

Fort Bend Christian Academy – Honors Apologetics

**Physicalism-Part 1**

A Thesis Submitted to the  
Teacher and Students of the Honors Apologetics Class

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## Table of Contents

<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Historical Review.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Philosophical Proof of Physicalism.....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>*Philosophical Terms Introduction.....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>* Physicalism of the Mind.....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>* Why Consciousness Must be Physical.....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>* Supervenience and Non-reductive Physicalism.....</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Scientific Poof of Physicalism.....</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>*Neuroscience: The Science Behind Cognition.....</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>*Psychology Introduction.....</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>* The Psychological approach with Imago Dei.....</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>*The Science Behind Free Will.....</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Theological Proof of Physicalism.....</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>*The Argument for Biblical Interpretation.....</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>Conclusion.....</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>Bibliography.....</b>	<b>64</b>

### **Introduction: Physicalism**

Let's get the main point out of the way right at the beginning, there is no soul, and Christians should be the most excited about that fact. Christians should be excited about this because they are the group that has held to the old school Dualist belief that has been going against Science and Philosophy for centuries. The Dualist belief of soul states that humans are not just their bodies, however, they are a connection of a soul and a body that gives them the ability to possess subjective thought. This belief goes against everything that Science is teaching the world today and something needs to be done to prove that it is incorrect. That something is the idea of Physicalism, which states that everything in the mind is physical, or it supervenes upon the physical within the bounds of physics. This idea, at first, seems to go against a God because of the fact that it discounts the soul, however, Christian Theist should be excited about this new idea. The reason for this is that Physicalism allows for the Christian to agree with, and work with modern Science and Philosophy. If it can be proven that Dualism is not actually read from the Bible perfectly then the Christian Theist can actually believe what Science and Philosophy are saying today. They do not have to be at odds all of the time, and if Christians can prove that the physical world can work with the non-physical God then they can show the Atheist that Christian Theology is not what they think it is. For these reasons Physicalism needs to be accepted in today's world by both the Atheist and the Theist. In Christian Theism, the best interpretation of the mind-body problem is the modern scientific and philosophical theory of Physicalism.

This thesis will be split into two parts, the first part being about the Science and Philosophy behind the idea of Physicalism, and the second being behind the Theology of it. This

thesis, being about the Science and Philosophy of Physicalism, will focus on what Philosophy has to say about the physicality of the brain, and Science will focus on how the brain works. These two parts are important because they make the idea of Physicalism seem feasible to both the Christian, and the Atheist.

The Philosophy section will focus on how Philosophy is proving that it is possible for the mind to be completely physical, and ran by the brain. For centuries, people have believed that the brain cannot possibly be the only thing there is within humans lives. Running subjective thought, while also running their everyday lives just seemed like too much to be reduced to just the brain. This made people believe that the brain could not be the only thing that made humans human, and throwing the idea of a God into the mix made it even harder to think that people are just their brains. However, today it is being said within Philosophy, that tough subjects such as whether conscious experience can actually be physical or not, are being answered. In Part 1 of this thesis, conscious experience and the idea of Supervenience will be looked at, in detail, to show just how they prove that humans are truly just their brain states.

Within Science, there will be an in-depth look into the Cerebral Cortex of the brain, specifically, the Prefrontal Cortex of the brain. This is the region where it is known that true decision making takes place, and this is where the ability for subjective reasoning to take place. However, many still believe that there can never be a true identification of whether the brain makes the decision or something that is nonphysical makes the decision, however, because the brain can be seen as causally sufficient for its actions, it can also be said that it is powerful enough to give humans the ability to produce the complex conscious thoughts and decisions that people make everyday.

Part 2 of this thesis will focus on the Theology of this topic, and this part will be for the second semester, and there will be a short introduction to the topic within this part. Christian Theist have long believed in an entity type soul that has been the humans connection to the world that they do not understand, or in other words the nonphysical world that God dwells in. However, now that Physicalism is gaining more prominence in Science and Philosophy, there needs to be a look into Gods word to see about whether there is actual proof within it of a nonphysical soul. There is not much talk of this soul within the Old Testament, however, there is countless mentions of it within the text of the New Testament. What needs to be done is a look into the words that were used in the original translations to see whether they actually meant a nonphysical soul, or just something physical within the body, and this will primarily be proven in part two of this thesis.

Physicalism has been seen by many Christian Theist as being something that goes against what they have held to for centuries. They have hated the new teachings in the realm of psychology and Philosophy of Mind, however they should not be debating with them, but rather helping them. If it can be proven that Physicalism is the right mindset in the world today, then the Christian Theist could easily prove to the Atheist that the idea of a God is not nearly as hard to believe as it is in a Dualist mind set. Physicalism brings the Christian better answers in the debates with Atheist, and this is why they should be excited for its proof.

### **Historical Review: Dualism and Physicalism**

Welcome to the complexities and debates within the world of Philosophy of Mind, and Christian Theism. These two topics have been around for thousands of years, and continue to leave the world in constant debate over what is true within each of them. Philosophy of Mind, through the centuries, has brought up questions that directly look into who people are. Questions such as, what is the connection between mind and body? What is the mind? What is known for certain about mental phenomena? What can be answered about mental phenomena? Philosophy of Mind is directly dealing with questions of nature as well, and these questions are more specific and deal with the nature of things. These include, what is knowledge, and what does human Psychology truly say about a certain characteristic given to humans? Philosophy of Mind is trying to answer the biggest questions in relation to humanity, and they are not looking into the beginning of life or why everyone is here, but rather how everyone works mentally in this world. They work directly with Psychologists and other scientists to try and answer these questions of how everyone behaves in their individual lives. Psychology tries to answer all of these questions with their scientific experiments and trials, but it is not possible to answer some of the questions without the usage of the logic behind Philosophy of Mind. However, empirical science does play a role in Philosophy of Mind, and without it, there would not be nearly as much evidence in favor of certain debates within this form of Philosophy. This is why scientific data fits into the debate quite well, so that humans can have more information on who they are.

Philosophy of Mind also deals with questions that have been stated within Christian Theism. Christian Theism has for many years been one of the biggest suppliers of philosophical

debates in this world, and they have stated their own form of how the world came into existence, and also stated their own forms of how humans have gotten their moral makeup. A supreme being, in this case God, is the answer as to why people were put on this earth and this is the basis for who they are morally. Philosophy has debated this for many centuries, but the topic they have not looked at as frequent as the others is within Philosophy of Mind. Philosophy of Mind has risen up the topics of Dualism and Physicalism, which are ideas trying to answer how humans are made up. They deal most directly with whether the mind is whole, and physically within the body, or whether it is separate and of a different substance than the physical body. How this connects to Christian Theism is quite important because answering this question could potentially shift a popular belief within Christian Theology that people are more than just their material bodies. There has been stated many times within the Bible that humans have a soul that cannot be destroyed, which would lead everyone to believe that the soul that they have must be immaterial, and most likely not within their bodies. This fits into Philosophy of Mind in the belief that the human brain is just not capable of handling subjective thought, and thus a soul would help answer this question. This is seen within the Bible in the multiple times that a soul is explained in a way that it is more than just a persons body. Physicalism, as stated in the introduction, states that people are not more than just their brains and their bodies.

Physicalism is both new and old, and can be seen in the beginning of the Old Testament and in recent times within Philosophy of Mind. Within the time of the Old Testament it was not uncommon to believe that people were just their bodies, considering Jesus had not been resurrected from death and ascended into Heaven. They just believed, back then, that people cannot be more than just themselves because being more than physical is reserved for God and

not mortal beings, however, this train of thought left once there was more preaching of a soul, from Jesus, in the New Testament. However, today Physicalism is gaining more following thanks to Scientific breakthroughs in the realm of Neuroscience and Psychology. The only problem though, is that the idea of the soul needs to be dealt with within Christian Theism, but first a detailed history of both ideas needs to be established so everyone knows who has come up with the major beliefs of both sides and what those beliefs happen to be.

The first topic to be discussed, historically, will be the idea that many believe to actually be held within Bible, and that topic is Dualism. Dualism has been discussed as being in the Bible by many because of Jesus's teachings in the New Testament that people have a soul that cannot be infringed upon. This would seem to go towards Dualism because if it cannot be destroyed, and immaterial things cannot be destroyed by material things, then the soul must be immaterial. This would then prove the idea that humans have a soul and a body that is separate of each other in how they are composed. This is the basic teaching of Dualism, that the mind and the body are separate of each other in composition, and because of this talk of there being a soul in the New Testament, people have thought that the mind and the body must be of a different substance. However, Dualism did not have its beginnings within the New Testament. Jesus talked about a soul, however, he did not create the Philosophical idea that there must be a separation of mind and body. He simply stated the idea that people have souls that cannot be destroyed, even though many debate that these words may have been misinterpreted, but that will be talked about later on in Part 2.

Dualism found its beginnings within Platonic Philosophy taught by the well-respected philosopher, Plato. Plato dealt with many problems within Philosophy, such as Metaphysics and

Epistemology, but he also dealt with the belief of Dualism. He first brought up the idea within his famous writing *Phaedo*, in which Plato proposed that the true substances are not the physical bodies, but rather the eternal forms. Therefore, the physical bodies would then be imperfect copies of these eternal forms.<sup>1</sup> He believed that “these Forms not only make the world possible, they also make it intelligible, because they perform the role of universals.”<sup>2</sup> This connection to being intelligible is important when discussing Philosophy of Mind, because forms must hold firm to intellect in the process of understanding. Plato also shows an argument for the immortality of the soul, but the most important argument he has is said when he states that the soul must be immortal because intellect must have a connection to the form it represents, and forms are immaterial and that means intellect must be immaterial and because these characteristics are connected to a soul, that soul must then be immaterial.<sup>3</sup> Not only does this mean that it is immaterial, but that the soul must be immortal because the soul does not have a connection to the body, other than being inside of it, so when the body dies the soul will not die as well. The soul will live on longer because it has an affinity too forms, and not to the body. This whole idea stems from the basic debate within Philosophy of Mind, and that is that the many characteristics of the mind, such as mental phenomena, cannot be physical because they are subjective, and subjectivity cannot come from a material substance such as the brain. Plato likened it to the forms that he speaks about because of his belief that the forms possessed intellect and were immaterial.

