

## PART III

### CHAPTER 2

#### CHRISTIAN MATERIALISM

Despite the interest in dualism among contemporary Christian thinkers, the majority of Christian philosophers and theologians are not dualists. On the contrary, physicalism and science has been more influential on Christianity's understanding of the soul; most non-dualist Christian scholars think physically, materially and naturally, in light of evolution and especially neuroscience. It is possible to reconsider the soul apart from metaphysics and hylomorphic language, while also looking at some attendant metaphysical implications.

This chapter outlines several theories closely related to scientific ideas about brain, mind and soul, and associated theological issues. It starts with ideas from Christian thinkers who profess their dedication to the neuroscientific and natural realities but who hold a nonreductive vision of persons. Next we explore beliefs not readily supported by nonreductive physicalist thinkers, namely the traditional Catholic teaching about the soul and the intermediate state, post-mortem. This is followed by an examination of the principal authority central to the Christian positions: the bible. Finally, we consider the question of how God intervenes in the world and reflect on the differences among Christian thinkers, especially with regard to the origins of the human soul.

#### *Nonreductive and Integral*

Christians have asked, 'whatever happened to the soul?',<sup>1</sup> and 'what about the soul?'.<sup>2</sup> Has the human soul disappeared amidst molecular biology, psychology, and brain scans? There are a number of possible answers. We look at three: nonreductive physicalism, emergent dualism and dual-aspect monism. We also consider briefly

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<sup>1</sup> Warren S. Brown, Nancey Murphy and H. Newton Malony (eds.), *Whatever Happened to the Soul? Scientific and Theological Portraits of Human Nature*, Theology and the Sciences Series (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998), especially Ray S. Anderson, "On Being Human: The Spiritual Saga of a Creaturely Soul," in Brown, Murphy & Malony (eds.), *Whatever Happened to the Soul?*, pp.175-194

<sup>2</sup> Joel B. Green (ed.), *What about the Soul? Neuroscience and Christian Anthropology* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2004)

several other theories: emergentist monism, associated with Arthur Peacocke (1924-2006)<sup>3</sup> and Philip Clayton;<sup>4</sup> other dual-aspect or dual-perspective theories;<sup>5</sup> and Barbour's 'dipolar monism.'<sup>6</sup>

N.Murphy and colleagues propose a position in philosophy of mind which they call *nonreductive physicalism*, where physicalism does not require mind, soul or a second metaphysics.<sup>7</sup> One opinion is that Murphy has perhaps done more than anyone else in the theology/science discussion to reach a philosophical view fitting in with the broad goals of the exchange.<sup>8</sup>

The term 'nonreductive' stresses the disagreement with Murphy and others have with philosophical ideas that a person is nothing but a body.<sup>9</sup> Despite this, Murphy's theory is that "nearly all of the human capacities or faculties once attributed to the *soul* are now seen to be functions of the brain."<sup>10</sup> For faculties once assigned to the soul or mind it is engaging to think that the brain undertakes those performs.

Physicalism can also be equated to materialism. Though the terms are mostly interchangeable in philosophy, Murphy explains that 'physicalism' is more current and it is more appealing to Christians because 'materialism' has long been used to

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<sup>3</sup> Arthur Peacocke, *All That Is: A Naturalistic Faith for the Twenty-First Century*, A theological proposal with responses from leading thinkers in the religion-science dialogue, edited by Philip Clayton (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), p.11

<sup>4</sup> Philip Clayton, *Mind and Emergence: From Quantum to Consciousness* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp.17-24.

<sup>5</sup> Peter Clarke, "Neuroscience and the Soul - A Response to Malcolm Jeeves," *Science and Christian Belief* Vol.21 No.1 (April 2009), pp.61-64. Clarke suggest most Christians who hold substance monism usually also hold some form of property dualism. Sometimes other terms may be used, e.g. in David Carr, "Metaphysics, Reductivism, and Spiritual Discourse," *Zygon* Vol.37 No.2 (June 2002), pp.491-510.

<sup>6</sup> Ian G.Barbour, "Neuroscience, Artificial Intelligence, and Human Nature: Theological and Philosophical Reflections," *Zygon* Vol.34 No.3 (September 1999), pp.361-398

<sup>7</sup> Nancey Murphy, "Nonreductive Physicalism, Philosophical Challenges," in Richard Lints, Michael S.Horton and Mark R.Talbot (eds.), *Personal Identity in Theological Perspective* (Grand Rapids, Michigan and Cambridge, U.K.: William B.Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2006), pp.95-117; Nancey Murphy, "Nonreductive Physicalism: Philosophical Issues," in Brown, Murphy & Malony (eds.), *Whatever Happened to the Soul?*, pp.127-148;

<sup>8</sup> Dennis Bielfeldt, "Nancey Murphy's Nonreductive Physicalism," *Zygon* Vol.34 No.4 (December 1999), pp.619-628

<sup>9</sup> Nancey Murphy, "Human Nature: Historical, Scientific, and Religious Issues," in Brown, Murphy & Malony (eds.), *Whatever Happened to the Soul?*, pp.1-29. On Murphy, see Philip Clayton, "Shaping the Field of Theology and Science: A Critique of Nancey Murphy," *Zygon* Vol.34 No.4 (December 1999), pp.609-618. Clayton contrasts Ian Barbour, credited as the "founder of the field of theology and science," a discipline founder with Nancey Murphy, a "discipline builder" and a "second-generation scholar in the field". The "first generation" scholars include Barbour, Philip Hefner, Ralph Burhoe, Arthur Peacocke and John Polkinghorne. Clayton, *Shaping the Field*, p.609

<sup>10</sup> Murphy, *Human Nature*, p.1.

refer to a *worldview* that excludes the divine.<sup>11</sup> To show that her theory is consonant with the Christian tradition, she matches the human faculties discussed by Thomas Aquinas to correspond to scientific concepts, e.g. Aquinas' 'interior sense' of memory is conceived by Murphy as generated by the connections in neural networks.<sup>12</sup>

Bodily survival after death is understood as disintegration at death and recreation by God at the general resurrection. Murphy questions the intermediate state; and the intelligibility of timelines in eschatology since God is beyond time.<sup>13</sup>

Nonreductive physicalism has a different concept of soul to that part of the Christian tradition which these proponents called dualist: humans are bestowed a separate entity by a special act of creation.<sup>14</sup> Two further associated understandings of soul are: the soul designates a realm of unique human capacity and experience like personal agency, capability to give and receive love, communication with God; secondly the soul designates the part of the self which continues after death.<sup>15</sup> Soulfulness, soulful and soul are descriptors not used for "an essence apart from the physical self, but the net sum of those encounters in which embodied humans relate to and commune with God (who is spirit) or with one another in a manner that reaches deeply into the essence of our creaturely, historical, and communal selves."<sup>16</sup>

One critical caveat has been noted: how the human soul relates to reduced cognitive capacity.<sup>17</sup> The latter does not diminish the worth of human beings with less-than-normal cognitive capabilities. But since experiences of soul emerge from personal

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<sup>11</sup> Murphy, *Bodies and Souls*, p.2. Atheist Daniel Dennett laments, "we materialists are the bad guys, and those who believe in anything supernatural, however goofy and gullible the particular belief, have at least this much going for them: they're 'on the side of angels'." Daniel C. Dennett, *Breaking the Spell: Religion as a Natural Phenomenon* (London: Allen Lane, 2006), pp.304-305

<sup>12</sup> Murphy, *Bodies and Souls*, pp.16ff

<sup>13</sup> Murphy, *Human Nature*, p.23

<sup>14</sup> Warren S. Brown, "Cognitive Contributions to Soul," in Brown, Murphy & Malony (eds.), *Whatever Happened to the Soul?*, pp.99-125; a similar view is argued by Ted Peters, "Resurrection of the Very Embodied Soul?" in Robert John Russell, Nancey Murphy, Theo C. Meyering, Michael A. Arbib (eds.), *Neuroscience and the Person: Scientific Perspectives on Divine Action*, Fourth Volume (Vatican City State: Vatican Observatory and Berkeley: Center for Theology and the Natural Sciences, 1999), pp.305-326.

<sup>15</sup> Brown, *Cognitive Contributions to Soul*, p.100

<sup>16</sup> Brown, *Cognitive Contributions to Soul*, p.101

<sup>17</sup> Brown, *Cognitive Contributions to Soul*, pp.123-125. In nonreductive physicalism, eternal life for human beings depends on God's re-creation from personal relatedness, not on a pre-existing nonphysical soul.

relatedness, where this relatedness is lessened by social history, or psychological constitution, then the experiences of soul can shrink. In such cases the community undertakes more responsibility to provide personal relatedness to these people.<sup>18</sup>

Yet relationships become richer as the human individual matures in social and cognitive understandings. For cases of amnesiacs, Asperger's syndrome and other forms of autism, to the extent that the quality of soul is bestowed by the Creator's relationship to them, the soul endures in essence. But some experiences of 'souliness' as they emerge from personal interrelationships need to be viewed as diminished in some measure by cognitive disabilities.<sup>19</sup>

It is acknowledged that substance dualism may provide moral protection, giving a reason for treating patients with uncontrollable seizures with loving care.<sup>20</sup> A nonmaterial soul has also been understood to inspire inclusivity for the imperilled aged and very young in Christianity; however, it has been suggested that the source of such moral idealism may be just the parable of the Good Samaritan.<sup>21</sup>

A second kind of "physicalism" is, notwithstanding its title, is W.Hasker's *emergent dualism*.<sup>22</sup> Emergence occurs when elements are organised into complex wholes, and something authentically new enters the picture, something that is not reducible to or explainable by the elements.<sup>23</sup> Hasker agrees with Murphy's ontological reductionism, that as one ascends the hierarchy of levels, there are no new metaphysical additives to generate higher-level entities from lower ones. Hasker points out that Murphy assumes the standard particle-interaction laws of physics or what he terms microdeterminism. Murphy asks if ontological reductionism can be accepted without causal reductionism, as in arguments about free will being an illusion. Hasker finds it hard to see how causal reduction can be avoided. If the higher-level organisation is to make a difference, "it can only do this by *affecting the interactions of the constituents at the base level* – but this is forbidden to do by the

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<sup>18</sup> Brown, *Cognitive Contributions to Soul*, p.125.

