

ABSTRACT

Christian Physicalism A Theological Examination of the Mind-Body Problem

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The mind-body problem is a puzzle that philosophers, theologians, and scientists have debated for years, leading to various different ontological doctrines. Two of these doctrines, Physicalism and Dualism, have been at the forefront of Christian thought for the past century. Despite centuries of dualistic influence on Western culture, new discoveries in the field of neuroscience have led to a shift towards Physicalism. Christians now must critically evaluate whether Physicalism is compatible with a Christian worldview. By examining the evidence for Physicalism and Dualism, this thesis determines that it is possible for a Christian to be either a Physicalist or a Dualist, while also providing an additional tool to examine these philosophies: Christological anthropology. Using the writings of Vladimir Lossky, supplemented by Rowan Williams, this thesis examines the tools provided by this comprehensive Christological anthropology in order to help Christians take an informed position on the mind-body problem.

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CHRISTIAN PHYSICALISM

A THEOLOGICAL EXAMINATION OF THE MIND-BODY PROBLEM

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DEDICATION

For My Parents

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

The mind-body problem has been a part of intellectual discourse for centuries. Philosophers have sought to understand this “relationship between mind and body...between mental and physical properties.”¹ Through understanding this relationship, the mind-body problem ultimately attempts to make sense of the human person. What gives humans the ability to exist in the physical world and experience mental phenomena such as consciousness? What is the relationship between the physical body and consciousness?

The mind-body problem deals both with philosophy and theological anthropology. Seeking to understand the relationship between mental and physical properties has direct implications on theological anthropology, or how one uses theology to understand the human person.² The composition of the human person impacts how one relates to God and to the created world, because it ultimately affects how one views personhood. The question of personhood affects how individuals interact with one another, as well as how they view themselves.

Two ways philosophers have sought to answer the mind-body problem are the ontological doctrines of Physicalism and Dualism. Physicalism states that the world and

¹ Howard Robinson, “Dualism,” in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta, Fall 2020 (Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University, 2020), <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2020/entries/dualism/>.

² Marc Cortez, *Theological Anthropology: A Guide for the Perplexed* (T&T Clark, 2010).

human persons are wholly physical, so there is no immaterial substance. Dualism on the other hand states that the human person consists of two substances: material and immaterial. Dualism was the predominant philosophy in the West since the time of the Greeks, for it made sense of consciousness by attributing it to an immaterial soul. Various mental faculties could be attributed to this immaterial soul, making it a prevalent theory to explain the composition of the human person. However, with the emergence of neuroscience, Physicalism began to gain support. Consciousness could be quantified and studied, leading to a slow elimination of attributing mental faculties to an immaterial soul. If consciousness can now be attributed to brain systems, is there any place for an immaterial substance in the human person? For many scientists of all disciplines, the switch to a Physicalist worldview and anthropology was common sense.

However, for some, particularly Christians, this switch to Physicalism was not as easy or obvious. Much of Christian doctrine has been explained using Dualist language, such as the immortality of the soul and the intermediate state between death and resurrection. Where does this leave the Christian who seeks to remain orthodox, without negating recent neuroscientific discoveries? Some Christians have argued that Physicalism is coherent with orthodox Christian doctrine, while others argue that there is no need to abandon Dualism in light of neuroscience. This is the question that this thesis seeks to address. This thesis is not attempting to solve the mind-body problem; rather, it seeks to determine whether it is possible for a Christian to be a Physicalist. This thesis will also provide tools for Christians to use as they discern between Physicalism and Dualism. By analyzing the writings of Vladimir Lossky and Rowan Williams, this thesis hopes to examine how Christological anthropology impacts the mind-body problem. The

first chapter of this thesis will cover the philosophic evidence for Physicalism in a Christian worldview and the second chapter will examine Dualism and how it opposes Physicalism. The final chapter of this thesis seeks to apply the principles found in Christological anthropology to Physicalism and Dualism. Ultimately, this thesis seeks to determine whether a Christian can be either a Physicalist or Dualist.

CHAPTER TWO

Emergent Physicalism

Introduction

In order to approach the mind-body problem, one must first address the major philosophies of mind that impact this question: Physicalism and Dualism. Both of these philosophies address the composition of the human person, seeking to determine how consciousness interacts with the physical world. This chapter seeks to examine the ontological doctrine of Physicalism and how it functions in a Christian worldview. Due to recent support from the scientific discipline of Neuroscience, Physicalism is on the rise and Christians must critically analyze whether it can fit within orthodox Christian practice and theology. This chapter will begin with the various divisions in Physicalism, especially Emergent Physicalism. The history of Physicalism will then be examined, documenting the major shifts in scientific discoveries and theories that impact the development of Physicalism. This chapter will then conclude with a section analyzing the evidence for Christian Physicalism. By examining the major problems Christian Physicalists address, this chapter will examine whether Physicalism is compatible with Christianity.

Physicalism

Physicalism is the ontological doctrine that suggests that the world is constituted solely by physical things.¹ Arising in the early twentieth century with the development of the modern physical sciences, it stands in opposition to Dualism, the belief that there are both material and immaterial facets of creation, particularly with Mind-Body Dualism. Claiming that all of creation, even human beings, are purely physical raises questions and concerns for many, such as what it means to be a person and if there is such a thing as the soul. These questions force the philosopher and the layperson alike to reexamine how he or she understands the world.

Physicalism can be divided broadly into two branches: Reductive and Non-Reductive. Reductive Physicalism states that everything in creation is reducible to its fundamental physical properties. Conversely, non-Reductive Physicalism denies that everything is reducible, claiming rather that there are properties that cannot be solely understood by their individual parts. To adhere to a Reductive Physicalist view would simplify all human nature and behavior to simple molecular interactions.² Behavior is reduced to brain pathways, which is further reduced to neuronal interaction, then to chemical reactions, and then finally to physics. There is nothing more to the human organism except an amalgamation of complex biophysical processes. The whole is identical to the sum of its parts. This theory provides comprehensive framework for investigating most phenomena, fostering a perceived understanding of the world and

¹David Papineau, "The Rise of Physicalism," in *Physicalism and Its Discontents*, ed. Carl Gillett and Barry Loewer, 1st ed. (Cambridge University Press, 2001), 3–36, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511570797.002>.

²Justin Tiehen, "Physicalism," *Analysis* 78, no. 3 (July 1, 2018): 537–51, <https://doi.org/10.1093/analys/any037>.

human behavior.³ However, by reducing human nature to pure physics, much of what has long defined the “human” is no longer coherent. Non-Reductive Physicalism seeks to remedy this issue by stating that there are higher properties that, while constituted by many lower properties, are not solely causally acted upon by said lower properties. While maintaining that all things are physical, it accepts that the human experience cannot be reduced to physics, but rather higher properties emerge from the interactions of lower properties. This form of Physicalism is often called Emergent Physicalism. While the whole depends on its parts, it is more than just the sum of its parts and can be considered unique to its parts. It introduces a new form of determination, allowing the Emergent property to influence its parts. This rejects a strict “bottom-up” determination and makes way for a possible “top-down” causality, which many find more consistent with religious worldviews. In a bottom-up determination, the workings of the lower properties cause the workings of the higher property. Essentially, the lower properties act upon the higher property. In top-down causality, the higher property works on the lower properties. The workings of the higher property cause the workings of the lower properties. These two forms of causality and determination are not mutually exclusive, nor are they opposites. Rather, in Emergent Physicalism, they interact in bidirectional communication to provide a more robust explanation of human behavior. While synaptic communication and

³ Nancey Murphy, “Physicalism Without Reductionism: Toward a Scientifically, Philosophically, and Theologically Sound Portrait of Human Nature,” *Zygon*® 34, no. 4 (1999): 551–71, <https://doi.org/10.1111/0591-2385.00236>.

neuromuscular interactions explain many aspects of human behavior, they miss the role social and mental factors play in human nature.⁴

Most Christian Physicalists adhere to the Emergent Physicalist view, rejecting the extreme of reductionism and opting for a more moderate view of the soul and personhood. Emergent Physicalism can be further divided into weak and strong emergence, differing in their approaches to dependence and autonomy. Dependency addresses how patterns depend on their parts, while autonomy addresses how these patterns are distinct from their parts. Weak emergence holds that the Emergent is “nothing over and above” its lower parts, more closely tying together the higher and lower properties. This implies that the Emergent holds no additional powers as compared to its parts. Emergent properties are dependent and non-distinct from the sum of their parts. Additionally, it holds to physical causal closure, which states that all physical events are due to completely physical causes. On the other hand, strong emergence states that the Emergent is “over and above” its compositional parts, indicating a stronger distinction between higher and lower properties. The Emergent depends on the lower properties out of nomological necessity, simply because it is a law of nature, indicating that the Emergent also possesses powers independent of its lower properties. This is the most popular way to categorize and organize each form of this metaphysical doctrine.⁵

⁴ Warren S. Brown, “Nonreductive Physicalism and Soul: Finding Resonance Between Theology and Neuroscience,” *American Behavioral Scientist* 45, no. 12 (August 1, 2002): 1812–21, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764202045012004>.

⁵ Timothy O’Connor, “Emergent Properties,” in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta, Fall 2020 (Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University, 2020), <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2020/entries/properties-emergent/>.

