, the particular way in which the question of immortality and survival is posed in philosophical investigations, no less than in fiction, yellow journalism, and film, has been precipitated by recent technological developments, with their attendant legal and moral complications—namely, artificial intelligence, organ transplants, brain surgery. Much current philosophical debate takes its departure from the Sperry experiments on epileptics, which offer evidence that the two hemispheres of the brain can exist separately; duplication of individuals through brain fission may be technologically feasible.⁴¹

One can therefore argue that the general human issues on which the philosophical problem of survival bears (the value of the individual, the mind/body problem, etc.) have not changed much recently. Nor do such general questions seem much closer to philosophical solution. What is in fact most time-bound—and therefore most instructive to us about ourselves—is the precise nature of the outré and

³⁹ Louis Sahagun and T. W. McGarry, "Investigators Seek Severed Head at Cryonics Center," *Los Angeles Times* (January 9, 1988), pt. 1.

⁴⁰ Barbara Harris, *Who Is Julia?* (New York: McKay, 1972). A recent novel that plays with such questions is Lawrence Shainberg, *Memories of Amnesia* (New York: Paris Review Editions/British American Publishing, 1988). Sydney Shoemaker in Shoemaker and Swinburne (n. 27 above), p. 69, also calls attention to the relevance of examples from popular fiction.

⁴¹ See Rey (n. 21 above), pp. 41–46.

jeune examples which apparently fascinate us, moviegoers and philosophers alike. It is the examples to which the philosophers continually refer, rather than their abstract positions, that tell us how far we go toward assuming that material continuity is crucial for personal survival. It is in the examples also that we see reflected the extent to which popular culture has moved away from concern with mind/body dichotomies and turned instead to issues of integrity versus corruption or partition.

DEBATES OF THE MEDIEVAL SCHOOLROOM IN THE CONTEXT
OF THE HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY

I wish now to offer a similar analysis of the seemingly outrageous and offensive schoolroom examples of the Middle Ages. Even a brief look at modern philosophy should weaken our resistance to taking seriously such medieval questions as the resurrection of hermaphrodites or of eaten embryos. This modern discussion reminds us, first, that we too explore the issue of personal survival through bizarre examples; second, that the examples we use to think with often come from popular culture and exactly for this reason express our deepest hopes and fears; third, that the cases currently under investigation—teletransportation and body or brain transplants—also treat survival and identity as matters involving body continuity or corruption. If the medieval question “Will my discarded fingernails rise again?” seems to us an odd one, we do well to admit the similar oddness of such modern questions as “If Caroline Bynum’s brain were transplanted into the body of, for example, Lawrence Stone, who would the resulting person be?”

My thesis about the twelfth- and thirteenth-century theology of the body is twofold and, in both its parts, revisionist. First, much of the debate about the resurrection of the body and about the relation of body and soul revolved not around a soul/body contrast (although the soul and body were, of course, seen as distinct entities in a way they are not by most modern philosophers) but around the issue of bodily continuity. Questions of risen embryos, foreskins, and fingernails, of the subtlety of glorified flesh, of how and whether God makes whole the amputee or the fat man, are questions about the reassemblage of physical parts. Scholastic theologians worried not about whether body was crucial to human nature but about how part related to whole—that is, how bits could and would be reintegrated after scattering and decay. The crucial question to which discussion of the resurrected body returned again and again was not “Is body necessary to personhood?” Medieval theologians were so certain it

was they sometimes argued that resurrection was “natural.” Peter of Capua suggested, for example, that it was a consequence not of divine grace but of the structure of human nature that body returned to soul after the Last Judgment.⁴² The crucial theological question was rather, What accounts for the identity of earthly and risen body? What of “me” must rise in order for the risen body to be “me”? Only by considering the specific examples debated by schoolmen can we see the extent to which, between 1100 and 1320, they were really debating how far material continuity is necessary for identity.

Second, I wish to argue that this issue of bodily continuity (of how identity lasts through corruption and reassemblage) was manifested as an issue not merely in the bizarre limiting cases considered by scholastic theologians but also in pious practice: in the cult of saints and relics, in changes in legal, medical, and burial procedures in exactly this period, in the kinds of miracle stories that were popular with preachers and audiences. Thus I see a connection between actual church practice and the debates of ivory-tower intellectuals, and this connection is easiest to find not in the general philosophical issues such scholars considered but in the strangest of their specific examples.

The story of philosophical discourse in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries is not, of course, usually told as a story in which issues of material continuity, or of part and whole, figure very prominently. The interpretation most of us have learned from the great Catholic historians of philosophy in this century is rather a story of Plato and Aristotle and of theories of soul.⁴³ It argues that twelfth-century thought was characterized, philosophically speaking, by Platonic dualism—that is, by the view (found especially in Hugh of St. Victor and Robert of Melun) that the person is the soul, to which body is attached as tool, garment, or prison. Modern scholars have thus seen the twelfth-century insistence on bodily resurrection as a somewhat

⁴² Heinzmann (n. 5 above), p. 208; H. J. Weber (n. 14 above), pp. 80–106. Simon of Tournai, William of Auxerre, Thomas, Bonaventure, and Giles of Rome all held that the resurrection of the body was both natural and supernatural; see Nolan (n. 7 above), pp. 96–104, 140.

⁴³ Etienne Gilson, *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages* (New York: Random, 1955); and Frederick Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, vol. 2, pts. 1 and 2, *Medieval Philosophy* (Westminster, Md.: Newman, 1950). Even those intellectual historians who have disagreed with Gilson have done so on other grounds than the one I raise here; see Fernand van Steenbergen, *Aristotle in the West: The Origins of Latin Aristotelianism*, trans. L. Johnston (Louvain: Nauwelaerts, 1955); and M.-D. Chenu, *La théologie au douzième siècle*, *Etudes de philosophie médiévale* 45 (Paris: J. Vrin, 1957). The basic Catholic position has been to see a growing awareness of and positive appreciation of “nature” and “the natural” in the twelfth century, which prepared for the reception of Aristotle in the thirteenth.

incongruous theological intrusion into a philosophical position that requires escape from body for human perfection.⁴⁴ According to this interpretation, the thirteenth-century adoption of Aristotle's definition of the soul as the form of the body (freed from Chalcidius's argument that a form could not be substantial) was a philosophical and theological triumph, undergirding with satisfactory theory for the first time a biblical view of the person as human rather than spiritual. Thomas Aquinas's theory of the human being as a hylomorphic (form/matter) union of soul and body is thus read as a victory over dualism, holding as it does that "anima . . . non est totus homo et anima mea non est ego."⁴⁵ The distrust and in certain key areas outright condemnation of Aquinas's ideas in the 1270s and 1280s are seen in this interpretation to stem from suspicion that, exactly in their close union of soul and body, such ideas might threaten the immortality of the soul and lend support to the hated teaching of Averroism.

Only a few perceptive Catholic philosophers read the story a different way.⁴⁶ They argue that what Aquinas's teaching actually threatens

⁴⁴ The burden of Heinzmann's *Die Unsterblichkeit der Seele* is to show the emergence in the twelfth century with Gilbert de la Porrée of a more Aristotelian conception of person over against Platonic definitions of man as soul found, e.g., in Hugh of St. Victor. This argument is, however, to some extent misleading. Although technical definitions may have shifted from Platonic to Aristotelian, thinkers such as Hugh and Bernard of Clairvaux actually treated the human being as an entity composed of body and soul (see n. 49 below; and H. J. Weber, pp. 123 ff.). So indeed did the fathers. Among patristic treatises on the resurrection, I find only Ambrose's *De excessu fratris sui Satyri*, bk. 2, c. 20, *PL* 16, cols. 1377–78, adhering to a strictly Platonic definition. For recent revisionist opinion about Augustine's anthropology, see Peter Brown, *The Body and Society: Men, Women and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988); Joyce Salisbury, "The Latin Doctors of the Church on Sexuality," *Journal of Medieval History* 12 (1986): 279–89; and Stroumsa (n. 1 above).

