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Georg Gasser
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Introduction

If there is no resurrection of the dead,
then not even Christ has been raised
And if Christ has not been raised,
our preaching is useless and so is your faith.

(1 Cor 15:13–14)

The Intellectual Background

The last four decades or so testify to a remarkable development in the academic climate of analytic philosophy. Stephen T. Davis witnessed this development from his college time in the late sixties and seventies onward. He writes: "in those days, we students were scarcely allowed even to mention words like 'God' or 'theology', and claims like 'God raised Jesus from the dead' were dismissed with disdain, scorn and knowing looks."[1] Nowadays, instead, many philosophers, believers and non-believers alike, explicitly dedicate their work to religious topics. Philosophy of religion has become a respectable discipline within analytic philosophy.

Conjecture abounds for the reasons for this development. In a recent article[2], Nicholas Wolterstorff identifies three major ones: first, logical positivism, once dominant among analytic philosophers, was unable to articulate in a satisfactory way its key concept of empirical verifiability. This inability proved to be positivism's downfall. The regressing influence of positivism paved the way for a rising interest in metaphysics in general and an open attitude to philosophical research of religious topics in particular. Second, this shift in analytic philosophy went hand in hand with a waning interest in the theme preoccupying classical modern philosophy: the limits of the thinkable and the assertible. Whereas philosophers in the tradition of Enlightment are concerned that our epistemological limitations might make it impossible to investigate certain kinds of topics in a meaningful way, analytic philosophers today no longer share this concern. They are thus more open to all sorts of inquiry, including metaphysics and philosophical reflection on theological doctrines. Finally, according to Wolterstorff, the third

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[1] Stephen T. Davis, "The Counterattack of the Resurrection Sceptics. A Review Article", *Philosophia Christi*, 8 (2005): pp. 39–63, p. 40.

[2] Nicholas Woltersdorff, "How Philosophical Theology Became Possible with the Analytic Tradition of Philosophy", in Oliver D. Crisp and Michael C. Rea (eds), *Analytic Theology. New Essays in the Philosophy of Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 155–68.

important development within analytic philosophy was the flourishing of meta-epistemology, that is, explicit investigation of alternative models of knowledge. Classical foundationalism—the view, roughly, that a belief is justified only if it rests ultimately on a foundation of non-inferential knowledge—was seen no longer as the only respectable epistemological theory. This made room for epistemological positions that were friendly towards the view that one might rationally hold religious beliefs.

These three developments eliminated important obstacles to a more intense analysis of religious beliefs. Analytic philosophy became less uniform and led to a multitude of examinations concerning a vast array of themes. No wonder, then, that Wolterstorff describes current philosophical discourse as pluralistic:

> For want of a better term, call the picture of the philosophical enterprise that I have just sketched, *dialogic pluralism*. Philosophy is now widely assumed, by analytic philosophers, to be a dialogical pluralist enterprise.[3]

Such a pluralistic enterprise is reminiscent of the situation in late antiquity when Stoics, Christians, Sceptics, Neoplatonists, and Aristotelians all contributed to shaping intellectual discourse. There was no body of principles or insights that all agreed on. Instead, proponents of the various schools met publicly, discussed and argued with each other, and when an argument was proven to be poor, the school which put it forward tried to improve and to articulate it in more detail. Analytic philosophy nowadays is like that: philosophers being reductive naturalists, non-reductive naturalists, non-naturalists, theists, and so on form a pluralistic mix, each philosophical strand representing a legitimate and important participant in dialogue. Such a situation offers an intellectual openness which encourages experimentation.

This volume testifies to this courage to experiment: though all authors are sympathetic toward the possibility of resurrection, their starting points and intellectual resources for justifying it range from materialist to dualist conceptions of the human person and involve classical theological approaches, recent analytic metaphysics, and various ideas from continental philosophy.

Specifying the Problem: Mind the Gap

Belief in some form of post-mortem survival is not extravagant. Take, for instance, Platonic Dualism: According to this view, bodies die and decay whereas an immaterial soul continues to live. The idea is that the soul naturally survives biological death for it is the nature of a soul to be incorruptible. Furthermore, this view claims that the soul is the essence of a human person: you *are* your soul, not your body. Though such a belief might be at odds with a materialist understanding

[3] Ibid., p. 167.

of reality, it does not appear incomprehensible from a metaphysical point of view. Once you have accepted that incorruptible souls exist which are the essences of human persons, it is not presumptuous to claim that human persons live forever due to soul's incorruptible nature, whereas human bodies disintegrate.