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<sup>1</sup> Stoljar, Daniel. "Physicalism." *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Spring 2016. Accessed September 12, 2016. <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/physicalism/>.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

The next philosopher to share their ideas on Dualism and the Mind-Body debate was another world-renowned and respected philosopher, Aristotle. Aristotle did not agree with the idea that forms exist independently of the body, and he actually has his own idea of forms that are actually, “natures and properties of things and exist embodied in those things.”<sup>4</sup> This means that the soul would actually be the form of the body because it holds the characteristics of the mind within it, but it is not separate from the body itself. The interesting thing about this idea is that it really does not sound like Dualism. It is not separate from the body, and it does not exit the body it dwells in when death occurs. Dualism states that the mind and the body are two different substances, and that the soul must be separate from the body in how it is made up. This idea, written by Aristotle, is not saying that at all, in fact he is actually saying that the soul is just the form of the body and it holds its mental characteristics within it. However, there is a reason as to why this idea stays connected to Dualism, and that is because Aristotle believed that the soul did not have an organ in which it occurred in, and thus it must be separate from the physicality of the body.<sup>5</sup> It holds many characteristics within it, and because of this it cannot have an organ in which it works. For organs have shapes and sizes that directly influence what they do, and the soul has no such limitations put upon it. The soul, he believed, was more of an abstract idea that defined who people were, however, it was in no way physically separate from the human body. It is highly debated today, as to whether Aristotle is truly a Dualist or has found a way to make a soul fit into a materialistic world. However, it can be seen from both Aristotle and Plato how the idea of a soul separate from the body has been accepted for many years after being interpreted

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<sup>4</sup> Stoljar, Daniel. "Physicalism." *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Spring 2016. Accessed September 12, 2016. <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/physicalism/>.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid

from Christian Theism. Dualism, most normally, is a religiously founded philosophical idea, because if people have an immaterial soul, then most likely, people will have an immaterial supreme being that has created their universe. This is why Dualism is accepted within most religions, because they all believe in something more than just this body, and this world.

The most widely accepted hypothesis when it comes to Dualism is not the first ideas brought to everyone by Plato, and other religions, but rather it is the theories brought to the world by the great philosopher Rene Descartes. Descartes version of Dualism is, again, a popular form of substance Dualism, in which Descartes believed substances can exist independently of other substances if they are different substances, and the soul is a different substance than the body is. Substance Dualism furthers the different substance idea of the mind and body. Descartes believed that the substance of the mind, or soul, has the ability to exist without the body, or without it being alive.<sup>6</sup> This means that not only could souls preexist the bodies existence, but also they could “survive” the bodies death. Christian Theism fits perfectly within this idea because this supposes that there is life after death, a prominent belief held within Christianity and almost all other religions. Descartes says that the mind, or soul, is an object, except it is an immaterial object, or to put it another way, an object not restricted by the physics of the material world, and not constrained by the laws of the universe. The body is also an object, but of a different, material substance, and because of it being material, therefore, it is constrained by physical laws and can die. While the soul is not material, and, therefore, cannot die. This is a great idea if one believes in a God that has created those souls, but how does the soul control, presumably, the brain? There are many debates on this subject as well, and it is the other half of

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<sup>6</sup> Kim, Jaegwon. *Philosophy of Mind*. 3rd ed. Boulder, Col.: Westview Press, 1996.

the Mind-Body debate and it deals with both Physicalism and Dualism. How does an immaterial soul control a physical Brain? Rene Descartes would say that the two substances causally influence each other. Jaegwon Kim states in, *Philosophy of Mind*, that, “Minds and bodies causally influence each other. Some mental phenomena are causes of physical phenomena and vice versa.”<sup>7</sup> This is Jaegwon Kim summing up what Rene Descartes would say when asked how they interact with each other. The mental phenomena being affected by the body and vice versa is actually where Dualist would say that Psychology fits in. They do not entirely discredit Psychology and they do say that the physical Psychology of the brain has an impact on the mental processes of the mind, however, where does this connection happen between the mental and physical? Rene Descartes famously said that this would happen in the Pineal gland, and his reasoning behind this hypothesis was because the Pineal gland is in the center of the brain and does not have a copy of itself, like other anatomical parts of the brain. However, people now know that the small Pineal gland in the middle of the brain is used to secrete hormones into the blood stream, and does not have an affect of the magnitude Descartes hypothesized on the mental make up of the mind. However, the hypothesis written by Descartes is the most widely accepted form of Dualism in today's world, and many religious philosophers and theologians believe in his Cartesian Dualism. The only problem with this is that it hurts Dualism the most in the fact that there has been little to no evidence explaining how the brain is controlled by anything other than its own material self. Also, there has been an overwhelming amount of empirical evidence that the brain has the last say in what goes on, and that it has the mental capacity to produce conscious thought from just its physical self. However, the many great philosophers through the

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<sup>7</sup> Kim, Jaegwon. *Philosophy of Mind*. 3rd ed. Boulder, Col.: Westview Press, 1996.

ages have created great ideas for how the brain may not be all there is, and they have contributed important information to the Mind-Body debate within Philosophy of Mind.

Physicalism is the other idea within the mind-Body debate that fights for a monist position instead of a Dualist position, and it is what will be argued within this thesis. The history of Physicalism is really a tough thing to truly identify, and this is why the details of Dualism are larger than Physicalism, because there needs to be a good understanding of what is being said from the other side to be able to effectively go against it. Physicalism is apart of the sector of Monism, which means, in Philosophy of Mind, one substance. This is the contrast to Dualism, where there is two distinctly different substances making up the whole. Monism was first brought up, as a word, by Christian von Wolff in his work *Logic*, however, the idea behind Monism has been around for just as long if not longer than Dualism. The reason for this is because Dualism stemmed out from major religious beliefs. People, centuries ago, believed that there has to be something more than just what is around them on earth, and this is why they started believing that they were put on this earth for a true purpose, and then they would start to believe that they themselves were something more. This then created the belief of Dualism, or just the beginnings of such an idea. However, for those that never believed that there was a supreme being, they would never believe that they were anything more than just their physical selves, and would thus never believe in a substance Dualism belief. Therefore, anyone within the Bibles Old Testament that looked at sayings such as the world being made from dust would think that they themselves are nothing more than just their physical bodies, but there is a maximally great being that created them from that dust. Physicalism the word, was first brought to the world

by the philosopher Otto Neurath.<sup>8</sup> That is basically the history of the actual word Physicalism, but the idea behind it has been around for most of eternity and has no true beginning, because believing that people are only people and the world is only the world really has no true beginning. Physicalism stems from the word Materialism, and Materialism is saying that everything in this world is physical and of material. The only true difference between the words is the fact that Physicalism adds on that the world is physical, and people are physical, and that everything is governed by the laws of Physics. This may seem to denounce all forms of religion, not just Christianity. Belief in a maximally great being in itself would at first kill Physicalism, because a physical maximally great being is not maximally great, because if there were a non-physical being, that being would be greater than the physically great being. However, that is not the idea that modern Christian Philosophers are trying to prove. They are trying to prove a version of Physicalist monism that still keeps a God in the picture. Philosophers such as Nancy Murphy, and theologians such as Joel Green, are trying to interpret Physicalism from the Bible and from Philosophy. This idea is rather new in history, and has only come about in the last century or so because it has always been believed that there can be no middle ground. Therefore, the best interpretation of the word Physicalism, is that everything in the world is physical, including the brains and the minds, however, there is a God who has created this physical world and who has the ability to interact with it through physical means.

Discoveries that have changed the way of thought in Philosophy of Mind include, the discovery of DNA by Watson and Crick, the discovery of Brodmann areas within the brain, areas in the brain that have certain soul characteristics, or jobs, attributed to them. The usage of

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<sup>8</sup> "Physicalism - By Branch / Doctrine - The Basics of Philosophy." Physicalism - By Branch / Doctrine - The Basics of Philosophy. Accessed December 03, 2016. [http://www.philosophybasics.com/branch\\_physicalism.html](http://www.philosophybasics.com/branch_physicalism.html).

PET Scans and fMRI imaging to look at parts of the brain lighting up, such as characteristics of consciousness being seen on a computer screen. The discovery of brain tumors and injuries being able to fundamentally change a persons characteristics just by physical means, which is something Dualism would never have truly believed, but it happens on a day-to-day basis.

Neuroscientist and Psychologist are constantly finding new areas of the brain that has to deal with a certain characteristic of the human experience which no one never thought would happen within Dualism. This is because the soul is supposed to be in charge of these characteristics and not a physical brain, however, if God created everyone to be physical, which is in every way possible, then this is all possible while still believing that there is a supreme being that created everyone and interacts with everyone. This is the history behind the true discovery of Physicalism within the Mind-Body debate and it has challenged the views of Dualism that have been around for centuries. For years, people who believed in Monism never had a chance of proving it because so much was seen as phenomena that they could never convince a religious person that it is was actually physical. However, now they have the ability, though Science, Philosophy, and more accurate Biblical interpretation, they can now show that there is a chance of a physical body existing with a non-physical God.

### **Philosophical Proof of Physicalism**

Philosophy of Mind is going to be the main driving force for the proof of Physicalism within this debate. Christian Theism makes it relevant to this discussion, however, Philosophy is what will be utilized in order to actually make the theory correct. Philosophy of Mind has for centuries been one of the most difficult sections in Philosophy, and the reason for this is because of how within it, people are trying to prove who people are. Philosophy of Mind tries to answer questions of who humanity is and the complexities that go into these questions are unending. It makes sense that it would be difficult because these philosophers are trying to understand understanding, comprehend comprehension, and learn about learning. Subjects such as consciousness are the bread and butter of this large topic in Philosophy, and people are also trying to answer how humans can have subjective mental processes in physical reality. This is where Physicalism and Dualism come in and they play a major role in trying to answer questions regarding physical conscious experiences. For Dualism it would be rather easy to say that because people are not one substance, then they can have non-physical mental processes that give them their ability to comprehend complex subjective thoughts. Then they can bring it into Christian Theism and say that God gave them their souls, and those are what give them this ability, however, there is a problem, because this contradicts all of modern Science when they try to make this assumption. The next logical step would be to find another Philosophical idea that would not go against Science and would still fit into Christian Theism, and this topic would be Physicalism.

Physicalism, as a philosophical topic, has multiple theories and interpretations that come with it. There is Supervenience Physicalism, Reductive and Non-Reductive Physicalism, and

then there is A Priori and A Posteriori Physicalism, to name just a few. All of these must be discussed to get a full picture of the topic. The next portion of Physicalism would be to see how it answers questions dealing with consciousness and subjective thought, and by looking into supervenience, qualia, and other topics of mind, and this will show how consciousness is physical. Physicalism, in its most basic form, states that everything mental is physically performed, but this is different from the Materialists who would say everything is physical. Materialists would go completely against any form of God, however, Physicalists still say that a God can be possible.

The problem of Consciousness is one of the biggest problems for Physicalists, and it says that consciousness cannot be physical because subjective thought cannot be physically reduced to just neurobiological processes within the brain. It is far too complex to possibly be within only the brain, and there must be something more to explain how each person's individual conscious experience is different. Physicalism responds to this in multiple ways. First, being that there is Supervenience that states that mental processes supervene on physical processes, and this means that they come about from those physical processes. Then there is Non-Reductive physicalism that would say that mental processes are not all physical, but still come about from physical processes through Supervenience.

The main point within this section is to say that Physicalism makes the most sense, in its multiple forms, within the debate in Philosophy of Mind. Then, because of this, there can now be effective usage of the theory within the debate in Christian Theism.

