Some Difficulties of Theology Developed in the Context of Science

A Critique of the Position of Grygiel and Wąsek

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Abstract *Teologia ewolucyjna: Założenia – problemy – hipotezy* (*Evolutionary Theology: Assumptions – Problems – Hypotheses*), by Wojciech P. Grygiel and Damian Wąsek, is an interesting and inspiring book. The attempt to formulate traditional problems of theology in the context of the natural sciences should command special attention today. And if it is also a successful and consistently pursued attempt, then we should welcome it with particular interest. In this article, however, I do not want to dwell on the advantages of the publication being discussed, but rather to make some comments that may appear relevant when seeking to assess the theses of its authors from the perspective of a classical theist entertaining a metaphysical rather than scientific perspective on theology. I will focus on four issues: (1) the concept of Revelation developed in the context of the natural sciences, (2) the understanding of evolution, (3) the metaphorization of theological language, and (4) the panentheistic perspective of theology practiced in the context of science. In conclusion, I state that the proposed development of theology in the context of science, despite the advantage of presenting old theological problems in a new perspective, is vulnerable to the accusation of pan-positivism, which entangles theology in too strict a context, depending as it does on the results of the empirical sciences.

Keywords evolutionary theology; Grygiel, Wojciech; metaphors; panentheism; religious language; theology; Wąsek, Damian

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1. The Concept of Revelation in the Context of the Natural Sciences

The authors of *Teologia Ewolucyjna* believe that theological reflection cannot be fully autonomous and independent in relation to other approaches to investigating reality. Therefore, in order to be credible to our contemporaries, it should adjust itself to reflect the influence of the development of various non-theological disciplines, especially the natural sciences. In this belief, they refer to the words of Cipriano Vagaggini, who formulates the dilemma of contemporary theology as follows: "How to practice a theology that will be sensitive to the achievements of the empirical and mathematical sciences?" (Grygiel and Wąsek 2022, 15). Hence, a theology credible to our contemporaries must refer to the theology of Revelation, which shows what God's agency in the world amounts to. The authors understand Revelation itself as an encounter between God and man, which is a dialogical event aimed at establishing a personal relationship between them. They therefore depart from the classical understanding of Revelation as God's clarification of His plan for the salvation of humanity. In their opinion, in the twentieth century, the dynamic and dialogical reality of God's agency has been revealed anew, on the one hand by the influence of existential philosophy, focused on the inner experience of the individual, and on the other by the *nouvelle théologie* movement, with its slogan of returning to original sources and living the faith inspired by the attitude of the early Church. The Second Vatican Council, in the Constitution *Dei Verbum*, confirmed these intuitions about Divine Revelation, emphasizing the aspect of the interpersonal relationship between God and man. After the Council, theologians began to define Revelation as a sign of God's loving and saving involvement in the world and in human life. This anthropological and existentialist turn pertaining to the concept of Revelation is best expressed by the words of K. Rahner, as quoted by the authors:

> … from the point of view of faith, the theologian is primarily interested in the question of the saving message of the reality he analyzes, and not this reality itself—it is only a space for the divine-human encounter. In other words, discovering Revelation consists in the fact that man, when faced with any signs, things, or arguments, asks himself: What significance does this have for his salvation? In what way is what he has before him an invitation sent by God to communion with Him? (Grygiel and Wąsek 2022, 22)

Grygiel and Wąsek accept Rahner's belief that God himself is Revelation—such that when speaking of Revelation, one can only speak of the

Creator sharing Himself with man. Such a perspective emphasizes the clear primacy of personal relationships over doctrine and, in principle, redirects theology from an interest in doctrine to the development of the attitude of faith. It is therefore recognized that in theology the most important thing is the personal attitude towards God, and not the recognition of some doctrine, truths of faith, or intellectual claims. Doctrine itself is treated as an intellectual construct that can only obscure the living personal relationship with God.