<sup>19</sup> Brown, *Cognitive Contributions to Soul*, p.124

<sup>20</sup> See also Stephen G.Post, "A Moral Case for Nonreductive Physicalism," in Brown, Murphy & Malony (eds.), *Whatever Happened to the Soul?*, pp.195-212

<sup>21</sup> Or perhaps the passage, 'I was sick and you took care of me...' (Matthew 25); Post, *A Moral Case*, p.202

<sup>22</sup> William Hasker, "Emergent Dualism, Challenge to a Materialist Consensus," in Green (ed.), *What about the Soul*, pp.101-115

<sup>23</sup> Hasker, *Emergent Dualism*, p.112

thesis of microdeterminism. Causal reduction has in no way been avoided.”<sup>24</sup> Hasker says microdeterminism has to be abandoned. These are grounds for his emergent dualism.

In emergent dualism the mental individual *emerges from* the organism and is sustained by it; not added separately from outside by the divine. Whereas in dualism a unitary, continuing *psychic individual* is distinct from the biological entity.<sup>25</sup> Like a current passing through a wire to generate an electromagnetic field, neural processes in the brain and central nervous system generate conscious awareness. This consciousness, the mind or soul, is real, distinct from the generating organism. The generated mind has a similar role as the traditional soul in dualism.<sup>26</sup> It is like a gravitational and magnetic fields in physics which are produced by physical objects but separate from them.<sup>27</sup> These fields appear not to be emergent in the strong sense needed to be properties of the mind but a helpful analogy for the ontological status of the mind.<sup>28</sup>

The difference from traditional dualism is that Hasker’s ‘conscious field’ is *generated and sustained* by the biological organism. There is no presuming that the conscious mind ought to be able to operate independently of the brain and body.<sup>29</sup> Emergent dualism does not lead to a teaching of natural immortality as it acknowledges the reliance of mental functions on brain functions. Emergent dualism also recognises “the fact (which is also acknowledged by Thomistic dualism [sic]) that disembodied existence is a truncated and abnormal state of the person, one that cries out for the re-embodiment that takes place in the resurrection.”<sup>30</sup> Hasker anticipates that materialists will think emergent dualism is “too dualistic,” while dualists can object that it is too near to materialism.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Hasker, *Emergent Dualism*, p.108

<sup>25</sup> Hasker, *Emergent Dualism*, p.113

<sup>26</sup> William Hasker, “Philosophical Contributions to Theological Anthropology,” in James K. Beilby (ed.), *For Faith and Clarity: Philosophical Contributions to Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2006), pp.243-260 (p.257)

<sup>27</sup> Hasker, *Emergent Dualism*, p.113

<sup>28</sup> William Hasker, *The Emergent Self*, Cornell studies in the philosophy of religion (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2001), p.192.

<sup>29</sup> Hasker, *Emergent Dualism*, p.113

<sup>30</sup> Hasker, *Emergent Dualism*, p.114

<sup>31</sup> Hasker, *The Emergent Self*, p.194

A third non-dualist approach is proposed by J.Polkinghorne who finds that science discourages a dualistic concept of mind and matter as two distinct substances. Humans are psychosomatic unities, where material and mental aspects are taken with equal seriousness, set within the inseparable and complementary relationship of a unitary person.<sup>32</sup> We surely are “psychosomatic unities, ‘animated bodies rather than incarnated souls,’ to use a famous phrase. We can no longer think of ourselves as apprentice angels.”<sup>33</sup>

Thus he finds some kind of *dual-aspect monism* to be a suitable viewpoint. Polkinghorne suggests looking at complexity theory and top-down causality, for examples.<sup>34</sup> He contrasts his approach with P.Clayton’s ‘emergentist monism,’ according to which the mental and the physical are two different ways to characterise one ‘stuff.’ Polkinghorne clarifies: “the dual-aspect monism that I espouse seeks to regard the mental and the physical as corresponding to encounters with complementary phases of the ‘one stuff’ of created reality, rather than simply different characterizations of it.”<sup>35</sup>

According to Polkinghorne, human beings are also ‘risen beasts’ rather than ‘incarnated souls’ or ‘fallen angels trapped in the flesh’. In fact he too asks, “what then has happened to the soul? Has it been lost altogether?”<sup>36</sup> He refers to the Thomistic notion of the soul as the form of the body, though he interprets it somewhat non-traditionally. For him the body is not of abiding importance for personhood because the matter is changing through wear and tear, and turnover of atoms.

The ‘real me’ is the carrier of the essence of individual personhood, a continuous “almost infinitely complex, ‘information-bearing pattern’ carried at any one time by

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<sup>32</sup> John Polkinghorne, “Mind and Matter: A Physicist's View,” *Philosophical Investigations* Vol.32 No.2 (April 2009), pp.105–112 (p.107)

<sup>33</sup> John Polkinghorne, “Opening Windows onto Reality,” *Theology Today* Vol.58 No.2 (July 2001), pp.145-154 (p.149)

<sup>34</sup> Polkinghorne, *Mind and Matter*, p.107

<sup>35</sup> John Polkinghorne, *Exploring Reality: The Intertwining of Science and Religion* (New Haven: Yale University Press & London: SPCK, 2005), footnote 14, p.57

<sup>36</sup> J.C.Polkinghorne, “The person, the soul, and genetic engineering,” *Journal of Medical Ethics* Vol.30 No.6 (December 2004), pp.593-597 (p.595); cf.also John Polkinghorne, *Exploring Reality*, pp.46-49.

the matter that then makes up my body.”<sup>37</sup> The human soul, says Polkinghorne, is this “information-bearing pattern” and he sees this as taking an antique view and putting on a fresh appearance. For Polkinghorne, the Aristotelian-Thomistic soul as the ‘form’ (animating principle) of the body now has a more relational, more dynamic character.<sup>38</sup> The information-bearing pattern, “me”, will decompose with my death. But Polkinghorne believes that God will preserve the pattern in the divine memory.<sup>39</sup> M.Ruse has a similar notion of how the soul might survive death, namely, that God is keeping information that can be reactivated, rather than a substance.<sup>40</sup>

Polkinghorne says there may be an immediate transition after death to the life and ‘time’ of the world to come or some “intermediate heavenly ‘holding pattern’, awaiting the final resurrection of the dead and the consummation of all things.”<sup>41</sup> The traditional intermediate state could be expressed in terms of patterns of human beings remembered in the mind of God, “the preserved ‘software’ awaiting a new realization through resurrection and, perhaps, subject to some ‘debugging’”. Because it is of the essence of humanity to be embodied, such a state of remembrance would be less than fully human.<sup>42</sup>

### Critical Comment

There are dialogue possibilities in each of these three thinkers. The nonreductive intent of Murphy’s physicalism; Hasker’s discussion of the important issue of

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<sup>37</sup> John Polkinghorne, *Science and Religion in Quest of Truth* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2011), pp.104-105

<sup>38</sup> Polkinghorne, *Science and Religion*, p.105

<sup>39</sup> For discussion on Polkinghorne’s concept of ‘information’ see Polkinghorne, *Mind and Matter*, pp.107-109 and Carl S.Helrich, “John Polkinghorne: Crossing the Divide Between Physics and Metaphysics,” *Zygon* Vol.35 No.4 (December 2000), pp.963–969.

<sup>40</sup> Michael Ruse, *Can a Darwinian be a Christian? The Relationship between Science and Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p.82. Ruse even explains “the soul as a Darwinian concept” that for the “Aristotelian, and the Thomist, and the Darwinian, the soul has to or needs to be ‘embodied’ in some way. It is not just a substance like a lump of rock or a lump of flesh. It needs to be activating, forming, informing, driving, and every other thing, making a lump of clay into a real human – as is appreciated by Saint Paul in his talk of the spiritual body.” (p.81)

<sup>41</sup> John Polkinghorne, *Science and Christian Belief: Theological Reflections of a Bottom-up Thinker*, The Gifford Lectures for 1993-94 (London: SPCK, 1994), p.173.

<sup>42</sup> It is equivalent in modern terms to the Hebrew notion of shades in Sheol. Polkinghorne, *Science and Christian Belief*, p.173. Cf. Roland E.Murphy, “The Testament(s): Continuities and Discontinuities,” *Biblical Theology Bulletin* Vol.29 No.3 (August 1999), pp.112-117. Sheol varies in the Hebrew Bible; it is a place where the ‘dead’ or ‘shades’ reside and it is also a type of code which describes the adversities or non-life that bother human beings in real life (Ps 30:4: ‘You brought me up from Sheol’). Death/Sheol ought not be dismissed “as having little theological value or relevance. It is a precious datum that corrects misplaced eschatological emphasis arising from views about human immortality.” (p.113)

causality which is debated in philosophy of mind; and Polkinghorne's concept of information, remembrance and the intermediate state. Yet other scholars diverge from their ideas, and is worth pondering.