### **Philosophical Terms introduction**

In order to give an in-depth look into the Philosophy of Physicalism, there must first be a clear understanding of terms used within the subject. This will clear everything up within this in-depth section because the terms used all appear to say the same thing at first, but are different when looked at more closely. Physicalism has many forms that can be looked at as a whole to give a general understanding of the idea as a whole. These terms are going to be Supervenience, Consciousness, Causation, Reductive and Non-Reductive Physicalism, A priori and A posteriori Physicalism, Type and Token Physicalism, and Substance and Property Dualism. These terms are collectively going to be used to look at the other side, and used to prove the theory of Physicalism within the mind.

Physicalism is known by many to be another word for the belief Materialism, however, it is not the same thing because Materialism is saying that the whole world in every way is physical. As discussed in the Historical Review, this would seem to totally destroy any belief in a God because that God should be non-physical. In this thesis, however, the words will not be used interchangeably, and Physicalism will stand to mean that the mind is completely physical and the brain is the soul mechanism for which thought and consciousness arise. Humanity was made purely to be physical beings and they do not have a soul so they will not follow the Dualist mindset.

The first topic of discussion will be on the word Supervenience. In Physicalism, all mental properties, such as thought, emotion, problem solving, and other methods of mind, should be physical. However, a problem arises when people think of this without philosophical thought. How can mental properties be physical? They certainly could not be physical mechanisms

because they are mostly subjective, however, physical brain matter is where they arise. Dualism would say that the soul answers this complex problem, because a soul, of non-physicality, would hold the ability to process subjective thought. However, because a soul is not being fought for here, Supervenience will be used to state that the mind and the body interact in purely physical terms. Supervenience is the idea that anything that is physically indiscernible must also be psychologically indiscernible.<sup>9</sup> This would then mean that mental properties supervene on physical properties. Jaegwon Kim furthers this by saying that if there is anything *x* that would happen to have a mental property *M*, then there is a physical property *P* that would mean *x* has *P*, and this would mean that any object with *P* must have *M*.<sup>10</sup> This seems confusing but Robert Francescotti simplifies it in his book by saying that if a class *A* property supervenes on a class *B* property then there is no property that *A* has that *B* does not have.<sup>11</sup> So what does this mean in regards to Physicalism? This helps answer the question of whether or not people could exist in another place as the same person with the same psyche. Imagine there being another place that you exist, this ‘clone’ of you is entirely the same as you physically. Does this mean that it will also be the same mentally? By the philosophical method of Supervenience you would be the exact same Psychologically because you have gone through the exact same life and experiences as this clone, which have made you who you are psychologically. This is because the mental supervenes upon the physical, and they work hand in hand and are how people’s mental properties are specific to them and brought up by physical means.

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<sup>9</sup> Kim, Jaegwon. *Philosophy of Mind*. 3rd ed. Boulder, Col.: Westview Press, 1996.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid

<sup>11</sup> Francescotti, Robert M. *Physicalism and the Mind*. Springer Briefs in Philosophy. Springer, 2014.

The next large topic within Philosophy of Mind and this thesis is the topic of Consciousness. Consciousness is held to be the number one defining trait of humans that makes them who they are. Humans are conscious and therefore they are human beings. Consciousness can never be seen as physical, right? How could something so individualistic and subjective be inherently caused by physical means? First, there must be a look into the Physicalists view of consciousness in order to be able to answer this question. The two definitions used by Susan Blackmore in her short book on consciousness go as follows, Consciousness means subjective thought or phenomenal experience, or it is seen as Qualia, the ineffable subjective qualities of experience.<sup>12</sup> Consciousness is not a thing, it is rather an experience that only humans experience, and it is the humans subjectivity, their ability to say they do not want ice cream or they do want ice cream. Animals work off of instinct, and they have been known to have some small form of rational thought, but never to the magnitude of a human. This trait is what makes humans human, it is what makes humans so unique in the world God created. Now whether this comes from subjective thought, or from an immaterial soul is the most important question. This will be discussed after the main discussion of the forms of Physicalism and it is seen as the most difficult question in the subject Philosophy of mind. Subjective individualistic thought arising from mechanical and physical means is known as the hard question in this debate, in Philosophy of mind.

There are many definitions to be seen within the various topics of Physicalism, these include the subcategories of Physicalist thought. The first set, being the most basic, is reductive and Non-Reductive Physicalism. It should be noted that, because of Supervenience,

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<sup>12</sup> Blackmore, Susan J. *Consciousness: A Very Short Introduction*. Very Short Introductions. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2005.

Reductionism can now be seen as not the only answer to the physicality of mental thought.

Reductionism is the idea that for every mental property X, there is also a physical property Y.<sup>13</sup>

This is the idea that all subjective thoughts within the brain are caused by the brain, and every mental property has a physical cause. This would then mean that Non-reductionism would say that not every mental predicate would have to have a physical predicate to go alongside it. This seems to just be a watered down version of Dualism, however, there is still many die-hard Materialist that believe in non-reductionism. This is because they say that because it is not caused directly by a physical process that does not mean it was caused by a non-physical process.

There are also other forms of Physicalism that go into other details within the subject. There is A Priori Physicalism and there is A posteriori Physicalism. A Priori Physicalism goes hand in hand with Reductive Physicalism and Materialism while A posteriori goes with Non-Reductive Physicalism. A priori shows that, “‘S’ is a sentence that reports the entire physical nature of the world and ‘S\*’ is a sentence that reports the entire nature of the world, therefore, S entails S\*”.<sup>14</sup> This basically means that if the whole knowable world is physical then the whole world in its entirety should also be entirely physical. This idea is basically Materialism in that they both agree that the whole world is completely material and physical. In A Posteriori Physicalism there is a belief that just because the knowable world is physical that doesn't necessarily mean that the entire world is material. There is still something everyone does not understand about the world and within Christian Theism that something else would be a non-

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<sup>13</sup> Stoljar, Daniel. "Physicalism." *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Spring 2016. Accessed September 12, 2016. <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/physicalism/>.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid

material God. This means that people are physical in their entirety and that they do not have a soul, however, that does not mean that everything in the world is physical and material like they are.

Type and Token Physicalism are two other definitions within Physicalism that also bring in the possibility of a God having made the physical world. Token Physicalism is saying that for every single particular X, there is some physical property Y so that  $X=Y$ .<sup>15</sup> Then Type Physicalism would mean that for every instantiated mental property F, there is a physical process G so that  $F=G$ .<sup>16</sup> This sounds a lot like the Supervenience argument for this debate, but there are a few differences. Type is saying that for every mental property there is a physical underlying, and is stating that mental processes are entirely physical. This does not immediately say that a God cannot exist for a God would have the power to make a population of entirely physical people with complex cognitive abilities. Both Type and Token seem to be just the repeated belief in Supervenience, however, both do not completely follow a Supervenience premise. Token does not fit because every particular having a physical underlying does not mean that some mental property would be physical. Supervenience is still saying that mental properties are in tandem with physical processes, and Type Physicalism, unlike Token, does entail Supervenience Physicalism. This is because they are both saying that mental properties are inherently physical. Type will be the main one focused upon within this argument because it actually entails all mental properties.

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<sup>15</sup> Stoljar, Daniel. "Physicalism." *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Spring 2016. Accessed September 12, 2016. <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/physicalism/>.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid

If someone wanted to go into even more depth on the topic of Reductive Physicalism they could bring in the Psycho-Neural Identity theory. This is the theory that explicitly believes that all mental processes are performed within the inner workings of the brain. Jaegwon Kim says that just as there is no lighting over and above the atmosphere, there is also no mental events over and above the brains neural processes.<sup>17</sup> This is the popular theory held within the realm of Science. Neuroscientists and Psychologists alike believe that all the complex neural pathways, held within a human's brain, have the ability to bring about the complexities of conscious experience. This is the truest form of Physicalism within the mind, and many believe Non-Reductive Physicalists go against this, however, as will be proven later on, WSupervenience and Mental Force have the ability to bring about the mental from the physical in this debate. That is why mental properties can come about from physical means.

On the other side of the argument there is the belief in Dualism which has two popular forms, Substance and Property Dualism. It is already known that Dualism is the belief that there is something more than just a humans brain, like the Psycho-Neural Identity theory states. Substance Dualism is the common belief held within Christian Theism, and it states that the brain is material and that the mind, or soul, is immaterial. Property Dualism, on the other hand, is defined in modern philosophy as being "no longer a Dualism of two sorts of substances; it is now a Dualism of two sorts of properties, mental and physical."<sup>18</sup> This seems to be Physicalism on a certain level because property Dualist reject immaterial minds. They do, however, say that it is two different things just not based off of material differences. This then is not the Dualism that

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<sup>17</sup> Kim, Jaegwon. *Philosophy of Mind*. 3rd ed. Boulder, Col.: Westview Press, 1996.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid

will be discussed because the main idea of Physicalism is that people do not have a soul and Property Dualism agrees with this idea.

These are not the only terms relevant in Philosophy of Mind, but they are the most important terms that are to be discussed in this paper. Words such as Behaviorism and Mind-Body Causation will come about in this paper, but they will be connected to other ideas. Physicalism, as a philosophical idea, entails a large amount of vocabulary that needs to be defined first so that the actual argument makes sense later on.

### **Physicalism of the Mind**

There has been a lot of definitions and basic teachings about certain terms, but no definitive opinion about what is actually true. Physicalism is the correct decision within the realm of Philosophy of Mind, however, which form is correct? There is Non-reductive, Reductive, A priori, A posteriori, Token, and Type Physicalism. Which form or formulation of terms makes the most sense within the jurisdiction of Christian Theism? Full reduction is hard to actually defend, however, that does not mean that it is absolutely unforeseeable, because Science seems to be moving towards total physicality of the mind within the brain. How then do people explain subjectivity of experience? How they do this is by a mixture of beliefs within Physicalism. There is not total reduction of mental processes to the brain, but that does not mean they are above the brain with absolutely no interaction with it. A Dualist would believe that the mental subjectivity of the brain does not actually come from the brain, but rather the immaterial soul, however, there is no scientific evidence to prove this theory, or even come close to proving it. The better theory would be to say that the mental processes supervene upon the physical within Non-Reductive Physicalism, and, therefore, opens the door for subjective mental thought

and thoroughly answers the questions of how it can actually happen. This means that for every mental process there would be a physical underlying accompanying it. Today, people can see in Science that there are areas of the brain that are specific to particular functions within thought. People can see decision-making in real-time within the powers of fMRI. This points to the belief of the mental coming from the physical and the mechanical function of the brain.