However, a significant inconsistency in the book under discussion shows up here. Grygiel and Wąsek themselves admit that the relationship with God and the truth of doctrine cannot be opposed. Even the conciliar Constitution *Dei Verbum* understands Revelation simultaneously as an interpersonal relationship of God to man and as truths revealed by God: i.e. the doctrine taught by the Magisterium of the Church. It can therefore be said that they are not protesting against doctrine so much as against distorted doctrine, which omits the dialogical relationship between God and man. In their opinion, this distortion occurred for certain historical reasons (the controversy with Lutheranism) at the Council of Trent, which spoke of Revelation as a "saving truth" and as "teaching concerning morals," and thus of a certain number of truths that God communicates to man. This state of affairs was deepened by the First Vatican Council, which understood Revelation as a doctrine of faith proclaimed by the Magisterium of the Church. In such an approach, the most important issue of God's self-revelation was omitted, and the things revealed by God were emphasized (*revelata*). Hence, faith began to be understood as accepting certain truths about God, and not as an encounter with Him or opening up of oneself to a personal relationship. The content of faith itself began to be understood instrumentally, without reference to the intentions of the biblical authors or the context of the era. This way of thinking generated conflicts relating to the changing picture of the world, as new discoveries about the functioning of nature broadly construed demanded a revision of the revealed truths. Yet the modification of theological statements supposed to occur under the influence of new scientific discoveries has been hindered by the top-down establishment of doctrine. To overcome this, theology must turn to the empirical sciences in search of new inspirations.

If we assume that Divine Revelation should be understood as a dialogical event consisting of an encounter between God and man, which nevertheless requires the world as a necessary stage for this same divine-human interaction, then the created world must play an active role in helping to create such an occurrence. Theology therefore contains a transcendent

element, which is universal and unchanging, and an immanent element, which is the historically and culturally conditioned way of verbalizing this experience of encounter. Hence, the more reliable the vision of the world, the better the purification of the act of faith, and the greater the dialogue between theology and the empirical sciences, the greater the chance of capturing "anchor points" for the divine-human relationship. Pictures of the world are only, in a somewhat Kantian way, a stage, and are not in themselves infallible doctrinal elements. They result from the culture and spirit of the times, and lose their relevance when the empirical data changes. Nevertheless, although the natural sciences are only extraneous sites for arriving at theological knowledge, they are important in the sense that they provide a current world-picture; they therefore become a model for practicing theology. For this reason, Grygiel and Wąsek would like to refer to new scientific models in order to search—through the prism of the latter—for theological and transcendent meaning, which will allow for the discovery of knowledge about God. Using the method of interpreting the data provided to theology by the natural sciences, they assume that the more reliable the vision of the world, the better the purification of the act of faith. They suggest that probably all theologians of the past had a more or less false understanding of God, because they operated under an erroneous (falsified) world-picture, which distorted theological knowledge. Ultimately, therefore, the world of nature, as a stage, is not just passive decoration for them, but actively shapes "anchor points" for the divine-human relationship. Therefore, if dogma always has a historical-evolutionary dimension, this means that God speaks to people through some historical context or other, and that in order to understand the proper meaning of dogma we therefore need to historically contextualize it. Since the most important context today is contemporary science, theology must be practiced in the context of science. Thus: "Evolutionary theology can therefore be a project of creating new interpretations of the truths of faith using metaphors, symbols, and images that correspond to contemporary scientific discoveries" (Grygiel and Wąsek 2022, 56).

Before we consider the problems posed by the model of evolutionary theology proposed here, however, let us briefly examine what the term "evolution" itself means to these authors, and how the evolutionary processes of nature are intended to impact theology.

2. Evolutionism as a Paradigm for Practicing Theology

Grygiel and Wąsek fail to define in what sense they use the term "evolution" in their project of evolutionary theology. However, when reading their book

carefully, one can distinguish at least three meanings of this term, which interpenetrate each other in various arguments.