Those advocating the soul as understood in the Catholic sense (Part I) soon meet objections that notions of soul are fundamentally unbiblical, foster dualisms and the simple dichotomy of the soul as a philosophical 'Hellenistic' idea versus the Jewish notion of the person.<sup>43</sup> In response, it has been suggested that a better historical narrative about 'soul' in early Christian thought would begin by acknowledging that the earliest Christian traditions were already familiar with a notion of soul as the inner spiritual core of persons. They progressively used and adapted themes from diverse sources to form arguments and express given theological concerns.<sup>44</sup> Another interpretation is that the biblical teaching portrays humans as having an internal, defining essence that endures through change, and is more than a grouping of ones' parts. Persons are not their capacities, their bodies, their brains, but are body-soul unities.<sup>45</sup>

Metaphysicians think differently.<sup>46</sup> W.N. Clarke (1915-2008) is alarmed that the "whole basic traditional distinction between matter and spirit, long accepted by all branches of Christianity, is now eroding... This movement is occurring principally among Protestant thinkers (predominantly so far among the academic elite of seminary and university), but with some Catholics now joining in."<sup>47</sup> Clarke finds nonreductive physicalism the most challenging and definitely the most articulate school discussing matter and spirit.<sup>48</sup>

What Clarke and others are seeing is a collection of nonreductionist and emergentist views.<sup>49</sup> While they accept that religious and scientific views may be reconcilable or

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<sup>43</sup> Lewis Ayres, "The soul and the reading of scripture: a note on Henri De Lubac," *Scottish Journal of Theology* Vol.61 No.2 (2008), pp.173-190.

<sup>44</sup> Ayres, *The soul*, pp.177-178

<sup>45</sup> Scott B. Rae considers bioethical questions around anencephalic infants, their brains and concepts of personhood. Scott B. Rae, "How Much Brain Do I Need To Be Human?," *Ethics & Medicine* Vol.24 No.3 (Fall 2008), pp.135-138

<sup>46</sup> E.g. W. Norris Clarke, S.J., "Metaphysics as Mediator between Revelation and the Natural Sciences," *Communio* Vol.28 No.3 (Fall 2001), pp.465-487

<sup>47</sup> Clarke, *Metaphysics as Mediator*, p.470

<sup>48</sup> Clarke, *Metaphysics as Mediator*, p.470

<sup>49</sup> Sami Pihlström, "A pragmatic critique of three kinds of religious naturalism," *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion* Vol.17 No.3 (2005), pp.177-218. Pihlström refers to papers in *Zygon* and the



that faith may be re-expressed in a naturalist framework, they express some scepticism about reconciliatory projects. They do so whether or not the work is metaphysical like emergentism or process-metaphysical ideas, or antimetaphysical as in ‘existential’ ideas.<sup>50</sup> These non-traditional approaches constitute a captivating project that hopes to make theism scientifically acceptable, to rethink religion in a way where no commitment to supernaturalist theism is needed. It sees a metaphysically realistic picture, i.e., that thoughts and beliefs should ideally express a thought- and language-independent reality whose structure is given, fundamental and unique.<sup>51</sup>

Some theologians question nonreductive physicalism’s denial that humans have immaterial souls.<sup>52</sup> One proposed alternative is that these traditional Christian beliefs can be explained by carefully selecting a philosophical system, such as a cosmology based on the principle of universal intersubjectivity and common ground between opposing subjectivities. J.A.Bracken uses the process philosophy of A.N.Whitehead to overcome the dichotomy of spirit and matter. For example, the gestating human embryo progressively gains complexity as a physical organism, and a slow building up of more and more complex societies as Whitehead understands.<sup>53</sup>

There is thus the emergence of “higher-order Whiteheadian societies out of the interplay of actual occasions within lower-level Whiteheadian societies...when the pattern reaches a certain stage of complexity, a new society, or higher-level ontological reality, emerges and with it a new regnant nexus of actual occasions to preside over that newly formed ‘structured society’.”<sup>54</sup> Bracken sees in the developing brain and central nervous system the emergence of the rational soul in the human beings.

For others, the view is that non-reductive physicalism cannot fully account for human experiences like free will, miracles obtained by intercessory prayer etc.,

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overall dialogue between religion and science as “antireductionist, emergentist world-picture painted by the new sciences of complexity and self-organizing systems, and of nondualistic yet nonreductive theories of the mind.” (p.181)

<sup>50</sup> Pihlström, *A pragmatic critique*, p.212

<sup>51</sup> Pihlström, *A pragmatic critique*, p.212

<sup>52</sup> Joseph A.Bracken, SJ, “Emergent Monism and the Classical Doctrine of the Soul,” *Zygon* Vol.39 No.1 (March 2004), pp.161–174;

<sup>53</sup> Bracken, *Emergent Monism*, p.169

<sup>54</sup> Bracken, *Emergent Monism*, p.169

which indicate an immaterial soul.<sup>55</sup> Support for the traditional view is sought from neuroscientists like Eccles and others like Beauregard. Still other contemporary philosophers and/or theologians have argued either in favour of some form of dualism (e.g., K.Yandell) or in favour of a composite view of the human person involving a profound union of physical body and spiritual soul, along the lines of Aquinas' influential view, e.g. B.Ashley; H.U.von Balthasar; and J.Ratzinger.<sup>56</sup>

Returning to Aquinas, Pasnau thinks he would differ from modern materialists who link the soul with a brain region: any materialism which makes the soul undertake the functions of mind alone.<sup>57</sup> There is a Thomistic objection to *reductive* materialism, which might be able to dialogue with nonreductive materialism. But this sort of materialism eliminates forms from having an explanatory role. What is unique about living creatures says Pasnau is their coherence, endurance over time, the complicated behaviours, must be found beyond their constituent material parts.<sup>58</sup> Certainly Aquinas is not just a materialist since he views the soul is subsistent and immaterial.<sup>59</sup>

Overall, there appears to be valid grounds both for accepting and questioning the integral and nonreductive physicalists. Depending on how it is presented, Catholic teaching is materialist, in a full-body and physicalist sense. And it is historically supportive of employing the sciences in its empirical investigations. However Catholic thinking about the nature of the soul has been spiritual and expressed in metaphysical, theological language and concepts. Moreover, it is not clear that these new non-reductionist and (mostly) non-metaphysical theories can support a significant traditional Christian belief about the soul, namely, life beyond death.

### *Intermediate State, Postmortem Survival*

Immortality of the soul has traditionally been understood as an intermediate state of separation of soul from body at death until a reunification at the final resurrection.

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<sup>55</sup> Paul Flaman, "The Human Soul: A Catholic Theological Response to Non-Reductive Physicalism." A paper was presented at the Metanexus Institute Conference in Madrid, Spain on 16 July 2008; published online, [www.metanexus.net/conference2008/articles/Default.aspx?id=10463](http://www.metanexus.net/conference2008/articles/Default.aspx?id=10463). See also Paul Flaman, "Neuroscience, Christian Theology, and a Fuller Understanding of the Human Person," *Religious Education* Vol.106 No.3 (2011), pp.252-256

<sup>56</sup> Flaman, *The Human Soul*

<sup>57</sup> Pasnau, *Aquinas on Human Nature*, p.72

<sup>58</sup> Pasnau, *Aquinas on Human Nature*, p.99

<sup>59</sup> See discussion about dualism too, Pasnau, *Aquinas on Human Nature*, pp.65-72

D. Edwards notes that K. Rahner (who regarded himself as a Thomist) sees the idea of the separated soul and the intermediate state as a phase in the history of theology. Rahner's thinking, shared by some Protestant thinkers, is that there is no disembodied soul and no interval between a person's ceasing to exist and their recreation by God, that is, a 'resurrection in death'.<sup>60</sup>

Others use the eternalist notion of time: as all times are actually and wholly present to God, God could create a "cosmic holding tank for disembodied or quasi-embodied souls," but this raises more questions.<sup>61</sup> It has been claimed that it is simpler to think with the eternalist notion of divine eternity means there is no need for the metaphysical claim of the intermediate state between death and resurrection.<sup>62</sup>

What is common to many theologians in the Catholic tradition, says Edwards, is a rejection of the idea that there can be any such thing as a separated body-free soul.<sup>63</sup> He finds profound unity in the human person on the basis of the neuroscientific view that mental capacities are based in the physical brain. He admitted some struggles with the language of 'non-reductive physicalism' as it leans to the physical; yet he does not think 'dual aspect monism' is not wholly satisfactory either. His own ideas are nearer to Clayton and Peacocke's 'emergentist-monism'.<sup>64</sup>

Rahner did not see a need for the 'intermediate state' between resurrection of the body and the death of a person. Thus there was no need for notions of a separated spirit or a "pancosmic theology of the separated soul in death."<sup>65</sup> There are several areas such as the status of the soul where there is tension between Catholic theology and science.<sup>66</sup> Rahner is seeks to maintain the essential point of Catholic theology on

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<sup>60</sup> Denis Edwards, "Response to Nancey Murphy," Hilary D. Regan and Mark Wm. Worthing (eds.), *Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Cosmology and Biological Evolution*, ATF Science and Theology Series: 2 (Hindmarsh, South Australia: Australian Theological Forum, 2002), pp.91-98 (p.97). The response is to Nancey Murphy, "Why Christians Should be Physicalists," in Regan & Worthing (eds.), *Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, pp.52-68 and Nancey Murphy, "How Physicalists Can Avoid Being Reductionists," in Regan & Worthing (eds.), *Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, pp.69-90

<sup>61</sup> Charles E. Gutenson, "Time, Eternity, and Personal Identity, The Implications of Trinitarian Theology," in Green (ed.), *What about the Soul?*, pp.117-132 (p.122)

<sup>62</sup> Gutenson, *Time, Eternity*, pp.118-120

<sup>63</sup> Edwards, *Response*, p.98

<sup>64</sup> Edwards, *Response*, p.92

<sup>65</sup> Denis Edwards, *Jesus and the Cosmos* (Homebush, NSW: St. Paul Publications, 1991), p.106

<sup>66</sup> Michael Barnes, "The Evolution of the Soul from Matter and the Role of Science in the Theology of Karl Rahner," *Horizons* Vol.21 No.1 (Spring, 1994), pp.85-104

the status of the soul, while being open to the findings of science and how best to interpret the traditional doctrines today.