⁴⁵ Aquinas, *In epistolam I ad Corinthios commentaria*, c. 15, lectio 2, in *Opera omnia*, ed. Frette (1876), 21:33–34: ". . . si negetur resurrectio corporis, non de facili, imo difficile est sustinere immortalitatem animae. Constat enim quod anima naturaliter unitur corpori. . . . Unde anima exuta corpore, quamdiu est sine corpore, est imperfecta. Impossibile autem est quod illud quod est naturale et per se, sit finitum et quasi nihil, et illud quod est contra naturam et per accidens, sit infinitum, si anima semper duret sine corpore. . . . Et ideo si mortui non resurgunt, solum in hac vita confidentes erimus. Alio modo, quia constat quod homo naturaliter desiderat salutem suiipsius; anima autem, cum sit pars corporis homini, non est totus homo, et anima mea non est ego; unde, licet anima consequatur salutem in alia vita, non tamen ego vel quilibet homo." See Emile Mersch and Robert Brunet, "Corps mystique et spiritualité," in *Dictionnaire de spiritualité, ascétique et mystique, doctrine et histoire*, ed. M. Viller et al. (Paris: Beauchesne, 1932–), vol. 2; col. 2352; and Michel (n. 1 above). For a modern position on the survival issue that agrees with Thomas, see Peter Geach, "Immortality," in Penelhum, ed. (n. 17 above), pp. 11 ff.

⁴⁶ They include Norbert Luyten, "The Significance of the Body in a Thomistic Anthropology," *Philosophy Today* 7 (1963): 175–93; Bernardo C. Bazan, "La corporalité selon saint Thomas," *Revue philosophique de Louvain* 81, no. 4, ser. 49 (1983): 369–409; J. Giles Milhaven, "Physical Experience: Contrasting Appraisals by Male

is body, since, in denying the plurality of forms, Aquinas must assert that the soul (our only form) is the form of our bodiliness too, reducing what is left over to mere primary matter or potency.⁴⁷ Although, of course, the body we have at the moment is formed and therefore existing “second matter,” *what it is* is, so to speak, packed into the soul.⁴⁸

If we follow up the insight of those Catholic scholars who have seen Aquinas’s formulation as threatening body, the history of philosophy looks different. We can then see in the many thirteenth- and fourteenth-century positions that rejected certain details of Aquinas—theories often called Platonic or Augustinian or Franciscan—an effort to retain both a sense of matter as a real entity teeming with shadowy, potential forms (called in the early part of the period “seminal reasons”) and a sense of body too as a real entity alongside form, however inextricably the two are bound at the resurrection. It is patently not true (however much passing remarks about “Platonic dualism” may suggest it) that twelfth-, thirteenth-, and fourteenth-century thinkers who attributed some independent substantial reality to matter and/or body were inclined to see such entities as unreal or (in a simple, categorical sense) evil.⁴⁹ Rather they agreed with the poet Bernard Sylvestris, who expressed a conception of matter as pregnant, yearning stuff, filled with potential. “Matter,” he wrote, “the oldest thing [in creation], wishes to be born again and in this new beginning to be encompassed in forms.”⁵⁰

Theologians and Women Mystics in the Middle Ages” (paper given at the Holy Cross Symposium “The Word Becomes Flesh,” Worcester, Mass., November 9, 1985); and Richard Swinburne, *The Evolution of the Soul* (n. 27 above), pp. 299–306, esp. n. 9.

⁴⁷ See H. J. Weber (n. 14 above), pp. 228–29. According to most interpreters, Aquinas does not go all the way toward seeing matter as potency. In his early writing, he holds that individuated matter in some sense subsists after the soul and body are separated. It is not that this matter is individuated by determined dimensions; rather it retains in flux a certain relation (undetermined dimensions) to the individuality it had when it was formed by the human soul. See Michel, cols. 2557–58; and H. J. Weber, pp. 220–21. However one understands this teaching, it further supports the impression that Aquinas is not willing to abandon material continuity entirely as an element in identity.

⁴⁸ Aquinas, *ScG*, bk. 4, c. 81, in 15: 252–53: “Corporeity, however, can be taken in two ways. In one way, it can be taken as the substantial form of a body. . . . Therefore, corporeity, as the substantial form in man, cannot be other than the rational soul” (see Bazan, pp. 407–8). Bazan says that, according to Thomas, “Notre corporalité est toute pénétrée de spiritualité, car sa source est l’âme rationnelle.”

⁴⁹ A perceptive exception to the ignoring of positive conceptions of the body among twelfth-century thinkers is John Sommerfeldt, “The Body in Bernard of Clairvaux’s Anthropology” (paper delivered at the International Conference on Medieval Studies, Kalamazoo, Michigan, May 1988).

⁵⁰ Quoted in Gerhart B. Ladner, “Terms and Ideas of Renewal,” in *Renaissance and Renewal in the Twelfth Century*, ed. Robert L. Benson and Giles Constable (Cambridge, Mass.: UCLA Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies and Harvard

Indeed, as historians have sometimes noticed to their puzzlement, it was those with the sharpest sense of body/soul conflict and the most ferocious ascetic practices (e.g., Bernard of Clairvaux, Francis of Assisi, or Angela of Foligno) who had the clearest and most passionate awareness of the potential of body to reveal the divine.⁵¹ Bernard of Clairvaux spoke thus of the joys of bodily resurrection:

Do not be surprised if the glorified body seems to give the spirit something, for it was a real help when man was sick and mortal. How true that text is which says that all things turn to the good of those who love God (Rom. 8:28). The sick, dead, and resurrected body is a help to the soul who loves God; the first for the fruits of penance, the second for repose, and the third for consummation. Truly the soul does not want to be perfected, without that from whose good services it feels it has benefited . . . in every way. . . . Listen to the bridegroom in the Canticle inviting us to this triple progress: "Eat, friends, and drink; be inebriated, dearest ones." He calls to those working in the body to eat; he invites those who have set aside their bodies to drink; and he impels those who have resumed their bodies to inebriate themselves, calling them his dearest ones, as if they were filled with charity. . . . It is right to call them dearest who are drunk with love.⁵²

Expressing a similar notion that body is necessary both for personhood and for eternal bliss, Bonaventure wrote, in a sermon on the Assumption of the Virgin Mary: "Her happiness would not be complete unless she [Mary] were there personally [i.e., bodily assumed into heaven]. The person is not the soul; it is a composite. Thus it is established that she must be there as a composite, that is, of soul and

University Press, 1982), p. 6. For an example of soul yearning for body, see Caesarius of Heisterbach, *Dialogus miraculorum*, dist. 12, c. 50, ed. Joseph Strange, 2 vols. (Cologne: Heberle, 1851), 2:356. Heinzmann (n. 5 above), p. 188, quotes a passage from the summa called *Breves dies hominis* in which Plato is represented as supporting the position that resurrection is natural because of the longing of soul for body. This suggests that contemporaries were aware that a Platonic position tends in some ways to give more weight to body than an Aristotelian one (and not necessarily negative weight).

⁵¹ On this point generally, see my *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1987). I suggest here that asceticism in the later Middle Ages treated body less as a trap or hindrance than a means of access to the divine; for a similar point of view, see *Les miracles miroirs des corps*, ed. Jacques Gélis and Odile Redon (Paris: Presses et Publications de l'Université de Paris VIII, Vincennes à St. Denis, 1983).