Belief in bodily resurrection, on the contrary, seems to be another matter altogether. It seems at the very least an odd belief indeed. Even its proponents are aware of this. Tertullian, one of the first Christian theologians in the West, wrote famously that "the resurrection of Jesus Christ is certain—because it is impossible".[4]

Of course, Tertullian wants to provoke his pagan contemporaries. Nevertheless, he expresses a view which most of his contemporaries (and probably the majority today) deemed to be true: the bodily resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth seems to be impossible, if taken literally. The problem of the resurrection of the body multiplies, for it concerns not only the unique person with human and divine nature, Jesus Christ. Christian faith claims also that all human persons who have ever lived at earth will be resurrected. Jesus Christ's resurrection is the anticipation of all people's resurrection. The early church affirmed this belief explicitly in the Nicene and the Apostle's Creeds. As documents summarizing the most important beliefs of Christian faith, the creeds make clear that the doctrine of bodily resurrection is not an addendum to Christian faith but belongs at its very core. Karl Barth, one of the most influential theologians of the previous century, for instance, underlines that the doctrine of bodily resurrection is *the* basic axiom of Christian faith: It is the key to the whole.[5] And Adolph Harnack, the eminent church historian from the turn of the twentieth century, says that "the resurrection of Jesus became the sure pledge of the resurrection of all believers, that is of their real personal resurrection. No one at the beginning thought of a mere immortality of the spirit."[6]

Why, then, is it apparently so more difficult to believe in the resurrection of the body than in the survival of a disembodied soul or spirit?

People are inclined to think that the body I have this afternoon is the same body that I had a week ago and that I will have at the end of the week. The view that I have one single body during my entire lifetime does not imply, however, that my body cannot change. The body I have now is very different from the body I had even a few days ago. At a very small scale it changed in size, weight and physiological composition. The body is continuously changing but nevertheless

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[4] See Tertullian, *De Carne Christi* (London: SPCK, 1956), 5, 4.

[5] See Robert Dale Dawson, *The Resurrection in Karl Barth* (Aldershot: Asghate, 2007).

[6] Adolph Harnack, *History of Dogma*, trans. Neil Buchanan (7 vols, New York: Dover 1961), vol. 1, p. 85. The German original, [4]1909, says: "Die Auferstehung Jesu wurde somit zum sicheren Unterpfand der Auferstehung aller Gläubigen, und zwar ihrer realen, persönlichen Auferstehung. An eine blosse Unsterblichkeit des Geistes hat im Anfang Niemand gedacht, selbst die nicht, welche die Vergänglichkeit der sinnlichen Menschennatur annahmen."

remains the same body. A good reason supporting such a view is the distinction between numerical identity and qualitative identity: when a thing changes, it remains numerically the same but becomes different in its qualities. In the process of change new acquired bodily qualities connect to already existing ones. So the same body has different qualities at different times, but these changes do not result in the old body's ceasing to exist and a new one's being generated.

Is the resurrection of the body an instance of qualitative change? In light of the aforementioned distinction it would not be particularly bold to claim that our earthly body metamorphoses into a new one by acquiring heavenly "incorruptible" properties and losing the earthly "corruptible" ones. There would just be one more—admittedly miraculous—process of change in the long chain of natural bodily changes.

The reason, however, why this traditional metaphysical solution to the problem of change cannot be applied to the Christian doctrine of resurrection is that death is the *definite* end of a human being's existence on earth. If human persons are bodily beings which die and thereby cease to exist, then their bodies decay, are eaten by animals or destroyed in the fire of a crematory. Thanks to common sense and science, it is safe to say that nothing remains of human bodies after a certain period of time. There is simply no physical entity left which could acquire new qualities.

Nevertheless, the creeds hold that the very same human persons who lived on earth will rise and exist again *in bodily form*. That is, the doctrine of bodily resurrection seems to admit that there is a *gap* between the earthly bodily existence of human persons and their resurrection. This gap is the reason why it is so much more difficult to believe in bodily resurrection than in the survival of the soul: many see no possibility to bridge the gap which death rips open between pre- and post-mortem human existence. There is simply nothing left of our human bodily existence which could cross the gap so as to preserve numerical identity. God certainly has the power to create a new body which is a duplicate of the earthly one. Such a duplicate, however, would not be *the same* body which existed at a determinate time in the history of the cosmos. The earthly body and its heavenly duplicate would have different histories: the latter was never on earth, the former never in heaven. There is thus not one and the same entity with different qualities but two numerically different entities with different qualities. Even for an all-powerful being it seems impossible to bring back into existence an entity which utterly ceased to exist. Nor could God suspend the metaphysical principle that the same entity cannot come into existence twice.

If these thoughts are correct, then Tertullian's statement is not just provocative rhetoric but makes a crucial point: The Christian doctrine of bodily resurrection seems to require a metaphysical impossibility in order to be true. If there is no identity between the pre-mortem and the post-mortem body in the sense that this very same body exists on earth and in heaven *and* in between, then the claim that the body will be raised again seems to be impossible. To believe a doctrine which apparently presupposes something metaphysically impossible is tantamount to having an irrational belief. If a central element of Christian faith is irrational, then Christian

faith will be at the very least severely impoverished in terms of its ability to be rationally justified. So Christians face the challenge of showing that their doctrine of bodily resurrection is not irrational. It is incumbent upon them to provide arguments which show convincingly that the gap between the annihilation of the human person in this world and her bodily resurrection in the next world can be bridged.