Traditional Catholic teachings about the state after death maintains that personal identity survives in the spiritual principle of the person, which is traditionally called the soul. Biblical accounts of afterlife and resurrection, however, tend to point away from this view. The true nature of what happens after a person's physical death can perhaps only be wondered about. The same may be said even of Rahner's notion of resurrection in death.

### Interpretations of the Bible

Several Christian thinkers observe how neuroscience aligns with some biblical scholarship.<sup>67</sup> At this point, in a spirit of dialogue it might be good to look at various interpretations of scripture. The bible is the principal foundation for accounts such as nonreductive physicalism. For example, the account of Adam becoming became a "living soul" (Genesis 2:7), is not about the soul of later Christian tradition. The 'breath of life' that is breathed into Adam is also associated with animals and does not signify the creation of an immaterial part within human nature which distinguishes humans from other animals.<sup>68</sup> It seems biblical scholars find no exegetical justification for the idea of an immaterial, immortal, disembodied soul or personhood.<sup>69</sup>

Similarly, the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31) is not linked to an intermediate state and disembodied soul. In the wider context of human nature in Luke-Acts, another scholar thinks that Luke has no present or eschatological notion of a disembodied soul, but still envisages an 'intermediate state'. What is more important to Luke is the inseparability of humans in their embodied and communal

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<sup>67</sup> Joel B.Green, "Bodies – That is, Human Lives" A Re-examination of Human Nature in the Bible," in Brown, Murphy & Malony (eds.), *Whatever Happened to the Soul?*, pp.149-173; Lawson G.Stone, "The Soul: Possession, Part, or Person? The Genesis of Human Nature in Genesis 2:7," in Green (ed.), *What about the Soul?*, pp.47-61; Ian G.Barbour, *Religion and Science: Historical and Contemporary Issues*, A Revised and Expanded Edition of *Religion in an Age of Science* (New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 1997), pp.267-272

<sup>68</sup> Stone, *The Soul*, p.53

<sup>69</sup> Stone, *The Soul*, p.59. He applies the same point to not introducing Satan in the passages about the serpent.

settings. Thus Luke's soteriology is inclined to be around the reinstatement of old or the provision of new relationships among the people of God.<sup>70</sup>

Other texts considered are the postresurrection appearances of Jesus (Luke 24:36-39) and Paul's thinking of a body beyond death in 1 Corinthians 15.<sup>71</sup> Here identity is found in self-conscious relationality and narrative identities, much as it is found in neuroscience and these scriptures. There is also the notion that death is the death of the person with no part of personhood surviving. The general New Testament view on life-after-death means re-embodiment. This provides grounds for the relational and narrative continuity of the self. Is there a transition from death to life-after-death? Not so, because of the capacity for transformed existence and for resurrection. This is an intrinsic feature of human persons.<sup>72</sup>

One interesting passage is 1 Samuel 28:3-19. King Saul consults a spiritist, a medium at Endor, who conjures the deceased prophet Samuel who communicates with the king. This could be read as Samuel's 'soul' existing in a state, could be difficult in a 'monist anthropology'.<sup>73</sup> There have been different interpretations of this problematic text and the general conclusion that a physicalist rather than dualist reading is closer to the ancient worldview of Israel.

Consider one scholar J.B.Green who assesses the neuroscientific data and the Bible's accounts of human beings, and concludes that while humans are not reduced to bodies and brains, there is nothing extra such as an ontologically separate entity of the spirit or soul or true 'self'.<sup>74</sup> But there are alternative interpretations<sup>75</sup> beyond the bible, in the two millennia of Christian tradition of eschatology.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Green, *A Re-Examination of Human Nature*, p.169.

<sup>71</sup> Joel B.Green, "Resurrection of the Body: New Testament Voices Concerning Personal Continuity and the Afterlife," in Green (ed.), *What about the Soul?*, pp.85-100.

<sup>72</sup> Green, *Resurrection of the Body*, p.100. That is, "the capacity for 'afterlife' is not a property of humanity, but is a divine gift, divinely enacted." (p.100).

<sup>73</sup> Bill T.Arnold, "Soul-Searching Questions About 1 Samuel 28, Samuel's Appearance at Endor and Christian Anthropology," in Green (ed.), *What about the Soul?*, pp.75-83

<sup>74</sup> Joel B.Green, *Body, Soul, and Human Life: The Nature of Humanity in the Bible*, Studies in Theological Interpretation (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic and Bletchley, UK: Paternoster, 2008), pp.33-71; Joel B.Green, 'Neuroscience and the Person: Scientific Perspectives on Divine Action', co-sponsored by the Center for Theology and the Natural Sciences in Berkeley and the Vatican Observatory. Joel B.Green, "Restoring the Human Person: New Testament Voices for a Wholistic and Social Anthropology," in Russell et al. (eds.), *Neuroscience and the Person*, pp.3-22

<sup>75</sup> For example, François Bovon, "The Soul's Comeback: Immortality and Resurrection in Early Christianity," *Harvard Theological Review* Vol.103 No.4 (2010), pp.387-406; John W.Cooper, *Body*,

Some bible texts not considered by Green are 1 Peter 3:18-20<sup>77</sup> and Revelation 6:9-11,<sup>78</sup> and these texts not addressed do appear to refer to a waiting period for the dead.<sup>79</sup> Even Green finds some evidence of body-soul dualism in the New Testament in Matthew 10:28,<sup>80</sup> and looks to the parallel in Luke 12:4. Though it could be possible that Jesus is simply saying that those who are persecuted should be comforted that martyrdom is only the end of earthly life, not the end of one's human existence. Thus *psyche* would refer not to 'soul' but to 'vitality'.<sup>81</sup>

Other scholars agree that the saying presumes an anthropology wherein the soul (*psychē*) is one's real self and the body (*sōma*) is the perishable shell, in which the 'soul' is the more important, immortal part.<sup>82</sup> It has origins in Greek ideas and soon became part of Hellenistic thought and is not surprising to be found in a first-century Jewish text from either Syria or Palestine.<sup>83</sup> However, life (*psychē*) is also used in Matthew 10:39 meaning the whole person and is closer to the Hebrew. But due to the different contexts, the first being Greek, the translation ought to be 'soul' and 'life' respectively. While the text does not pronounce on anthropological questions it has become part of the history of interpretation for the immortality of the soul in the Patristic period and beyond.<sup>84</sup>

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*Soul and Life Everlasting: Biblical Anthropology and the Monism-Dualism Debate* (Grand Rapids, Michigan and Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2000), pp. xxi-xxiii.

Cooper finds Green's arguments "incomplete and unsound... in general Green plays down the evidence of the intermediate state in Scripture." (p. xxii)

<sup>76</sup> International Theological Commission, "Some Current Questions in Eschatology," *Irish Theological Quarterly* Vol. 58 No. 3 (September 1992), pp. 209-243; *Commissio Theologica Internationalis*, "De quibusdam quaestionibus actualibus circa eschatologiam," *Gregorianum* Vol. 73 No. 3 (1992), pp. 395-435; and critical comments and suggestions by Peter C. Phan, "Contemporary Context and Issues in Eschatology," *Theological Studies* Vol. 55 No. 3 (September 1994), pp. 507-536; and Dermot A. Lane, *Keeping Hope Alive: Stirrings in Christian Theology* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1996), pp. 149-173

<sup>77</sup> "He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit, in which also he went and made a proclamation to the spirits in prison..." NRSV

<sup>78</sup> "When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slaughtered for the word of God and for the testimony they had given..." NRSV, as pointed out by Jeremy Holmes, review of *Body, Soul, and Human Life: The Nature of Humanity in the Bible*, by Joel B. Green, in *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* Vol. 72 No. 4 (October 2010), pp. 826-827.