⁵² Bernard of Clairvaux, *De diligendo Deo*, sec. 11, pars. 30–33, in *Sancti Bernardi opera*, ed. J. Leclercq, C. H. Talbot, and H. M. Rochais (Rome: Editiones Cisterciensis, 1957–), vol. 3, *Tractatus et Opuscula*, pp. 145–47; Robert Walton, trans., *The Works of Bernard of Clairvaux*, vol. 5, *Treatises*, Cistercian Fathers Series 13 (Washington D.C.: Cistercian Publications, 1974), 2:122–24.

body. Otherwise she would not be there [in heaven] in perfect joy; for (as Augustine says) the minds of the saints [before their resurrections] are hindered, because of their natural inclination for their bodies, from being totally borne into God."⁵³ Henry of Ghent criticized Aquinas's doctrine of the unicity of form because he thought it made the *dots* of the body merely the consequence of the soul's blessedness. Henry himself held to the theory of a separate *forma corporeitatis* so that the gifts of the glorified body could be understood as real changes in that body, not merely as consequences of changes in the soul.⁵⁴ Richard of Middleton, like Bonaventure, actually saw the soul's yearning for the body as a motive for the saints in heaven. The blessed around the throne of God pray all the harder for us sinners, he asserted, because these blessed will receive again their own deeply desired flesh only when the number of the elect is filled up and the Judgment comes.⁵⁵

It thus seems to me that a distrust of the strict hylomorphic theory of man and of the doctrine of the unicity of form was endemic in thirteenth-century debate because of a strong pull toward body as substantial—a pull reflected in the theory of resurrection that stressed numerical identity as material continuity. In other words, it was the more conservative, more Augustinian-Platonic thinkers (not the followers of Thomas) who made body "real" in a commonsense way; and their ideas fit the needs of the pious to experience body as a separate entity that was the locus both of temptation and of encounter with the divine. But even those who departed from theories of material continuity were uncomfortable with, and inconsistent in, their departure. The philosophically elegant new identity theory implied by Thomas and Giles of Rome and finally articulated by Peter of Auvergne, John of Paris, and Durandus of St. Pourçain—a theory that obviated any need to consider material continuity—never caught

⁵³ Bonaventure, *De assumptione B. Virginis Mariae*, sermon 1, sec. 2, in *S. Bonaventurae opera omnia*, ed. Collegium S. Bonaventurae (Quarrachi: Collegium S. Bonaventurae, 1901), 9:690. See also Aquinas, *ScG.*, bk. 4, c. 79, in 15:249, and Aquinas, *De potentia*, q. 5, art. 10, pp. 176–77, which says explicitly that Porphyry's idea that the soul is happiest without the body, and Plato's idea that the body is a tool of the soul, are wrong; the soul is more like God when it is united to the body than when it is separated, because it is then more perfect.

⁵⁴ H. J. Weber (n. 14 above), p. 326. The doctrine of the plurality of forms seems to lurk behind much Franciscan teaching on the *dots* of the glorified body, for thinkers such as Bonaventure and Richard of Middleton hold that body is in some way predisposed for the flowing over of glory into it before it receives the *dots*; see *ibid.*, pp. 314 ff.

⁵⁵ H. J. Weber, p. 304, n. 197; and see *ibid.*, pp. 266, 135–36. The Augustinian idea that the soul desires the body so greatly that it is held back from vision of God when it is without the body is also found in Giles of Rome; see Nolan (n. 7 above), pp. 46, 78.

on.⁵⁶ Not only were certain of its consequences explicitly condemned; it was not fully used by its creators, who continued to speak of the resurrected body as reassembled by God from its own tiny bits of dust scattered throughout the universe.

This last point needs explanation in a little more detail. In the course of patristic discussion, theologians had come to see identity as the heart of resurrection.⁵⁷ As John of Damascus said (and scholastic theologians quoted him repeatedly): it is not *re-surrectio* unless the same human being rises again.⁵⁸ But what does it mean for a person to be “the same”? In the twelfth century, some felt that only the continuation of exactly the same matter qualified as sameness.⁵⁹ Indeed some thinkers held that nutrition and growth were in a natural sense impossible because food could never change substance and become flesh.⁶⁰ Hence to Hugh of St. Victor, for example, any growth was a miracle: the growth of Eve from a rib of Adam or of a child from the seed of its father was likened to the miracle of the loaves and fishes.⁶¹ By the early thirteenth century most thinkers held that each person possessed a *caro radicalis* (a core of flesh) formed both from the matter passed on by parent or parents to child and from the matter that comes from food.⁶² It was this *caro radicalis* that God reassembled after the Last Judgment. Thus, as William of Auxerre

⁵⁶ H. J. Weber, pp. 243–44.

⁵⁷ Heinzmann (n. 5 above), pp. 147 ff.; H. J. Weber, pp. 217–19. I would place the change in emphasis in the patristic notion of resurrection—a change toward a materialist interpretation—at the time of the debate between Methodius and the Origenists.

⁵⁸ John of Damascus, *In librum de fide orthodoxa*, bk. 4, c. 27, in *Patrologiae cursus completus: Series graeca*, ed. J. P. Migne (Paris: Migne, 1857–66), vol. 94, col. 1220; see H. J. Weber, p. 62, n. 99; p. 218, n. 261. For Hugh of St. Victor's use of the idea, see Heinzmann, p. 159.

⁵⁹ This is made clear in their use of the example of the statue, taken from Augustine (see *Enchiridion*, c. 23, par. 89, *Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina* 46 [Turnhout: Brepols, 1969], p. 97) and treated in Lombard's *Sentences*, 4, dist. 44, cc. 2–4, in 2:517–19. Bodily resurrection is, they argue, like the melting down and reconstituting of a statue: it is the same statue because it is made of the same matter, although the material bits need not be returned to exactly the same place in the whole. See Heinzmann, pt. 2 *passim*. By the later thirteenth century, some who adopt the new identity theory reject the analogy, saying that in this case it is not the same statue because it does not have the same form—the form of a statue (unlike the soul) not being substantial; H. J. Weber, pp. 244 ff.

⁶⁰ Heinzmann, pp. 150 ff.

⁶¹ Hugh of St. Victor, *De sacramentis*, bk. 1, pt. 6, cc. 35–37, *PL* 176, col. 284–88. Growth continued to be hard for scholastic natural philosophers to explain, and Aristotelian categories did not necessarily provide the answer. See Joan Cadden, “The Medieval Philosophy and Biology of Growth: Albertus Magnus, Thomas Aquinas, Albert of Saxony and Marsilius of Inghen on Book I, c. V of Aristotle's *De Generatione et Corruptione*, with Translated Texts of Albertus Magnus and Thomas Aquinas” (Ph.D. diss., Indiana University, 1971).

⁶² See n. 13 above; and H. J. Weber, pp. 217 ff.

argued in the early thirteenth century, summing up previous teaching, there must be material identity for numerical identity: the ashes of Paul must rise as the body of Paul. If matter is somehow lacking, the power of God must make up the deficit by miracle.⁶³

This insistence on material continuity raised, as I explained above, a host of problems. If, for example, all our matter comes back (and, on this point, theologians found Luke 21:18—"Not a hair of your head shall perish"—very troubling), will not the fingernails of those who died adult be too long in heaven? And, on the other hand, where will the matter come from for those who died in the womb? To these problems, the theory of form as identity, adumbrated by Aquinas and articulated by John of Paris and Durandus, was an elegant solution. Since only substances exist, matter does not exist apart from form: prime matter is potency. When the human being dies, therefore, one cannot say that its body or its matter waits to be reassembled, for *its* body or matter does not exist at all. When the human being is resurrected, the body that is matter to its form (which is also its form of bodiliness because it is its only form) will by definition be its body. The cadaver that exists after we die, like the body that exists before, is second matter—formed matter—but the cadaver is informed not by the form of the soul but by the form of the corpse. Thus, says Durandus, we may not say that God can make the body of Peter out of the body of Paul, because this is nonsense; if it is the body of Paul it is the body of Paul.⁶⁴ But God can make the body of Peter out of dust that was once the body of Paul.⁶⁵ And he need take no more or less dust than necessary to make a perfect human body.

This theory could have swept away, as sheer foolishness, the questions of fingernails, foreskins, and aborted fetuses over which theo-

⁶³ Heinzmann, p. 243, n. 11.