Bridging the Gap

It was very early that Christian theologians offered a way to meet this challenge: after death the body decays but the last material particles constituting our body continue to exist. On the Last Day, God gathers up these very last material particles which once constituted our body and reassembles them into a new heavenly body which he then rejoins with the surviving soul. So body and soul once more constitute the same single human person who once existed on earth. Brian E. Daley calls this view "anthropology of composition": in order to be raised there must be both material and spiritual identity between the earthly and heavenly person.[7]

One problem with this view is that particles constituting one body at t_1 might constitute another body at t_2. Take, for instance, the often discussed example of cannibalism: if a cannibal eats a fellow human person, so he incorporates particles into his body which formerly belonged to another body. On the resurrection day both the cannibal and his victim shall be raised again. But there are certain particles belonging to both bodies: how shall God proceed? God has to decide first who owns which particles. There are a few possible criteria: the first body has priority over all successive bodies to which a given particle belonged. Or the last body has priority over the previous ones. Or female bodies over male bodies or saints over sinners or believers over non-believers. The apparent problem is that there are no obviously objective criteria for deciding, leaving God to solve this puzzle arbitrarily. In a second step, then, the missing particles have to be replaced with newly created ones. Then, however, no resurrected body with new particles is identical to the earthly body, strictly speaking. Athenagoras, a Christian apologist from the second century, was well aware of this problem. He invokes medical reasons for solving it. According to him each animal has a food suited to its nature. Only appropriate parts of the food can be absorbed so as to remain permanently in an animal's body. Human beings cannot absorb human flesh, for it is not suitable to them. So the particles constituting a human body could never end up as particles constituting another fellow human person's body as well.[8] In a similar vein, early

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[7] Brian E. Daley, "A Hope for Worms", in Ted Peters, Robert J. Russell and Michael Welker (eds), *Resurrection. Theological and Scientific Assessments* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2002), pp. 136–64, p. 148.

[8] See Athenagoras, *De Resurrectione Mortuorum*, ed. Miroslav Marcovich, Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae, Volume 53 (Leiden, Boston and Köln: Brill, 2000), Ch. 4–8.

rabbis taught that an indestructible part of the spinal cord will be the toehold for the reconstruction of the resurrection body.[9]

There are good reasons to look for other models of bodily resurrection. As far as we know, neither Athenagoras' nor the rabbi's accounts work: there are no incorruptible parts of the human body and is it possible that certain particles belong to more than one human body. In the light of the length of human history it is even very probable to assume that some particles making up human bodies now belonged to other bodies previously.

Peter van Inwagen came up with a different approach for avoiding these problems.[10] On their deaths men *apparently* cease to exist and human bodies *apparently* decompose. At the moment of each human person's death God clandestinely removes the dying person, whom He replaces with a simulacrum which falls prey to the natural destiny of material things: it rots and decays. The person, however, continues to live or is revivified in eternity. The problem of the gap does not arise, giving way instead to just the sort of miraculous intervention which an almighty God could enact. Such an intervention, however, would at any rate be necessary to guarantee the resurrection of an entity which is not immortal by nature. According to van Inwagen, nothing in the creeds contradicts his story. The downside of this model is that it requires God systematically to deceive human beings. Van Inwagen speculates that one reason for so much divine trickery might be God's will to leave enough freedom for voluntary faith. Imagine that a world in which the body-snatching scenario were apparent to all: in such a world all would believe in the existence of God for the simple reason that God's existence would amount to the best explanation for the observed phenomenon of body-snatching.

Van Inwagen's solution for the problems plaguing the reassembly theory is ingenious. Nevertheless, serious troubles remain: the body-snatching model seems to imply either that no person ever dies, strictly speaking, or that resurrection amounts to a process similar to reanimation. If we interpret van Inwagen's model in the former sense, then the dying person is brought to heaven where she continues to live in a transformed and glorified way. Such a story, however, apparently contradicts the Christian doctrine that human persons truly die. The creeds confess that Jesus suffered death and was buried. There is no hint in these documents that these statements should not be taken at face value. In the latter sense, instead, the corpse is brought to heaven and brought back to life again. This gives the event of resurrection a very "biological touch". Human persons seem to be bound indissolubly to the body they had at the moment of death and the continuance of the biological functioning of the body seems to be all that truly matters for resurrection. Resurrection comes close to the reanimation of the

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[9] Caroline Walker Bynum, *The Resurrection of the Body in Western Christianity. 200–1336* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), p. 55.

[10] Peter van Inwagen, "The Possibility of Resurrection", *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion*, 9 (1978): pp. 114–21, reprinted in Paul Edwards (ed.), Immortality (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books 1997), 242–6.

deceased, along the lines of the resurrections reported in the gospels of Lazarus and of Jaïrus' daughter.