The first meaning is very narrow, and limited to the theory of evolution found in the natural sciences. Evolution is understood here as a scientific theory explaining the origin and development of life on Earth. If theology were to model itself on such an understanding of evolution, it would express a progressive idea, taking on board new scientific developments. Therefore, Christian doctrine would also have to develop in order to cope with today's science. The basic difficulty that arises with such an understanding of the relationship between theology and science will always comes down to the fact that today's findings in the natural sciences are not the final word on the nature of the world. In biology, the dispute over whether evolution is blind or designed (intelligently?) is still unresolved, and in physics and cosmology, after the latest data from the Webb telescope, there is even talk of such discoveries being made as will change the foundations of our understanding of the world. The deeper we look into the universe, the better we understand that Einstein's standard equations, describing the expansion of the universe according to the theory of relativity, do not describe this expansion in the way that the theory should suggest. And it is not my intention here to undermine the theory of evolution. I only want to point out that in today's discussions in the field of the biological sciences, between biochemists and geneticists, certain new facts may emerge that would force scientists to significantly modify their understanding of the mechanisms of the evolutionary process. This could cause philosophers of biology to look more favorably at certain aspects of teleological explanations, in order to better understand complex evolutionary processes. After all, as William James argued, we are not able to imagine today what our future science will be like, especially when it comes to the research methods used there. Therefore, if the theory of evolution is to become a model for practicing theology and establishing the truth of doctrine, we must accept that we base the truths of faith on temporary theories, because scientific theories are always temporary, and we do not know what they will be like in the future. This can only have catechetical and pastoral significance, because we want to explain the truths of faith to modern man in the light of new scientific theories. However, this is only a practical problem, not a theoretical one. It can also result from the confusion experienced by theologians who, no longer able to explain doctrine in the language of classical metaphysics, reach for the language and theories of modern science with the aim of practicing a more understandable theology in that context.

In the second sense, Grygiel and Wąsek use the term "evolution" to describe the general evolutionary paradigm that prevails in all contemporary science. This means that any field of knowledge, in order to deserve being called 'scientific,' must be cultivated from an evolutionary perspective. Therefore, not only the natural sciences, but also the historical and humanistic sciences, including of course theology, to be recognized as science, must adhere to the evolutionary paradigm, which in the humanities goes under the label "historicism." It should be emphasized here that Grygiel and Wąsek adhere to a cumulative model of knowledge development: i.e. they treat the most current theories as the truest. Thinking in terms of the evolutionary paradigm, they assume that the development of science is straightforwardly evolutionary, moving from worse to better theories. Therefore, they focus all their efforts on reconciling theological theses with today's science, and not on deepening the theological theses themselves. They assume that if some theological truth were to be incompatible with the current state of natural science, then it would have to be adapted to the latter as swiftly as possible. They do not assume that any theological truth is universally true, but rather maintain that it must always be reinterpreted and adapted to current scientific theories. And yet, the question arises whether forming theology on the basis of the current state of science will not always be to some extent arbitrary, in that it makes doctrine dependent on the state of scientific knowledge.

Most important, however, is the third level of understanding of the term 'evolution,' which Grygiel and Wąsek implicitly assume in everything they write about evolutionary theology. Specifically, they recognize that even if current scientific theories are partial, hypothetical, and based on questionable, not always well-founded, assumptions, each future scientific theory, however far it may go in supplementing or verifying our current one, will always be expressed in terms of the evolutionary paradigm. In short, although our current scientific theories are provisional and open to verification, there is one certainty: namely, that in the future, they will always still be expressed in terms of the evolutionary paradigm. The most general evolutionary scheme of future science cannot be denied, because reality itself is dynamic and evolutionary. Therefore, as long as science describes reality, it must remain evolutionary in the broadest sense. And this is the most important argument in favor of evolutionary theology—and, indirectly, also an argument for theology practiced in the context of science, because it is science that reveals to us the truth about the dynamic and evolutionary scheme of reality itself. Even so, the question arises of whether it is correct to perceive every dynamic change and every process as evolutionary, to

such an extent that even the fact that history is taking place means that there is evolution. Is referring to the theory of evolution, treated as the most general paradigm of scientific thinking and even, to some extent, as the ideology underpinning modern science, which excludes everything not presented in evolutionary terms, a correct method for practicing theology? What novelty, one may ask, does the paradigm of evolution bring to theology? Why is practicing theology in the context of science more legitimate than practicing it in the context of metaphysics? For a theologian, it should not matter whether their work is accompanied by a psychological intuition to the effect that they are practicing their reflection in a manner modelled on the modern natural sciences. Should one not recognize that since most scientific claims are provisional, one should first of all consider what the status of such claims really is, and to what extent they conflict with religious doctrine? And, most importantly, is constructing a bottom-up theology based on the natural sciences really a better proposition than traditional top-down conceptions?