⁶⁴ Durandus of St. Pourçain, *In Sententias theologicas Petri Lombardi commentariorum libri quatuor*, dist. 44, q. 1 (Lyon: Apud Gasparem, 1556), fols. 340v–341r: "Utrum ad hoc quod idem homo numero resurgat, requiratur quod formetur corpus eius eisdem pulueribus in quos fuit resolutum." (The printed edition of the commentary is the third and last redaction, moderate in comparison to earlier ones; see Gilson [n. 43 above], p. 774, n. 81.)

⁶⁵ In answer to the question whether the soul of Peter can be in the body of Paul (which he says is misformulated), Durandus argues (*In Sententias*, dist. 44, q. 1, pars. 4 and 5, fol. 341r): "Quaestio implicat contradictionem: quia corpus Petri non potest esse nisi compositum ex materia et anima Petri . . . ergo anima Petri non potest esse in corpore Pauli nec e converso, nisi anima Petri fiat anima Pauli. . . . Restat ergo quod alio modo formetur quaestio . . . : supposito quod anima Petri fieret in materia quae fuit in corpore Pauli, utrum esset idem Petrus qui prius erat." He concludes (*ibid.*, par. 6, fol. 341r): "Cuicumque materiae vniatur anima Petri in resurrectione, ex quo est eadem forma secundum numerum, per consequens erit idem Petrus secundum numerum." For the background to Durandus's position, see H. J. Weber (n. 14 above), pp. 217–53, 76–78. Weber's basic argument is that there were a number of precursors to Durandus's position, the originality of which has been overestimated.

logians had puzzled since Tertullian and Augustine. But it did not do so. Instead its own proponents for the most part failed to use it in their discussions of resurrection. For example, Eustachius of Arras, who appears to understand the argument, in fact held that God created the glorified body from the same dust that body contained earlier.⁶⁶ Giles of Rome worried about how matter from several bodies could be understood to be in one resurrected body and devoted much attention to questions about the resurrection of eaten food and flesh—matters in which he would presumably have had no interest if he had gone over completely to a formal theory of identity.⁶⁷ Thomas, who articulated a purely formal theory, pulled back from it in a famous and much debated passage of the *Summa contra Gentiles*, asserting merely the conventional position that people do not have to receive all their previous matter in the resurrection; God can make up the difference.⁶⁸ Indeed in the discussion of eaten embryos, which would not come up if identity were only formal, Aquinas not only made material continuity the principle of identity, he also tipped the scales toward matter in a second way, violating the Aristotelian theory (which he elsewhere adopted) that the father provides form, the mother matter, in conception.⁶⁹ Something held the theologians back from using their own philosophy when they came to discussing problems of piety or of physics or of biology.

⁶⁶ H. J. Weber, p. 234.

⁶⁷ Giles of Rome's Sentence commentary never reaches bk. 4. His major statement on the resurrection, in the *Quaestiones de resurrectione mortuorum et de poena damnatorum*, has been edited by Nolan (n. 7 above), pp. 69–75, 90–96, 105–13, 124–30. Giles's position clearly foreshadows Durandus's; see *Quaestiones* in Nolan, pp. 73–74, and Nolan's discussion, pp. 88 and 120. What guarantees the identity of earthly body and risen body (and therefore the identity of person) is not matter but form. As H. J. Weber points out, however (pp. 234–36), Giles does not go all the way to Durandus's position. When Giles discusses Christ's body in the *triduum* he makes it clear that, although the body is not man, the material cadaver continues and is Christ's body; Nolan, p. 60. Moreover, like Thomas, Giles devotes much attention to the question of whether the body that rises is a body into which food was converted and to related questions about the resurrection of eaten flesh; see Nolan, pp. 114–23. For Giles's embryological theory, see M. Anthony Hewson, *Giles of Rome and the Medieval Theory of Conception: A Study of the De formatione corporis humani in utero* (London: University of London, Athlone Press, 1975). For a similar interpretation of John of Paris, see nn. 75–76 below.

⁶⁸ Aquinas, *ScG*, bk. 4, cc. 80–81, in 15: 251–54. Thomas holds that risen body will be reconstituted out of all of the former matter of body; but it is not impossible for it to be reconstituted out of some other matter. Interpretation of this passage has been controversial. See H. J. Weber, p. 229; and E. Hugueny, "Resurrection et identité corporelle selon les philosophies de l'individuation," *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 23 (1934): 94–106. Hugueny argues that Thomas's thought developed away from the idea of material continuity and toward formal identity.

⁶⁹ See n. 16 above.

There appears to have been concern generally in the 1270s that the teachings of Aristotle as interpreted by the Arab commentators might lead not only to denial of the immortality of the soul but also to denial of the resurrection of the body. Proposition 13 condemned in 1270 stated that “God cannot give immortality or incorruptibility to a corruptible or mortal thing.”⁷⁰ Propositions condemned in 1277 included not only the idea that the same body, numerically speaking, does not return⁷¹ but also other positions in which the issue of bodily identity is implicated: for example, “that God cannot give perpetuity to a mutable and corruptible thing,” “that man, through the process of nutrition, can become another numerically and individually,” “that one should not take care for the burying of the dead,” and “that death is the end of all terrors [i.e., that there is no eternal punishment of the damned.]”⁷² Moreover, certain consequences of the new identity theory and of the connected theory of the unicity of form were also condemned. Controversy erupted in the 1270s over the implication that, if the cadaver is not the body, then Christ’s body did not lie in the tomb for the three days between crucifixion and resurrection. Not all the events in the course of the debate are clear; but the record shows that the argument that a dead body is just a body equivocally (i.e., that the word “body” in the two phrases “dead body” and “living body” is merely a homonym) was condemned at Oxford in 1277. The doctrine of the unicity of form was also condemned in England in March 1277.⁷³

We must not make too much of the condemnations. Some were later revoked. And it is important to note that Durandus’s identity

⁷⁰ *Chartularium universitatis Parisiensis . . .*, ed. H. Denifle and A. Chatelain (Paris: Delalain, 1889), 1:487.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, proposition 17, p. 544.

⁷² *Ibid.*, propositions 25, 148, 155, and 178, pp. 544–55; and see Roland Hissette, *Enquête sur les 219 articles condamnés à Paris le 7 Mars 1277*, *Philosophes médiévaux* 22 (Louvain and Paris: Publications universitaires de Louvain and Vander-Oyez, 1977), pp. 187, 294, 307–8.

⁷³ Debate over whether Christ was a man in the *triduum* went back into the twelfth century. By the mid-thirteenth century, theologians generally agreed that living union was necessary for humanness (i.e., for being a man). Thomas’s theory, however, raised the question whether Christ’s body on the cross and in the grave were the same body. Giles of Lessines in 1278 raised the issue in a treatise on the unicity of form which he sent to Albert the Great. (Indeed he added the thesis of the equivocality of body to the list of those condemned in 1270, but it is not clear that it was in fact condemned.) Perhaps because of Albert’s defense, the unicity of form was not condemned in 1277 in Paris, but in 1277 in Oxford the position was condemned that: “corpus vivum et mortuum est equivoce corpus” (H. J. Weber, pp. 76–78, 150–51). John Quidort (John of Paris) also got into trouble for the implications of his teaching on identity for the body of Christ; see H. J. Weber, p. 239. On the condemnation of the doctrine of the unicity of form in England, see *Chartularium univers. Paris.*, 1:558–59; Copleston (n. 43 above), 2, pt. 2: 153–54; and Hewson, *Giles of Rome and Conception*, pp. 6–11.

theory was not condemned in the early fourteenth century when other aspects of his teaching were extracted from his Sentence commentary for censure.⁷⁴ What is informative for our purposes is the context of the discussion. Theologians themselves related abstruse considerations of the nature of body and person to such practical matters as burial customs and the veneration of saints.