The reason there is even a debate over whether the brain is physical stems from the problem of subjectivity. It used to be the belief that the brain could not possibly be something that is even remotely physical because people, years ago, did not have the advancements in Science to understand how the brain actually operates. All they had was Philosophy, and the only logical way to answer how they are the way they are had to be in the form of something outside their own understanding, and outside their own brains. This belief came in the form of a soul in connection to a God, but what happens when they remove the soul but keep the God? What happens is the modern-day belief of Physicalism. The problem that keeps coming up in the Philosophy side of things is this problem with subjectivity that keeps on being stated. This problem is known as the hard problem and it is stated in the question, “How do subjective experiences arise from objective brains?”<sup>19</sup> It truly is a hard problem because physicality of the brain would then also bring objectivity. How then can subjectivity be achieved within someones consciousness? That is what needs to be answered in this debate, because with a soul in Dualism it is easy to just allocate subjectivity to something outside the mind and outside the physical. However, when dealing with Physicalism someone cannot simply say that it is outside their understanding for they have to say that it is inside the processes of the brain.

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<sup>19</sup> Blackmore, Susan J. *Consciousness: A Very Short Introduction*. Very Short Introductions. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2005.

The sections to prove Physicalism and the subjectivity of mind will be broken up into two main topics of relevance. These topics will be Supervenience connected to the ideas of Non-Reductive Physicalism, and how consciousness has to be physical. The reason for these topics is that both of them try to prove how the mental and physical must work together. This is the main point of Physicalism, stating that the mental and the physical are actually in tandem working together.

### **Why Consciousness Must be Physical**

First, let's look at why consciousness must be physical and why that is important to this discussion. Consciousness, as previously stated, is one of the most important features of the human race, and it can be agreed upon that while some other species have some level of consciousness, being able to make incredibly simple decisions, but they have nowhere near the amount of consciousness that humans appear to have. Besides consciousness being quintessentially a human trait, it is also known to be connected to the human's ability to experience subjective thought. One person does not experience the same conscious experience as another all of the time. Consciousness is known to be the ability a person has to experience everything there is in the world around them in ways that are exactly like another human. It is the reason that the apple is one shade of red to someone and another to someone else. It is the reason that the sky is blue, that the car smells of gasoline, and that the weather feels a certain way. It is a person's ability to participate in the world around them, and it is known to also be subjective. Not one person experiences the same thoughts and experiences as another person does. No one will make the same decisions that another person will 100% of the time. This is what is so amazing about the conscious world, but explaining it in physical terms is incredibly tricky, and

this is because of the hard problem of consciousness stated earlier. It is saying that subjective experience should not be able to be reduced to the physical brain because physical constraints of the brain would mean that there is no subjectivity. It would mean that there is no real subjective decisions because of the physical constraints basically already having a set choice. It gets into causality, because how can people cause something in their physical brains? Because of the Science behind the brain, but also because of the arguments for the physicality of consciousness in Philosophy, there must be a subjective system within the brain. Philosophical arguments for the physicality of consciousness revolve around whether or not consciousness can actually be physical, not whether the brain has the power to make it arise. Determining whether consciousness is physical is determining whether there is a physical basis for every single thing people experience in their lives. Michael Tye, in *Consciousness Revisited*, talks about consciousness as being the pain someone feels when they get hurt, or the joy they experience when they eat amazing food. It is the feelings they are able to go through that make them human and conscious.<sup>20</sup> Contributing these experiences to physical events will in turn prove that consciousness is physical. People do not believe that consciousness can be reduced to the physical because of the amount of experiences that they are able to go through. They need to prove that these experiences cause behavior and not just actions. This is where the divide occurs between the Physicalists and the Dualists. The Dualist believes that the experiences people go through cause them to then make decisions that would then result in them performing actions. However, the Physicalists say that the experiences people endure cause their specific behavior to

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<sup>20</sup> Tye, Michael. *Consciousness Revisited: Materialism without Phenomenal Concepts*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2009.

arise.<sup>21</sup> This is the most popular view in Psychology, people experiencing things throughout their lives and remembering these events and then having a specific behavior because of it. This is entirely physical and can be reduced to neurophysiological processes. The person experiences a sensation, this sensation enters through one of the neural pathways that lead to the brain, these neural pathways translate the sensation into an electrical message to go through the neurons, this message then goes to the specific region of the Cerebral Cortex that it is associated with, then the memory that the person has already experienced that is connected to the electrical impulse will make the person remember what it is that is happening, and finally they will have a behavior associated to the experience.<sup>22</sup> However, the Dualist will say that if the neural event that is connected to this experience also has an independent non-physical connection, or cause, then the non-physical event is what should be seen as the actual cause for the behavior that ensues. This is the idea of trumping and it is saying that no matter what, the behavior is going to happen, but the real cause of that behavior is going to be the non-physical event.<sup>23</sup> However, they do agree that the neural event is causally sufficient for the behavior that is taking place. Lets look at it in the way that Michael Tye states, stating that Tom experiences a neural event N as an example and he says that,

“N causes the event of Toms groaning G. The empirical evidence the view that N causes G in virtue of its physical properties. If N has an additional, nonphysical property P, then

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<sup>21</sup> Tye, Michael. *Consciousness Revisited: Materialism without Phenomenal Concepts*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2009.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid

<sup>23</sup> Ibid

N does not cause G in virtue of having P, for even if P had been missing, N would have caused G so long as it had the same physical properties.”<sup>24</sup>

This makes quite a bit of sense, because it is saying that if someone were to experience pain, then that pain would cause them to have a neurophysiological response to that experienced pain that would cause them to have a behavioral response to it. They do not have to remember that exact type of pain, for they have already experienced other forms of pain and, therefore, they know what is happening. Every neurological response will cause a behavioral response, however, the Dualist will say that this pain causes emotion, which cannot be physical, and the emotion will cause the behavioral response, however, a person's response to these events are based off of previous physical events that they learned their emotion and behavior from. People struggle to see how a past physical event will set what happens in the future because everything should have a beginning, but learning something will then cause someone to have a similar response to it in the future, based off of its physical consequences. This means that a kid touches a hot stove and gets burned, that burn causes the nerves to send a pain message to the brain, this message is associated as bad because pain is bad in the kids mind, then the brain has a neurological response to remove the hand from the stove, and the kid remembers to never to do that again, unless the kid wants to feel pain. Memory of physical events are sufficient enough to set in stone what someones particular behavior will be, given a certain impulse.

The last part to this is the debate over what the actual cause is, in these cases, for if a physical event has a non-physical connection then what actually causes the response? Dualists say that the non-physical event trumps the physical event because it can never be hindered in

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<sup>24</sup> Tye, Michael. *Consciousness Revisited: Materialism without Phenomenal Concepts*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2009.

anyway. However, the physical event, in this case the neural event, is causally sufficient enough to make the actual response happen, whether there is a non-physical connection or not, the behavioral response will still happen because that is just what brains have been made to do.

This may not seem to much like a consciousness debate, however, it is a debate over whether consciousness can be physical given all of the impulses and responses people go through. It is because of the fact that the neural event can cause the behavior that humans go through, and this is because people have gathered experiences throughout the years in their lives that they actually have memory of and, therefore, can respond to any such experience. John's food tastes great because he has experienced good tasting food, and he has taste buds that respond to that good tasting food. Even if he had never tasted good tasting food, he has experienced a good feeling. His taste buds respond to certain types of food, giving John a good experience when in contact with the good food. John would then know that this food is good because it gives him a good feeling that he has experienced before. The experiences people have gone through connected to their physical neural underlying are powerful enough to make consciousness have a total physical underlying that is not dependent upon any nonphysical cause.

### **Supervenience and Non-Reductive Physicalism**

Supervenience is the main topic of relevance for this debate, and deals with relation in this argument by saying how the mental and the physical are related. Jaegwon Kim in his book, *Mind in a Physical World*, states the proposition that if any mental event is present at a certain time, then there would have to be a physical event also at that specific time.<sup>25</sup> This would then

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<sup>25</sup> Kim, Jaegwon. *Mind in a Physical World: An Essay on the Mind-body Problem and Mental Causation*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1998.

mean that there can be no mental event without a physical event present, or there can be no mental event without a physical underlying. Lets say someone experiences some form of sensation, this person, within the doctrine of Supervenience, must also have an event that is connected to this sensation. This event that would be connected would be a neural event that is connected to the sensation that would actually cause the physical sensation. The neural event, that is physical, must be there to instantiate the sensation, and without it there would be no such sensation. What is great about this belief that the mental supervenes on the physical is that the doctrine of Non-Reductive Physicalism uses Supervenience to help prove its point. Non-Reductive Physicalism is the belief that the mental properties, such as Psychological Properties, cannot be fully reduced to physical processes. This has been stated in the terms section and it sounds like a watered down atheistic version of Dualism, however, through weak Supervenience this idea is in no way seen to be a Dualist position.

Remember that Dualism specifies that the two properties that interact with each other are of a different substance completely. Non-Reductive Physicalism is not saying that these properties are completely different things, one being physical and the other being nonphysical. It is mainly saying that the mental properties cannot merely be reduced to the brain in its completeness. Therefore, a mental property would have to be some sort of field still held within the bounds of physics in the world. This does not go against the discussion in consciousness because it was being debated about what causes behavior and not where thought is taking place. There is still thought that is not fully within the brain, but the cause of behavior will always be the physical cause that is occurring. For it to not be the cause, the mental properties that make the decision would have to be completely non-physical and not bound by the physics of this world,

which Physicalism disagrees with. Someones thought is not completely unbounded because people can in no way think of an infinite amount of ideas because they are bound by the physical world that their brains are enslaved to.

Supervenience, as stated above and in the terms section, is the way philosophy connects the mental and the physical in today's world. Weak Supervenience, the belief that there is no distinction in composition between mental and physical, but there is still a separation, and this is the belief that will be used to look at Physical Realizationism and Non-Reductive Physicalism. This doctrine states that if there is some mental property at a certain time, and also a physical property at that certain time, then the physical property and the mental property would be related to one another.<sup>26</sup> It is also important to say that anyone can have the same mental properties related to the same physical property in the brain. However, each individuals different Psychology through their upbringing gives them there differences in beliefs and usages of these mental properties and physical properties. This means that it is not a mind-body theory of how they are separated, but merely an idea about how they are related to each other.<sup>27</sup> The mental and the physical are working together and are connected to each other in that one has the other and vice versa. However, there needs to be an understanding that this does not in itself prove that Supervenience is an actual proof of Physicalism. Robert Francescotti says in his book, *Physicalism and the Mind*, that,

“Kim points out that a Supervenience thesis ‘itself says nothing about the nature of the dependency of the dependence’ of the mental on the physical; ‘it tells us neither what

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<sup>26</sup> Kim, Jaegwon. *Mind in a Physical World: An Essay on the Mind-body Problem and Mental Causation*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1998.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid

kind of dependency it is, nor how the dependency grounds or explains the property covariation.’’<sup>28</sup>

Supervenience is merely an explanation of how the two things are dependent on each other. It is still powerful in this debate because of the explanation of the mental and the physical being completely dependent on one another. There cannot be one without the other because they are causally dependent on one another as proven in the section about mental and physical properties existing at the same time and causing each others occurrence.