3. Metaphorical Language in Theology

The program of evolutionary theology focuses on modifying and reinterpreting existing formulas of faith, including official statements of the Magisterium of the Church, in such a way as to harmonize them with the theory of evolution. This task primarily concerns changing the theological language in which these formulas have been defined. Grygiel and Wąsek hold that "the doctrine of the Church is not a monolith once formulated, but a living tissue that is constantly developing. Defined truths of faith that clash with new, evolutionary images of the world can therefore be modified and their change doesn't go beyond the boundaries of orthodoxy" (2022, 56). The basic problem here is the proper distinguishing of the logical meaning of a truth of faith from its historical context, and the linguistic picture of the world in which this truth has been formulated. The authors make this task much easier for themselves by claiming that the entire language of theology is metaphorical, in that the concepts used to describe finite nature are referred to the description of infinite reality in the case of speaking about God. When we say that God is the Creator of the world, or the Person, we use metaphors and models referring to human experiences. The metaphorical nature of theological language allows us to constantly search for new pictures that will be more adequate. Hence, Grygiel and Wąsek write, "evolutionary theology can … be a project of creating new interpretations of the truths of faith using metaphors, symbols and images that correspond to contemporary scientific discoveries" (2022, 56). Referring

to the idea of extending the language as proposed by John Macquarrie, they claim that "to adapt theological language, one metaphor should be translated into another metaphor that is understandable in today's image of the world" (Grygiel and Wąsek 2022, 47). However, the question arises of how, on such a constructivist approach, we can preserve the original meaning of the doctrine of faith.

The difficulties associated with the extreme metaphorization of religious language proposed by authors such as John Macquarrie (1994) and Sallie McFague (1982) were pointed out by William Alston, amongst others. He asked whether, in discussions about God, there are so-called irreducible metaphors: i.e. metaphors that, in the strong sense, cannot be formulated in literal terms, even in part. He calls those theologians who answer this question affirmatively "pan-metaphoricists." This position began to be popular in the 1970s, and in its extreme form claimed that the concepts of our language refer to descriptions of our world and are completely inadequate when used in reference to God. In its weakened form, it maintained that although we can use our language to talk about God, it is always so vague and unclear that in fact we do not know to what extent it refers to Him. In response, Alston argues that

> if we can make any assertion about God definite enough to have truth-value, it will be in principle possible to say the same thing literally, at least partially, even if that requires introducing new terms (or new meanings for old terms) into the language for that purpose. (Alston 1989, 2)

The basic problem is whether we can somehow overcome the impossibility of talking in a literal sense about God, who is wholly other and transcendent to the world. In this situation, the appeal to metaphorical language did seem very promising. It allowed us to formulate truth-apt propositions about God without using terms in any literal way. But the following difficulty arose: if metaphorical statements cannot be at least partially expressed in literal terms, what status does theological language in general have when it comes to such statements' claim to truth? Can personalistic predicates about God, for example, be paraphrased in such a way that they say something literally true about Him, even though they start from an understanding of a person that applies to human beings? Alston shows how it is possible in language to speak about immaterial persons in a way that avoids irreducible metaphors. It seems that, for example, the biblical metaphor "The Lord is my shepherd" is reducible to the more or less literal idea that God protects me, cares for me, and will never abandon me. This paraphrase speaks at least

in part in a literal sense of God's relation to man, and thus in a broader sense of God's relation to the world. Alston shows that in a similar way we can attribute to God such attributes as timelessness and immutability, and also—despite some difficulties—understand them in a literal sense (see Alston 1989, 64–102). He therefore concludes that