Since the early days of the twelfth century, schoolmen had seen that the status of Christ's body in the tomb had implications for the cult of the dead. Sentence collections tended to insert entries on prayers for the departed among *quaestiones* concerning Christ's body in the *triduum*, the nature of resurrected bodies generally, or the problem of how food was assimilated in the Garden of Eden.⁷⁵ In the later thirteenth century, some charged explicitly that the notion of the equivocality of body threatened the cult of saints. In his treatise on the unicity of form, John of Paris defended himself against critics who maintained that the doctrine removed all justification for relic veneration. In his reply John not only maintained, as theologians had since Augustine, that relics were to be honored because they bring before our memories the life and suffering of the saints. He also held—in what almost amounts to a concession to material continuity—that the “first matter” (which does not quite mean mere potency) in relic and living saint is the same and is glorified in the body.⁷⁶ We find a similar inconsistency in Aquinas himself when we look at *Summa theologiae* 3a, q. 25, art. 6: “Should we worship the relics of the saints?” Beginning with a quotation from Augustine to the effect that bodies are dearly loved garments, temples of the Holy Spirit, aids to memory, and tools for the working of miracles, Aquinas points out that “a dead body is not of the same species as a living body.” It is therefore to be worshiped only for the sake of the soul that was once united to it. But then Aquinas, contradicting at least the pure formulation of his own identity theory, concludes: “The dead body of a saint is not identical to that which the saint held during life, on account of its difference of form—viz, the soul; but it is the same by identity of matter, which is destined to be reunited to its form.”⁷⁷ Not merely a mnemonic device, the body in the tomb is the body that will be joined to the saint in heaven.

⁷⁴ H. J. Weber, p. 242, n. 404.

⁷⁵ Lottin (n. 11 above), 5:214–18, 320–21. John of Paris, in his *De unitate formae*, dealt explicitly with the objection that the unicity of form threatened the belief that Christ's body was Christ in the *triduum*; see Franz Pelster, “Ein anonymer Traktat des Johannes v. Paris O. P. über das Formenproblem in Cod. Vat. lat. 862,” *Divus Thomas* 24 (1946): 26–27.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

⁷⁷ Aquinas, *ST* (n. 15 above), 3a, q. 25, art. 6, in 50:202–5.

Thus in the late thirteenth century, when the new categories of Aristotelian hylomorphism seemed to make material continuity irrelevant, theorists nonetheless discussed survival and resurrection as if identity of matter—or, to put it another way, univocality of “body”—were necessary. The texts I have just cited suggest that the adherence of theologians to material continuity was owing in part to pious practice. Intellectuals were aware that relic cult implied material continuity; the ordinary folk for whom they (or their pupils) crafted sermons behaved as if the bodies were the saints. And medieval intellectuals apparently preferred philosophical inconsistency to scandalizing the faithful.

Moreover, intellectuals sometimes even promoted veneration of holy bodies. Nor did they see such veneration merely as an aid to memory: it was veneration of the saints themselves. Preaching in the mid-twelfth century, Peter the Venerable, for example, was careful to emphasize that the souls of the saints are around the throne of heaven while their bodies are in churches for reverencing by the faithful; the saints are divided by death into two parts. But Peter nonetheless also spoke as if pieces of dead holy people are already touched by the glory they will attain at the end of time.⁷⁸ The “*bodies* of the saints,” said Peter, “live” with God. Exhorting his monks on the occasion of a martyr’s feastday, Peter argued:

The divine dignity divides his martyr into equal parts, so that he may retain his soul for himself among the mass of the blessed and give, with marvellous largesse, the relics of his sacred body to be venerated by the faithful still living in the flesh. But suppose someone says: “What does it profit us to honor a lifeless body; What does it profit us to frequent with hymns and praise bones lacking in sense?” Let this kind of thinking be far from the hearts of the faithful. . . . God, the creator of spiritual and corporeal things, . . . established the human creature and, in an excellent operation, joined it together from rational spirit and flesh . . . , one person of man conjoined from [two] diverse substances. And glorifying the unity of the wonderful conjoining with felicity appropriate to the proper nature of each [of the diverse substances], he bestowed justice on the soul and incorruptibility on the body. . . . Therefore we know the spirits of the just will in the meanwhile live happily in the eternal life which we expect through faith, which he promises who is faithful in his words, and we anticipate for them a future resurrection in their bodies with immortality and in every sense incorruptibility. For this reason we do not debase as inanimate, despise as insensate, or trample under foot like the cadavers of dumb beasts the bodies of those who

⁷⁸ Peter the Venerable, “Sermo in honore sancti illius cuius reliquiae sunt in presenti,” edited in Giles Constable, “Petri Venerabilis Sermones Tres,” *Revue bénédictine* 64 (1954): 265–72.

in this life cultivated justice; rather we venerate them as temples of the Lord, revere them as palaces of divinity, hoard them as pearls suitable for the crown of the eternal king, and, with the greatest devotion of which we are capable, preserve them as vessels of resurrection to be joined again to the blessed souls. . . .

Behold whose bodies you venerate, brothers, in whose ashes you exalt, for whose bones you prepare golden sepulchres. They are sons of God, equal to angels, sons of the resurrection. Hence you should receive them reverently as sons of God, extoll them as equal to the angels with suitable praises, and expect that they will rise in their own flesh as sons of the resurrection. And in this hope I have confidence more certainly than in any human thing that you ought not to feel contempt for the bones of the present martyrs as if they were dry bones but should honor them now full of life as if they were in their future incorruption. . . . Flesh flowers from dryness and youth is remade from old age, and if you do not yet see this in your martyr it is supported by sacred authorities; do not despair of the future. Having therefore, dearest brothers, the author of the old law and the new grace, Jesus Christ, who promises to his servants the resurrection of the flesh and the glorification of human substance totally, first through the saints of old and afterwards through himself, and demonstrates [this resurrection] in his own body, we ought to reverence with due honor the body of this blessed martyr as about to be resurrected, as it will be clothed in immortal glory, although we see it as dead.

. . . I say that the bodies of the saints live with God. . . . And that they live with God innumerable miracles everywhere on earth demonstrate, which miracles are frequently experienced by those who come to venerate their sepulchres with devout minds. . . . Isaiah says: "Your bones shall flourish [*germinabunt*] like an herb." Therefore because the bones of the present martyr shall flower like an herb, rising to eternal life, because the corruptible shall put on the incorruptible and the mortal the immortal, because this body of a just man snatched up to meet Christ shall always remain with him, who will not, with full affection, bring to be honored in his life what he believes will be elevated in the future glory.

Eighty years later, Caesarius of Heisterbach wrote: "Although the souls of the saints always look upon the divine face, nevertheless they have respect to their bodies, and when they see us devoted to them, they are much pleased."⁷⁹

BODILY PARTITION AND BODILY INCORRUPTION IN MEDIÉVAL CULTURE

It therefore seems clear that contemporaries were aware of certain connections between the oddest cases debated by theologians and the behavior of ordinary folk. Burial practices, prayers for the dead, and

⁷⁹ Caesarius, ed. Strange (n. 50 above), dist. 8, c. 87, in 2:155; and see n. 83 below.

relic cult were sometimes the explicit context for theological debate; theological distinctions sometimes informed sermons composed for church dedications or saints' days. I want to argue, however, that the connection between the outré examples of scholastic debate and the concerns of the pious existed at a deeper level as well—a level contemporaries did not see. The assumption that material continuity is crucial to identity is an assumption that runs throughout medieval culture; therefore, the theme of part and whole also runs deep. When we look at the way in which ordinary thirteenth-century people behaved, we find there too a concern with material continuity and thus with the corruption and reintegration of bodies.