Additionally, there is division relating to one's identity in relation to one's own physical body. Individuals can either believe that one's identity is identical to the body or that his or her identity is merely constituted by a body.⁶ Both of these views are still staunchly Physicalist, because they do not hold that the body is made up of a material and immaterial substance. They accept that the human person is physical, but this division seeks to understand the way the body relates to identity. In the identical view, one's person is identical to his or her actual body, essentially stating that: "I am my body, and my body is me." In this understanding of personhood, one is no different from his or her body. The criteria of personal identity is summed up by the human organism. On the other hand, the constitution view believes one is not identical to the body, but simply constituted by it. In this view, if something is physical, then what it constitutes is physical as well. Therefore, since human persons are constituted by physical human bodies, human persons are also physical. A popular metaphor used to describe this phenomenon is one of marble statues, particularly Michelangelo's David. If a statue is made from marble, the statue must also be marble. Therefore, to continue the metaphor, Michelangelo's David is marble. However, it is not identical to a slab of marble, for it differs in shape and function. The two are not one and the same, but they are made of the same material. The main point of the constitution view is the importance of the relation of unity when describing one's personhood and body. While they might not be identical, they are no less unified, demonstrating a holistic understanding of the body and soul, or the psychosomatic unit. Furthermore, in this view, there are both environmental and

⁶Kevin Corcoran, "Physical Persons and Postmortem Survival without Temporal Gaps," in *Soul, Body, and Survival*, 2001, 201–17.

organismic factors that come into play and must be spatially coincident to make the human person. Both the person and the human body must coexist in the same space and time to come together to make a human person.⁷

The main difference between these two forms of Physicalism, the identical and constitution view, is if they hold to the idea that the human person is different from the human organism. For those who uphold the belief that each person is identical to his or her body, the human person is no different than the human organism. They are one in the same. However, those who hold to the constitution view see the human person as fundamentally different from the organism. This requires a distinct definition of what makes a person, for it is no longer synonymous with possessing a human body. Many support the argument that the human person is defined by the presence of a first-person perspective. First-person perspective allows one to “think about oneself as oneself and think about one’s thoughts as one’s own,” over the course of time and space.⁸ This is not merely consciousness, it is self-consciousness. One is aware of oneself, not as a third person who one can act upon, but rather as oneself, wholly unique and separate from his or her environment. What makes a *human* person, then, is this person being constituted by a human body.⁹

Viewing personhood through this lens accounts for bodily change as well. Even though one’s body might change, her personhood does not, leaving room for physical bodies and psychological capacities to change and grow as time passes. While this might

⁷ Lynne Baker et al., “Materialism with a Human Face,” in *Soul, Body, and Survival*, ed. Kevin Corcoran, Essays on the Metaphysics of Human Persons (Cornell University Press, 2001), 159–80, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7591/j.ctv3s8s32.14>.

⁸Baker et al., “Materialism with a Human Face.”

⁹Baker et al., “Materialism with a Human Face.”

seem to align more with a form of Mind-Body Dualism rather than Physicalism, it still remains staunchly Physicalist for its assertion that the human person is purely physical. Due to being composed of physical matter, the human person is also physical. Although there seems to be some separation, it is not a separation of material versus immaterial, nor does it state that the human person can be separated from the physical. Both the view that the person and body are identical, and the view of bodily constitution hold that individuals are purely physical; there is not an immaterial substance that makes up one's being or enlivens the body. Rather, human beings are physical members of creation, created by God and constituted of physical things.

History of Physicalism

Whereas Mind-Body Dualism is backed by centuries of support, Physicalism has found its footing in the modern era. However, the novelty of its evidence does not take away from its credibility. These new ways of viewing the world and advancements in fields of study such as neuroscience, biology, and physics make it easier to defend an argument that creation is purely physical by using empirical data in ways that were not possible a century ago, let alone a millennium. With these new findings in natural sciences, it became necessary for philosophers to examine how this new information fit into an ontological understanding of the world, and many began to support Physicalism.

The foundation of Physicalism was laid in the seventeenth century. Modern Physicalism found its basic support in the theory of the completeness of physics, which states that all physical effects are the result of physical causes. This is antithetical to the theory of mental causation resulting in some physical causes, which supported mind-body

dualism. While the completeness of physics is widely accepted today as common sense, this theory first had to be supported by conservation of energy and the law of forces. Before these laws, René Descartes (1596-1650), a prominent proponent of Dualism, held that one could uphold mental causation with the theory of Conservation of Quantity of Motion.¹⁰ This allowed for the mind-body interactions to remain and supported the concept of Mind-Body Dualism. However, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646-1716), a prominent mathematician and philosopher, soon disproved Descartes theory of Conservation of Quantity of Motion, claiming it was simply exploiting a loophole to support Dualism. Instead, he argued for the Conservation of Linear Momentum and Conservation of Kinetic Energy, analyzing the importance of impact on physical particles. This conservation is incompatible with mental causation because energy and momentum must be conserved in all directions, leaving no room for mental states to affect movement of particles. Rather, he argues for physical determinism,¹¹ which states that all physical events are caused by previous physical events, which in turn supports the completeness of physics.¹²

While this could have been the emergence of Physicalism, Newtonian mechanics and physics eclipsed Leibniz and expanded the concept of forces to mean more than just impact. This allowed for the concept of vital and mental forces, a force or energy that enlivens bodies (thought of as the soul), to coexist with an understanding of energy and

¹⁰ Gary Hatfield, “René Descartes,” in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta, Summer 2018 (Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University, 2018), <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2018/entries/descartes/>.

¹¹ “Implausibility of Physical Determinism,” Biola University Center for Christian Thought / The Table, September 6, 2012, <https://cct.biola.edu/implausibility-of-physical-determinism/>.

¹² Papineau, “The Rise of Physicalism.”

mechanics. This belief continued into the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.¹³ Then, theories of fundamental forces and a greater understanding of physiology developed, which are two arguments for the doctrine of physicalism. These scientific developments were fundamental in the advancement of Physicalism.¹⁴

With the development of cognitive neuroscience in recent decades, Physicalism has become easier to support than before, with many scientists claiming it is undeniable. Traits that used to be relegated to the realm of human nature, such as consciousness, self-representation, and decision making, now have a neurobiological groundwork, taking what was thought of as distinctly “other” and making it a product of the physical. Human behavior is no longer strictly a philosophical or theological riddle to be solved, but rather intrinsically dependent on the human body and its proper functioning.

For example, consciousness, sense of self, and emotions were primarily relegated to the realm of the soul until recent discoveries of the role of various brain regions and structures in self-representation. Previously, how one interacted with the outside world through sight, sound, and touch, was comprehended through the soul. The immaterial part of the person was in charge of placing her properly in the world and appropriately interpreting outside stimuli. Consciousness was thought to be due to the immaterial soul inhabiting a body, giving her awareness of her surroundings, and emotions were simply a product of this soul reacting to the world around her. However, the somatosensory cortex,

¹³Papineau, “The Rise of Physicalism.”

¹⁴Robert Brennan, “Has a Frog Human a Soul? – Huxley, Tertullian, Physicalism and the Soul, Some Historical Antecedents,” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 66, no. 4 (November 2013): 400–413, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0036930613000215>.

prefrontal cortex, brainstem, and amygdala¹⁵ control much of the “soul” by managing sensation, perception,¹⁶ wakefulness/alertness,¹⁷ and emotions, respectively. These brain regions, and many more, are deeply interconnected and are responsible for much of the human experience. Therefore, dysfunction in these neural networks, or simple changes to their make-up, deeply affect the individual person in ways that clearly denote causation. demonstrating that neurobiology plays a much bigger role in personhood than previously thought. Thus, an immaterial soul is no longer necessary to describe much of the body’s interactions with the world.¹⁸

For many scientists and philosophers, these recent scientific discoveries are satisfactory proof of the validity of Physicalism, and Physicalism has seen a boom in its number of supporters. As neuroscience continues to grow as a field, more and more empirical ways of studying human behavior will be developed that could further advocate for a Physicalist philosophy. Thus, Physicalism will only grow as a formidable challenger for Dualism, making it imperative that Christians make sense of this philosophy.

¹⁵ “Limbic System: Amygdala (Section 4, Chapter 6) Neuroscience Online: An Electronic Textbook for the Neurosciences | Department of Neurobiology and Anatomy - The University of Texas Medical School at Houston.” Accessed July 19, 2022. <https://nba.uth.tmc.edu/neuroscience/m/s4/chapter06.html>.

¹⁶ Tony Cheng and Antonio Cataldo, “8: Touch and Other Somatosensory Senses,” in *Neuroscience and Philosophy* (The MIT Press, 2022), 211–30.

¹⁷ Sarah Ly, Allan I. Pack, and Nirinjini Naidoo, “The Neurobiological Basis of Sleep: Insights from *Drosophila*,” *Neuroscience and Biobehavioral Reviews* 87 (April 2018): 67–86, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.neubiorev.2018.01.015>.

¹⁸ Patricia S. Churchland, “Self-Representation in Nervous Systems,” *Science* 296, no. 5566 (April 12, 2002): 308–10, <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.1070564>.

Christianity and Physicalism

With growing empirical evidence for Physicalism standing in opposition to popular Mind-Body Dualism, as laid out above, many Christians began to reevaluate their understanding of creation, attempting to balance received traditional orthodoxy with an understanding of modern science. For centuries, much of orthodox Christian thought subscribed to a form of Mind-Body Dualism, seeing the world as consisting of both the immaterial (the soul) and material (the body). While there were different forms of Dualism affirmed among Christians, it was still widely held as the truth, and anything that differed from it was incompatible with Christianity. Therefore, serious philosophical contemplation on the validity of Physicalism had to be undertaken.

This contemplation bore fruit for many Christians, with some remaining staunch Dualists and others realizing that Physicalism held merit within the Christian faith. Many found that the scriptures that had served as support for Dualism could also be coherent in Physicalism.¹⁹ These thinkers assert that not only is Physicalism compatible with Christianity, but it aligns more closely with orthodox Christianity, remaining biblically accurate without rejecting advancements in modern science. Some of these Christians are Nancey Murphy, Lynne Baker, Trenton Merricks, and Kevin Corcoran. This next section has synthesized each of their arguments to determine how Christians in general have approached these problems. They argue that the Bible does not necessarily support a dualistic anthropology, allowing one to be both a follower of Christ as well as a Physicalist, widening the diversity of thought in theological anthropology.

¹⁹Ralph Stefan Weir, "Christian Physicalism and the Biblical Argument for Dualism," *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 91, no. 2 (April 2022): 115–38, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11153-021-09811-0>.