<sup>79</sup> Holmes, review, p. 827

<sup>80</sup> "Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell." (NRSV). Green, *Re-Examination of Human Nature*, p. 162

<sup>81</sup> Green, *Re-Examination of Human Nature*, p. 162

<sup>82</sup> Daniel J. Harrington, S.J., *The Gospel of Matthew*, Sacra Pagina Series Volume 1 (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1991), p. 150 & p. 153

<sup>83</sup> Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew*, p. 153

<sup>84</sup> Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 8-20: A Commentary*, Hermeneia Series, Translation by James E. Crouch (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), p. 102

There could be body-soul dualism in 2 Corinthians 5:1-10,<sup>85</sup> about the earthly tent being destroyed, and a building from God.<sup>86</sup> Yet to say that Paul simply supports Old Testament monism against pagan body-soul dualism is not sufficient. If it was a rudimentary matter, Paul would not have needed a long discussion with the Corinthians.<sup>87</sup>

But there is scholarship questioning of the Old Testament's (OT) perceived understanding of the person as a psychosomatic unity.<sup>88</sup> It is argued that the emergence of modern selfhood, during the Enlightenment and its aftermath in the romantic period can explain partly for the temperament of OT scholars to see in today's biblical accounts an idea of personal unity which uses their own image. The Enlightenment witnessed a linguistic change where talk about a 'soul' was displaced by talk about the 'self'.<sup>89</sup> If it was a simple matter, Paul would not have need that extensive discussion on the subject in the letter.<sup>90</sup>

Scholars recognise that the earthly body, the "tent" (σκηνούς), referred to by Paul is rather allusive.<sup>91</sup> A Cilician may understand the idea to be transitoriness and nomadic; a Jew may have ideas of the 'festival of booths' after the exodus from Egypt; a Christian would refer to the tabernacle as God's presence among his people during the wandering in the wilderness, then to the indwelling of the Spirit of Christ.<sup>92</sup> Perhaps Paul changed his eschatological expectations (1 Thessalonians

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<sup>85</sup> Green, *Re-Examination of Human Nature*, pp.171-172

<sup>86</sup> Others note that the Corinthian Letters extend Paul's usual use of anthropological terms towards a body-soul dualism of the Platonic kind. Theo K.Heckel, "Body and Soul in Saint Paul," in Wright & Potter (eds.), *Psyche and Soma*, pp.117-131. There is renewed interest in Pauline anthropology too, Troels Engberg-Pedersen, "The Material Spirit: Cosmology and Ethics in Paul," *New Testament Studies* Vol. 55 No.2 (2009), pp.179-197; Hans Dieter Betz, "The Concept of the 'Inner Human Being' (ὁ ἕσω ἄνθρωπος) in the Anthropology of Paul," *New Testament Studies* Vol.46 No.3 (2000), pp.315-341

<sup>87</sup> Heckel, *Body and Soul*, p.118

<sup>88</sup> Robert A.di Vito, "Old Testament Anthropology and the Construction of Personal Identity," *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* Vol.61 No.2 (April 1999), pp.217-238

<sup>89</sup> di Vito, *Old Testament Anthropology*, p.219

<sup>90</sup> Heckel, *Body and Soul*, p.118; Cf. also Robert A.di Vito, "Old Testament Anthropology and the Construction of Personal Identity," *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* Vol.61 No.2 (April 1999), pp.217-238.

<sup>91</sup> It is difficult to know, "to what extent Paul thinks of the body as 'house' of the soul (or better, of the inmost self, 4:16). The destruction of Paul's body is his death." Jan Lambrecht S.J., *Second Corinthians*, Sacra Pagina Series Volume 8 (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1999), p.82.

<sup>92</sup> Murray J.Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians, A Commentary on the Greek Text*, The New International Greek Testament Commentary. (Grand Rapids: William B.Eerdmans Publishing Company and Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2005), pp.370-371; Victor Paul Furnish (trans.), *II*

4:13-18, 5:10; 1 Corinthians 15:50-58; 2 Corinthians 5:1-10; Philippians 1:21-24 and 3:20-21).<sup>93</sup>

In the parable of the Rich man and Lazarus, several biblical commentators observe the Lucan Jesus as undoubtedly saying something about retribution in the afterlife.<sup>94</sup> The beggar died, was left unburied and was carried away by heavenly beings. The rich man was buried with ceremony but in death abode. The request of someone coming back from the dead to warn the surviving brothers is different to Jesus' death and resurrection. The setting is individual eschatology in a realm beyond death.<sup>95</sup>

The delay of the Parousia or second coming of Christ is evident in Luke.<sup>96</sup> Eschatology is actualised and individualised in Luke by its transfer to the individual. Luke does uphold the expectation of end-time, but the future is somewhat outshined by the reality of people dying during the long intermediate period. Subsequently, future salvation becomes closely associated with the after-death, even more than with the Parousia. In Luke, the fate of the individual is sealed at death (Lk 12:16-21; 16:19-31; 23:43; Acts 1:25; 7:59); no intermediate state appears to be envisioned (compare with 2 Corinthians 5:1-11).<sup>97</sup>

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*Corinthians*, The Anchor Bible (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1984), pp.263-299. Cf. the paper by George van Kooten, "The Anthropological Trichotomy of Spirit, Soul and Body in Philo of Alexandria and Paul of Tarsus," in Michael Labahn and Outi Lehtipuu (eds.), *Anthropology in the New Testament and its Ancient: Papers from the EABS-Meeting in Piliscsaba / Budapest*, Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology 54 (Leuven: Peeters, 2010), pp.87-119

<sup>93</sup> In 1 Thessalonians and 1 Corinthians there is a Pauline periods of 'sleeping' whereas in Philippians and 2 Corinthians this is seen as 'being in Christ'. Certainly more Hellenistic ideas are used by Paul in 2 Corinthians 5 than 1 Corinthians 15. Lambrecht, *Second Corinthians*, p.89. See also Joseph Osei-Bonsu, "Does 2 Cor. 5.1-10 Teach the Reception of the Resurrection Body at the Moment of Death?," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* Vol.9 No.28 (December 1986), pp.81-101 and Donald J.Keefe, S.J., "Bašār-Nepeš: Sarx-Pneuma; Body-Soul: Death-Resurrection An Essay in Pauline Anthropology," *Christianity and the Human Body, A Theology of the Human Body* (St. Louis, Missouri: ITEST Faith/Science Press, 2001), pp.105-152

<sup>94</sup> Joseph A.Fitzmyer, S.J. (Trans.), *The Gospel According to Luke (X-XXIV)*, The Anchor Bible (New York: Doubleday, 1985), pp.1130-1134; Green, *Re-Examination of Human Nature*, pp.167-169.

<sup>95</sup> See Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, Sacra Pagina Series Volume 3 (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1991), pp.251-257; see also Leopold Sabourin, "The Resurrection of Jesus," *Biblical Theology Bulletin* Vol.5 No.3 (1975), pp.262-293. Cf.also Daniel A.Smith, "Seeing a Pneuma(tic Body): The Apologetic Interests of Luke 24:36-43," *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* Vol.72 No.4 (October 2010), pp.752-772.

<sup>96</sup> Leopold Sabourin S.J., "The Eschatology of Luke," *Biblical Theology Bulletin* Vol.12 No.3 (August 1982), pp.73-76.

<sup>97</sup> Sabourin, *The Eschatology of Luke*, p.74



### Critical Comment

As seen above, there are philosophical and theological arguments in favour of a non-dualist/non-traditional view of the soul, particularly as supported by biblical scholarship. Thus it needs to be taken seriously. However, in assessing the importance of biblical views on this matter, it needs to be remembered that the Catholic tradition values not only historical-critical studies but also theological considerations. It is these latter points which include reasons for supporting a more traditional position. At the very least these considerations need to be part of the scholarly dialogue about an understanding of the soul.

Benedict XVI comments about the Lucan parable that Jesus is not referring to the final destiny after the Last Judgement, but is using a concept found in early Judaism and elsewhere: an intermediate state between death and resurrection. The early Jewish notion of an intermediate state includes the understanding that these souls are experiencing a provisional type of bliss or being punished rather than are in a kind of temporary custody. This is illustrated in the parable of the rich man.<sup>98</sup> It raises anthropological questions in the history of interpretation for the immortality of the soul in the Patristic period and beyond.<sup>99</sup>

In the Catholic tradition, there is an ecclesial context to the Church's living magisterium.<sup>100</sup> Benedict XVI considers the current state of biblical studies in relation to theology. The historical-critical exegesis and other methods of textual analysis have brought to the life of the Church. He refers to the Second Vatican Council's dogmatic constitution *Dei Verbum*, which emphasised the study of historical contexts and literary genres so as to grasp the meaning intended by the sacred authors.

It also said emphasised that Scripture must be interpreted in the same Spirit it was written in. Three criteria for appreciating the divine dimension of the Bible: 1) the

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<sup>98</sup> Pope Benedict XVI, *Spe Salvi, On Christian Hope*, Encyclical Letter (Strathfield, N.S.W.: St.Paul Publications, 2007), Nos.45, p.82.

<sup>99</sup> Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 8-20: A Commentary*, Hermeneia Series, Translation by James E.Crouch (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), p.102

<sup>100</sup> Benedict XVI, *Verbum Domini*, nos.31-47; pp.58-86; On Pope Benedict's 'hermeneutic of faith' in biblical interpretation see Scott Hahn, "At the School of Truth: The Ecclesial Character of Theology and Exegesis in the Thought of Benedict XVI," in David Lyle Jeffrey and C.Stephen Evans (eds.), *The Bible and the University*, Scripture and Hermeneutics Series, Volume 8 (Bletchley, Milton Keynes: Paternoster Press and Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2007), pp.80-115.

text must be interpreted with attention to the unity of the whole of Scripture; nowadays this is called canonical exegesis; 2) account is be taken of the living Tradition of the whole Church; and, finally, 3) respect must be shown for the analogy of faith.<sup>101</sup> Only where the methodological levels of the historical-critical and the theological are respected, can there be “a theological exegesis, an exegesis worthy of this book.”<sup>102</sup> While academic exegesis, including Catholic scholarship, is exceedingly adept in historical-critical methodology, Benedict XVI writes that comparable attention needs to be given to theological dimensions of the bible’s texts.<sup>103</sup>

Biblical scholars see still significance for historical criticism in Catholic biblical scholarship, and also how they perceive themselves. R.E.Murphy notes that the Catholic scholar is “an active member of the church, who inherits from the past and works within that ‘living tradition’...this presupposition colors the approach to the text.”<sup>104</sup>

Traditional Catholic eschatology saw two phases: an intermediate eschatology, extending from the death of the individual to the Parousia; and a final eschatology commencing with the Resurrection of the dead at the end of history.<sup>105</sup> Questions were raised by Protestant theologians and some Catholic theologians too, holding that the authentic biblical idea is that of Resurrection and immortality of the soul.