The assumption that the material body we occupy in this life is integral to person and that the event we call death is not a radical break was reflected in legend, folktale, and even "science." Many stories that circulated in the later Middle Ages implied that the body was in some sense alive after death. Moralists told of temporary resurrections; hagiographers described dead saints who sat up momentarily to revere the crucifix or eucharistic host; medical writers spoke of cadavers that continued to move or grow while on the embalming table or in the tomb; folk wisdom held that corpses would bleed to accuse their murderers.⁸⁰ Down into the seventeenth century, learned treatises were written by doctors on the life of the body after death—a phenomenon which seemed proved to some by such facts as the growth of fingernails and hair observed in corpses.⁸¹ The claim that all or part of a saint remained incorrupt after burial was an important miracle for proving sanctity, particularly the sanctity of women.⁸² Although the development of the doctrine of purgatory and increased discussion of the nature of the soul's condition between death and Last Judgment forced theologians to make it clear that the body is restored and glorified only at the end of time, preachers and teachers sometimes suggested that the ability of the martyrs to withstand pain or corruption was owing to an assimilation of their bodies on earth to

⁸⁰ Henri Platelle, "La voix du sang: Le cadavre qui saigne en présence de son meurtrier," *La Piété populaire au Moyen Âge*, Actes du 99^e Congrès National des Sociétés Savantes, Besançon 1974 (Paris, 1977), pp. 161–79; Ronald C. Finucane, *Miracles and Pilgrims: Popular Beliefs in Medieval England* (Totowa, N.J.: Rowman & Littlefield, 1977), pp. 73–75; Michel Bouvier, "De l'incorruptibilité des corps saints," in Gélis and Redon, eds. (n. 51 above), pp. 193–221; Philippe Ariès, *The Hour of Our Death*, trans. Helen Weaver (New York: Knopf, 1981), pp. 261–68, 353 ff.; Jacques Gélis, "De la mort à la vie: Les 'sanctuaires à répit,'" *Ethnologie française* 11 (1981): 211–24.

⁸¹ Ariès, pp. 261–68, 353 ff.

⁸² Thurston (n. 18 above), pp. 246–52; Caroline Walker Bynum, "The Female Body and Religious Practice in the Later Middle Ages," *Zone 3: Fragments for a History of the Human Body* 1 (1989): 203, n. 32.

the glorified bodies of heaven.⁸³ Indeed, in what appears to have some parallels to modern cryonics, alchemists and physicians in the thirteenth century experimented with ways of returning the body to its pristine state before the fall, convinced that they might thus free it, more or less indefinitely, from decay.⁸⁴

Since the patristic period, theologians had asserted that God could reassemble—even recreate—any body. Neither the jaws of wild beasts nor the swords and flames of executioners could deny resurrection to the martyrs. Nonetheless, ordinary Christians in the second and third centuries went to extraordinary lengths to collect and reassemble the dismembered pieces of the martyrs for burial.⁸⁵ And medieval readers loved such stories. The pious in the thirteenth century, as in the third, often behaved as if division or fragmentation of the cadaver were a deep threat to person. The Parisian theologian Gervase of Mt.-St.-Eloi, for example, called even division for the purposes of burial *ad sanctos* a “horrible and inhuman” practice [*atrocitatem et inhumanitatem*]. Gervase admitted that divine power could gather scattered parts but insisted that it was better to bury bodies intact so they were ready for the sound of the trumpet.⁸⁶ Roger Bacon composed several works on how to postpone the “accidents” of old age and geared such precautions toward the resurrection: because Christ had promised bodily integrity to all at the Last Judgment persons here below should prepare themselves for it by striving for moral and physical

⁸³ Aquinas, *ST* 3a, q. 15, art. 5, obj. 3 and reply to obj. 3, in 49:204–7, suggests that beatific vision flows over naturally into body; therefore the martyrs bore up under pain. See also *ST*, 3a, q. 14, art. 1, obj. 2 and reply to obj. 2, in 49: 170–77. And see Bynum, “Bodily Miracles and Resurrection” (n. 12 above), n. 64. Caesarius, dist. 12, c. 47, in 2:354, tells of a master who copied many books, and after death his right hand was found undecayed although the rest of his body had turned to dust. In Caesarius, dist. 12, c. 50, pp. 355–56, a man who says Ave Maria as he walks appears with the words written on his boots; God, says Caesarius, puts “the mark of glory most of all on those members by which it is earned”; see also Caesarius, dist. 12, c. 54, p. 358.

⁸⁴ Agostino Paravicini Bagliani, “Rajeunir au Moyen Age: Roger Bacon et le mythe de la prolongation de la vie,” *Revue médicale de la Suisse romande* 106 (1986): 9–23, and “Storia della scienza e storia della mentalità: Ruggero Bacone, Bonifacio VIII e la teoria della ‘prolongatio vitae,’” in *Aspetti della Letteratura latina nel secolo XIII: Atti del primo Convegno internazionale di studi dell’Associazione per il Medioevo e l’Umanesimo latini (AMUL) Perugia 3–5 ottobre 1983*, ed. C. Leonardi and G. Orlandi, Quaderni del Centro per il Collegamento degli Studi Medievali e Umanistici nell’Università di Perugia, 15 (Florence and Perugia: “La Nuova Italia,” 1985), pp. 243–80; and, for useful background on thirteenth-century notions of “physic,” see Faye Marie Getz, “Medicine at Medieval Oxford,” in *The History of Oxford University*, vol. 2 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), in press.

⁸⁵ See Bynum, “Bodily Miracles and Resurrection,” nn. 95–99.

⁸⁶ E. A. R. Brown, “Death and the Human Body in the Later Middle Ages: The Legislation of Boniface VIII on the Division of the Corpse,” *Viator* 12 (1981): 238–40.

intactness.⁸⁷ Saints, who frequently effected miracles of healing or of temporary resurrection, sometimes simply reassembled cadavers without bothering to reanimate them. In an Old French life of Saint Barbara, for example, a decapitated head asks a priest for communion and is reunited with its body (although both parts remain lifeless) through the power of the saint;⁸⁸ the popular story of a leg transplant performed by the physician saints Cosmas and Damian changes in its late medieval retelling to emphasize not only the grafting of a black leg onto a sick white man but also the attaching of the gangrenous white leg onto the corpse of the Moor from whom the original graft was taken.⁸⁹ Such tales surely suggest that the intact condition of the body, even after death, had deep significance.

Despite such worries about fragmentation, however, division of the body was widely and enthusiastically practiced in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The culture of ancient Rome had possessed strong taboos against moving or dividing corpses—taboos which were overcome in the Christian cult of relics only over the course of hundreds of years.⁹⁰ But by 1300 the practice was widespread of dividing not only the bodies of the saints to provide relics but also the bodies of the nobility to enable them to be buried in several places near several saints.⁹¹ As is well known, the years around 1300 saw the first cases of dissection carried out in medical schools.⁹² The same

⁸⁷ Paravicini Bagliani, "Rajeunir au Moyen Age," and "Storia della scienza e storia della mentalità: Ruggero Bacone, Bonifacio VIII e la teoria della 'prolongatio vitae.'"

⁸⁸ See Brigitte Cazelles, *Le corps de sainteté d'après Jehan Bouche d'Or, Jehan Paulus, et quelques Vies des XIIe et XIIIe siècles* (Geneva: Droz, 1982), pp. 55–56.

⁸⁹ Judith-Danielle Jacquet, "Le Miracle de la Jambe Noire," in *Les miracles miroirs*, ed. Gélis and Redon, pp. 23–52.

⁹⁰ Ariès (n. 80 above), pp. 29 ff.; Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981); P. Sejourne, "Reliques," in *DTC*, 13, pt. 2, cols. 2330–65; Nicole Hermann-Mascard, *Les reliques des saints: Formation coutumière d'un droit*, Société d'Histoire du Droit: collection d'histoire institutionnelle et sociale 6 (Paris: Edition Klincksieck, 1975); Patrick J. Geary, *Furta Sacra: Thefts of Relics in the Central Middle Ages* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1978), esp. pp. 152–54; Joan M. Petersen, *The Dialogues of Gregory the Great in Their Late Antique Cultural Background*, Studies and Texts 69 (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1984), pp. 140–50; and Lionel Rothkrug, "German Holiness and Western Sanctity in Medieval and Modern History," *Historical Reflections/Réflexions historiques* 15, no. 1 (1988): 161–249.

⁹¹ E. A. R. Brown, pp. 221–70; Pierre Duparc, "Dilaceratio corporis," *Bulletin de la Société Nationale des Antiquaires de France, 1980–1981* (Paris: Boccard, 1981), pp. 360–72.