Since the majority of Christian thought is dominated by Dualist anthropology, Christian Physicalists wrestle with how to fit Physicalism within Christian doctrine. One of the most important tenets of the Christian Physicalist is the importance of the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead. Instead of believing in the presence of an intermediate state between death and new creation where an immortal soul persists, as many Dualists believe, Physicalists believe that Christian hope lies solely in the bodily resurrection. There is no immortality of the soul that one can rely on. Instead, one should put his or her faith in the promise that followers of Christ will be resurrected at the second coming.²⁰ Physicalists must work out how bodily death, persistence over temporal gaps, and the resurrection of the dead can fundamentally make sense in Physicalism, both philosophically and theologically.

Without immortality of the soul to fall back on, bodily death becomes a rather formidable enemy for one to face. If human existence is purely physical, Physicalists must either accept that when the body dies the person dies too, or there is an intermediate state in between death and the resurrection of the body. When the person is identical to his or her own body, the only possible option is death of the person. Once the body has perished, the person no longer exists and perishes along with the body. The popular conception of the dead watching over their loved ones is no longer a coherent and permissible comfort for those in mourning. Death is permanent and functions as an enemy that takes away loved ones without remorse. However, Christian Physicalists have found true, biblical hope despite the hopelessness of bodily death. This hope lies in the

²⁰ Oscar Cullmann, *Immortality of the Soul or Resurrection of the Dead?: The Witness of the New Testament* (Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2000).

belief that Christ has conquered death. It is no longer a threat to those who put their hope in Christ. Not only has Christ conquered death, but he also promises a bodily resurrection, where all will be made new.²¹ Death is not the final word, not because of the soul's immortality, but because God keeps his promises and what he says will come to pass.²²

Absolute death is not the only view of bodily death among Christian Physicalists. The constitution view believes in a physical intermediate state between death and resurrection, denying that physical death is synonymous with the death of a person. This intermediate state, commonly advocated for by Dualists, exists as a holding place that allows for this persistence of identity across temporal gaps. However, as opposed to Dualist perspectives on this intermediate state where the soul exists independent of a body, physicalists adhere to a temporary replacement body in this intermediate state. Persons are not identical to their bodies; therefore, the only requirement is that persons in this state are constituted by *some* body. Since persons cannot exist independent of a body in this view, the intermediate state is categorized by having some form of an intermediate body, even though it is not one's current or eternal body. Therefore, bodily death for these Christian Physicalists entails a death, but not the permanent death of the person. This view is more warmly accepted by Dualists because it accounts for verses in scripture

²¹ Cullmann, *Immortality of the Soul or Resurrection of the Dead?*

²² Cullmann and the majority of Christian thought relies heavily on the second coming of Christ and the resurrection of the dead. This hope is dependent on God keeping his promises from the New Testament, allowing Christians to rely on the Word of God and its promises to the faithful believer.

that address both the death of the body and the soul.²³ For example, Matthew 10:28, warns followers of Christ to fear those who can kill the body and the soul. Also, 2 Corinthians 5:8, which states it is better to be away from the body and at home with the Lord. Consequently, despite it being more controversial than the previous view, this understanding of death fits into the long-standing traditional view of the intermediate state among Christians.²⁴

The next problem that Christian Physicalists must wrestle with is the persistence of identity over temporal gaps. If there is nothing immaterial about humankind, then burial and decomposition of one's physical body raises some very important questions of identity. It is a known fact that bodies slowly begin to decompose and degrade at death, while others are cremated once they have died. The body, no matter how pristine or well preserved after death, will eventually return to dust. As Ecclesiastes 3:20 states: "all are from dust, and to dust all return." However, the Christian hope is that one's physical body will be resurrected. The question to be grappled with is what happens in between a person's death and resurrection? If a person dies hundreds of years ago and is raised from the dead, given that his or her body has decomposed, many will rightly ask whether this is actually him or her, or simply a replica. This is known as the problem of reidentification, and it has troubled many physicalists and dualists alike as each try to discern how identity can remain constant despite change and decay. Physicalists have tried to solve this problem in a multitude of ways.

²³ Lynne Baker, "Need a Christian Be a Mind/Body Dualist?," *Faith and Philosophy: Journal of the Society of Christian Philosophers* 12, no. 4 (October 1, 1995): 489–504, <https://doi.org/10.5840/faithphil199512446>.

²⁴ Weir, "Christian Physicalism and the Biblical Argument for Dualism."

One popular solution to the problem of reidentification is the concept of reassembly. While many may hold to this understanding of the resurrection unconsciously, many philosophers have demonstrated that it is both inconsistent and incorrect. Reassembly involves God reassembling “all the parts at a certain level of decomposition - such as all the atoms - that composed the person at the time of her death” on Resurrection Day.²⁵ The physical components of one’s body are taken and put back together again, no matter how reduced they have become. A common metaphor to describe this phenomenon would be the destruction and reassembly of a watch. A watch can exist on a counter and then be taken apart, piece by piece, until it is no longer a watch, thus ceasing to exist. However, if in two years, the watch is reassembled with each of its pieces, it now exists again. It is the same watch. It has just crossed a temporal gap of two years by reassembly²⁶.

While an interesting take, reassembly has proven to be rather problematic, for human beings are more complex than watches. The most popular counterargument to reassembly is the instance of the cannibal. If reassembly is true, then if a cannibal consumes a deceased individual, parts of the dead individual are digested by the cannibal and become a part of the cannibal. Then, on Resurrection Day, there are atoms and molecules that belong to both the cannibal and the person she ate. This rather gruesome thought experiment against reassembly hits on the point that one’s atoms and molecules are not hers and hers alone throughout all of time. She is composed of carbon that could

²⁵ Trenton Merricks, “How to Live Forever without Saving Your Soul: Physicalism and Immortality,” in *Soul, Body, and Survival* (Cornell University Press, 2001), 183–200.

²⁶ Merricks, “How to Live Forever without Saving Your Soul: Physicalism and Immortality.”

have once been a fundamental part of another woman five hundred years ago, and this same carbon could be vital to a little boy's body in another three hundred years.

To further expand this point, there is also the issue of age and constancy for the theory of reassembly. The molecules that make up an individual at age five are not the same ones that make up the same individual at age seventy. In fact, "having all the same atoms (arranged in the same ways) is not a sufficient condition of bodily identity," for the human body is constantly in flux.²⁷ If a body loses atoms as one gets older and gains other atoms, there would be no consistency of personhood if simple assembly was what constituted identity. Therefore, reassembly cannot be sufficient for reidentification and bodily resurrection because it is not even sufficient for identification while an individual is alive.²⁸

With reassembly missing the mark in many aspects, some have argued for psychological persistence as the way in which one maintains identity across a temporal gap. John Locke (1632-1704) was one of the first proponents of this theory, stating that one's beliefs, thoughts, and attitudes define who one is and remains constant and alive, even after death.²⁹ This aligns more closely with the constitution view of Physicalism, for the body and person are distinct. While the body may die, consciousness remains and can be constant. However, this also has flaws, for it allows for future individuals with the same consciousness as someone in the past to be identical. This is considered the problem of pre-resurrection. If a person died, and three hundred years later another individual is

²⁷ Merricks, "How to Live Forever without Saving Your Soul: Physicalism and Immortality."

²⁸ Merricks, "How to Live Forever without Saving Your Soul: Physicalism and Immortality."

²⁹ William Uzgalis, "John Locke," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta and Uri Nodelman, Fall 2022 (Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University, 2022), <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2022/entries/locke/>.

born with the same ideas, beliefs, desires, and quasi-memories, these two individuals would be considered identical in this view.

There is also the issue of memory that persists in the psychological criterion, particularly if memories are a prerequisite to constancy in personhood. Memories are limited, and there are questions of whether individuals at the resurrection will maintain their memories at all. Some have argued that morality serves as the criterion for psychological persistence over time, which would solve the problem of memory consistency. Researchers found that most individuals felt that their loved ones were the most “not like themselves” when their disposition and morality changed, as compared to their memories or physical body. As an individual’s morals change, her sense of self and identity change. However, directionality matters immensely, with many claiming a “loss” of morals causes the change in identity. In fact, if one became more moral, loved one’s claimed they became more like themselves.³⁰ This solution to the question of identity is more popularly believed by those who adhere to the constitution view of personhood. However, it is also lacking in many ways and is insufficient to provide an adequate criterion of identity over temporal gaps.³¹

While these two explanations have been refuted, there are three further explanations for the persistence of identity that three prominent Christian Physicalists hold to. Kevin Corcoran, a prominent advocate for the constitution view, argues that identity can hold over temporal gaps due to causal relations. In Corcoran’s view, there

³⁰ Jim Everett, Joshua Skorburg, and Jordan Livingston, “4: Me, My (Moral) Self, and I,” in *Neuroscience and Philosophy* (The MIT Press, 2022), 111–31.

³¹Merricks, “How to Live Forever without Saving Your Soul: Physicalism and Immortality.”

can be changes in composition between temporal gaps without changing identity as long as state one is causally related to state two. He states:

If an organism O at t2 is the same as an organism P that exists at t1 (where $t1 < t2$), then the (set of) simples that compose P at t1 must be causally related in the life-preserving way to the (set of) simples that compose O at t2.³²

Even if the atoms are different, as long as they undergo the same processes to get from state one to state two and state one must cause state two, personhood is constant.

Therefore, even following death, one's personhood persists.³³ Lynne Baker, another proponent of the constitution view, argues that the resurrection occurs in eternity, so continuity of identity over time does not matter. Baker discusses eternity as negating the need for temporal gaps. If resurrection happens in eternity, there is no gap in time between death and resurrection. Thus, there is no issue of maintaining identity.³⁴

Meanwhile, Trenton Merricks claims that identity persists with or without an adequate explanation for why it persists. Therefore, there is simply no criteria for identity. Merricks believes that identity can persist throughout temporal gaps regardless of an explanation. He believes that there are no criteria for personal identity because "personal identity over time just is - is analyzed as - the relation of numerical identity holding between a person existing at one time and a person existing at another."³⁵ This relation is unanalyzable, but just because it is unanalyzable does not mean it does not exist. This relation exists, but he argues that there is no local or global supervenience. Supervenience is defined as the relation between two things: local supervenience is

³² Corcoran, "Physical Persons and Postmortem Survival without Temporal Gaps."