Next, then is to point out what else is needed to see both of them working together, and how that actually occurs. People normally look to Science to fill in some of the gaps in this discussion in looking at the idea of a mental force which helps with this argument. This mental force idea is stated in the Science section dealing with Free Will and is a great answer to the idea of subjectivity in someones thought. There has already been a look into the physical understanding of subjective thought within the consciousness section in this chapter. Now there needs to be a look into a possible answer into how the mental and physical are connected. This would be in the belief of mental force which arises from mental effort in the brain, so it is physical yet not necessarily confined to the brain. This is part of the belief in this debate which is connected to Non-Reductive Physicalism. This belief is the one that says that the mental cannot be fully reduced to the brain, however, that does not mean that it is not physical in nature. Mental Force works within physics, but not within Materialism, and this a large reason as to why Physicalism is the topic in this thesis. Mental Force is a force that comes about from the Physicality of mental effort, and this means that it is still confined to the physics within the

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<sup>28</sup> Francescotti, Robert M. *Physicalism and the Mind*. Springer Briefs in Philosophy. Springer, 2014.

universe, but not within the bounds of the brain. This means that it is Non-Reductive, yet it still relies on the physical to come about, like Supervenience has stated.

The next topic of conversation is the idea of Physical Realizationism. This ties into Supervenience and Non-Reductive Physicalism, and is the idea that, “mental properties, if they are realized, must be physically realized-that is, no mental properties can have nonphysical realizations.”<sup>29</sup> This is tied to the idea of functionalism which is saying that for mental properties are properties that are in between the sensory input and the behavioral output. The Physicalists form of this would say that physical properties are the only properties that can realize these mental properties.<sup>30</sup> This idea helps connect Supervenience as a method of mind-body correlation, through the usage of physical realizers. Jaegwon Kim sums it up perfectly when he says, “the mental supervenes on the physical because mental properties are second-order functional properties with physical realizers.”<sup>31</sup> There then needs to be an answer as to why it is that the physical will instantiate the mental? This is because that whenever some physical property is realized in a system, it will have a certain causal specification that the mental property will also have.<sup>32</sup> Having the physical property is also having the mental property. When a neurophysiological occurrence is seen in the brain, and that occurrence has a mental occurrence at the same time, it is known that that neurophysiological event has to arise the mental event that is connected with it.

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<sup>29</sup> Kim, Jaegwon. *Mind in a Physical World: An Essay on the Mind-body Problem and Mental Causation*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1998.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid

<sup>31</sup>Ibid

<sup>32</sup>Ibid

These ideas about Supervenience connected with the realization of the mental from the physical are what helps prove that the mental can come about from an entirely physical system. There is no need for an entirely different substance to have to be connected to the brain to tell it what to do. The physical and the mental work together and mental force comes about from the mental effort put in by the physical system.

### **Scientific Proof of Physicalism**

Science, in today's world, has gone against Christian belief in just about every aspect of discussion. They have gone against the way they look at the beginning of the world and they have gone against them in the way they go about explaining what happened after the beginning. Science has always been the first to discredit any idea that has Christianity as its basis, and this holds true when talking about Dualism and Physicalism. Neuroscience is a relatively new field, when talking about science of the mind, however, they are the front line in today's world when it comes to trying to disprove the idea of the soul. Psychology has also come against Christianity in multiple ways because of how they explain behavior and the explanation of self. Christianity has always explained individuality in behavior as being something beyond humanities knowledge. People are the way they are because that is the way God made them. Psychology says that it is not something that cannot be explained, but rather it is a complex conglomeration of different aspects in everyone's lives. There is nature and then there is the way that the individual was nurtured. People were born with their specific DNA and this makes them who they are from the beginning, then after that the different experiences that they go through in their lives nurture themselves to be a specific way. Neuroscience has come into the game to prove that the nature of who people are can be found in the brain, and they have said that there are certain locations in the physical brain that make people who they are. There are parts of the brain that handle complex emotion, such as sadness and happiness, then there are parts of the brain everyone uses all of the time such as facial recognition, memory, and specific complex thoughts, all arising from this physical chunk of grey matter in-between their ears. In Science's mind there is just simply no possible evidence for a soul. Rene Descartes believed in Cartesian Dualism, where the

soul and the brain interact in some specific location, and he stated that they interacted at the Pineal gland, because of the fact that it was in the center of the brain and it had no duplicate anywhere else in the brain. Today, it is known that the Pineal gland only deals with the secretion of hormones into the endocrine system, no evidence is found for something beyond the brain that interacts with it. All of this evidence seems rather convincing that Physicalism has to be the way to go when talking about the Science behind mind, however, it is way more complicated than that. Science will be discussed in huge length to show the everyday Christian just what Science is saying today about the brain. Most Christians today believe that the brain cannot simply be the answer, the reasons being that it just is not that powerful, and that there has to be a soul in order for everyone to be able to go to the non-physical Heaven. However, Neuroscience and Psychology are making breakthroughs everyday about the new information about just how powerful the brain really is. 86 billion neurons, with trillions of synapse all interconnected firing specific instructions to each other, surely this is powerful enough for everyone to have thought that is at least close enough to being able to convince them that they have complete and total subjectivity in their reasoning. The next problem is then the question of whether or not people have to have a soul to go to Heaven, and this is a theological question and it will be discussed in its own section. The fact that Science today has been fighting against the idea of a soul does not in any way discount a belief in a supreme being that created everyone. Such complexity in the physical, and biological world does not point to random chance, but rather it points to a being that had the ability to create and design it and let it work, and make its own choices. The purpose of Science in this debate is to show the Christian that there is no evidence for this soul that they have always held to, and to show that the complexity of the brain opens doors that show them

that the brain is powerful enough to arise their thoughts. It has the ability to give the individual so much cognitive power that it seems to them that they have unlimited subjective thought, when really they are just using the many avenues of neural pathways that they possess. Trillions of synapses show that there are an uncountable amount of individual pathways that can arise in the brain, and there are an uncountable amount of ways an individual can use their brains. Also, adding in the fact that not one human has an identical number or orientation of neurons shows that the individuality of the human experience can arise from the unbelievable complexities seen in the brain. The brain is the answer to the question of consciousness, and humanity may not ever be able to get the most definitive forms of truth out of the research, but this is because people are, at the end of the day, studying themselves. People expect the brain to answer the questions of itself, yet this will never truly happen, but they can see the brain is working and gather as much information as they can. They can see the areas of the brain that bring up certain subjects and beliefs, and they can see facial recognition, they can see sadness, and happiness. The rest of the belief must then come from God. God created unbelievably complex organisms that inhabit the earth in their own ways, and they have cognitive power to be able to make decisions based off of knowledge. This comes from the creator that designed them, and, therefore, Physicalism does not discount the possibility of God creating them. As seen in the belief in Philosophy that God creating a physical world with physical organisms did happen. People do not have infinite subjective consciousness, but they do know that they can make their own decisions. This section is to show both sides that Science goes for in Physicalism. Philosophy and Theology both use the scientific proof to say that it works here and now it will work there to.

### **Neuroscience: The Science Behind Cognition**

Neuroscience is the most important science behind the study of a physical brain, and Neuroscientists are truly the fiercest believers in the completely physical mind. One study arose that said that 99% of Neuroscientist believed that the brain was entirely physical, and that there was no need for a soul because of the power the brain has within it. They are at the forefront of studying how the brain creates conscious experiences, and neuroscientists are the ones answering the questions about where each and every experience arises in the physical brain, and how they are created. Besides non-scientific Philosophy, Neuroscience, is the most convincing section in this paper for Physicalism. In order to study the basis of cognition it is almost a given that one must discount the theory of a soul. Neuroscience studies what makes the world come to life in an entirely physical world, and they believe that everything arises, or supervenes, in a minor way, on the physical brain. They teach that the brain has the power that many doubt, and they also teach that everything in a humans conscious life has a physical underlying. Here will be an attempt to cover all of these underlings that they state in their findings, to paint a better picture of what a total belief in the physical mind looks like in todays Neuroscientific teachings.

The first major topic is looking into what makes up the brain, which includes looking at what physical structures are in the brain, including the brain stem, the cerebellum, and most importantly the Cerebral Cortex. The brain stem and the cerebellum are important to speak about because of the functions that they perform on a daily basis that no one ever has to think about. The brainstem is the oldest part of the modern developed brain, and is where the beginning of knowledge and understanding began in the earliest creatures. This is where breathing and heart

beat regulation, and temperature regulation take place.<sup>33</sup> These are some of the most important functions within the brain because of their pure necessity for life. What makes them so amazing is the fact that there is no need for conscious thought control to make them happen. They are the oldest parts of the brain because they are the simplest parts. They require no complex usage of interconnected neurons like the Cerebral Cortex, and they perform on an input-output basis. The next important structure of the brain is the cerebellum, which is the part in the back of the brain located under the occipital lobe, and the body's ability to balance comes from the cerebellum.<sup>34</sup> This is another part of the brain that does not really require any real thought to use, and it is also another old structure within the brain. The last major structure in the brain is the most important for this discussion. The Cerebral Cortex houses the bread and butter of Neuroscience, and it is home to the frontal lobe, temporal lobe, parietal lobe, and the occipital lobe. This is where all of the thoughts, memories, and experiences come about within the brain. Neuroscientist look to the Cerebral Cortex for all of the functions of conscious experience, and it is known that, "The Cerebral Cortex-that thin surface layer-contains some 20 to 23 billion nerve cells and 300 trillion synaptic connections."<sup>35</sup> All of these neurons and synapses work together constantly in their own individual ways to make the world come to life in the physical brain. It truly is just light, sound, and smell, coming into the brain and being translated based off memories to make the world. The soul has been said to be that breath of life and connection between people and the world, but the brain truly has the power to make it all come about around them because of the insane amount of

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<sup>33</sup> Myers, David G., and C. Nathan DeWall. *Exploring Psychology*. NY, NY: Worth Publishers, 2014.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid

<sup>35</sup>Ibid

cognitive processing ability that it is within the Cerebral Cortex, and especially in the Prefrontal Cortex.

Why then did the soul arise in the minds of those within Christian Theism? The teachings of the Bible interpreted in ways that are not thorough enough are part of the answer, but also the necessity for humans to believe in something greater than themselves, is part of the answer as well. Back in the time of Jesus there was no one that truly thought that there was anything in their body that could arise complex thought. There was no one that saw their brains as being the answer to everything. Evolutionary Psychology mainly says that religion arose from people needing to believe in something greater than themselves. It simply arose because it was the best possible thing for humanity to do to survive at that point. A soul would give the human a true sense of faith in times of tragedy and horrible occurrences. The soul is something that would make people believe that they are greater than just the body they have. No meaning to life would occur without the soul, and humans would not have kept pushing for survival without the belief that there is something more to them. However, religion did not just arrive this way, but through the teachings of Jesus, and through the need for something more, that the soul would come about in the persons psyche. However, today there is no need for such teachings like the soul because the belief in the magnificence of the brain should replace the need for any form of belief in a soul. The brain arises something more than just a persons body because of the impressive cognitive abilities it has, and it answers the problems that people have today without missing a beat. This should excite the Christian because now they can work along side the scientist, trying to learn about the world that God created. If both sides were to believe in Physicalism, then one of the biggest disagreements between Christians and Atheist would no longer exist.