In order to avoid some of the problems beleaguering van Inwagen's approach, Dean Zimmerman came up with the so called "falling elevator model".[11] Zimmerman's idea was to use van Inwagen's materialist metaphysics of human persons while developing a model by which God is able to raise human persons again without secretly replacing their dying body with a simulacrum. According to this metaphysics it is essential for human persons that they are organisms; the matter constituting an organism is caught up in a special event—a Life—which continues as long as the organism exists. Life is self-maintaining, that is, earlier stages in a Life tend to cause their successive stages. This process of continuous causation is direct and immanent; the immanent causal relations cannot pass through anything external to the organism, such as a teleportation machine. It is imaginable that one's psyche can pass through such a device and reappear elsewhere in a new organism. But it is hard to see how a material organism could survive such a procedure; all that could be accomplished is the generation of a duplicate organism formed, from the original pattern, either out of old or new particles. Given this framework, Zimmerman proposes the following solution: God could endow the particles constituting a human organism with a miraculous "budding" power. In the moment of death the particles continue to immanently-cause later stages in the existence of these particles on the one hand. The dying body becomes a corpse in a process we are familiar with. But, on the other hand, thanks to the budding power, in the next world the organism reappears. So the living organism goes one way, ending up in the next world, and at the same time the particles of the very same organism immanently cause a corpse in this world. The particles undergo a kind of fission process while the organism's Life remains one and the same.

Zimmerman's approach avoids positing massive deception on God's part. The matter of the human body stays in this world. Nevertheless, nagging doubts remain about this approach. David B. Hershenov pointed out that in normal life-processes new particles gradually get integrated in the organism's body.[12] Zimmerman's budding event does not allow for a slow replacement of old particles over a certain period of time but is more reminiscent of a very unusual birth scenario. He concludes:

> The entity in heaven is a clone of the deceased, and thus Zimmerman's account provides us with no more immortality than that which comes from an identical twin surviving our death. And whatever consolation that may give us as we are dying, it is not a case of true immortality.[13]

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[11] Dean Zimmerman, "The Compatibility of Materialism and Survival: The "Falling Elevator" Model", *Faith and Philosophy*, 16 (1999): pp. 194–212.

[12] David Hershenov, "Van Inwagen, Zimmerman, and the Materialist Conception of Resurrection", *Religious Studies*, 38 (2002): pp. 451–69, pp. 460–3.

[13] Ibid., p. 463.

If I understand him correctly, Hershenov objects that Zimmerman's account is unable to guarantee personal identity strictly speaking. All we are left with is a kind of a closest continuer theory. The organism showing up in the next world is the closest continuer of the organism that died in this world. The corpse cannot be said to be the closest continuer of the organism that died, for it is essential to an organism to be alive and the only organism alive in this story is the one in the next world. To do justice to Zimmerman's model it must be noted that Zimmerman is well aware of the problem of a closest continuer. However, he accepts it willingly. For Zimmerman this is simply the metaphysical price which attends a metaphysical framework such as van Inwagenian's.[14]

Those unwilling to pay the price of a closest continuer theory might embrace a four-dimensionalist materialist conception of the human person. According to this approach a human person is composed of various temporal parts. Different entities are able to share the same temporal parts. If a fission scenario occurs, then according to four-dimensionalism, it becomes apparent that there have been two entities all along sharing the same temporal parts till the fission event and then dividing up by occupying different temporal parts from this moment on. Imagine, for instance, the human person John^{P}, composed of temporal parts resulting from a lifetime of eighty years. According to four-dimensionalism, there is not one entity, John^{P}, but rather at least two different entities, namely the human person John^{P}, and the human organism of John^{P}, alias John^{org}. The difficulty in distinguishing between these two entities stems from the fact that, during his earthly lifetime, the temporal parts making up John^{P} are all shared by John^{org}.

When John^{P} dies, the linked lives of both entities, John^{P} and John^{org}, come to an end. A fission event occurs: saying that John^{P} is raised from the dead means John^{P} is succeeded by another part, John living in eternity, alias John$^{\infty}$. So, it can be said that John^{P} continues to live in heaven because of his successive part John$^{\infty}$. The organism John^{org}, instead, remains on earth and is followed by temporal parts resulting in John^{org}'s corpse, alias John†. John$^{\infty}$ does not stage-share any of his temporal parts with a living human organism such as John^{org}; rather he has features of what the gospels report from the body of the risen Christ. How four-dimensionalist approaches account for the causal linkage between different temporal parts such as John^{P} and John$^{\infty}$, allowing these parts to form one persisting entity, is a matter of dispute which can be neglected at this point. It could be imagined that God commands there to be the right causal linkage.

A four-dimensionalist approach in this vein can easily address the difficulties raised about the relation between the different pre- and post-resurrection bodies. Hud Hudson, defender of such an approach, writes:

> owing to this very liberal account of composition, our Four-Dimensionalist Universalist is in a unique position to claim that no matter how profound are the differences between two temporally-non overlapping items, we will always

[14] See Zimmerman's article in this volume (Chapter 2).