> either the pan-metaphoricist abandons the aspiration to significant truth claims or he revokes the ban on literal predictability. He cannot have both. Which way he should jump depends, inter alia, on the prospects for true literal predication in theology. (Alston 1989, 37)

Treating religious language in a way similar to the language of science seems to be a mistake precisely because we then transfer the metaphors and models used to explain natural reality onto religious reality. A much better solution is to appeal not to science, but to metaphysics. As Jacques Maritain pointed out, metaphysical knowledge is the highest form of purely natural knowledge, the purpose of which is to seek ultimate rationality by pointing to God as the First Cause and Author of nature. In this way, the existence of God and His perfections (unity, simplicity, immutability, perfection, etc.) can be known by causal ascent from the natural world to the First Principle of all being (*sub ratione, primi entis*):

> The knowledge of God thus obtained by the reason constitutes that prime philosophy, metaphysics, or what Aristotle called "natural theology." It is ananoetic knowledge or knowledge by analogy, which is by no means to be confused with metaphorical knowledge. It makes use for the knowledge of God of those notions which we seek for in things, and which we, because of this, in as much as they are realized in created things, conceive as limitations, but which in themselves, in their significance, imply neither limitation nor imperfection, and which can therefore be applied in a rightful sense to the Uncreated as well as to the creation. A light of knowledge broken in the prism of creation, but veritable for all that. (Maritain 1937, 306)

According to Maritain, analogy differs from metaphor in that it allows us to know God, albeit in an imperfect way and one limited to the concepts of our language. It nevertheless allows us to grasp the uncreated reality in the divided mirror of transcendental concepts, which are common in an analogical way to what is created and uncreated. However, it is extremely important to clearly distinguish the use of analogy in the domain of faith and in the domain of metaphysics. The difference here is fundamental,

because in the case of metaphysics, analogy constitutes the very form and rule of knowledge. God is not reached either in his personality or in his nature, in the indivisibility of his purest and simplest essence, but only as he reveals himself in the variable but true reflections that are shown to us by things proportional to our reason. Not only is the way of knowing a human characteristic, but also the object itself, which is the goal of knowledge, is understood only to the extent to which it allows itself to be grasped by human reason, by appearing in the mirror of sensible things, and via the analogy of being. Above this wisdom of the natural order stands theology, which rationally develops the truths contained in the deposit of Revelation. Its certainty is greater than that of metaphysics, because it receives its principles from reason illuminated by faith. But theological knowledge still takes place in the symbols of language and through the medium of human thought. It cannot be otherwise, because God speaks our language so that we can know Him. According to Maritain, however, we can say that it is the object of faith, taken not from the side of the thing itself in which we believe, *ex parte ipsius rei creditae*, but from the side of the means or signs that serve the faithful person, *ex parte credentis*. Here we see, in a certain sense, a return to the method of knowledge by analogy—to the extent that Revelation uses human terms, but not by analogy to creation, as in metaphysics, but by analogy with the very mystery of the inner life of God, who will be known face to face in the beatific vision (see Maritain 1937, 307).

All this leads to the conclusion that in defending the thesis about the metaphorization of theology, we should firstly expect Grygiel and Wąsek to provide a much stronger justification for the necessity of using so-called 'irreducible' metaphors in theology (and thus answer precisely the question about the sense in which theology is metaphorical, and whether it includes all formulas of faith), and secondly demand that they better justify the thesis that the use of metaphors, analogies and myths in the contemporary natural sciences is a procedure identical, or at least significantly similar, to the use of analogical language in theology.

4. Panentheism in Evolutionary Theology

When presenting God's relation to the world, evolutionary theology tends to understand it from a panentheistic perspective. This is a common tendency of all contemporary evolutionary theologians, and the authors of the book we are discussing are no exception in this respect. This tendency, it seems, stems from the error I mentioned in the first objection: that is, from giving an excessive role to nature, or to what Grygiel and Wąsek called

"the stage," in understanding God's relation to the world. It aims to find some balance between the transcendence and immanence of God, in which

> the Being of God includes and penetrates the whole universe, so that every part exists in Him but (as against pantheism) that his Being is more than, and is not exhausted by, the universe. (Peacocke 1993, 371)