³³ Corcoran, "Physical Persons and Postmortem Survival without Temporal Gaps."

³⁴ Baker, "Need a Christian Be a Mind/Body Dualist?"

³⁵ Merricks, "How to Live Forever without Saving Your Soul: Physicalism and Immortality."

microphysical occurrence and global supervenience is a macro-occurrence.³⁶ Local supervenience deals with the very atoms that make up a body and is intrinsic. This has been demonstrated to be false because one's molecular makeup cannot serve as a criterion for identity; it is too fickle and constantly in flux. Global supervenience, meanwhile, addresses extrinsic qualities, where one's existence is contingent on all of the microphysical occurrences in the world. He claims that since local supervenience is false, global supervenience must also be false. Thus, Merricks argues that there are no analyzable criteria of identity, and the problem of temporal gaps does not need to be troubling.³⁷

The last difficulty Physicalists need to address is the hope of bodily resurrection. For the Physicalist, life after death hinges on the resurrection of the body, not the immortality of the soul. In this view, resurrection and the new spiritual body entails "restoring the whole person to life – a new transformed kind of life."³⁸ It is not simply fleshing a soul with a new spiritual body but bringing back to life what has died and been corrupted with new spiritual life. One of the main supports of this is the resurrection of Christ.³⁹ In the Christian scriptures, all accounts of Christ are physical, in which Jesus had a body. While he was given a new spiritual body that could walk through walls, the resurrected Christ was still encompassed by a body that held the scars of his physical life

³⁶ Brian McLaughlin and Karen Bennett, "Supervenience," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta, Summer 2021 (Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University, 2021), <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2021/entries/supervenience/>.

³⁷ Merricks, "How to Live Forever without Saving Your Soul: Physicalism and Immortality."

³⁸ Nancy Murphy, "Do Christians Need Souls? Theological and Biblical Perspectives on Human Nature," in *Bodies and Souls, or Spirited Bodies?* (Cambridge University Press, 2006), 1–37.

³⁹ Murphy, "Do Humans Have Souls?"

before death. It is held that Christ's resurrection is a model for mankind's own resurrection. On Resurrection Day there will be a raising of the dead that emphasizes the psychosomatic whole of persons, not simply putting a new spiritual body on an immortal soul.⁴⁰

The emphasis is on making all things new. Creation will be renewed, human persons will be renewed, and all things physical will be restored. This hope of restoration and renewal to its fullest extent is seen in the resurrection and the new creation. This doctrine of resurrection is the point of connection between all Christian Physicalists, rooting this anthropology in Christian scriptures. It makes up a large portion of Physicalism's foundation and roots faith and the Christian walk in the body and the physical, not in the intangible spiritual realm. As a result, this view links Physicalism with a biblical worldview that is comprehensible and coherent.

Conclusion

With these understandings of bodily death, persistence of identity, and the resurrection of the dead, Physicalists have fleshed out a thorough framework in which one can hold a Christian worldview and also be a Physicalist. While there are many differences in how Christian Physicalists work through important questions of immortality and personhood, that is to be expected within any school of thought. As they have worked through these challenging questions, the resounding echo of many Physicalists is that creation is physical, and humankind is a component of God's creation.

⁴⁰ Baker, "Need a Christian Be a Mind/Body Dualist?"

The physicality of human beings matters immensely. It is not to be disregarded in favor of an immaterial soul, for the human being is constituted by a physical body and is thus physical as well. This charges people to think more carefully about how they view the body as well as how they treat all of creation. Ultimately, a Physicalist anthropology is both acceptable and coherent within a biblical worldview, despite its negation of the immaterial soul. It has worked through many difficult questions of criteria of identity and bodily resurrection, providing adequate doctrinal answers for followers of Christ while also affirming views in modern science that are supported by empirical data.

CHAPTER THREE

Mind-Body Dualism

Introduction

Despite modern movements towards Physicalism, there is still strong pushback against this shift in ontology and anthropology. The most prominent opposing doctrine to Physicalism is Mind-Body Dualism. Mind-Body Dualism is broadly defined as the ontological doctrine that the mind and the body are inherently and fundamentally different. This has been the predominant way of understanding the human soul and its relation to the body, constituting the majority of intellectual and Christian thought for most of history. This anthropology has manifested itself in understanding the human person as consisting of an immaterial soul and a physical body, separate and unique, yet intrinsically connected.¹

Cartesian Dualism has been the most prominent form of Dualism accepted in the general population, and this was originally espoused by René Descartes (1596-1650). This form of Dualism is widely accepted as true in the general population due to its influence on Western culture.² Cartesian Dualism involves the immaterial soul acting upon the physical body, but the body has no impact on the immaterial. Essentially, the immaterial soul functions as a ghost in a machine, operating the physical body.³

¹ Howard Robinson, "Dualism," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta, Fall 2020 (Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University, 2020), <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2020/entries/dualism/>.

² Gary Hatfield, "René Descartes," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta, Summer 2018 (Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University, 2018), <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2018/entries/descartes/>.

³ J. Joseph Porter, "Christianity and Cartesian Dualism," *The Harvard Ichthus* (blog), June 12, 2009, <https://harvardichthus.org/2009/06/christianity-and-cartesian-dualism/>.

However, most Christians generally agree that this form of Dualism is incompatible with Christianity. Christian doctrine emphasizes embodiment, and Cartesian Dualism does not emphasize embodiment. Instead, this thesis will examine three main forms of Christian Dualism, which will be called non-Cartesian Dualism, advocated by many Christian scholars in various theological camps.⁴ These forms are non-Cartesian Substance Dualism, Emergent Dualism, and Thomistic Dualism. Three authors who have written prolifically on each form of Dualism will be examined in this chapter. These authors are E.J. Lowe, William Hasker, and J.P. Moreland, and they are big proponents of Dualism as opposed to Physicalism.⁵

This chapter will begin with a brief overview of the major movements in mind-body Dualism, from Plato to modern Dualism. The historical mind-body Dualistic views that this thesis will address are related to a Christian view of Dualism, excluding the secular views due to the scope of this thesis. Following the historical overview, the three forms of mind-body Dualism will be addressed in detail, including their main arguments, how they fit within a Christian framework, and ending with how they differ from Physicalism. Overall, this chapter seeks to lay out the evidence against a Christian Physicalist anthropology by offering an argument for a viable and historical alternative.

⁴ Marc Cortez, *Theological Anthropology: A Guide for the Perplexed* (T&T Clark, 2010).

⁵ J. P. Moreland, "In Defense of a Thomistic-like Dualism," in *The Blackwell Companion to Substance Dualism* (John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated, 2018), 148–73.

History

Dualism finds its roots in Platonic philosophy. Plato (428-348 BCE) holds to a separation between the immaterial soul and the material body, with the soul seeking to separate itself from the body.⁶ A key element to Platonic philosophy are the Platonic Forms, which are defined as immaterial, eternal, and unchanging entities that serve as the reference point for all of creation.⁷ These Forms are “beings that are what they are *in virtue of themselves*,”⁸ indicating that they are both independent of the material, while also serving to define it. For example, Beauty and Justice are Forms to which beautiful and just things must conform to in order to be counted as such. Therefore, beautiful and just material things are imperfect reflections of the Forms of Beauty and Justice.

This understanding of Platonic Forms sets up the main tenets of Plato’s Dualism, primarily immortality of the soul. Plato divides the human person into body and soul, material and immaterial. Rationality is the highest expression of the soul, manifesting itself as the intellect, though the soul is understood as tripartite in nature.⁹ While the body is clearly physical, Plato argues that the soul is not, basing this statement on the intellect’s ability to comprehend the Forms. Being of the same substance is necessary for

⁶ “Plato | Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy,” accessed November 22, 2022, <https://iep.utm.edu/plato/>.

⁷ Howard Robinson, “Dualism,” in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta, Fall 2020 (Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University, 2020), <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2020/entries/dualism/>.

⁸ Allan Silverman, “Plato’s Middle Period Metaphysics and Epistemology,” in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta and Uri Nodelman, Fall 2022 (Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University, 2022), <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2022/entries/plato-metaphysics/>.

⁹ Hendrik Lorenz, “Ancient Theories of Soul,” in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta, Summer 2009 (Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University, 2009), <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2009/entries/ancient-soul/>.

comprehension, thus, in virtue of the Forms being incorporeal, so is the intellect. This grounds Plato's argument that the human person is divided into material and immaterial. Additionally, a key component is the soul's desire to "dwell in the realm of Forms,"¹⁰ escaping the confines of the physical body. Here, the soul is imprisoned in the flesh, seeking to abide and be united with the Forms. This relationship between body and soul highlights two things: the body hinders the soul, and the soul can exist on its own. The language of "escape" and "imprisoned" implies that the soul not only inhabits the body but is limited by it. The body prevents the full growth and development of the rational soul; thus, it must be a hindrance, assigning a negative moral value to the body. Furthermore, this language also implies that the soul is not dependent upon the body for existence. The soul can exist in virtue of itself, suggesting that it is its own substance. This philosophy laid the groundwork for modern day Dualism, with Aristotelian philosophy providing the next fundamental aspect of a historical understanding of mind-body Dualism.¹¹

Aristotle's (384-322 BCE) philosophy of mind is hotly debated in modern scholarship, yet it is still foundational for a Dualistic theological anthropology because it undergirds Thomistic Dualism.¹² Many debate whether Aristotle was a Physicalist or a Dualist, for he understood the human person as fundamentally embodied in a way that

¹⁰ Howard Robinson, "Dualism," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta, Fall 2020 (Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University, 2020), <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2020/entries/dualism/>.

¹¹ Thomas M. Olszewsky, "On the Relations of Soul to Body in Plato and Aristotle," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 14, no. 4 (1976): 391–404, <https://doi.org/10.1353/hph.2008.0163>.

