

A Hylomorphic Analysis of Concrete Particular Objects

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ABSTRACT

Concrete particular objects (e.g., individual living organisms) figure saliently in our everyday experience as well as our scientific theorizing about the world. The literature is divided over whether these entities are or are not further analyzable into more basic constituents: so-called “relational ontologies” (e.g., Platonism) or “blob ontologies” (e.g., nominalism) hold that concrete particular objects are *not* further analyzable into more basic constituents, while so-called “layer cake” or “constituent ontologies” (e.g., bundle theories or substratum theories) hold that concrete particular objects *are* further analyzable into more basic constituents. The Aristotelian doctrine of *hylomorphism* can be interpreted as yielding a further type of constituent ontology, according to which concrete particular objects are analyzed as compounds of matter (*hūlē*) and form (*morphē* or *eidos*). A hylomorphic analysis of concrete particular objects is well-equipped to compete with alternative approaches when measured against familiar criteria of success. In addition, hylomorphism is designed to meet further challenges which have not been emphasized much in recent times. A successful development of this doctrine, however, hinges on how hylomorphists conceive of (i) the *matter* composing a concrete particular object; (ii) its *form*; (iii) the “*hylomorphic tie*” which holds between the matter and the form composing a concrete particular object; as well as (iv) the *further commitments* and (v) the *explanatory value* associated with the application of the doctrine of hylomorphism to the specific case of concrete particular objects.