Why does a tumor, the size of an egg, within the Cerebral Cortex cause someone to lose some of their own ability to control themselves? Why does an iron rod shot through the Prefrontal Cortex of a man cause him to have a monumental shift in his personality? These two questions are some of the most powerful examples of the brain being changed in a certain way and the human changing along with it. The Cerebral Cortex houses the ability of all of someone's conscious thought. Humans think, imagine, feel, experience emotion, and process information in the Cerebral Cortex. What then happens if it is affected in some way? With a soul the brain's ability to control itself should never be hindered in any way. Also with a soul humans should have their own possessed traits that should not be affected by traumatic brain injury because they are at the very heart of who they are. These changes are exactly what took place to a 40 year old school teacher and Phineas Gage. These are two of the most popular stories in Neuroscience because they show just what can happen in the case of something traumatic occurring within the Cerebral Cortex. The 40 year old school teacher could not stop looking at women and making sexually motivated comments towards them, and this was strange because never in his life had he been caught doing any sort of thing. He was in trouble at his school for inappropriate comments towards women, and when he got to the hospital to get everything checked out, after he started experiencing tumor like symptoms, he couldn't stop talking to the nurses in inappropriate ways. It turns out that, "The man had an egg-sized brain tumor pressing on the right frontal lobe. When surgeons removed it, the lewd behavior and pedophilia faded away."<sup>36</sup> The man had never been previously apt to make comments towards women like this, and he had never been known for doing anything overly sexual. However, all it took was a tumor in the Prefrontal Cortex and he

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<sup>36</sup> Choi, Charles. "Brain Tumour Causes Uncontrollable Paedophilia." *New Scientist*. October 21, 2002. Accessed September 12, 2016. <https://www.newscientist.com/article/dn2943-brain-tumour-causes-uncontrollable-paedophilia/>

was a completely different person in his life. When it was removed he went back to normal, and the tumor did end up coming back and he ended up having the exact same problems come back up, however, he had it removed again, and the problems went away.<sup>37</sup> No one knows exactly why this occurred, but there are a few possibilities. First, lets also look at the famous story of Phineas Gage. The story of Gage and the iron rod is the most told story in the world of Neuroscience and Psychology. Gage was working at a railroad site putting large iron rods into the ground. He had to fill the rocky area with gun powder, and after he did this he turned around to check his men and then turned back around to experience one of the most intense experiences any human has ever gone through. The rod shot through his lower jaw and ended up going straight through his left eye socket and up through the Prefrontal Cortex.<sup>38</sup> This would normally instantaneously kill anyone, but not Phineas Gage. Within two months he was in stable condition and back in his home in Lebanon, New Hampshire.<sup>39</sup> Whats important to this story is what comes next. Phineas Gage was always known to be the light-hearted guy on the railroad site, and he was a nicer guy than most of the workers, and in a better mood than most people there, however, after the accident, he changed and became an entirely different person than he was before. He no longer was a talkative enjoyable person, but rather a harsh, cruel spoken man. This would seem like it would be from the cause of the iron rod being shot through his skull and him losing the ability to see out of one of his eyes, however, the change was so drastic that Neuroscientist today debate

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<sup>37</sup> Choi, Charles. "Brain Tumour Causes Uncontrollable Paedophilia." New Scientist. October 21, 2002. Accessed September 12, 2016. <https://www.newscientist.com/article/dn2943-brain-tumour-causes-uncontrollable-paedophilia/>

<sup>38</sup> Kean, Sam. "The True Story of Phineas Gage Is Much More Fascinating Than the Mythical Textbook Accounts." Slate Magazine. May 15, 2014. Accessed September 12, 2016. [http://www.slate.com/articles/health\\_and\\_science/science/2014/05/phineas\\_gage\\_neuroscience\\_case\\_true\\_story\\_of\\_famous\\_frontal\\_lobe\\_patient.html](http://www.slate.com/articles/health_and_science/science/2014/05/phineas_gage_neuroscience_case_true_story_of_famous_frontal_lobe_patient.html).

<sup>39</sup>Ibid

whether he was just angry because of his situation, or if his character change came from the rod going through his Prefrontal Cortex, the area that is mostly used for complex emotional thought and informational processing. Both of these stories have to do with what happens when the Prefrontal Cortex is hindered in some way. The Prefrontal Cortex is where it is known that decision making and the basis of morals is brought about.<sup>40</sup> This area is known in Neuroscience as the main part of the brain that humans have that other species do not have, or do not have as well developed as humans. In humans, the Prefrontal Cortex, located at the front of the frontal lobe, is used more than any other part of the other lobes. Humans decide so much based off of the thoughts that take place in the Prefrontal Cortex. Neuroscientist call the parts that make up the frontal lobe, association areas. Association areas are, “areas of the Cerebral Cortex that are not involved in primary motor or sensory functions; rather, they are involved in higher mental functions such as learning remembering, thinking, and speaking.”<sup>41</sup> These association areas are what the Neuroscientists can see light up on magnetic resonance imaging. They are not a specific area doing a specific function like the cerebellum or brain stem, but rather they are large sections of the brain involved in a larger array of cognitive thought. This means that they are not seen to do a specific thing, but they will do anything they learn and are told to do. Humans have 20 billion interconnected neurons in the Cerebral Cortex for a reason, and that reason is that they can use them to do whatever they have learned to do. What happens then when they are hurt or changed? Will they lose the ability to use these areas to their full capacity? The answer to this is yes, and this is where there is found to be no room for a soul. In the case of the 40 year old tumor

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<sup>40</sup> Myers, David G., and C. Nathan DeWall. *Exploring Psychology*. NY, NY: Worth Publishers, 2014.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid

patient and Phineas Gage it is believed that they had their association areas of the Prefrontal Cortex infringed upon, and therefore, lost their ability to be able to control themselves and control who they are. They lost the ability to see morals in the same way they did before their individual problems. These are also not the only cases of this sort of thing occurring. There have been multiple studies of people with damaged frontal lobes, and all of them are known to have the same types of problems, issues dealing with their ability to keep the same morals they had before the problem. All of them do not seem to have their same moral compass that they had before the injury or tumor. Psychologists go as far as to say that someone with frontal lobe injury will be more prone to throw someone in front of a train to save five people for example.<sup>42</sup> Someone with damage to their frontal lobes cannot deal with morals the same way they would have before the problem, and they would have nothing holding them back as well like in the case of the tumor patient. They simply lose their ability to control themselves, and this is quite telling in the argument against a soul because a soul is supposed to give people the ability to deal with morals in whichever way they so choose. People can be taught them, but then they should be able to make whatever choice they want without being hindered in any way. When there is damage to the frontal lobes, however, there is a hindrance to the normal person's ability to choose, which should be something the soul should be dealing with, however, Science can tell that it is not in any way. One side of the argument would be to say that because the brain has been damaged the soul can simply not continue its usual ability to control the brain, because of the hurt hardware. However, there must first be some proof of any connection between a physical brain and a non-physical soul. There simply is no connection, and it has been found that the

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<sup>42</sup> Myers, David G., and C. Nathan DeWall. *Exploring Psychology*. NY, NY: Worth Publishers, 2014.

processing of morals is hindered in brain injury. This is quite telling in just how powerful the brain can be and just how important it is. If a soul truly had the ability to control the brain in its entirety, then it should not be hindered by brain injury. This shows that there is not a soul anywhere to be found in the brain, but also that the brain is causally sufficient for what arises in behavior.

### **Psychology Introduction**

Psychology is one of the main scientific studies that is trying to further knowledge about the brain and humanity, and how they operate in a given environment. Psychology is primarily the study of human behavior, and asks why people act the way they act. It deals with how certain events can change how a person will behave, and it looks into how characteristics given at birth will mold the psyche of someone in the future. Christianity, for many years, has been against the ideas that Psychology has arisen, and this is because Psychology focuses on evolution and genetics as the reasons that people are who they are today. There is Evolutionary Psychology, and Behavioral Genetics, that are both looking for reasons as to how humans have changed and evolved and how their genetic code has changed and evolved. Behavioral Geneticists are looking at how things change day to day in the now, depending on genetics, while Evolutionary Psychologists are looking at the bigger changes within cognition in history.<sup>43</sup> These two fields explain why Christianity has been against Psychology for so long, and these fields try to answer questions of religion and character without the use of a God. They look at how evolution brought about belief in a God, and how genes in the genome make people who they are, not how God makes them who they are. The major belief in Psychology is that humans are computational

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<sup>43</sup> Spielman, Rose M., Ph.D. Psychology by OpenStax College. Houston, TX: OpenStax, 2014.

systems that have unbelievably powerful cognitive abilities to bring up the world around them.

Physicalism works quite well within Psychology, and this is the reason so much of Science believes in it, however, there are still the Christians that need to be convinced that all of Psychology is not out to get them. The best way to do this is to defend Physicalism within Christianity and then tell how Psychology is working to further this Philosophical idea in modern Science.

### **The Psychological approach with Imago Dei**

Psychology looks at the nature and nurture of a human to see how they will be expected to turn out in their individual life. They look at the whole picture of the human experience in order to see how humans will turn out given a particular event happening. Dr. Adam Cash, world-renowned psychologist, explains the two by saying that,

“Nature refers to the concept that behavior and mental processes are innate, inborn, and hard-wired and will unfold over time as a person develops and there genetic blueprint is revealed. Nurture refers to the idea that behavior and mental processes are not inborn and instead are learned from the environment in which people live.”<sup>44</sup>

Nature is the genes someone is born with while nurture is the experiences that one goes through. These two concepts are a fundamental in the Psychological explanation of self because they say that there is a little bit of everything that goes into molding the individual human. There is a little bit of genetics, behaviorism, experiences, and other topics that make people who they are. What is especially great about this is that this does not really go against any Christian beliefs if one does not look to a soul to define self. There is nothing that goes directly against the Bible

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<sup>44</sup> Cash, Adam. Psychology for Dummies. 2013.

whenever psychologists say that humans are who they are because of their genetics and their experiences. The problem arises when the Psychologists then says that this would discount any need for a soul to define self. Physicalism looks strongly to Psychology to explain the complex experiences that one goes through in their lives without the use of a soul.

The soul has been seen to define who humans are, and has been said to be the answer to how people become the way they are. This is because God must have made them specifically with certain characteristics in the soul, however, what happens to the soul once it is proven that multiple characteristics of it, have been allocated to certain parts of the brain? What happens whenever it is proven that the experiences that people go through actually make them human? With the use of Philosophy to explain Physicalism, and better interpretations of God's word, the jump to the Psychological approach to human characteristics is not that far of a leap.