Whereas Greek philosophy is the basis of ideas of intermediate eschatology. One solution is a resurrection at death. Opposing this is the idea of continued life and of retribution directly after death and before the Resurrection. Texts for example Luke 16:19-31; 23:42f, are quoted which apparently use body-soul scheme of later Judaism such as Matthew 10:28. Such thinkers also include Paul, Church Fathers like St. Irenaeus, and authors who, while not sympathetic to concede a separated soul due to their philosophical ideas, however did affirm it because it was contained in the

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<sup>101</sup> Benedict XVI, *Verbum Domini*, no.34, p.63

<sup>102</sup> Benedict XVI, *Verbum Domini*, no.34, p.63

<sup>103</sup> Benedict XVI, *Verbum Domini*, no.34, p.63

<sup>104</sup> Roland E.Murphy, “What Is Catholic about Catholic Biblical Scholarship? - Revisited.” *Biblical Theology Bulletin* Vol.28 No.3 (August 1998), pp.112-119 (p.118)

<sup>105</sup> Sabourin, *The Resurrection of Jesus*, pp.287-288

words of the Lord.<sup>106</sup> There is the continuation of consciousness and the continuity of the bodily element, connected with the idea of transformation.

But some see the idea of placing the Resurrection at the point of death will lose this dimension of bodily continuity. The paradox is that, “while it begins by affirming man’s indissoluble unity, it goes on to propose the profound division inherent in the person’s definitive abandonment of the body. Furthermore, if the Resurrection is placed at the moment of death, it becomes spiritualized.”<sup>107</sup> That is, so as to remove the eschatology of souls by explaining the next life in terms of Resurrection, what is threatened is the authentic Christian notion of Resurrection, which is substituted by a mere continuation of the ‘ego’.

All things considered, clearly the bible is a chief source for dialogue, and textual criticism by all scholars can be about centred on the written word. Nonetheless a Catholic interpretation can critically study the texts and also go beyond those texts to incorporate a theological, ecclesial dimension in its use of other source of revelation, e.g. the Tradition. Dialogue partners would need to take this into consideration and be open to possible different conclusions resulting therefrom.

### *Divine Intervention and Non-Intervention*

In the realm of materialism and evolution, another subject for mutual discussion is the Catholic and papal tradition on the immediate creation of the human soul by God. In the light of dialogue with contemporary science, some theologians resist the notion of direct divine action as an intervention.<sup>108</sup> Edwards, for example, explains that God creates in one divine act that enfolds the entire process rather than creating human beings individually via a sequence of interventions. This one divine act enables the radically new to emerge in creation especially the emergence of spiritual and self-conscious human beings.

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<sup>106</sup> Sabourin, *The Resurrection of Jesus*, p.288

<sup>107</sup> Sabourin, *The Resurrection of Jesus*, p.288

<sup>108</sup> Denis Edwards, *The God of Evolution: A Trinitarian Theology* (New York/Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1999), pp.72-77. Edwards refers to Pope Pius XII and Pope John Paul II: “the concept of a particular *intervention* at the origin of the human species, or a particular divine *intervention* for each individual person, does not seem satisfactory either scientifically or theologically.” (p.75). For other interpretations of theology, evolution and nature, see for instance, Alister E. McGrath, *A Fine Tuned Universe. The Quest for God in Science and Theology*, The 2009 Gifford Lectures (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009); Ludovico Galleni, “Is Biosphere Doing Theology?,” *Zygon* Vol.36 No.1 (March 2001), pp.33–48; Ernan McMullin, “Cosmic Purpose and the Contingency of Human Evolution,” *Theology Today* Vol.55 No.3 (October 1998), pp.389-414

The relationship of ongoing creation is the presence of the indwelling Creator Spirit to each creature.<sup>109</sup> Noninterventionist divine action envisages God in heaven not intervening at specific times to break into creation from outside or to suspend natural laws.<sup>110</sup> Such ideas are influenced by Rahner, for whom God's creative action is always present and immanent. This suggests that God does not intervene in creation intermittently from outside.<sup>111</sup>

Edwards refers to Aquinas, who sees God acting as primary cause which is mediated through secondary causes. Everything in the universe is created in the world of interacting creaturely causes, called secondary causes by theology, and this is world that science investigates.<sup>112</sup> Edwards notes that secondary causes includes scientific laws and theories and those parts of the natural world not yet captured well by modelling in science.

Departing from Aquinas on a particular point, Edwards on this point does not see miracles as an exception where God replaces the created cause.<sup>113</sup> He (Edwards) then explains divine action where the Creator acts through secondary causes.<sup>114</sup> There are "no gaps in the causal explanation at the empirical level that theology should fill...God acts in and through secondary causes, through the natural world, and the regularities, contingencies, processes, and laws studied by the sciences."<sup>115</sup>

'Spiritual soul' which distinguishes humans from animals, and the immediate creation of the soul by God, are viewed by A.M.Clifford as "the Roman Catholic

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<sup>109</sup> Denis Edwards, *How God Acts: Creation, Redemption and Special Divine Action* (Hindmarsh, S.A: ATF Theology, 2010), p.6.

<sup>110</sup> Edwards, *How God Acts*, pp.44-45

<sup>111</sup> Edwards, *How God Acts*, p.46. See his earlier paper Denis Edwards, "Resurrection and the Costs of Evolution: A Dialogue with Rahner on Noninterventionist Theology," *Theological Studies* Vol.67 No.4 (December 2006), pp.816-833

<sup>112</sup> Edwards, *How God Acts*, p.46

<sup>113</sup> Edwards, *How God Acts*, p.47; for other perspectives on miracles see for instance, Christopher C.Knight, *The God of Nature: Incarnation and Contemporary Science*, Theology and the Sciences series (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), pp.28-39

<sup>114</sup> Edwards, *How God Acts*, pp.62ff; cf. also William R.Stoeger SJ, "Cosmology and a Theology of Creation," in Regan & Worthing (eds.), *Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, pp.128-145; Denis Edwards, "Response to William R.Stoeger SJ," in Regan & Worthing (eds.), *Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, pp.146-152

<sup>115</sup> Edwards, *How God Acts*, p.65. Edwards also explains God's personal action in human lives for example experiences of the Holy Spirit in grace, God's care in personal providence and "disruptive grace" in consolations and challenges; as well as special acts in the history of salvation such as the incarnation of Jesus. (pp.66-75)

form of ‘creationism’,”<sup>116</sup> assuming that God creates every individual soul directly out of nothing.<sup>117</sup> She claims Aquinas also “made a creationist claim when he argued that the rational soul of humans could be made only by [direct] creation, even though other life forms [species] could come into existence by generation and presumably, therefore, by evolution (although evolution would have been very foreign to Aquinas’ mind set).”<sup>118</sup> Clifford further argues that John Paul II’s “creationist position” on the soul shows a parallel aim with the Church’s rejection of Copernicanism: protecting the belief that humans are special, made in the image and likeness of God.<sup>119</sup> She comments that to scientists this position may demonstrate that John Paul II is not free from ‘ideology.’ and supports this view by noting that Barbour situates John Paul II’s ideas in the typology of ‘independence’.<sup>120</sup>

Similarly, for B.Brundell MSC, a soul immediately created and infused by God into a material body, as a model is “not very helpful in an evolutionary perspective.”<sup>121</sup> He explains that the biblical language is far more flexible on body and spirit and soul (1 Thessalonians 5:23). The human person created in the image of God lives at different material and spiritual levels and is called to communion with God. After death this conscious, personal willing self continues. To call this self the ‘soul’ we need a concept which is closer to the biblical notion of human beings rather than to a dualistic notion body-soul.<sup>122</sup>

For Brundell, humans are born material and loved into active spiritual existence by divine action.<sup>123</sup> This does not necessitate God’s creative action be a divine intervention which alters the course of natural evolutionary processes. Rather, it is top-down causality that is ascribed to the Creator God via the evolutionary process that generates the natural world and the emergence of human beings. However,

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<sup>116</sup> Anne M.Clifford, “Catholicism and Ian Barbour on Theology and Science, in Robert John Russell (ed.), *Fifty Years in Science and Religion: Ian G.Barbour and his Legacy*, Ashgate Science and Religion Series (Aldershot, Hants & Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate, 2004), pp.287-300 (p.295). She refers to Popes John Paul II and Pius XII.