⁹² See Walter Artelt, *Die ältesten Nachrichten über die Sektion menschlicher Leichen im mittelalterlichen Abendland*, Abhandlungen zur Geschichte der Medizin und der Naturwissenschaften 34 (Berlin: Ebering, 1940), pp. 3–25; Mary Niven Alston, "The Attitude of the Church towards Dissection before 1500," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 16 (1944): 221–38; Ynez Viole O'Neill, "Innocent III and the Evolution of Anatomy," *Medical History* 20, no. 4 (1976): 429–33; Nancy G. Siraisi, "The Medical

period witnessed the revival of torture as a judicial practice and a significant increase in the use of mutilation and dismemberment to punish capital crimes.⁹³

Much research is still needed on these developments. But what is important for our purposes here is the amount of anxiety and controversy with which they were fraught. The papacy, as Elizabeth Brown has reminded us in a recent article, condemned the division of bodies by the nobility;⁹⁴ and the various positions taken in the debate that surrounded the issuing of the papal bull were all based on the assumption that continuity of matter is necessary for continuity of person. The first medical dissections were touched, as Marie-Christine Pouchelle has brilliantly demonstrated, by an extraordinary sense of the mystery of the closed body, particularly the female body, and of the audacity required to open it.⁹⁵ So highly charged was bodily partition that torturers were forbidden to effect it. Chronicle accounts of the use of dismemberment in capital cases make it clear both that it was reserved for only the most repulsive crimes and that the populace was expected to be able to read the nature of the offense from the precise way in which the criminal's body was cut apart and the pieces displayed.⁹⁶

Moreover, saints—living and dead—frequently opposed their own fragmentation or, when fragmented, remained incorrupt in their parts.⁹⁷ Caesarius of Heisterbach's *Dialogue on Miracles*, from the

Learning of Albertus Magnus," in *Albertus Magnus and the Sciences: Commemorative Essays, 1980*, ed. James A. Weisheipl (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1980), p. 395; Marie-Christine Pouchelle, *Corps et chirurgie à l'apogée du Moyen Age: Savoir et imaginaire du corps chez Henri de Mondeville . . .* (Paris: Flammarion, 1983), pp. 132–36; and Danielle Jacquart and Claude Thomasset, *Sexualité et savoir médical au Moyen Age* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1985), p. 49.

⁹³ Edward Peters, *Torture* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1985); J. G. Bellamy, *The Law of Treason in England in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970); and Camporesi (n. 18 above), pp. 19–24.

⁹⁴ See nn. 86, 87, and 91 above.

⁹⁵ See n. 92 above; and Bynum, "Bodily Miracles and Resurrection" (n. 12 above), n. 109.

⁹⁶ Peters, pp. 67–68; and Bellamy, pp. 9, 13, 20–21, 26, 39, 45–47, 52, 226–27. As Bellamy points out (p. 227), historians often know the nature of the crime only from the type of execution inflicted. We know, e.g., that a homicide had been adjudged petty treason in fourteenth-century England if the male perpetrator was drawn and hanged, or the female perpetrator burned.

⁹⁷ A related issue concerning incorruptibility is the incorruptibility of the bodies of great sinners; see Ariès (n. 80 above), p. 360; and Louis-Vincent Thomas, *Le cadavre: De la biologie à l'anthropologie* (Brussels: Editions Complexe, 1980), pp. 39–44, 199. The fact that the earth is reported to refuse the normal process of decay to the extraordinarily evil suggests that there is in this culture an accepting, perhaps even a valuing, of natural decay. Such normal, organic corruption is good because it is a prelude to fertility; hence the analogy drawn in patristic writing between the naturally germinating seed and the resurrected bodies of the martyrs, "seeds of the church." Thus there seems to be a contrast between good corruption (decay) and bad corruption

early thirteenth century, contains a number of stories of relics resisting division.⁹⁸ Robert Grosseteste may have forbidden division of his corpse on his deathbed.⁹⁹ The holy woman Mary of Oignies, who in a sense fragmented herself while alive by pulling out a large hunk of her hair to use as a device to cure the sick, castigated the prior of Oignies for “cruelly” extracting the teeth of a holy cadaver. After her own death Mary supposedly clenched her teeth when the same prior tried to extract them as relics; when he humbly asked her pardon, however, she shook out a few teeth from her jaw for his use.¹⁰⁰

Thus the years around 1300 saw a new enthusiasm about dividing bodies for purposes of science, politics, and piety. Because the person was in some sense his body, the multiplication of holy or criminal body parts seemed pregnant with possibility. The heart of a king or the finger of a virgin made the earth where he or she was buried fertile with saintly or royal power. The greater the number of parts and places in which noble or holy figures resided after death, the greater the number of prayers they received or evoked and the more farflung their presence. The evil too were present wherever their bloody fragments were exhibited. In the severed quarters of a traitor displayed on castle walls, the person who broke the integrity of community was himself presented broken. Yet the cultural assumption that material continuity is crucial to person made such fragmentation horrifying as well. Popes therefore opposed cremation and dissection; physicians tried to preserve corpses forever from putrefaction. Indeed it seems to me that the increasing claims that holy bodies do not decay and especially that parts of holy bodies are incorrupt or intact represent a widespread concern to cross or deny the part/whole boundary by asserting the part to be the whole. The emphasis on body parts as “whole,” on mutilated flesh as “intact,” is after all an odd use of language; yet we find it over and over again in the period’s most popular genre: hagiography.¹⁰¹

(fragmentation), good wholeness (the incorruptibility of saints) and bad wholeness (the incorruption of sinners); see also Camporesi (n. 18 above).

⁹⁸ Caesarius, ed. Strange (n. 50 above), dist. 8, cc. 53 and 60, in 2:125–26, 133. He also tells (dist. 8, c. 88, in 2:155–56) of bones which sort themselves out so that the false relics are eliminated. For stories of bones that, however, invite their disturbance, see Caesarius, dist. 8, cc. 85–87, in 2:151–55.

⁹⁹ See E. A. R. Brown (n. 86 above), pp. 227, 243. Guibert of Nogent (n. 12 above) tells several earlier tales which are intended to indicate that relics do not wish to be dismembered; see *De pignoribus*, bk. 1, c. 4, *PL* 156, cols. 626–30.

¹⁰⁰ Thomas of Cantimpré, *Supplementum* [to Life of Mary], c. 1, pars. 6–7, and c. 3, par. 14, in *Acta sanctorum*, 3d ed., ed. J. Bollandus and G. Henschenius (Paris: Palmé, 1863–), June, 5:574–78.

¹⁰¹ The insistence that a relic is the saint or that the heart or liver of a king buried among his people is their sovereign seems parallel to modern statements that a donor lives on in a transplanted organ. Such use of synecdoche is clearly more than a linguistic matter.

As many recent scholars have pointed out, both the vernacular saints' tales of the high Middle Ages, which contain significant folkloric elements, and the new collections of legends made for the use of mendicant preachers agree in their archaizing tendency. Looking to distant events in Christian history and choosing heroines or heroes singularly unsuitable for pious imitation, hagiographers filled their pages with stories of martyrdom and mutilation.¹⁰² James of Voragine's *Golden Legend*, at least as popular in the later Middle Ages as the Bible itself,¹⁰³ can serve as my final example of the medieval capacity simultaneously to abhor, deny, and delight in bodily partition.

Recent studies of James have underlined the brutality of his accounts and his obsession with martyrdom, especially with torture and bodily division.¹⁰⁴ Of the 153 chapters of the *Golden Legend* devoted to saints' days, at least seventy-five have dismemberment as a central motif.¹⁰⁵ Nonetheless, the point of such tales is not the presence but the absence of suffering; there are only one or two references in all James's accounts of the early martyrs to the fact that mutilation might be uncomfortable.¹⁰⁶ So extravagant, indeed, is the denial of fragmentation, that, as several modern students of hagiography have pointed out, it is hard to say why James finally allows one among a series of lengthy tortures to dispatch his hero or heroine; in any case the actual death is often singularly anticlimactic.¹⁰⁷ What is underlined repeatedly is the reassembling of the fragmented body for burial or the victory of intactness over division. For example, the story of

¹⁰² See Cazelles (n. 88 above), pp. 219–20 and passim; and G. Philippart, *Les légendiers latins et autres manuscrits hagiographiques*, Typologie des sources du moyen âge occidental, 24–25 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1977), pp. 40, 47.