> be correct in our supposition that there is some persisting object that has them each as temporal parts, for even when those items are wholly unlike one another and separated by a significant temporal gap, some continuant or other is trivially guaranteed by the Universalist consequence that any two temporally discontinuous things have a mereological sum.[15]

According to such an approach the problem of personal identity mutates into a problem of different temporal parts overlapping in such a way that the mereological sum of these parts forms one single entity. Unquestionably the four-dimensionalist approach offers a very elegant solution to many metaphysical problems besetting the doctrine of bodily resurrection, especially the problem of gappy existence.

But like every metaphysical theory, four-dimensionalism comes with a price many are unwilling to pay.

Apart from peculiar metaphysical worries[16], the main motivation for rejecting a four-dimensionalist solution comes probably from common sense: in everyday life we do not conceive of ourselves as sums of temporal parts. We experience ourselves not as four-dimensional space-time-worms but rather as three-dimensional beings. E.J. Lowe voices this assumption:

> And even if we accept that temporal-parts theories provide a unitary explanatory framework in which problems of qualitative change, fission, and vagueness can conveniently be dealt with, we have to wonder whether this is enough to justify our acceptance of an idea so apparently obscure and contrary to common sense as that of temporal parts.[17]

In light of this criticism of four-dimensionalism the impression arises that each account of bodily resurrection comes with a high cost. Either people do not die literally, or the resurrected person is the closest continuer of the deceased person, or identity claims mutate into technical reflections about mereology. No solution is able to preserve identity in the strict sense.

Maybe, someone might argue, bodily resurrection simply takes a miracle and no informative metaphysical conditions for explaining identity between the pre- and post-mortem body can be given. There are no metaphysical conditions justifying our belief about identity between earthly and heavenly human existence which do not already presuppose this very same identity for which they are claimed to be conditions. Thus, a modest agnosticism about the problem of personal identity and resurrections is appropriate.

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[15] Hud Hudson, *A Materialist Metaphysics of the Human Person* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001), p. 190.

[16] See, for instance, Michael Rea, "Temporal Parts Unmotivated", *The Philosophical Review*, 107 (1998): pp. 225–60.

[17] Ernest Jonathan Lowe, *A Survey of Metaphysics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 57.

Trenton Merricks is the proponent of such an "agnostic approach". According to him we may have intuitions that the way in which laws of nature structure this-worldly occurrences necessarily excludes the possibility of personal identity over gaps. Do such intuitions, however, justify us in holding that there are no metaphysically necessary conditions for identity over time which can possibly span temporal gaps? This question does not refer to nomological but to modal intuitions. Unluckily, our capacities for discerning what is principally possible and impossible do not lead to clear judgements concerning personal identity—not even in this world, as the many well known thought experiments about fission- and fusion-cases show. Therefore, according to Merricks, a modest agnosticism is the most reasonable position regarding criteria of identity in general and the possibility of bodily resurrection in particular. Admittedly, it cannot be shown that a resurrected person satisfies a bodily criterion for identity with some deceased person. But this negative result is less alarming than is generally thought. Since we seem to lack clear criteria even in this world, Christian faith is no worse off than our ordinary assumptions about personal identity.[18]

This philosophical conclusion is meager but it should not dishearten us. Belief in resurrection does not derive primarily from philosophical reflections about personal identity and temporal gaps but is the direct consequence of divine revelation. Merricks underlines:

> to the extent that revelation justifies belief in the resurrection, I think it also justifies belief in bodily identity across a temporal gap. So it likewise justifies the conclusion that there are no necessary conditions for bodily identity that cannot possibly be satisfied across a temporal gap.[19]

At the end, all hope for bodily resurrection resides in God's promise to raise all human beings again as Jesus Christ was raised from the dead with a glorified body. This hope is not a desperate one, for it is reasonable to believe that God, an almighty and perfectly good being, would not make a promise that is beyond his power to keep. So we are justified in holding that bodily resurrection is possible even though it takes a miraculous divine intervention for accomplishing it. At this point the same question can be asked which concludes Mavrodes's article: "But who knows whether that is philosophy?"[20]

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[18] A very similar point was made by George Mavrodes, "The Life Everlasting and the Bodily Criterion of Identity", *Noûs*, 11 (1977): pp. 27–39.

[19] Trenton Merricks, "The Resurrection of the Body", in Thomas P. Flint and Michael C. Rea (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophical Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 476–90, p. 481.

[20] Mavrodes, "Life Everlasting", p. 39.