Psychology looks to the behavior of the individual, the genetics of the individual, and the experiences of the individual to see who they are, which means they look at the whole picture. There have been Psychologist who have looked to specific parts as the only definitions to human self, such as B. F. Skinner and his radical behaviorism as the only way to understand the psychology of a person. This, however, is not the only way to look at a persons psychology. There needs to be a look into the whole of the individual to fully understand why they are acting the way they are. Psychology and Theology are always at odds with each other when the definition of self through the psyche comes about. Theology looks to something more than just the brain and experiences to define who people are. They look to the soul to say that the human is specially designed and thought of by God. Psychologist say that this is false and that humans are made a certain way through genetics and evolutionary progression. Then they live their lives

experiencing certain things to then mold themselves in a sense. Both sides completely disagree with the beginning of who humans are, all because of the idea of the soul in Christianity. If there is the usage of a Physicalists mind-set then Christians and Psychologist could actually work together to have a better understanding of who God created people to be.

The discussion into Imago Dei comes up when looking into humans and their design. Imago Dei means that people are made in the image of God.<sup>45</sup> They are made in a certain way as to be made in the image of God, however, the Dualist will say that this must mean that they have a certain deity type connection to God, and therefore, they have a soul. This would make people in the image of God, however, when Psychology has stated that humans are their genetics, and their experiences, people started to think about what Imago Dei must really mean. Because of this, Christian Theologians have gone a new route in saying that humans are made in the likeness of his actions, of who God is. People are their bodies, and their DNA, however, they were made this way to care for the earth and animals on that earth the way God cares for them. This means that their psychology has the morals of love and acceptance built into them. Their psychology has progressed to have an accepting and forgiving nature, and people act the way they do to stay in their communities and in their social circles. Theodore W. Jennings Jr. stated that, “Our DNA may contain the call to be the way life becomes conscious of itself in such a way as to care for all of life, to take responsibility for the benefit of all life.”<sup>46</sup>

God made humans in his image, he did not do it with a nonmaterial soul that would make them more like him, but rather by the creation of their human development and psychology to be

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<sup>45</sup> Thistlethwaite, Susan Brooks, Laurel C. Schneider, Lainie F. Ross, Theodore W. Jennings, Ken Stone, and Lee H. Butler, Jr. *Adam, Eve, and the Genome: The Human Genome Project and Theology*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid

a loving and caring community. By the understanding of Imago Dei, in this relation, it can be seen that their development in their psychology through their experiences and behaviors, has made them into a community that generally tries to continue on and survive. They help others and have morals because that is the way they were designed to be. They developed their DNA over the centuries to be more powerful and to use their abilities for the furtherance of their society. This is because their being made in God's image has made them a caring loving people. Their psychology is this answer and they were made this way by God without the need of a deity type soul. This is exciting to think about for the Christian, because it means that people were made in his likeness by being like him. Humans are not connected to him in his non-physicality, because that is reserved for him, and not humanity.

### **Science's Explanation of Free will**

For generations, Free Will has been the most difficult question arisen in this debate for Philosophy and Science. Free Will is someones ability to choose what they want to do. Free Will is the ability to choose blueberry ice-cream instead of cotton candy, and it is the ability to decide not to jump out of place, or the ability to say why not. It is by far and away the biggest distinction between man and other organisms. It is what truly sets humans apart from the rest, however, it also raises a huge problem in this debate. People have already looked through the philosophical questions and answers for the topics dealing with Free Will, such as consciousness and their subjective thought processes. Philosophy has given incredibly important answers, but what does Science have to say? What does Neuroscience and Neurobiology have to say about decision-making? What does Psychology contribute to the debate besides decisions made off of experience? Many people in the philosophical world have always looked to something more

being the cause of volition, however, in the Neuroscience world it is something completely different. Dr. Jefferey M. Schwartz has stated that, “Generally, Neuroscientists assume that the brain causes everything in the mind, period-further inquiry into causality is most unwelcome.”<sup>47</sup> Neuroscientist do not like looking into how something in the brain can actually be answered by Philosophy, and Free Will is actually more of a philosophical question, but the Science is there for everyone to see.

When looking into volition, there first needs to be a statement of where it is that all of this Free Will decision-making actually happens in purely physical terms. This can be answered by the use of PET scans, which actually show which specific parts of the brain are being activated when certain tasks are being made. Positron Emission Tomography is a form of nuclear imaging that can see the usage of a certain type of sugar in metabolism. Whenever a certain part of the brain is being utilized, that part of the brain will use a higher amount of sugar to compensate for its usage. This allows the user of the PET scan to be able to see what is happening in the brain at a certain time, and to see where volition arises all that needs to happen is for someone to go through a PET scan while having to make certain decisions at the same time. What can be seen when this happens is that there is an increased usage of the sugar in the frontal lobes, meaning that decision-making thoughts are processed and ran through the frontal lobe. This is quite telling, and at first makes the neuroscientists say, “Hey! There it is right there!”, however, there are still questions that need to be asked. Dr. Schwartz asked whether volition was actually caused by the frontal lobes or whether the increased usage was caused by

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<sup>47</sup> Schwartz, Jeffrey, and Sharon Begley. *The Mind and the Brain: Neuroplasticity and the Power of Mental Force*. New York: Regan Books/HarperCollins Publ., 2002.

volition?<sup>48</sup> The answer to this question is quite complicated and it takes the route of the Non-Reductive Physicalists.

The answer to the question of volition and Free Will is the belief that there is a mental force that handles the volitional processes, and causes the frontal lobes to fire. This may seem at first to be a Dualist mentality, however, it actually is not. The topic of Physicalism has been used in this paper because Materialism says that everything in this world is fully and only of a material substance. However, Physicalism, opens the doors for the idea of forces to be used. Forces that are still understood in and well found in physics and are inherently physical. This is why a mental force being able to cause a certain thing to happen is a Physicalists position. Dr. Schwartz defines it perfectly when he states that, “mental force is a physical force generated by mental effort. It is the physical expression of will. And it is physically efficacious.”<sup>49</sup> Dr. Schwartz studied patients who had OCD, and he wrote his synthesis over what was happening to them and why they could not actually get over the urge to do something. It really showed the idea of free won’t which was postulated by Ben Libet.<sup>50</sup> The idea of free won’t is the idea that people have the ability to say no to the urges that come from their frontal lobes. Neuroscience of the brain has shown that the steps to decision-making go as follows, there needs to be a decision to be made, then the brain instinctively chooses something to do, and then humans have the ability to stop this from happening or to let it run its course. Instinct tells people what to do, then they say yes or no. If no is said then they choose the next best option and so on. How then does

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<sup>48</sup> Schwartz, Jeffrey, and Sharon Begley. *The Mind and the Brain: Neuroplasticity and the Power of Mental Force*. New York: Regan Books/HarperCollins Publ., 2002.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid

<sup>50</sup>Ibid

mental force work within this? Let's look at the OCD example that Dr. Schwartz deals with. This idea of free won't will say that humans have the physical urge to perform something, and then someones mental force can stop it, or continue it. OCD patients would have a problem with this because the urges to do something would come more powerfully and more often, so powerful that the mental effort humans put into stopping them would never actually stop them. Therefore, they would have OCD tendencies where they would do something over and over again when they really never want to. How then does this separate from a Dualist point of view? Mental Force is physical and it is bound by the physics of the universe that Physicalism suggest. A Dualist idea of soul and complete separation of mind and body says that they are of completely different substances and are not bound together. Mental force is still bound by the physicality of the brain and, therefore, it still works within a Physicalists point of view discussed in the idea of Non-Reductive Physicalism stated earlier. These studies into Free Will show the existence of such a force being able to stop the urges of the brain. When someone has problems within the frontal lobes such as the tumor case, they will have urges that are more powerful than the mental effort that they are putting into stopping them. Therefore, mental force is not unbound in its power and it is confined by the laws of physics and it is a Physicalists idea.

### **Theological Proof of Physicalism**

Theology is the portion of this thesis that needs to be stressed the most in regards to whether Physicalism can be accepted in the world of Christian Theism. It can be shown that Physicalism is the most plausible idea to believe in both Science and Philosophy, however, if it is not proven in Theology then there is no point to this argument. For generations, the most popular belief within Philosophy of Mind for Christian Theism has been Dualism. It continues today to still be that popular idea, however, it is starting to lose its foot hold with many believers. The reason for this has been the advancements in Science that have stressed the importance of the brain, and also the many great philosophers saying that a belief in the soul is just not plausible. Still, most believers stay with Dualism, and this is because there is a large amount of evidence for Dualism in the Bible. Gods word has spoken about the soul on multiple occasions, whether it be in talks of life after death or when Jesus tells his followers that nothing can destroy the “soul”. Popular belief has generally always held that there must be something more than just physical bodies. There must be something beyond just someones physical self because if there was not, then that would make the idea of Heaven seem impossible. The possibility of a Heaven existing has been a long-held tradition within Christian Theism and normally Physicalism does not seem to work within it because of how an entirely physical body could not reach what has been believed for centuries to be a nonphysical Heaven. There is also the problem with Biblical interpretation that Dualists will look to for support. Within the modern translations of God’s word there is repeated usage of the word soul. It is used countless times within the Bible and it is used multiple times by Jesus himself when talking about subjects such as death. Then there are also problems dealing with commonly held beliefs that would seem to go against Physicalism.

These include ideas like how God can be non-physical and still interact with physical beings.

This is where deism has been seen within Physicalism, however, there are Physicalists answers to these questions that still hold true to the idea that God is non-physical, and that he can still interact within his creation. The first problem, the problem with Heaven and Hell, has been talked about for many years within the subject of Annihilationism. This idea has said, in its most basic form, that when someone dies they die, and that is it. Annihilationists would state that if someone were to live a sinful life and never repent of those sins then they would pay the harshest penalty for those sins, death. There would be no afterlife in a hell because they are purely physical and have sinned, without repenting, which caused them to just die and have no chance of resurrection. For someone who has repented and put their full faith in God, they will die and just be resurrected into the new earth whenever that happens, and they would not go to a heaven. This holds with them also being purely physical and being resurrected to the new kingdom with the return of Christ back to earth. Now this is not the only belief that is available for Christian Physicalists. There is also the subject of Non-Reductive Physicalism that was stated in the Philosophy section. Believers in Non-reductionism would state that they believe mental processes come about from physical processes, but are not physical in in of themselves. This then opens the door for something beyond human understanding to take place that would end up with their minds being in Heaven yet still being physical. This is not as popular of a belief within Christian Physicalism, but it does have some good points. The next problem, the problem of Biblical interpretation, has also been contested by Christian Physicalists. The word soul is used many times in modern translations of Gods word, however, this does not mean that it is interpreted perfectly from the original writings of the Bible. Words such as soma, and nephes,

have been, for centuries, interpreted to mean soul, but they were also used multiple times within the word to mean ideas such as body and human. It is not perfectly translated to soul and there are only a handful that truly could be seen as meaning something beyond physical. In this section the most common soul verses will be looked at and interpreted to see whether or not the word soul, with its modern-day meaning, can be interpreted from them. The last part deals with God creating humans and interacting with them when he is not Physical. Many Christian Physicalists are seen as deist because they sound like they believe that God created everyone and then left them alone to physically work within his creation. However, there are beliefs that can answer the fact that God can interact with the world when he is non-physical. The belief here is that it is beyond three-dimensional understanding. God is seen as a powerful being that is not completely within everyones understanding, and it is possible that he can move within dimensions to interact with his creation. It is believed that Jesus was physical and that would mean that God had to send him by some means. It is beyond human understanding, but there can still be theories about it within humanities own understanding of Philosophy and Theology.