¹² "Aristotle - Biography," Maths History, accessed November 22, 2022, <https://mathshistory.st-andrews.ac.uk/Biographies/Aristotle/>.

differs from a strict Cartesian Dualism.¹³ However, for the purposes of this thesis, Aristotle will be addressed as a proponent of mind-body Dualism, primarily due to his belief that the soul is immaterial.¹⁴ Aristotle also has an idea of forms, though differs from Plato in regard to what a “form” is. For him, forms are the “natures and properties of things and exist embodied in those things,”¹⁵ as opposed to incorporeal Concepts. Thus, the soul is the form of the body, the very nature or essence of a human person. Unlike Plato, the soul is not imprisoned in a body, but rather embodied. While the soul may be embodied, Aristotle’s view is still viewed as dualistic because the soul is a separate substance. A key component of the Aristotelian view is the matter-form composite that he claims is the human person.¹⁶ Matter is the body, whereas the rational soul is the form. While the differences between this view and Emergent Physicalism appear to be simply semantic, this distinction in language is crucial. The rational soul is distinctly immaterial for that is the only way in which it can perceive all the forms, and in fact possesses no physical organ according to Aristotle, which St. Thomas Aquinas will adapt to develop Thomistic Dualism.¹⁷

St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) builds his understanding of the body and soul upon the groundwork of Aristotle, forming his own philosophy of substance mind-body

¹³ Robinson, “Dualism,” 2020.

¹⁴ Robert Heinaman, “Aristotle and the Mind-Body Problem,” *Phronesis* 35, no. 1 (1990): 83–102, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4182348>.

¹⁵ Robinson, “Dualism,” 2020.

¹⁶ Thomas Ainsworth, “Form vs. Matter,” in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta, Summer 2020 (Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University, 2020), <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2020/entries/form-matter/>.

¹⁷ Olszewsky, “On the Relations of Soul to Body in Plato and Aristotle.”

Dualism.¹⁸ Aquinas similarly holds to the idea that the immaterial soul is the form of the physical body. The human person as a composite is fundamental to his theological anthropology, rejecting the extremes of the Platonic view of the soul and what will eventually be known as Cartesian Dualism (this shall be addressed in a later section). Similar to Aristotle, he believed “in general, the form (the substantial and accidental forms taken together) of a material object is the arrangement of the matter of that object in such a way that it constitutes that object rather than some other one.”¹⁹ The soul is immaterial and simple, not consisting of parts, by virtue of the fact that it is the essence of the body, providing unity and wholeness. In fact, the soul is spatially located within the entirety of the body, “considered with regard to the wholeness of essence, for instance, the whole soul is entirely in each part of the body, just as whiteness is entirely in each part of a completely white thing.”²⁰ This view of wholeness contradicts a popular view of the soul functioning as a “ghost in the machine,” focusing on the importance of embodiment. It is popular to address the body as simply a machine, operated by an immaterial soul that functions as a ghost, directing the body in whichever way it chooses. However, understanding the body and soul as a unified psychosomatic unit elevates the mind-body relationship to more than simply a ghost and a machine. Rather, the mind and body, while different substances, are fully unified to form a person.

¹⁸ Robinson, “Dualism,” 2020.

¹⁹ Eleonore Stump and The Society of Christian Philosophers, “Non-Cartesian Substance Dualism and Materialism Without Reductionism:,” *Faith and Philosophy* 12, no. 4 (1995): 505–31, <https://doi.org/10.5840/faithphil199512430>.

²⁰ Stump and The Society of Christian Philosophers.

Immortality of the soul is also a core aspect of Thomistic Dualism, yet it differs from Platonic Dualism. The soul can in some regards be separated from the body, independent of death. However, the soul does not exist in its whole form when separated from the body, implying it is not a substance in its own right. According to Aquinas, neither the body nor the soul are substances, but rather subsistent parts of the human person. The composite would be counted as a substance.²¹ These parts exist on their own, yet a human soul without a body is technically not a human person. Thus, in Thomistic Dualism, it is possible to hold both that the soul is immortal and immaterial, as well as in a causal relationship with the human body and dependent on it in some form.²²

This leads to Cartesian Dualism, the most well-known historical documentation of Dualism spearheaded by René Descartes (1596-1650). Much of Dualism is based, whether loosely or strongly, on some form of Cartesian Dualism, which is also considered substance Dualism. A shift is made in language away from regarding the immaterial as a soul, but rather as the mind. However, due to the topic this thesis wishes to address, the immaterial soul will still be referenced in relation to the mind. Similar to previous ancient and medieval Dualistic thought, the mind and body are separate substances, with the key focus being substances. Substances are defined as “the thing which possesses [properties],”²³ and properties characterize said substances. For example,

²¹ Ralph McInerny and John O’Callaghan, “Saint Thomas Aquinas,” in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta, Summer 2018 (Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University, 2018), <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2018/entries/aquinas/>.

²² Gyula Klima, “Aquinas on the Materiality of the Human Soul and the Immateriality of the Human Intellect,” *Philosophical Investigations* 32, no. 2 (2009): 163–82, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9205.2008.01368.x>.

²³ Robinson, “Dualism,” 2020.

the property of the mind is the intellect, and the property of the body is spatial localization. For Descartes, the mind is an immaterial and immortal substance, existing both prior and following the existence of the body. This is separate from the physical body, which operates mechanistically and deterministically. As opposed to many forms of Physicalism, as addressed in the previous chapter, Cartesian Dualism holds to unidirectional causality, exclusively top-down causation. The mind works upon the machine of the body, adjusting it to the substance of the mind.

This causal relationship emphasizes the question of unity between two substances in Cartesian Dualism. Due to the inherent difference between the immaterial and material substances of mind and body, how can they act upon one another to cause a human person? This has been a point of contention for Descartes and many of his contemporaries, with some relying on the act of God for this union and others claiming the pineal gland in the brain as what allows the mind to exert causal actions on the body (which has since been disproven). Despite some glaring inconsistencies with Cartesian Dualism, it has been foundational for modern-day Dualism.²⁴

In the modern era, Dualism has either been rejected outright or modified to find a satisfactory union between body and soul. Many academic disciplines, particularly in the sciences and mathematics, have chosen to reject mind-body Dualism on grounds addressed in the second chapter of this thesis. However, a majority of the population in almost all cultures still hold to some form of mind-body Dualism, despite the emergence of Physicalism. This has been attributed to the power of folk psychology. Folk psychology is the “everyday way of understanding, or rationalizing, intentional actions in

²⁴ Robinson, “Dualism,” 2020.

mentalist terms,”²⁵ also known as commonsense psychology. Particularly in the West, whether consciously or subconsciously, most individuals believe they are composed of both body and soul, material and immaterial. Even among children, this is considered common sense, making Physicalism as a theory jarring and disorienting.²⁶ Whether this is attributed to cultural influences or overarching human nature, men and women see themselves as possessing an immaterial soul that inhabits their body and is immortal in some way. This proves a formidable case for Dualism, simply because so many people believe it to be true.²⁷

Overall, the aforementioned groundwork for modern Dualism has now led to three main forms of Dualism today: Non-Cartesian substance Dualism, Emergent Dualism, and Thomistic Dualism. By examining one particular philosopher’s work for each form of dualism, these views will be addressed in detail in the next section of this chapter, along with how they stand in opposition to Physicalism. These philosophies are very similar in how they view the mind-body relationship and the importance of unity between mind and body. However, they have some key distinctions that add to one’s understanding of Dualism, essentially functioning as variations on a theme. These forms of Dualism each serve as viable and cohesive arguments against Physicalism and for mind-body Dualism.

²⁵ Daniel Hutto and Ian Ravenscroft, “Folk Psychology as a Theory,” in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta, Fall 2021 (Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University, 2021), <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2021/entries/folkpsych-theory/>.

²⁶ J. P. Moreland, “A Critique of and Alternative to Nancey Murphy’s Christian Physicalism,” *European Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 8, no. 2 (June 21, 2016): 107–28, <https://doi.org/10.24204/ejpr.v8i2.60>.

²⁷ Hutto and Ravenscroft, “Folk Psychology as a Theory.”

Non-Cartesian Substance Dualism

Non-Cartesian Substance Dualism is held by many philosophers, yet this thesis will focus on E.J. Lowe's view. E.J. Lowe (1950-2014) was a prominent British philosopher who studied ontology extensively. His metaphysical theory of mind has been foundational for the modern understanding of Non-Cartesian Substance Dualism. For this reason, he will be addressed in this section.²⁸ Cartesian Substance Dualism was addressed in the previous section as the view that the mind and body are "two distinct and separable substances"²⁹ in unity with one another, emphasizing the fact that the mind is its own substance and can exist fully independent of the body. The mind has the property of the intellect, and the body has the property of spatial locality in Cartesian Dualism, so that each independent substance carries with it its own property. Likewise, Non-Cartesian Substance Dualism argues that the self is different from the physical body, fundamentally distinct from any part or organ of the body (namely the brain). However, while the self may be distinct, it also "may not be able to exist without a body and ... may be extended in space, thus possessing spatial properties such as shape, size, and spatial location."³⁰ Lowe argues that the self, mind, or soul is indeed a separate substance, but is not fully independent. Rather, he focuses on the importance of embodiment in the mind-body relationship. In embodiment, the self now has a spatial location, the physical body, while

²⁸ "Lowe, Edward Jonathan | Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy," accessed November 16, 2022, <https://iep.utm.edu/lowe-ej/>.

²⁹ E. J. Lowe, "Non-Cartesian Substance Dualism and the Problem of Mental Causation," *Erkenntnis* 65, no. 1 (July 2006): 5–23, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10670-006-9012-3>.

³⁰ Lowe.

also maintaining the property of the intellect. Essentially, the mental substance possesses two properties, both mental and physical, as opposed to only having mental properties.³¹

Non-Cartesian Substance Dualism seeks to combat some of the extremism that comes with Cartesian Substance Dualism, namely the issue with mental causation, or how the immaterial (mental) states cause physical actions. Lowe remedies this problem of mental causation by asserting that the immaterial self does in fact exist spatially, namely in the physical body by virtue of possessing said body. While not identical, Lowe argues that the self and body are “so intimately related that they exactly coincide spatially at a given time and necessarily share, at that time, many of their physical properties, such as their shape, size, and mass.”³² However, this is still distinctly Dualist because they are separate substances, as well as simple, which means they cannot be divided further. The self is not identical with the physical body, nor would it be considered physical or material. This allows the self and the body to exist as one, without negating the existence of the soul, which has been fundamental to Christian Doctrine for centuries.