¹⁰³ Konrad Kunze, "Jacobus a (de) Voragine," in *Die deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters Verfasserlexikon* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1983), vol. 4, col. 454.

¹⁰⁴ See Giselle Huot-Girard, "La justice immanente dans la *Légende dorée*," *Cahiers d'études médiévales* 1 (1974): 135–47; Alain Boureau, *La légende dorée: Le système narratif de Jacques de Voragine (+1298)* (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1984); Sherry L. Reames, *The Legenda Aurea: A Reexamination of Its Paradoxical History* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985); and Marie-Christine Pouchelle, "Représentations du corps dans la *Légende dorée*," *Ethnologie française* 6 (1976): 293–308. André Vauchez, "Jacques de Voragine et les saints du XIII^e siècle dans la *Légende dorée*," in *Legenda Aurea: Sept siècles de diffusion: Actes du colloque international . . . à l'Université du Québec à Montréal 11–12 mai 1983*, ed. B. Dunn-Lardeau (Montreal and Paris: Bellarmin and J. Vrin, 1986), pp. 27–56; gives an interpretation opposed to that of Boureau and Reames.

¹⁰⁵ Of the 153 chapters (many of which tell several stories), ninety-one chapters treat martyrs; the majority of the martyrs discussed are not merely killed but in some way dismembered. As Boureau notes (p. 116), James details eighty-one kinds of torture.

¹⁰⁶ Boureau, pp. 60–61, 115–33.

¹⁰⁷ Hippolyte Delehaye, *The Legends of the Saints*, trans. V. M. Crawford, Westminster Library (London and New York: Longmans, Green, 1907), pp. 97, 130–34; René Aigrain, *L'hagiographie: Ses sources, ses méthodes, son histoire* (Paris: Bloud & Gay, 1953), p. 146; Cazelles (n. 88 above), pp. 50–60; Boureau, pp. 126–33.

Saint Margaret, bound on the rack, beaten with sharp instruments until her bones were laid bare, burned with torches, and plunged into water, describes her body as remaining “unscathed.”¹⁰⁸ Burned on the pyre, Saint Theodore renders up his soul, but his body is “unharmd by the fire [*ab igne illaesum*]” and perfumes the air with sweet odor. The wife of Saint Adrian journeys a long distance to place her husband’s severed hand with his other remains, which have been preserved by a miraculous rainfall from burning. Left by the emperor Diocletian to wolves and dogs, the bodies of two martyrs survive “intact [*intacta*]” until the faithful can collect them for burial.¹⁰⁹ James (or a later interpolator) describes as “unharmd” and “unhurt” Sophia’s three daughters, who were fried in a skillet, had their breasts torn off, were stretched on the rack and finally beheaded. In contrast, the emperor Hadrian, who presided over the torture of the three young girls, is said to have “withered away, filled with rottenness [*totus putrefactus*].”¹¹⁰ Whether or not fragmentation or diminution is characterized as significant (or even in fact as occurring) depends not on what happens to the body physically but on the moral standing of the person to whom the bodily events pertain.

Indeed the fact of bodily division is often denied by exactly the account that chronicles it. The words attributed to the martyr James the Dismembered, as he loses his toes, are typical: “Go, third toe, to thy companions, and as the grain of wheat bears much fruit, so shalt thou rest with thy fellows unto the last day. . . . Be comforted, little toe, because great and small shall have the same resurrection. A hair of the head shall not perish, and how much less shalt thou, the least of all, be separated from thy fellows?”¹¹¹ The message, with its explicit echoes of Luke 21:18 and 1 Cor. 15:42–44, is clear.¹¹² Dismemberment is horrible, to be sure; and even more horrifying is rottenness or decay. But in the end none of this is horrible at all.

¹⁰⁸ James of Voragine, *Legenda aurea vulgo historia lombardica dicta*, ed. Th. Graesse, 3d ed. (Breslau: Koebner, 1890), pp. 400–403.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 740–41, 597–601, 601–2.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 203–4. It is worth noting that Sophia is said to have gathered up the remains of her daughters and buried them, with the help of bystanders; she was then buried with her children. This chapter, not found in the 1283 manuscript, is probably a later interpolation but is fully in the spirit of the other chapters; see Boureau, pp. 27–28.

¹¹¹ James, *Legenda aurea*, ed. Graesse, pp. 799–803; G. Ryan and H. Ripperger, trans., *The Golden Legend*, 2 pts. (London: Longmans, Green, 1941), pt. 2, p. 719.

¹¹² James also uses the seed metaphor in his discussion of the death of the contemporary saint, Peter Martyr; see *Legenda aurea*, ed. Graesse, p. 282: “Sic granum frumenti cadens in terram et infidelium manibus comprehensum et mortuum uberem consurgit in spicam, sic botrus in torculari calcatus liquoris redundat in copiam, sic aromata pilo contusa odorem plenius circumfundunt, sic granum sinapis contritum virtutem suam multipliciter demonstravit.” The metaphor was extremely important in the earliest Christian discussions of resurrection; see Michel (n. 1 above), cols. 2515–32.

Beheaded and mutilated saints are “whole” and “unharméd.” Severed toes are the seeds from which glorified bodies will spring. God’s promise is that division shall finally be overcome, that ultimately there is no scattering.¹¹³ As one of the more conservative theologians might have said: material continuity *is* identity; body is univocal; the whole will rise, and every part is in a sense the whole.

CONCLUSION

My discussion has ranged far afield from the scholastic debates with which it began. But I doubt whether, for all its range, it has succeeded in quelling all the doubts and disagreeable sensations such material usually arouses in a modern audience. Some of the philosophical details may still seem far from clear. The theological details and hagiographical stories may remain distasteful. Even the historical conclusions may have no little capacity to shock, in view of the clichés about the spiritualism and dualism of the Middle Ages purveyed in college textbooks. Nonetheless, I hope I have compelled even outraged readers to recognize that the oddest medieval concerns are no less bizarre than modern ones. Moreover, the opinions of twelfth- and thirteenth-century schoolmen and of late twentieth-century philosophers and medical sociologists have more in common than simply their respective oddity. In their debates about fetuses and fingernails as in their popular preaching and legends, medieval people expressed the understanding that body is essential to person and material continuity to body. A significant group among modern intellectuals does not disagree. It is clear both that questions of survival and identity are not, even today, solved, and that they can be solved only through the sort of specific body puzzles medieval theologians delighted to raise.

This article may do no more than cause shocked readers to wonder who on earth would result if Caroline Bynum’s brain were translated into the body of Lawrence Stone. But I hope that some will take it more seriously. In a world where we are faced with decisions about heart (and possibly even brain) transplants, about the uses of artificial intelligence, about the care of Alzheimer’s patients and severely birth-damaged infants, we are forced to confront as never before the question, Am I my body? Issues of part and whole, of life prolongation and putrefaction, scream out at us from the headlines of the *National Enquirer* as we stand in supermarket check-out lines. We are no closer to definitive answers than were the medieval theologians

¹¹³ My reading agrees with that of Boureau, p. 126; and Cazelles (n. 88 above), pp. 48–61.

who considered the resurrection of umbilical cords and fingernails. But, like them, we seem unwilling to jettison the conviction that material continuity is necessary for personal survival. Perhaps then, perusal of the *New York Review of Books*, the *New York Times* science page, or the *National Enquirer*—or an evening with “Star Trek” or “Max Headroom” or even “General Hospital”—suggests that we should feel greater respect than we have hitherto evidenced for the sophistication of medieval theologians.

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