Christian Physicalism is not an idea that needs to be kicked to the side because of Christian Theism. Many people discount all of it because it just seems to not be possible within their Theology. The Bible simply says the soul, so then no one can be just simply physical, however, these beliefs are now throughly and accurately being contested by Physicalists within Science, Philosophy, and now Christian Theism. It is not so simple anymore and there are good arguments that are being used, and these arguments will be discussed thoroughly within this section.

This section is so important to the debate that it will be its own Part to this thesis, and it will be the part 2. It will be an in-depth look into each and every verse that has been said to be either against, or for Physicalism. There will also be a physical look into many topics within Christian Theism that have been said to not be physical, which means looking into the resurrection and other important topics, which will be the focus of the next part to this thesis. Until then, the Theology section in this thesis will be a brief overview of what the biggest arguments for and against Physicalism are in the Bible.

### **The Argument from Biblical Interpretation**

The most important argument for Physicalism within the Bible is that there are no adequate translations of the soul being said within God's word. The Bible, as is read today, has been translated many different ways using the original Hebrew, Greek, and Arabic writings. These writings have been read thousands of times and looked over countless times to make sure that Biblical interpretations today make sense and convey the exact message that the original authors, and God, intended for everyone to hear. The word soul is the topic of conversation within this debate and it is the most important word that would be used to prove the Dualist point of view. The word soul is stated multiple times within the bible in the Old and New Testament. It is stated by Jesus when he says in Matthew 10, verse 28, "And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell."<sup>51</sup> This is the most important usage of the word soul within the Bible, and the largest topic of debate into whether humans have a separate, nonphysical soul. However, a deeper look into the interpretation of the words will open the eyes of those who look at it to literally.

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<sup>51</sup> Matthew 10, verse 28

There is also a large sector of belief within Christian Theism that states that there is no actual Hell or Heaven for the soul to go to. This would be the belief called Annihilationism. There may be evidence, within the Bible, to go against this argument, but there is a strong argument for it. The argument being that if the greatest payment of sin is death than would not a soul, that can presumably defeat death, in Heaven or Hell, show that the people have defeated the worst payment for sin? It is enough to make the most traditional Christian question whether dying with a soul is really dying at all if they go to Heaven or Hell.

Both of these topics will be discussed shortly in this thesis and heavily in part 2 of this thesis. These arguments are here to show that the traditional thoughts held within Christian Theism have been incorrectly interpreted from the Bible, and therefore, cannot simply prove that there is such a thing as a soul in the text.

The main argument within Biblical interpretation is that the word people see as soul in their modern day texts are not correctly interpreted from the original texts, or they are supposed to be read to mean something other than a nonphysical soul. The first point to be made is that when it is said that people are made in the image of God, image Dei, that does not mean that they have been made with a soul that is of a different material than everyone, it just simply means that they were made in the likeness of God and made in his character. Joel Green says in his book, *Body, Soul, and Human Life*, that “in the image of god” should be taken as purely relational and covenantal. He states that, “The concept of the imago Dei, then, is fundamentally relational, or covenant, and takes as its ground and focus the graciousness of God’s own covenant relations with humanity and the rest of creation.”<sup>52</sup> It in no way means that being human means that the

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<sup>52</sup> Green, Joel B. *Body, Soul, and Human Life: The Nature of Humanity in the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008.

human must have some nonphysical quality specific to humans that the rest of the creatures of the world do not have, however, humanities dominion over and relation to the other creatures is supposed to be like the relation God has with humanity.

The next large topic is the words that are meant to mean soul within the Bibles interpretations. This includes the greek words, *sōma*, *psychē*, *pneuma*, and *sarx*, and the hebrew words, *nepheš*, *bāšār*, *lēb*, and *rūah*.<sup>53</sup> These words are the most commonly used words within Christian Theism for when the topic of soul or body comes about, however, these words actually have multiple translations. *Nepheš*, for example, can be interpreted to mean life, inner person, breath, self, desire, and other words dealing with humanity. Therefore, to get correct interpretations there must then be a use of context to see if the soul is actually what is being spoken about. The most powerful word would be the greek word, *psyche*, which is the most common word to be used to describe the soul. However, even when looking at this word, with the utilization of the context of the verse, there is still no real definitive description of a nonphysical soul that every human must have. There is no saying that the soul is completely separate from the physicality of the body. The descriptions are more likely saying that the mental is connected to the physical, and there is no real separation of body and soul unless looking into the belief that there must be a separation of the soul to enter into Heaven, if Annihilationism is not believed. Going into extreme detail of this topic will be the focus for the next part of this thesis, and it will be a continuation of this Biblical debate.

Also, famous philosophers and thinkers in the time back then, not associated with God and the Bible, used the words that are stated in the bible such as *psyche*. One famous philosopher

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<sup>53</sup> Green, Joel B. *Body, Soul, and Human Life: The Nature of Humanity in the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008.

to use it would be Aristotle. Famous in the debates on mind and body, and a huge part of the debates history, he used psyche in modern physical terms. He did believe that the heart was over the brain in importance, but his belief of the soul was a physical belief. He believed that the soul was a description of humanity, and humans are like the soul because they are alive and human.<sup>54</sup> Aristotle, being a major thinker in these times, showed that there is a lot of contradiction in the usages of words back then to describe the soul. He stated a completely different idea than what the Bible stated, and that other people in that time believed. This again shows that the belief that the soul is completely different from the body is just not definitive. In order to interpret it, a deeper look into the life after death discussion must be debated.

One of the strongest supporters of smarter Biblical interpretation into the meaning of words such as psyche is the famous Theologian N.T. Wright. N.T. Wright believes that this debate is harming the Christians Theological imprint because he believes that, “we are wrong to look for a soul-of-the-gaps, hiding in the bits that Neuroscience hasn’t yet managed to explain.”<sup>55</sup> He also believes that the New Testament cannot actually prove that there is a soul because of the use of the word psyche. He says that the objections to the soul being easily seen in the NT are,

“focussed particularly on the word psyche, normally translated as ‘soul’. I note, by the way, that in Paul’s engagement with the Corinthians in particular, there is good reason to suppose that his audience at least would have heard his references to psyche and pneuma

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<sup>54</sup> Green, Joel B. *Body, Soul, and Human Life: The Nature of Humanity in the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008.

<sup>55</sup> Wright, N. T. "Mind, Spirit, Soul and Body: All for One and One for All Reflections on Paul's Anthropology in His Complex Contexts." Ntwrightpage.com. March 18, 2011. Accessed September 12, 2016. [http://ntwrightpage.com/Wright\\_SCP\\_MindSpiritSoulBody.htm](http://ntwrightpage.com/Wright_SCP_MindSpiritSoulBody.htm).

in terms of different kinds of material substance: within Stoic pantheism, everything was in principle material and everything was as it were god-bearing.”<sup>56</sup>

He has strong beliefs that the normal view of the soul is just simply not definitively seen within the New Testament. He, however, does not go straight for the Physicalists belief just because he does not want to say that there is no God, however, if he believes in Physicalism with a God, there can then be a usage of his writings to show that every usage of a word such as psyche is actually being used to describe something like the body.

The belief of Annihilationism is also a major topic that is within Biblical interpretation and is a large part of the next part of this thesis. This belief is dealing with life after death, and within the Annihilationist teachings there is the belief that there is no soul that would go to Heaven or Hell after death. There is just plainly death and a waiting for the final judgment. There is the, “resurrection of the dead and the eternal judgment,”<sup>57</sup> that will occur in the future. There is going to be a judgment in the, “age to come, not merely a judgment made by man or God in the here and now.”<sup>58</sup> This belief is that there is no Heaven or Hell that the soul would survive to, rather there is just simply death, and then there is waiting for the final judgment for both the good and the bad, not just the good. Then there will be a resurrection of those dead and the judgment will either send the people to the final lake of fire or to the new Heaven and new Earth. This is the proper belief to hold if one is a Physicalists because of the fact that it does not hold true to the idea that humans have a soul that technically can survive the greatest price for their

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<sup>56</sup> Wright, N. T. "Mind, Spirit, Soul and Body: All for One and One for All Reflections on Paul's Anthropology in His Complex Contexts." Ntwrightpage.com. March 18, 2011. Accessed September 12, 2016. [http://ntwrightpage.com/Wright\\_SCP\\_MindSpiritSoulBody.htm](http://ntwrightpage.com/Wright_SCP_MindSpiritSoulBody.htm).

<sup>57</sup> Fudge, Edward. *The Fire That Consumes: A Biblical and Historical Study of Final Punishment*. Houston, TX: Providential Press, 1982.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid

sin ,which is death. If the greatest price for their sin is in fact death, then how does a soul let someone actually go through that payment? A soul gives the person the ability to survive the greatest punishment, by letting their thought process and their self continue on, therefore, a true payment of sin is death, and no soul means that they actually get to go through this. The mental force that humans posses cannot survive this because of the fact that it is completely reliant upon the physical brain.

Again, the fact that Dualism cannot be accurately interpreted from the Bible, should be exciting for the Christian Theist. It means that they can work along side the modern day Scientist in explaining how God created this physical world. There can also be a closing of the divide between Christians and Atheist, which means there no longer needs to be such a huge disagreement on how humans are the way they are, if both sides believe in Physicalism.

### **Conclusion: Physicalism**

It is seen within modern Science and Philosophy, that Physicalism is a plausible idea for answering how mind and body are connected and how they work together physically. Mental force gives people their ability to decide subjectively, and not in a preset order. Human Psychology shows how they are made in the image of God without a soul. Neuroscience shows where in their brain their emotions, and thoughts take place, and this shows where they are in their brain. Philosophy shows how consciousness is physical and how Supervenience answers how mind and brain interact. All of these ideas come together to give an intro into how to prove that people are entirely physical and that there is no need for a soul to make humans human. The Theology that goes with this was introduced in this thesis, but will be fully looked at in the next part of this thesis. Christian Theism has given everyone text that, when it is properly interpreted, shows how there is no definitive proof that humans have a soul or if it is actually just a part of their body. For all of these reasons, Physicalism is the proper Mind-Body theory for both sides to agree with, for the Atheists and the Christian Theist.

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