Theological Reservations

Merricks's and Mavrodes's accounts might sound far too theological for many philosophers. Nevertheless, most theologians are purportedly rather dissatisfied with the accounts put forward by analytic philosophers. From a theologian's perspective, the accounts may be apt for solving certain metaphysical problems but they are inappropriate for genuine theological purposes. Here are some reasons why this might be so: as indicated already, a strong materialist conception of the human body levels the difference between this life and the next. If the same particles get reassembled, then the laws of nature, which are presupposed by the existence of particles in this world, probably ought to obtain in the afterlife as well. If human persons are necessarily biological organisms, then resurrection seems to be a divine form of re-animation and eternal life a kind of divine fountain of youth. To most theological ears this sounds too materialist, biological, and this-worldly. The British physicist and theologian John Polkinghorne makes this point very clear:

> It is not necessary, however, that the 'matter' of these bodies should be the same matter as makes up the flesh of this present world. In fact, it is essential that is should not be. That is because the material bodies of this world are intrinsically subject to mortality and decay. If the resurrected life is to be a true fulfillment, and not just a repeat of an ultimate futile history, the bodies of that world-to-come must be different, for they will be everlastingly redeemed from mortality.[21]

Many theologians would thus be pleased to see whether an alternative, less materialist, conception of bodily resurrection could be developed without converging into a version of Platonic or Cartesian soul-body-dualism. The theologian's desideratum conceives "of the person as 'more than' the body, and as a 'centred self' distinct in some ways from it and its experiences, without ever being separable from it."[22]

Furthermore, such an alternative account ought to be essentially relational. So far, approaches in the analytic tradition appear to theologians to be individualistic and self-engaged. After an analysis of anthropological approaches ranging from substance dualism to non-reductive physicalism, theologian Stuart Palmer comes to the conclusion that they all need further development in terms of "a holistic and relational understanding of personal identity."[23]

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[21] John Polkinghorne, *Science and Theology: An Introduction* (London and Minneapolis: SPCK and Fortress, 1998), pp. 115–16.

[22] Paul S. Fiddes, *The Promised End. Eschatology in Theology and Literature* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), p. 91.

[23] Stuart Palmer, "Christian Life and Theories of Human Nature", in Joel B. Green and Stuart L. Palmer (eds), *In Search of the Soul. Four Views of the Mind-Body-Problem* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2005), pp. 189–215, p. 214. On the importance of relationships for an appropriate theological anthropology see also Alistair I. McFayden,

To sum up: the philosophical discussion explicates the problems concerning the nature of human persons, diachronic identity, and God's role in resurrection. Philosophers are aware that an omnipotent God could accomplish the resurrection of the body in other ways than those which their models propose. As philosophers, however, it is hard to come up with "more godlike" solutions, since this would transcend the field of philosophy. So theologians should take seriously the metaphysical problems which philosophers try to overcome with their models. They should aim at incorporating valuable philosophical insights in their own accounts and see whether more theologically appropriate models can be spelled out thereafter.

An Exceedingly Brief Suggestion How to Proceed

In light of theology's wish list, the phenomenological tradition might help to avert the suspicion that the philosophical discussion of the metaphysics of resurrection is too materialist and self-centered.[24] The phenomenological tradition distinguishes between the concept of the human body conceived as something a subject experiences directly because it is *her* body, and as a material entity describable from a scientific point of view. In the former sense the human body is something you know about subjectively. In the latter sense, instead, you perceive the human body as something objective. Now, the former approach to the human body is necessary for an adequate understanding of specific capacities of the human person such as first-person-perspective, self-representation, and subjectivity. The latter approach, according to phenomenology, is instead the consequence of a certain practice, such as that of seeing something that is by nature essentially subjective as an object in order to study it scientifically.

This twofold approach avoids strong materialist conceptions of the human person. Phenomenology teaches us that the concept of bodily resurrection is the notion of an embodied human person not that of a physical body as accounted for in scientific theory. In other words: it does not contradict the creeds to claim that bodily resurrection requires *embodiment* but not the physical realization of one's body as we are familiar with it from this world. We do not need an "anthropology of composition" as the Church Fathers believed in order to account for bodily resurrection. Accordingly, to rise again with a transfigured body means that ascriptions of physical or biological qualities cease definitively.

Embodiment suffices for conceiving of the human person as an individual who was fundamentally embedded in relationships on earth and still is so in the afterlife. The doctrine of the resurrection of the body underlines that the human

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The Call to Personhood. A Christian Theory of the Individual in Social Relationships (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

[24] See Thomas Schärtl, "Was heißt 'Auferstehung des Leibes'?", in Franz Gruber et. al. (eds), *Homo animal materiale. Die materielle Bestimmtheit des Menschen* (Wien: Wagner, 2008), pp. 105–49, and his contribution in this volume (Chapter 6).

person does not "pull off" her history and earthly existence in the afterlife. Rather, these become integral parts of the communal inter-personal reality which serves as the interpretation of the eschatological fulfillment of the cosmos. The basis for human personhood is not physical reality but embodied existence which is able to participate in a communal reality created and maintained by God. Following the theologian Karl Rahner, the notion of the body refers to the symbolic reality of man, that is, what a human person becomes because of a specific history and life.[25]

Embodiment indicates, so to speak, that human persons are not isolated "pure" souls but subjects whose nature is to forge experiences by entering into relationships and taking up a determinate perspective toward the world they occupy. The concept of embodied human person embraces both the notion of a human subject capable of experiences and that of experiences made by this very human subject, through which that subject becomes the kind of human subject she is.