While Non-Cartesian Substance Dualism is not inherently Christian, it can function within a Christian worldview. This view allows for the existence of an intermediate state and the resurrection of the body, which are important to orthodox Christianity. While the self cannot exist fully independently on its own, there remains a possibility of a disembodied state in the intermediate period, in which the self is not fully

³¹ Mostyn Jones and Eric LaRock, “From Murphy’s Christian Physicalism to Lowe’s Dualism,” *TheoLogica: An International Journal for Philosophy of Religion and Philosophical Theology* 5, no. 2 (December 29, 2021): 100–128, <https://doi.org/10.14428/thl.v5i2.56273>.

³² Lowe, “Non-Cartesian Substance Dualism and the Problem of Mental Causation,” 2006.

existent.³³ This leads to the resurrection of the body, in which the body and soul will once again be united in perfect harmony, not of the same substance but intrinsically and spatially co-localized once again. Personhood can still be present in the intermediate state but not fully, avoiding the extremes of Physicalism and Cartesian Substance Dualism.³⁴

Non-Cartesian Substance Dualism considers itself incompatible with Non-Reductive Physicalism, for it disagrees with a purely materialist stance. Lowe believes that the self is still inherently a distinct substance, despite its surface-level similarities with an Emergent Physicalist perspective. In fact, a key component of this rejection of materialism is its strict adherence to a top-down causation only. Whereas Physicalism holds to both top-down and bottom-up causation, Non-Cartesian Substance Dualism rejects this. Additionally, Non-Cartesian Substance Dualism holds that science, particularly neuroscience, will never truly explain the self, for that is beyond its scope of influence. Instead, neuroscience is intended to explore and explain “various empirical facts about the condition of embodied human persons or selves,” not necessarily account for “what constitutes thought or feeling or agency in a human person.”³⁵ In summary, this form of Dualism argues that the mental substance, the self, is distinctly other compared to the body, but possesses mental and physical properties that allow the body and mind to be united without conceding that there is no soul.

³³ Alejandro Perez, “An Embodied Existence in Heaven and the Non-Cartesian Substance Dualism,” *TheoLogica: An International Journal for Philosophy of Religion and Philosophical Theology* 5, no. 2 (December 29, 2021): 5–19, <https://doi.org/10.14428/thl.v5i2.58823>.

³⁴ Stump and The Society of Christian Philosophers, “Non-Cartesian Substance Dualism and Materialism Without Reductionism.”

³⁵ E. J. Lowe, “Non-Cartesian Substance Dualism,” in *The Blackwell Companion to Substance Dualism* (John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated, 2018), 228–42.

Emergent Dualism

Emergent Dualism is the next form of mind-body Dualism, in which the mental substance is considered to emerge from the physical body. Emergent Dualism appears to be very closely related to Emergent Physicalism; however, the key difference arises in whether or not there is an Emergent property or substance. In Emergent Physicalism, the Emergent is a property of the physical substance of the body. Therefore, the Emergent self or soul is a property of the physical body, one that exhibits both top-down and bottom-up causality, which was addressed in the previous chapter. On the other hand, Emergent Dualism argues that the Emergent is a substance, not a property. The self or the soul is a substance that emerges from the physical substance, maintaining the classic substance distinction between mind and body.³⁶

There are various thoughts regarding what exactly arises in Emergent Dualism, such as mental properties or causal powers (which would be staunchly Physicalist in nature, relating back to Emergent properties). William Hasker (1935-present), a proponent of Emergent Dualism, is a philosopher who has extensively written on the philosophy of religion and the philosophy of mind. He is an expert on the mind-body problem, which is the reason why his writings on Emergent Dualism are being examined.³⁷ He states that what emerges is “not merely mental properties and experiences, and not merely new causal powers, but a new individual, a subject that has those experiences and exercises the causal powers in question.”³⁸ In essence, a whole self

³⁶ Hasker, “The Case for Emergent Dualism.”

³⁷ “Prof. William Hasker,” Faraday, February 20, 2020, <https://www.faraday.cam.ac.uk/about/people/prof-william-hasker/>.

³⁸ Hasker.

emerges from the configuration of the physical. It is not simply the sum of the physical parts, though. Rather, it is an Emergent substance. Additionally, the Emergent self must match the physical body it has emerged from. For example, a human self emerges from a human body, but a non-human animal self emerges from a non-human animal body. The physical composition of bodies brings about an even greater self that transcends the mere interactions between molecules. Ultimately, Emergent Dualism states that “the soul appears naturally, given the appropriate physical organization and function of the body and brain.”³⁹

Christianity is considered compatible with Emergent Dualism due to the fact that the unity between body and soul is upheld, without erasing the soul. The soul as the Christian understands it is present and is responsible for an individual’s moral decisions and personhood. There is still an immaterial soul that exists in unity with a physical body. However, it does not minimize the biomechanical workings in the body that dictate how a human person interacts with the world. The physical makeup of the body is the very foundation for the emergence of the self, or soul, upholding the value and importance of the human body and justifying the findings of natural sciences. The workings of the nervous system and the brain are not unimportant in the nature of the soul, yet they are not the cause of mental activities and properties. However, the mind and body are still distinctively different substances.

Furthermore, Emergent Dualism avoids many of the issues faced by Emergent Physicalists, while keeping many of the benefits. Whereas Emergent Physicalism must address the issue of persistence of identity in reassembly in the resurrection, Emergent

³⁹ Hasker.

Dualism claims not to have the same issue. Although the soul does not preexist the body, Emergent Dualists assert (without explaining) that the soul exists once the body has died. It does not exist in its full form, and is not considered a whole person, but the essence and self are still existent, hand-waving away the the issue of persistence of identity. Additionally, Emergent Dualism does not face the issue of causality because the soul is still spatially and temporally located within the body for it emerges from the body's configuration. Thus, Emergent Dualism has the potential to withstand many points of contention about both Dualism and Physicalism.⁴⁰

Thomistic Dualism

The final form of mind-body Dualism this thesis will address is Thomistic Dualism, also known as Thomistic Hylomorphism, built upon the foundation of both Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas. As mentioned previously, Thomistic Dualism holds that the soul is the form of the body, relying heavily on the concept of matter and forms existing in a composite. While the details of Thomistic Dualism were addressed in a previous section of this chapter, this section will address J.P. Moreland's (1948 – present) views of Thomistic Dualism. Moreland has is an American philosopher who has written extensively on the mind-body problem from a theological aspect.⁴¹ A key aspect of Moreland's Thomistic Dualism is the teleological importance of the soul on the body, but functionally and structurally. His view, which he considers the organicist view, holds not

⁴⁰ Hasker.

⁴¹ "JP Moreland's Web » J.P. Moreland Bio," accessed November 22, 2022, <http://www.jpmoreland.com/about/bio/>.

only that a soul exists, but that the “soul is not only the formal/essential cause of the body, but also becomes (1) an internal efficient first-moving cause of the development and structure of the body, and (2) the teleological guide for that development and structure (thus, form determines function).”⁴² Here, the soul does not emerge from the body, rather the body emerges from the soul. The soul gives form and function to the body, guiding its development and how it ought to function within the physical world. In fact, the soul is considered “the blueprint, the information responsible for the body's structure and functions,” guiding the body into its telos.⁴³

Additionally, the body and the soul are one composite substance, with each individual part counting as subsistent, or able to exist on its own but not fully. The soul and the body are created at the same time; thus, the soul does not pre-exist the body. However, the soul does outlive the body, for when the body dies the soul exists in the intermediate state in the unnatural disembodied form. Death separates the soul from the body, placing the soul in a state in which it was never intended to live. The soul loses its wholeness until it is once again reunited with the body in the resurrection of the body. In this sense, the soul can exist apart from the body, but not in a Cartesian way that disregards the psychosomatic union.

Thomistic Dualism is the most overtly Christian of the forms of Dualism addressed in this chapter, for it emphasizes the teleological importance of the soul more than the others. The soul directs the body and serves as a blueprint, a blueprint that God designed to unify the body and mind. Thomistic Dualism works seamlessly with the

⁴² Moreland, “In Defense of a Thomistic-like Dualism.”

⁴³ Moreland.

immortality of the soul, the intermediate state, and the resurrection of the dead, as well as with other orthodox Christian Doctrines. Christianity and Thomistic Dualism are compatible, and J.P. Moreland argues that it remedies well the issues with both Dualism and Physicalism without sacrificing the theological significance of the soul or the vast array of scientific knowledge.⁴⁴

Additionally, Thomistic Dualism stands in the most opposition to an Emergent Physicalism compared to the other forms of Dualism. Whereas a Christian Physicalist might claim the self emerges from the body, a material substance configuring the Emergent self through its own configuration, a Thomistic Dualist would propose the opposite. Instead, the body emerges from the soul, in which the soul functions as a “configured configurer.”⁴⁵ Here, the structure of the brain and body that reflects changes in mental states is directed by the soul, which gives the body its form. The soul is a material substance that exerts causal powers upon the physical material of the body. This reversal is fundamental to the difference between a Thomistic Dualistic understanding of the mind-body relation, as opposed to Christian Emergent Physicalism.

Conclusion

These three forms of Dualism emphasize the unity of the body and soul without rejecting the existence of an immaterial soul. The biggest issue with Cartesian Dualism was the disunity between body and soul that created a separation that is simply not

⁴⁴ Moreland.

⁴⁵ Stump and The Society of Christian Philosophers, “Non-Cartesian Substance Dualism and Materialism Without Reductionism.”

backed by either empirical scientific evidence or metaphysical logic. Since scripture is appears to be convinced that the body is a psychosomatic whole, this disunity was incompatible. The material and the immaterial needed to possess value in their own right. Thus, these variations of Dualism remedy these issues seen with Cartesian Dualism, while avoiding many issues with Physicalism.