<sup>117</sup> Clifford, *Catholicism and Ian Barbour*, p.299, footnote 32

<sup>118</sup> Clifford, *Catholicism and Ian Barbour*, footnote 32, p.299. The reference is to *Summa Theologica* Part I, Q.90 Art.2 and *Summa Contra Gentiles* Book 2, Q.87 “where he takes a creationist position against the soul’s source being the semen of the father.” (footnote 32, p.299)

<sup>119</sup> Clifford, *Catholicism and Ian Barbour*, p.295

<sup>120</sup> Clifford, *Catholicism and Ian Barbour*, p.295

<sup>121</sup> Barry Brundell MSC, “Theology and Contemporary Science, Riding the Boundaries,” *Compass* Vol.41 No.2 (Winter 2007), pp.2-7 (p.6)

<sup>122</sup> Brundell, “*Theology and Contemporary Science*, p.6

<sup>123</sup> Brundell, “*Theology and Contemporary Science*, p.6

because the human being is greater than matter, Brundell rejects evolutionary materialism's intervention into the fields of philosophy and theology, e.g. regarding the value of life.<sup>124</sup>

There is both dialogue and a struggle here with two seemingly incompatible accounts: the 'evolutionist' and 'creationist' stories.<sup>125</sup> 'Creationism,' says G. V. Coyne S.J., is the view God intervenes at conception to create a unique, new soul for each person. There seems to be no room in evolutionary theory to explain divine creation of each human soul.<sup>126</sup> This results in dissonance between science and religion. The term 'creationist' here, however, does not refer to a fundamentalist or American evangelical ideas that the Genesis account of the creation is a scientific account. The detailed scientific understanding of human origins, says Coyne, has no effect on whether God exists or not. "We do not need God to explain the universe as we see it today. But once I believe in God, the universe as I see it today says a great deal about that God."<sup>127</sup>

God's continuous creation may assist in a "dualistic dilemma."<sup>128</sup> God in his infinite freedom continuously creates a world which manifests freedom which is in all levels of the evolutionary process of increasing complexity. This allows the world to be what it will be, without intervention from God who still permits, participates, and loves.<sup>129</sup> Since there is no final contradiction between revealed truths and true science, continuous creation is seen as the best scientific account of the emergence of the human being. The model proposed for God is that of a parent, with the universe having a childlike vitality. The universe is then grows into adulthood.<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> Brundell, *Theology and Contemporary Science*, pp.6-7

<sup>125</sup> George V. Coyne, SJ, "Evolution and the Human Person: The Pope in Dialogue," in Robert John Russell, William R. Stoeger, S.J. and Francisco Ayala, (eds.), *Evolutionary and Molecular Biology: Scientific Perspectives on Divine Action* (Vatican City State: Vatican Observatory Publications and Berkeley: Center for Theology and the Natural Sciences, 1998), pp.11-17

<sup>126</sup> Coyne, *Evolution and the Human Person*, p.16

<sup>127</sup> George V. Coyne SJ, "The Sacred Cows of Religion and Science Meet," in Chris Impey and Catherine Petry (eds.), *International Symposium on Astrophysics Research and on the Dialogue between Science and Religion* (Vatican Observatory, Templeton Foundation, 2002), pp.15-25 (p.23 & p.23)

<sup>128</sup> Coyne, *Evolution and the Human Person*, p.16. The papers in this volume are from a week long international conference, co-sponsored by the Vatican Observatory, Rome and the Center for Theology and the Natural Sciences, Berkeley at the Vatican Observatory in Italy. It explored interactions between philosophy, theology and evolutionary and molecular biology.

<sup>129</sup> Coyne, *Evolution and the Human Person*, p.17

<sup>130</sup> Coyne, *The Sacred Cows*, p.23 & p.24

### Critical Comment

One Thomist writer thinks that if Aquinas had the scientific knowledge we have today, he would accept convergent evidence that demonstrates that evolution had occurred, he would accept evidence that new species arose from previous ones, he would then also recognise that there must be some way for evolution to occur. Then he would see reasons to accept that ‘how’ that occurs involves necessary and contingent causality.<sup>131</sup> A different to this view, based on philosophical discussion of occasionalism, suggests that God is the only and total cause of all events. If God is continuously creating everything, there is just nothing left to be done by secondary causes to do.<sup>132</sup>

A different interpretation of evolution is given by Józef Życiński,<sup>133</sup> but in support of traditional view of the soul. According to his view, the creation of the soul is a specific discontinuity in the process of evolution because it can only be rationally explained by appeal to a creative act of God.<sup>134</sup> The ontological structure of the world he says cannot be explained by simple application of customary methodological principles. To absolutise the earlier principles of methodology would mean rejecting non-linear thermodynamics and even quantum mechanics, because they bring in discontinuity and rescind the simplicity of an earlier picture of the world.<sup>135</sup>

Życiński, explains that the details of the ‘ontological leap’ when human mental life appears is found in the radical discontinuity initiating the soul’s existence. There is a position of so-called ontological emergentism, wherein the appearance of the marvellous world of human mental life is an inescapable necessity in the appearance of more complex biological structures. While evolutionary-minded scientists avoid

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<sup>131</sup> Marie I. George, “On the Occasion of Darwin’s Bicentennial: Finally Time to Retire the Fifth Way?” *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association* Vol.83 (2009), pp.209-225 ((p.209 & p.210)

<sup>132</sup> Timothy D. Miller, “Continuous creation and secondary causation: the threat of occasionalism,” *Religious Studies* Vol.47 No.1 (March 2011), pp.3-22 (p.4)

<sup>133</sup> Scientists may have hesitations about possible discontinuities indicating a gap interleaved into the explanation so as to ease the introduction of God as *deus ex machina*. Józef Życiński, *God and Evolution: Fundamental Questions of Christian Evolutionism*, Translated by Kenneth W. Kemp and Zuzanna Maślanka (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2006), p.66. Życiński is Archbishop of Lublin, Poland.

<sup>134</sup> Życiński, *God and Evolution*, pp.66-67

<sup>135</sup> Życiński, *God and Evolution*, p.66

terms like immateriality and immortality, Życiński refers to Eccles whose work on the brain and mental processes of lower animals recognises this gulf.<sup>136</sup>

Życiński avoids simple schemes where God is only a 'Divine engineer' putting in effect a predetermined plan.<sup>137</sup> Instead in evolving nature, God is involved in local 'butterfly effects' - a term from chaos thinking where relatively small influences can lead to disproportionately large effects in the outcomes. Like the prophet Elijah (1 Kings 19:12) God reveals his power in apparent chance as once in delicate breath of wind bringing hope to the exhausted.<sup>138</sup> God's cooperation with nature should not be interpreted as meaning that the extraordinary interventions of God are the main way of directing the process of evolution. Extraordinary presence, as with evolutionary discontinuities or as miracles, implies "in principle ordinary non-presence in a process of development subordinated to ordinary laws...His role is not reduced to that of a watchmaker or builder who implements a design expressible in the form of simple algorithms."<sup>139</sup>

Divine immanence is found in the laws of nature. Images of God include the 'divine attractor of evolution.' The term 'attractors' is used here as in the thermodynamic evolution of physical systems which have non-linear development; God as a 'Cosmic Attractor' is a counterpart to Teilhard's 'Omega Point' to which all evolutionary processes tend; and also Rahner's idea of God as 'Absolute Future' and J.Moltmann, W.Pannenberg, and T.Peters who view God as 'The power of the Future'<sup>140</sup> and 'director of a cosmic symphony.' The history of the world is not a recording played "from a cosmic compact disk, but the completion of a great symphony in which man can aim at Divine patterns of beauty, but also keep his own authorial rights to cosmic dissonances and discords."<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> Życiński, *God and Evolution*, pp.67-68

<sup>137</sup> Życiński, *God and Evolution*, p.158

<sup>138</sup> Życiński, *God and Evolution*, p.158

<sup>139</sup> Życiński, *God and Evolution*, p.159

<sup>140</sup> Życiński, *God and Evolution*, p.162 & p.163. New works of physics have a concept of the 'mind of God' in nature and in mathematical structures, a counterpart to the Platonic world of ideas.

<sup>141</sup> Życiński, *God and Evolution*, p.164.



A recent conference in Rome also recognised the human soul as the intellectual and spiritual capacity of human beings,<sup>142</sup> known as ‘the human discontinuity’. For these participants the search continues for a “more adequate understanding of what divine creation of the human soul involves. This is where these two fundamental philosophical/theological issues of creation and soul, particularly the human soul, come together and strongly influence one another.”<sup>143</sup> The dynamic relationship between *creatio ex nihilo* and *creatio continua*, is viewed as an ongoing relationship everything has with the Creator, and not an event. Thus creation is about ultimate dependence, rather than temporal beginnings.<sup>144</sup> God's creative action bestows existence and order on everything but does not replace causal effects studied by the sciences.<sup>145</sup> This presumes order and hence is not ultimately able to explain it entirely.

Creation of the human soul is usually explained with little consistency with what creation as a theological concept actually entails. This conference found agreement that evolution as understood in natural science supports a deeper grasp of creation and human emergence, which is also now found in theology. These are complementary views and are better understood through philosophical analysis. Some of those “constitutive relationships have scientifically accessible correlates, and some do not. There seems as well to be a closely related need to carefully define ‘spiritual’ and ‘material’ in ways that enable understanding and dialogue across the scientific-theological divide.”<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>142</sup> The conference entitled ‘Biological Evolution—Facts and Theories: A Critical Appraisal 150 Years After The Origin of Species,’ was held at the Pontifical Gregorian University (Pontificia Università Gregoriana) in Rome during 2009. Gennaro Auletta and William Stoeger SJ, “Highlights of the Pontifical Gregorian University's International Conference on Biological Evolution,” *Theology and Science* Vol.8 No.1 (February 2010), pp.7-15. Auletta and Stoeger explain how the conference was sponsored by the Pontifical Gregorian University in collaboration with the University of Notre Dame (South Bend, Indiana, USA), under the patronage of the Pontifical Council on Culture at the Vatican. Major funding was provided by the Sir John Templeton Foundation through the ‘Science, Theology and the Ontological Quest’ (STOQ) grant to a consortium of Pontifical universities in Rome. Apart from the fine scientific papers, it “was unusual in following those with equally notable treatments dealing with the history and philosophy of evolutionary biology and with theology's ongoing engagement with it.” (p.7)

<sup>143</sup> Auletta and Stoeger, *Highlights*, p.12

<sup>144</sup> Auletta and Stoeger, *Highlights*, p.12

<sup>145</sup> Moreover, “what the sciences investigate and are capable of investigating, describing and modeling are the particular relationships, regularities, processes and structures we find in nature, but not the ultimate source of their existence and order.” Auletta and Stoeger, *Highlights*, p.12.