One might ask at this point how to conceive of embodiment if not in terms of physical realization. In all humility we can admit that we do not yet know. It seems reasonable to concede that we presently lack the conceptual resources for answering this question in detail: We live in a physical world and cannot clearly conceive either of an eschatologically transformed world in partial discontinuity with the actual one nor of ourselves as being bodily but non-physical.

We can aim, however, to specify the conditions that must obtain in order for bodily resurrection to be metaphysically and theologically feasible. This task leaves room for creativity to develop different sorts of models which meet these conditions. Such models indicate that an informative defense of the doctrine of resurrection is available even though we are not in a position to specify which mechanisms God actually uses for raising us from the dead.[26]

The contributions in this volume follow this line of reasoning. They dispute the claim that bodily resurrection from the dead is a metaphysical impossibility by offering possible scenarios in which it occurs. These scenarios are a lively expression of the old dictum *fides quaerens intellectum*. They neither prevent nor impugn the faith of those believers who trust that a God who created the cosmos *ex nihilo* can also sustain human persons in existence when the physical world as it is known comes to an end. On the contrary, such scenarios can aid believers in considering more precisely which prospects for accomplishing this feat are the most promising. At the same time, non-believers are not exempt from considering these possible scenarios: Even if they do not see it as a matter of existential importance, reflecting on the scenarios put forward presents a provocative intellectual journey. It stretches the imaginative powers in thinking about what might happen to us after our earthly existence comes to an end.

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[25] See Karl Rahner, "The Theology of the Symbol", *Theological Investigations 4: More Recent Writings* (23 vols, Baltimore, MD: Helicon Press, 1966), pp. 245–52.

[26] Christian Tapp highlights this point in his contribution in this volume (Chapter 12).

Summaries of Contributions

Stephen T. DAVIS, 'Resurrection, Personal Identity and the Will of God': Davis places God in the centre of his paper: he argues that God is not only the creator but also the sustainer and preserver of all contingently existing things. In other words, personal identity through time is based not just on the person's immanent causal powers to persist but also on the fact that God sustains and upholds the person by recognizing and calling her. The will of God is, so to say, the "further fact" needed to resolve the troubling cases of personal identity-indeterminacy. Davis elaborates his approach by ruling out various possible misunderstandings of the notion of God as sustainer and preserver of all contingently existing things.

Dean ZIMMERMAN, 'Bodily Resurrection: The Falling Elevator Model Revisited': Zimmerman's falling elevator model is widely discussed within the metaphysics of resurrection. In this paper Zimmerman explains in detail his attitude towards the model, including his thought about human organisms. Then he responds to objections raised against the model by William Hasker, David Hershenov, and Eric Olson. He argues that the model is still one way in which God could accomplish that the resurrected body represents a continued life of the earthly body despite the criticisms raised.

Eric T. OLSON, 'Immanent Causation and Life After Death': the paper concerns the metaphysical possibility of life after death. It argues that the existence of a psychological duplicate is insufficient for resurrection, even if psychological continuity suffices for personal identity. That is because our persistence requires immanent causation. There are at most three ways of having life after death: If we are immaterial souls; if we are snatched bodily from our deathbeds; or if there is immanent causation "at a distance" as Zimmerman proposes—but this requires an ontology of temporal parts.

Godehard BRÜNTRUP, '3.5 Dimensionalism and Survival: A Process Ontological Approach'. Brüntrup develops a metaphysical framework which combines aspects of a four-dimensionalist space-time-ontology with a presentism. The key intuition is that the ontological base level of reality is thoroughly four-dimensional in the sense of a stage theory. This base level is a level of concrete event-like particulars. If ordered in a causal relation which establishes genidentity, this base level presents the constitution base for abstract time-invariant patterns. These patterns configure endurants, such as the human person. This metaphysical picture allows for a rather robust common-sense view of personal identity through time. It also is capable of accounting for post-mortem existence without having to make use of the notion of a Cartesian soul or the notion of a resurrected body identical to the earthly physical body.

Hud HUDSON, 'Multiple Location and Single Location Resurrection': Hudson's approach depends on recent metaphysical considerations about the relation between space-time regions and the objects occupying them. The basic insight says that a resurrected human person might be conceived as an entity located either in two different space-time regions or in one scattered region with

two (salient) temporally connected parts. On this view, the whole human being consists of a terrestrial part on the one hand and of a celestial part on the other hand with different spatio-temporal properties accordingly. Though this approach comes packaged with costs of its own, the resulting metaphysical framework may turn out to be of considerable interest to theologians for being able to account for personal identity though partial discontinuity.

Thomas SCHÄRTL, 'Bodily Resurrection: When Metaphysics Needs Phenomenology': this paper combines the analytic debates on the metaphysics of resurrection with insights from phenomenology. Schärtl argues that phenomenology helps to develop a clearer notion of the raised "spiritual body" following the notion of "natural body": A natural body is not understood primarily as an object describable entirely by science but as the object of our direct perception and our primary experience. The point is that the human person has to be "embodied" in order to exist but it is not necessary for it to be physically embodied. Finally, Schärtl indicates how his combination of analytic metaphysics and phenomenology might contribute to an amended version of the "resurrection in death" theology as well.

