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## Silas N. Langley, DEATH, RESURRECTION, AND TRANSPORTER BEAMS: AN INTRODUCTION TO FIVE CHRISTIAN VIEWS ON LIFE AFTER DEATH

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any possibly instantiated essential kind, it is at least possible that there should be an instance of that kind that exists for a reason" (171). This seems a difficult claim to deny. Premise 3 is unassailable. The critic, then, should probably fall back on defending the claim that it is not, in fact, possible for there to be something divine. But this, too, is difficult to argue. Smith concludes by defending the "other" argument against a couple of Lost Island-style attacks—successfully, it seems to me.

In the 900 years since Anselm wrote his *Proslogion*, there has been a large and steady stream of ink spilt over analyzing the arguments in chapters 2 and 3 and in the *Replies*. Smith's accomplishment is impressive on two counts. He has uncovered something *new* in those oft-read texts, and he has presented his discovery as a plausible argument for the existence of God—plausible, at least, to those of us sympathetic to an Anselmian approach and hence to arguments which operate entirely within the confines of what is "conceivable."

*Death, Resurrection, and Transporter Beams: An Introduction to Five Christian Views on Life after Death*, by Silas N. Langley. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2014. 231 pages.

WILLIAM HASKER, Huntington University

You are the sole remaining passenger on a spaceship that is programmed to self-destruct in one minute. You have before you a control panel with five buttons; each button represents a possible way in which you might be transported from the doomed ship to the friendly surface of a nearby planet. You need to choose which button to push; one, and only one, of them will bring you safely to the planet. The ship's guidebook gives some hints, but unfortunately it lacks clear instructions concerning which is the correct button. Time is running out. So begins Silas N. Langley's *Death, Resurrection, and Transporter Beams*.

The five buttons represent five different Christian views concerning the way in which we survive bodily death. They are roughly as follows:

*Soul-flight*: You are your soul, your body is just a shell. Your soul is transported to the planet; on arrival, you get a new body.

*Particle Beam*: You are your body, which is disassembled, teleported to your destination, and reassembled.

*Data Stream*: Your body is scanned and all your physical and mental characteristics are registered in a stream of data that is transmitted to the planet, where you are reconstructed and continue your life.

*Saved by the Soul:* As in soul-flight, you travel to the planet simply as a soul, but on arrival the soul re-creates the body, which is in fact the very same body because it is made by the same soul.

*Surfing in Slipstream:* This button will shift you into another dimension, where you will have “some kind of weird dimensional body” during the flight to the planet. Upon arrival, you will return to this dimension with a new and better body.

(Some of these options are sub-divided later on.) Langley admits, of course, that God’s ability to resurrect us does not depend on our having the right theory about our survival. He claims, however, that how we think about this will have an effect on our lives here and now. (See Part Three below for more on this.)

Following the introduction, the first main section is “Framing the Puzzle,” a process which takes place in three stages. The first, or outer frame, is the Bible—which is, of course, the ship’s guidebook mentioned earlier. This chapter provides a brief but useful summary of biblical teaching concerning the afterlife, with notice taken of matters that remain controversial. The middle frame is science; the main emphasis here is on the scientific evidence that closely links our mental states and processes with what goes on in our neurons. It is acknowledged that this evidence makes it more difficult, though not necessarily impossible, to believe in an immaterial soul. The inner frame is philosophy, with emphasis on philosophical concepts and theories concerning personal identity.

Given this, we proceed (in “Filling in the Puzzle”) to examine each of the five “escape plans” mentioned above. Each chapter here begins with a narrative in which, after a brief transition, you find yourself safely on the planet. Once there you find nearby a computer, which prints out a message to you from the Uralive Teletransportation Corporation. It congratulates you on having chosen the correct button to push, and explains the method by which your survival has been accomplished. This leads into a general discussion of the chosen method and its associated mind-body theory, in the light of the information from the three frames. One might quibble a bit here or there, but the discussion is generally accurate and often insightful. (One of Langley’s better lines: According to emergent dualism “Neurons both birth and berth the mind.”) Benefits as well as problems of each theory are discussed in a fair and illuminating manner.

The third main section is “Processing the Puzzle: Implications of the Five Options for the Here and Now.” These implications include the ways we remember the dead and prepare for death, near-death experiences, ghosts, and speaking with the dead, whether there will be animals in heaven, and the way we treat ourselves and others (as “really” souls, as “really” bodies, or as some combination thereof) in our everyday lives. Some might feel that all this does not need to be discussed in a book on the nature of persons, but it is a fact that the various options do have different implications for some of these topics. A final chapter examines the way in

which one might assess the strengths and weaknesses of the various options, and states (quite tentatively) the author's own preference.

As a textbook, Langley's book has quite a bit going for it. It is well and clearly written, and the frequent references to science-fiction provide a good hook to connect with students' interests. There is a lot of philosophical content here, served up in a way that will be largely painless to assimilate. Students, I predict, will enjoy the book and will learn from it. It could be used in one segment of an introduction to philosophy course, or perhaps in a course on philosophy of mind or philosophy of the person. (In this case, it presumably would be supplemented with other texts that provide a more rigorous philosophical approach.) There is, however, a significant limitation that needs to be pointed out. The book is really intended for use at a Christian college or university, in a context where the instructor and most of the students are committed Christians. As has been noted, the first "frame" for the discussion is the Bible, and it is assumed throughout that readers will be concerned to harmonize their own view of these matters with biblical teachings. In a more neutral setting this assumption would just not be viable, and this constitutes a limitation on the book's usefulness as a text. In the contexts for which it is appropriate, it should perform excellent service.

*The Insistence of God: A Theology of Perhaps*, by John D. Caputo. Bloomington/Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2013. 320 pages. \$85.00 (hardback).

MARK MANOLOPOULOS, Monash University

I've said it before and I'll say it again: I love Caputo.<sup>1</sup> I read Caputo for multiple reasons: his passion, his rigor, his style, his accessibility; he is a provocateur, not only motivated by the joy which I suspect he derives from shocking us (a joy that all good thinkers should enjoy), but also because the thoughtful can't avoid scandalizing a herdlike humanity (consider Jesus, Nietzsche, Žižek, etc.). To be sure, I do not love Caputo for his thinking alone: he not only writes about aporias like the gift and

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<sup>1</sup>Refer to, e.g., Mark Manolopoulos, "A Loving Attack on Caputo's 'Caputolism' and his Refusal of Communism," *Political Theology* 14.3 (2013): 378–389; "Caputo in a Nutshell: Two Introductory (and Slightly Critical) Lectures," *Postmodern Openings* 4.2 (2013): 21–43, [http://postmodernopenings.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/3\\_Mark-MANOLOPOULOS\\_PO-Vol-4-No-2.pdf](http://postmodernopenings.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/3_Mark-MANOLOPOULOS_PO-Vol-4-No-2.pdf).