<sup>146</sup> Auletta and Stoeger, *Highlights*, p.12

## Conclusions

Scientifically-informed theology and philosophy seemingly compels many Christian thinkers to produce a working concept of ‘soul’ which essentially contends that the soul does not really exist, at least not as a distinct entity and not even in a hylomorphic body-soul unity. There is brain-without-soul, as it were, e.g. in nonreductive physicalism and related views. These thinkers look for complementary support in biblical criticism, though they omit Tradition as a source for doing theology.

Some Catholic theologians tend to agree, particularly those who seriously consider the data from evolutionary and research from scientific investigations. These thinkers may find the Catholic teaching to be not fully attuned to evolutionary history, nature and the implications for the God-world relationship. They may agree in general with Coyne’s comment, originally about John Paul II’s encyclical *Fides et Ratio* (Faith and Reason), that “while its principal focus is not upon the natural sciences, the encyclical makes a serious attempt to lay the foundations for dialogue with the sciences in the search for meaning. However, the view presented of the natural sciences, as a participant in the search, is somewhat limited.”<sup>147</sup> These thinkers may concur that there appears to be a ‘Catholic explanatory gap’ concerning direct creation and bodily-infusion of each soul by God. However, genuine dialogue remains possible.<sup>148</sup>

Other such as P. Hampson, however, identify ‘explanatory constraints’ in science, philosophy and religion.<sup>149</sup> This term signifies that “arguments which abide by constraints are those which acknowledge and incorporate principles or criteria that they must in some sense obey or satisfy.”<sup>150</sup> A significant constraint, particularly in

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<sup>147</sup> George V. Coyne, S.J., “Today’s Playing Field: Theology and Science,” in Ted Peters and Nathan Hallanger (eds.), *God’s Action in Nature’s World: Essays in Honour of Robert John Russell*, Ashgate Science and Religion Series (Aldershot, England and Vermont: Ashgate, 2006), pp.173-187.

<sup>148</sup> Denis Edwards, *Partaking of God: Trinity, Evolution, and Ecology* (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2014), pp.116-129

<sup>149</sup> Peter Hampson, “Credible Belief in Fides et Ratio: I Explanatory constraints in philosophy, science and religion,” *New Blackfriars* Vol.87 No.1011 (September 2006), pp.482-504; see also E.Christian Brugger, “Christian Integrative Reasoning: Reflections on the Nature of Integrating the Science of Psychology with Catholic Faith and Philosophy,” *The Catholic Social Science Review* Vol.XIII (2008), pp.129-167 and C. Kevin Gillespie, S.J., “Patters of Conversations between Catholicism and Psychology in the United States,” *The Catholic Social Science Review* Vol.XII (2007), pp.173-183

<sup>150</sup> Hampson, *Explanatory constraints*, p.485. For instance, a realist ontology in philosophy must think about real world entities somewhat independent of their observers.

*Fides et Ratio* is the Christ, the model for the person. Secularist thinkers are likely to be sceptical.<sup>151</sup> To non-theists this seems to defy Ockham's razor, *Pluralitas non est ponenda sine necessitate* (plurality should not be posited without necessity).<sup>152</sup> He proposes 'Hampson's razor', *fines sunt parendi, quod fines requirendi*, (limits are to be heeded, in so far as they are needed) about obeying explanatory limits and constraints.<sup>153</sup>

Życiński too notes that Ockham's razor is a methodological principle, not a doctrinal one. It cannot be invoked to find simple solutions to complex metaphysical questions or even scientific questions. For example, the principle has sometimes had a negative heuristic role. In the nineteenth century Ockham's razor slowed the development of extragalactic astronomy by nearly a century.<sup>154</sup>

Constraints feature also in the theology and psychology dialogue.<sup>155</sup> Theology can provide an overall context for secular knowledge. Reason is guarded against becoming sidetracked by narrow philosophies like scientism. Theology can influence secularity by encouraging philosophy, science and culture to reintroduce awareness of and possible engagement with metaphysics and being.<sup>156</sup> With a longer view, theology detects psychology's ontological limitations due to psychology's later appearance from post-Enlightenment philosophy.<sup>157</sup>

In dialogue with theology, psychology could recognise the possibility of being oriented by theology if psychology is accepting of theology's own accounts and its

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<sup>151</sup> Hampson, *Explanatory constraints*, pp.501-502

<sup>152</sup> Hampson, *Explanatory constraints*, p.502, footnote 25. Hampson notes that this is Ockham's original formulation, with *entia non sunt multiplicanda praeter necessitatem* (do not multiply entities beyond necessity) a later and popular translation.

<sup>153</sup> Hampson, *Explanatory constraints*, p.503;

<sup>154</sup> Similarly, Joseph M. Życiński, "Evolution and the Doctrine of Creation," in Louis Caruana (ed.), *Darwin and Catholicism - The Past and Present Dynamics of a Cultural Encounter* (London and New York: T. & T. Clark, 2009), pp.181-189 (p.185)

<sup>155</sup> Peter John Hampson and Eolene M. Boyd-MacMillan, "Turning the Telescope Round: Reciprocity in Psychology-Theology Dialogue," *Archive for the Psychology of Religion* Vol.30 No.1 (2008), pp.93-113; Peter Hampson, "Credible Belief in Fides et Ratio: II The theology-psychology dialogue," *New Blackfriars* Vol.87 No.1012 (November 2006), pp.631-650. Hampson's theological sympathies are "broadly Thomist." (p.482). This view is different to empirical psychology's investigations of religious matters, e.g. Jesse Preston and Nicholas Epley, "Science and God: An automatic opposition between ultimate explanations," *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* Vol.45 No.1 (January 2009), pp.238-241

<sup>156</sup> Hampson, *The theology-psychology dialogue*, p.641

<sup>157</sup> Hampson & Boyd-MacMillan, *Turning the Telescope Round*, p.102..

claim that the divine is the measure, not the human.<sup>158</sup> Psychology could be encouraged to accept to being oriented as a science with moral implications, commitments to the good, beautiful and the true even risk engaging with God.<sup>159</sup>

This is a part of a question posed by R.J.Russell<sup>160</sup> who asks if theology and science are genuinely *interactive*. That is, each offering “something of intellectual value to the other although in different ways and without any appeal to ‘authority,’ or is the only role for theology that of critically integrating the results of science into its own conceptual sphere (i.e. hermeneutics)?”<sup>161</sup> For example, if Christians know from revelation know that humans are created in the image of God and have free will, Russell foresees the preference for quantum mechanics over classical mechanics since quantum mechanics allows indeterminism.<sup>162</sup>

On the whole, re-imagining a traditional Catholic understanding of the soul along Christian materialist lines, would entail at least: integral and nonreductive anthropology, reinterpreting post-mortem identity and the intermediate state perhaps following Rahner’s lead, engaging in dialogue with biblical scholars who favour historical-critical exegesis, and rethinking divine intervention as continuous creation. It would also mean using concepts and language not drawn from hylomorphism. While this may be possible, recent discussions suggests that this is not occurring just yet.

‘Christian materialism’ generally acknowledges, within a nonreductive setting, the embodied mind, comprising cognition, affect, personality, and a view of the individual or the self. However, the discussions are inspired, carried along, yet

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<sup>158</sup> Peter J.Hampson and Johannes Hoff, “Whose self? Which unification? Augustine's anthropology and the psychology-theology debate,” *New Blackfriars* Vol.91 No.1035 (September 2010), pp.546–566

<sup>159</sup> Hampson & Hoff, *Whose self?*, p.564

<sup>160</sup> Robert John Russell, “The Relevance of Tillich for the Theology and Science Dialogue,” *Zygon* Vol.36 No.2 (June 2001), pp.269-308. Russell speaks of “the method of creative mutual interaction” (pp.271, 275, 277) and also “mutual creative interaction” (p.270). He reaffirms his thinking in Robert John Russell, *Cosmology From Alpha to Omega: The Creative Mutual Interaction of Theology and Science*, Theology and the Sciences Series (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008), pp.20-24, 304-306, 318-322.

<sup>161</sup> That is, each offering “something of intellectual value to the other although in different ways wand without any appeal to ‘authority,’ or is the only role for theology that of critically integrating the results of science into its own conceptual sphere (i.e. hermeneutics)?” Russell, *The Relevance of Tillich*, p.274.

<sup>162</sup> Russell, *The Relevance of Tillich*, p.277.

unavoidably restrained by neuroscience, which has reductionist tendencies. There are always hopes for more discoveries; and such promises of exciting new knowledge may hold out a possibility of one day reaching a complete account of the embodied mind. Yet, even though it strives to be nonreductive, what is proposed will be a kind of physicalism, that provides a 'complete' understanding of the human person, and that has no need for a spiritual soul.

It might be expected that neuroscience, as with evolution which itself has significantly influenced Catholic theology, may drive traditional Catholic and Thomist metaphysical explanations of the soul-body towards redundancy. But, as has been noted above, there has been surprising interest in these more traditional approaches by some contemporary thinkers, as we shall see in the next chapter.