Overall, Dualism has functioned as a formidable opposing theory of personhood and the mind-body relationship. It has support from both millennia of intellectual thought, as well as folk psychology. However, Cartesian Dualism is problematic and incompatible with Christianity, and thus Physicalism sought to solve these issues. In response to this, new forms of Dualism were developed that can be compatible with a Christian worldview. In fact, these Dualists claim that while a rejection of Cartesian Dualism is necessary, a rejection of Dualism as a whole is incompatible with Christianity. This grounds their argument that Christians need not, and should not, become Emergent Physicalists in order to hold a coherent theological anthropology of personhood and self that emphasizes the unity between the self and the body.

CHAPTER FOUR

Christological Anthropology

Introduction

In the quest to find answers to the mind-body problem in the question of personhood, this thesis has given a broad overview of the ontological doctrines of Physicalism and Dualism. Both of these philosophies are substantially supported by evidence that seeks to validate each viewpoint. They not only claim to fill in the philosophical gaps left by the other, but also to be the most compatible with an orthodox Christian worldview, thus providing a clearer understanding of the human person as a whole. However, simply laying both arguments side by side in order to compare and find the best answer will not solve the mind-body problem. A critical analysis of the evidence for Physicalism and Dualism demonstrates that there is not one clear, obvious answer.

Where does this leave Christians who seek to be faithful as they navigate the mind-body problem? While those who adhere to Dualist anthropology would generally argue that some form of Dualism is required for the faithful Christian, Physicalists hold a more liberal view of the issue. In fact, many Christian Physicalists hold that Christians have the liberty to be either, even though they still agree that Physicalism is more coherent. This liberty allows room for one's individual conscience, and following this thesis' analysis of the debate, is more compatible with the present evidence. This thesis agrees with this argument, accepting that the Christian has the liberty to be either a Mind-Body Dualist or an Emergent Physicalist, and will base this argument on the writings of

Vladimir Lossky (1903-1958) and Rowan Williams (1950). These authors are prominent Christian theologians from two major Christian traditions (Eastern Orthodoxy and Anglicanism, respectively) and they approach the mind-body problem from the lens of Christological Anthropology, which is concerned with how Christology relates to what it means to be human. Through understanding the nature of Christ, Lossky and Williams claim one can better understand the make-up of the human person due to mankind's role as the image of God, or the *imago Dei*. These authors understand the Image of God as the fundamental groundwork of how Christians ought to view the human person, and thus is an important factor in navigating the mind-body problem. As one examines Physicalism and Mind-Body Dualism, she must ensure that a functional understanding of the Image of God is coherent with each philosophy. Additionally, through examining both Lossky and Williams, this thesis will be able to see how the Church as a whole, not just individual denominations, can use Christological anthropology.

Thus, this thesis will unpack each author's understanding of Christology and the Image of God in order to apply it to the Physicalism and Dualism debate.¹

Vladimir Lossky and His Christological Anthropology

Vladimir Lossky is a Russian, Eastern Orthodox Neo-patristic theologian who was greatly influenced by the writings of the Church Fathers. He was raised in Russia, yet spent his academic career in Paris, France after his family was exiled due to their anti-

¹ *Embodied Souls, Ensouled Bodies : An Exercise in Christological Anthropology and Its Significance for the Mind/Body Debate* (T&T Clark, 2008), <https://doi.org/10.5040/9781472549693>.

Bolshevik stance.² He was influenced by both the Western and Eastern theological traditions, even though he is distinctly Eastern Orthodox, providing a balanced and comprehensive theological understanding of the human person. His ecumenical openness allowed him to openly criticize the scholasticism of the Western Church, preferring the emphasis on Divine Mystery in the Eastern Church, while still seeking unity in the church. Therefore, this thesis seeks to analyze his understanding of the human person in relation to the mind-body problem. He has not only written extensively on this topic, but he has an approach that emphasizes mystery and unity in the church, which are vital to a healthy understanding of the mind-body problem among all Christians.³

Lossky bases his understanding of what constitutes a person in Christology, using Christ as a template for the human person. In his essay “The Theological Notion of the Human Person,” he addresses how an orthodox understanding of the Hypostasis ought to inform how one thinks about the created being and its personhood. He begins with an argument that this discussion cannot be grounded in Patristics, for the Church Fathers were not asking the same questions that philosophers and theologians are asking today. To apply Patristic writings to the mind-body problem would be to superimpose the questions and worldview of modern philosophers on the Fathers, who were not addressing these topics. Rather, they were analyzing the personhood of Christ and how the Hypostatic union functions in order to build up the Church and prevent heresy. All

² Nicholas Lossky, “Theology and Spirituality in the Work of Vladimir Lossky,” *The Ecumenical Review* 51, no. 3 (1999): 288–93, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1758-6623.1999.tb00393.x>.

³ Viorel Coman, “Vladimir Lossky’s Involvement in the Dieu Vivant Circle and Its Ecumenical Journal,” *Irish Theological Quarterly* 85, no. 1 (February 1, 2020): 45–63, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0021140019889211>.

that can be known, according to Lossky, is that Patristic Christian anthropology ultimately depended on “a theological doctrine based upon the revelation of a living and personal God who created man ‘according to his own image and likeness.’”⁴ Thus, to be consistent with general Patristic theology, modern theological anthropology must be grounded in the notion that humankind is made in the image and likeness of God.⁵

He then proceeds to ground his understanding of personhood in the irreducibility of the hypostasis in Christ. Hypostasis can be defined either as existence, or as individual substances or persons in this context and is contrasted with ousia (translated to essence or substance), which is understood as “the essence common to many individuals.”⁶ For the remainder of this thesis, hypostasis will be used to denote individual substances or persons, and ousia will be called essence and will denote that which is common to hypostases. The Fathers determined that the hypostasis was not reducible to the essence in the person of Christ, without negating the fact that person and essence of Christ are of the same reality. Essentially, according to Lossky, “the hypostasis is the same as the ousia; it receives all the same attributes— or all the negations— which can be formulated on the subject of the ‘superessence’; but it nonetheless remains irreducible to the ousia.”⁷ This irreducibility is then used as the foundation for Lossky’s next question: Does this apply to the created person and how does this affect theological anthropology?

⁴ Vladimir Lossky, “The Theological Notion of the Human Person,” in *In the Image and Likeness of God* (New York: St Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1974), 111–23.

⁵ Lossky, “The Theological Notion of the Human Person.”

⁶ Vladimir Lossky, “God in Trinity,” in *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*, 1st ed. (The Lutterworth Press, 1957), 44–66, <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt1cgf332.5>.

⁷ Lossky, “The Theological Notion of the Human Person.”

Christian thought sees the person of Christ as the ultimate model of the created human person,⁸ due to the incarnation in which God becomes consubstantial with, or of the same substance, as His creation.⁹ If Christ is consubstantial with his creation while retaining his divinity, being fully man and fully divine, His hypostasis must be irreducible to his nature. Lossky asserts that:

A divine Person made himself consubstantial with created beings, this is because He has become a Hypostasis of human nature without transforming Himself into the hypostasis of a human person. Thus, if Christ is a divine Person, all the while being totally man by his “enhypositized” nature, one has to admit (at least in Christ’s case) that here the hypostasis of the assumed humanity cannot be reduced to the human substance, to that human individual who was registered with the other subjects of the Roman Empire under Augustus.¹⁰

This demonstrates that the person of Christ is not reducible to his essence, because personhood is not synonymous to essence or substance. It also demonstrates that since Christ is fully man, his assumed humanity is also irreducible. This assumed humanity is the model for all humanity because Christ is consubstantial with his creation. Thus what is applicable to the humanity of Christ is transferable to the humanity of all created human persons. This idea can then be applied to the question of how humans function as the image of God. Lossky argues against Gregory of Nyssa’s claim that the image of God is found in the intellectual aspect of the human. Gregory of Nyssa contends that “the seat of liberty (autexousia), the faculty of self-determination...lends to man his character of being created in the image of God or what we could call his dignity of personhood.”¹¹ However, Lossky states that this is inconsistent with a proper understanding of

⁸ Embodied Souls, Ensouled Bodies.

⁹ Lossky, “The Theological Notion of the Human Person.”

¹⁰ Lossky, “The Theological Notion of the Human Person.”

¹¹ Lossky, “The Theological Notion of the Human Person.”

Christology, and proposes “another conception of the image, closely linked with the condition of personhood— and which would extend to the whole human make-up, not excepting the ‘cloak of skin.’”¹² The image of God cannot be reduced to the intellectual part of a person, because there is “no place for the idea of the hypostasis or person of man as one element in the composite of his individual nature.”¹³ Thus, the image of God is represented by the whole of the human person, not by some element of a person’s nature.

This understanding of personhood, while not directly addressing the mind-body problem, can be used as the groundwork for Christians to piece together their beliefs about the mind-body problem. An analysis of Lossky’s theological anthropology essentially establishes that discernment regarding this problem must first be consistent with an understanding of how humankind function as the image of God. If Physicalism or Dualism is consistent with this Christological anthropology, then it can be accepted and adopted by Christians. First, it must accept that the human person is irreducible to her parts. This is not consistent with Cartesian Dualism or with Reductive Physicalism. However, it is consistent with the various other forms of Dualism accepted by Christians, as well as Emergent Physicalism. These philosophies agree that human persons are not reducible to their parts, but rather somethings distinctly other, irrespective to whether or not the person is counted as material or immaterial. Whether the human person is made up of one substance or two substances does not matter, for the image of God, or the thing that makes one human, is dependent on the whole of the human person, not a distinct

¹² Vladimir Lossky, “The Theology of the Image,” in *In the Image and Likeness of God* (New York: St Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1974), 125–39.