Johannes HAAG, 'Personhood, Bodily Self-Ascription, and Resurrection. A Kantian Approach': Haag defends the claim that ascribing states of consciousness to ourselves is only possible if we are able to apply to ourselves predicates signifying bodily states as well. Understood as a transcendental thesis, this means that bodily self-ascription is an enabling condition for self-ascribing states of consciousness. This transcendental thesis unfolds by way of reference to the philosophical work of I. Kant, G. Evans, and P.F. Strawson. In light of these results, Haag asks which concepts of embodiment and self-reference underlie the eschatological transformation of the human person.

Bruno NIEDERBACHER, 'The Same Body Again? Thomas Aquinas on the Numerical Identity of the Resurrected Body': Niederbacher discusses Thomas Aquinas's influential teaching about bodily resurrection. Apparently there are two rival views in Aquinas's teaching, one more materialist, the other more dualist. The materialist says: what makes for the numerical identity of the body is that some elemental parts of which the body is composed during the earthly life will be part of the resurrected body. The dualist says: what makes for the numerical identity of the body is nothing other than the substantial form. Whenever the substantial form is embodied, this body will be of its flesh. Niederbacher argues that Aquinas should opt for the "dualist" view, in order to maintain the consistency of his overall account and to meet systematic objections.

Lynne RUDDER BAKER, 'Persons and the Metaphysics of Resurrection': theories of the human person differ greatly in their ability to underwrite a metaphysics of resurrection. Baker's paper compares and contrasts a number of such views in light of the Christian doctrine of resurrection. In a Christian framework, resurrection requires that the same person who exists on earth also exists in an afterlife, that a postmortem person be embodied, and that the existence of a postmortem person is brought about by a miracle. Baker advocates the Constitution View of a human person as a metaphysical basis for resurrection.

Josef QUITTERER, 'Hylomorphism and the Constitution View': by analyzing the problems which bodily resurrection poses for the Constitution View of persons, Quitterer concludes that Hylomorphism encounters similar problems. He proposes reformulating the Scholastic concept of the soul as the basic capacity for everything that goes into a human being's life, including the capacity to have a first-person perspective. He argues that the advantage of this approach over the Constitution View lies in the fact that the explanation proffered by the soul embraces both mental and bodily functions. Thus, within a Hylomorphic framework, it belongs to the inner logic of the concept of the soul to guarantee not only the survival of a first-person perspective but the resurrection of the body as well.

Kevin CORCORAN, 'Constitution, Resurrection and Relationality': Corcoran's paper points out that the Constitution View of the human person ought to be congenial to those stressing the relational character of personhood—a feature more salient in the continental tradition than in analytic philosophy. Corcoran addresses the issue of relationality head-on: first, he argues that relations figure crucially in the causal story of the emergence of a first-person perspective, because a social context seems required for the development of such a perspective. Second, he underlines that relationality is essential to a Christian understanding of eschatological transformation since we are created in the image of God, a God who exists in three persons engaged in mutually reciprocated, intimate, perichoretic relations of love.

Christian TAPP, 'Joseph Ratzinger on Resurrection Identity': Tapp elaborates cornerstones for a Christian understanding of eschatology. He does so by analyzing the scholarly work on eschatology of the current pope of the Roman Catholic Church, Benedict XVI. He emphasizes the following points: (i) the resurrected body is transformed but is somehow identical to our natural body; resurrection thus means fulfillment and perfection for the material aspects of the world; (ii) the traditional scholastic concept of the "human soul" is valuable for systematic theological discourse if "purified" from strong dualist commitments; (iii) the ultimate fulfilment of man is dialogical and relational both to other human beings and to God. Thus, Christian eschatology essentially has a communitarian aspect.

Nikolaus WANDINGER, 'The Rationale behind Purgatory': according to Wandinger's approach, on the "day of wrath" the prosecution's part is played by the victims of evil actions themselves. Extrapolating from human interaction as we know it, it seems very likely that the encounter of victims and culprits will result in mutual accusations. If heaven is the harmonious community between God and all the humans saved, then only those who have ended their mutual accusation can enter into it. Wandinger asks which features of the human person are essential to such an interpretation of purgatory and the salvific actions of God. He points at the importance of being embodied, enjoying a first-person-perspective, having certain standards of rationality, and the ability of human and divine persons to enter into relationships.

Robert John RUSSELL, 'Scientific insights into the Problem of Personal Identity in the Context of a Christian Theology of Resurrection and Eschatology':

Russell asks how the belief in individual eschatology affects our understanding of the eschatological transformation of all reality. If bodily resurrection means transformation (and not resuscitation or spiritual flight), and if transformation includes elements of continuity against a deeper background of discontinuity at the matter side of creation, then there must be some elements of continuity and discontinuity in reality as we now know it. Russell presents possible models of continuity and eschatological transformation of the cosmos by taking into consideration cosmological conceptions of space-time on the one hand and theological models on the other hand.