¹³ Lossky, “The Theological Notion of the Human Person.”

part. Thus, the Physicalism and Dualism addressed in the previous chapters can both be consistent with Lossky's Christologically based anthropology of the human person.¹⁴

Rowan Williams and His Christological Anthropology

Rowan Williams is a Welsh, Anglican theologian who served as the Archbishop of Canterbury. He is an expert on the theology of Vladimir Lossky and has written extensively on human personhood.¹⁵ Whereas Lossky came from the Eastern Orthodox tradition, Williams comes from the Anglican tradition, which is distinctly Western. This tradition bridges the gap between Catholicism and Protestant denominations and has maintained dialogue with the Eastern Orthodox Church.¹⁶ Due to his roles as both an academic and a priest, as well as his knowledge of Vladimir Lossky, his writings on Christological anthropology will supplement Lossky in order to develop a fuller understanding of how Christological anthropology informs the mind-body problem.

For Williams, the key aspect of the human person is relationality, or how an individual relates to God, others, and the world around her. As he examines Christological anthropology, he bases his argument heavily on Lossky's understanding of the image of God. The image of God in humankind cannot be found in an element or substance, but rather "the core of the doctrine is something about the character of our relation to God and the character of God as generating and inviting response, a response

¹⁴ Lossky, "The Theological Notion of the Human Person."

¹⁵ "About Rowan Williams," accessed November 21, 2022, <http://rowanwilliams.archbishopofcanterbury.org/pages/about-rowan-williams.html>.

¹⁶ Public Orthodoxy, "Orthodox and Anglicans in Dialogue," Public Orthodoxy (blog), October 2, 2020, <https://publicorthodoxy.org/2020/10/02/orthodox-and-anglicans-in-dialogue/>.

that is at its fullest when the whole of our subjectivity is involved.”¹⁷ For Williams then, the divine image is ultimately the way in which humankind relates to a personal God. Humankind is welcomed into a relationship with God, according to Williams, and this relationship is a gift and the ultimate way in which personhood is defined. Additionally, this personhood is not “an item within ‘nature’ nor a given and deeply buried stratum of sheer naked individuality: but it is that which shapes itself through exposing or declaring itself in relation.”¹⁸ For Williams, it does not matter what constitutes a human person, whether that be one substance or two. What matters is that a human person is fundamentally relational, relying on Christ and fellow humankind to be declared a person.

Additionally, Williams addresses unity in the human person and how persons ought to interact with the created world around them. A point of contention in the mind-body debate is how a person can be unified if that one is composed of material and immaterial substances. For Williams, this need not be a problem because unity is due to “a coherence or integrity in my relations with my environment and my creator.”¹⁹ Unity is a given for human persons, regardless of how the human person is composed, so as long as either Physicalism or Dualism ensures the unity remains intact, it is a valid philosophy and anthropology of the human person. This unity of human persons is then extended to the rest of the created world. Personhood is deeply enmeshed in the life of the created world, for “there is no ‘true’ human identity that is not always already

¹⁷ Rowan Williams, “The Elements of a Christological Anthropology,” *Perichoresis* 19, no. 2 (June 1, 2021): 3–20, <https://doi.org/10.2478/perc-2021-0008>.

¹⁸ Williams, “The Elements of a Christological Anthropology.”

¹⁹ Williams, “The Elements of a Christological Anthropology.”

implicated in the material order, living in and from and with it.”²⁰ Therefore, the human person must also have unity with the material order, fully engaging in the created world where she exists. Any philosophy regarding personhood that negates the importance of how one interacts with the rest of creation in the physical world is not consistent with Christological anthropology, for this interaction and engagement is core to human identity. Persons are created beings that are fully immersed in the created world around them. In fact, it is a part of humankind’s role as the image of God to exist in relation to the created world. Williams asserts that:

We are most distinctively human when we refuse to think of ourselves in isolation from matter and animality; and thinking of ourselves in solidarity with matter and animality involves, among other things, the thinking of the world around as shot through with the same life of logos that we live from.²¹

Thus, in order to be consistent with a Christian worldview and Christological anthropology, Physicalism and Dualism each must ensure that the human person exists fully in the created world because she is a member of creation. Each philosophy must emphasize relationality, unity, and engagement in the created world. While strict Cartesian Dualism or Reductive Physicalism does not emphasize this, the previous chapters demonstrate that Emergent Physicalism and the other addressed forms of Dualism are consistent with Williams’ Christological anthropology, for they emphasize relationality and unity in human composition. Since these philosophies are consistent with Christological anthropology, both can be valid worldviews for the faithful Christian who is seeking discernment in regard to the mind-body problem.

²⁰ Williams, “The Elements of a Christological Anthropology.”

²¹ Williams, “The Elements of a Christological Anthropology.”

Mystery and Unity in the Mind-Body Problem

Lossky and Williams establish a foundation for a Christian to examine the mind-body problem. Neither directly addresses this problem, rather their writing addresses the topic of Christological anthropology and personhood. Christological anthropology and personhood examine what it means to be human, while not necessarily speaking into the relationship between consciousness and the human body. However, both authors provide a unique groundwork that a Christian can then apply to the mind-body problem. This groundwork relies on two aspects of Christological anthropology: unity and mystery. Lossky and Williams both assert that the human person is an irreducible psychosomatic unit, and that mystery is fundamental to one's understanding of consciousness and personhood.

Unity must be at the core of a Christian's philosophy of mind and anthropology. Regardless of any philosophy of mind, in order for Christians to remain orthodox in their understanding of humankind, they must accept that "humans are integral, multidimensional beings."²² This is established by both Lossky and Williams and is a helpful tool in discerning the mind-body problem. Any philosophy must be consistent with the belief that human beings are psychosomatic units, unified in mind and body, regardless of whether it is monistic or dualistic. Consequently, as a Christian approaches the mind-body problem, discerning the viability of Emergent Physicalism and Mind-Body Dualism, it is vital to ensure that the unity of the person is sustained in either philosophy.

²² John W. Cooper, "Biblical Anthropology Is Holistic and Dualistic," in *The Blackwell Companion to Substance Dualism* (John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated, 2018), 526

Furthermore, mystery is a key aspect of the mind-body problem. For both Lossky and Williams, a great appreciation for mystery plays an important role in their Christological anthropology. Despite humankind's best efforts, the answers to the mind-body problem will never be fully satisfactory and there will always be things humankind does not and cannot know. In fact, Lossky states that this ultimately "is a question of meta ontology, only God can know."²³ Relying on Christological anthropology as a tool to help one understand the human person ensures that there will always be a level of mystery, for only God fully understands the nature of the person of Christ. However, this emphasis on mystery need not discourage academic discourse on the mind-body problem. Instead, it can encourage the Christian to appreciate the uniqueness of the human person and the beauty of God's creation. Christian life is inherently rooted in the mystery of the life of Christ and God's redemptive work in the world. Therefore, it only makes sense that the mind-body problem is also approached with a certain appreciation for mystery.²⁴ In fact, if any philosophy of mind or theological anthropology claims to fully explain the human person, leaving out any room for mystery, this can safely be eliminated as inconsistent with a Christian worldview. Thus, as the Christian examines Physicalism and Dualism, mystery can function as a helpful tool.

²³ Lossky, "The Theological Notion of the Human Person."

²⁴ Nicolae V. Moşoiu, "The Mystery and the Unity of the Church: Considerations from an Eastern Orthodox Perspective," *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 77, no. 4 (August 31, 2021), <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v77i4.6707>.

Conclusion

Ultimately, both Lossky and Williams provide a unique perspective to the mind-body problem for Christians. Instead of looking solely to biblical anthropology or to philosophy of mind, these authors approach this question through the lens of Christological anthropology. They use the orthodox understanding of the nature of Christ, such as the irreducibility of the hypostasis, to then inform a theology of the *imago Dei*. This theology of the image can then be applied to the question of personhood, defining personhood in terms of how human persons relate to creation, others, and God himself. By developing this Christological anthropology, they provide two tools that the Christian can then use to assess the validity of both Physicalism and Dualism: unity and mystery. In abiding by these two principles, Christians make informed decisions on mind-body problem based on the evidence provided by both Emergent Physicalists and Non-Cartesian Dualists.

CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusion

This thesis explored the mind-body problem in Christian anthropology, examining how Physicalism and Mind-Body Dualism fit within a Christian framework. Due to Physicalism's novelty and its recent support by modern empirical science, many Christians have sought to determine its validity within a Christian worldview. Can one eliminate the soul, or the immaterial substance of the human person, and remain orthodox and faithful? Major Christian figures in this push towards Physicalism were studied and the evidence they used to argue for Emergent Physicalism was laid out. Emergent Physicalism appears to answer many of philosophical holes left by both Reductive Physicalism and Cartesian Dualism. However, movements towards Physicalism in the twentieth century led to a countermovement in Dualism. This countermovement abandoned Cartesian Dualism in favor of more consistent forms of Dualism: Non-Cartesian Substance Dualism, Emergent Dualism, and Thomistic dualism. These forms of Dualism seek to eliminate the issues found with Cartesian Dualism without succumbing to Physicalism.

After analyzing both sides of the argument, this thesis concluded that is possible to be either an Emergent Physicalist or Non-Cartesian Dualist. There is satisfactory evidence on both sides of the argument, allowing a Christian the liberty to assess the evidence and adopt an informed position. The final chapter sought to provide an additional tool for Christians as they assess both sides of the argument: Christological anthropology. Using the writings of Vladimir Lossky and Rowan Williams, a

Christological anthropology was presented based on examining the person of Christ and how mankind images God in its function and relationality. This anthropology provides two important tools for Christians to consider as they examine both philosophies: unity and mystery. Overall, this thesis determined that, based on current evidence, it is possible for a Christian to be either an Emergent Physicalist or a Non-Cartesian Dualist. The Christian is at liberty to make an informed decision on the mind-body debate and can use Christological anthropology to help discern which viewpoint aligns with her convictions.

For future scholarship, research can be done to analyze Christological anthropology and how it relates to the mind-body problem in Catholicism, not just Eastern Orthodoxy and Anglicanism. By examining three major Christian traditions, greater ecumenicalism can be reached, as well as providing a more comprehensive understanding of Christology. Additionally, further research can also be done on Karl Barth's understanding of personhood and Christology to supplement the research done in this thesis.

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