Grygiel and Wąsek hold that the modern scientific method allows for a significant correction of the inadequate traditional theistic approach, which introduces a division into natural and supernatural reality. It enables a more precise presentation of the theological understanding of how the world of divine immanence is immersed in the world of divine transcendence. Referring to the position of John Peacocke, who understood "everything in God," they state that "this concept is panentheism, or an ontological position, connecting the immanent and transcendent order in such a way that the immanent order is 'immersed' in the transcendent" (Grygiel and Wąsek 2022, 148). On the one hand, this concept eliminates the arbitrariness of the transcendent God's intervention in created reality, and on the other, in an understandable way, it shows the causal action of God in the world through the laws of nature. Grygiel and Wąsek state that

> adopting the position of panentheism allows for a redefinition of the commonly accepted division of reality into natural and supernatural. Divine immanence in the created order makes all natural events the work of God, and there is no area of reality that would remain outside His causal influence. (2022, 232)

One might think that this is a rather moderate panentheism, although the abolition of clear boundaries between God and His creation may pose certain difficulties for the theist. Nevertheless, supporters of evolutionary theology, such as Philip Clayton, believe that panentheism constitutes a kind of *modus vivendi* between radical theism and various types of pantheisms that have been a temptation for Christian thinkers for centuries. Following Jürgen Moltmann, he emphasizes that a holistic understanding of creation necessarily shows God's panentheistic relation to space and time. The time-space dimensions become to some extent divine attributes; we should think of God as

> … coextensive with the world: all points of space are encompassed by God and are in this sense "within" him. Nonetheless, created space is precisely that created, contingent. Only God himself has the ontological status to be

> absolute and to contain all space within himself. In short: finite space is contained within absolute space, the world is contained within God; yet the world is not identical to God. (Clayton 1997, 90)

Clayton emphasizes that dialectical thinking is needed in theology to show that the world is both different from God and completely dependent on Him. This means that to some extent the effects on the world also effect God, although the world remains a contingent and accidental being relative to Him.

Of the six arguments in defense of panentheism that Clayton cites, the most interesting seems to be the argument from divine causality. If God is ontologically 'outside' the world, then His agency in the world seems to be an intervention 'from outside' in the natural order of the latter. Clayton concludes, like Grygiel and Wąsek, that the understanding of God's agency seems more coherent when we understand it as a relation of God to the world that is analogous to the relation of mind to body. This panentheistic analogy suggests that there is no ontological difference between divine action and the regularities of the laws of nature. From a theological perspective, the laws of nature are essentially "descriptions of the predictable regularity of patterns of divine action" (Clayton 1997, 101). The laws and regularities of nature, although they are autonomous actions of nature, are nevertheless, thanks to God's omnipresence in the world, ontologically identical with God's intentions. This understanding removes the difficulty of perceiving God as controlling the regularities and laws occurring in the world 'from the outside.'

Let us consider, however, whether there is any alternative to the panentheistic doctrine of God's relation to the world that evolutionary theology presents us with. Is the doctrine of God's omnipresence that so entangles Him in creation that He becomes changeable and responsive to the world the only perspective for Christianity? Mariusz Tabaczek, assessing panentheistic doctrines, indicates that among the various characteristics of panentheism, evolutionary theologians (J. Moltmann, J. Peacocke, J. Polkinghorne and P. Clayton) emphasize the following in particular: (1) that God encompasses or contains the world (the substantive or locative notion); (2) that God binds up the world by giving the divine self to the world; (3) that God provides the ground for that which emerges within, or for the emergence of, the world (see Tabaczek 2021, 157). The essence of panentheism is not only that everything is in God, but also that divine immanence permeates the entire created order of nature. This feature is distinguished from classical theism which, while emphasizing that God exists in all things, avoids the

statement that everything is in God. For this reason, theists such as Niels Gregersen emphasize that classical Christian doctrine recognized God's immanence without falling into panentheism (see Gregersen 2004, 19–35). At the same time, Thomas Aquinas spoke of God's being present in the world in three ways: (1) by virtue of His power, as all things are subject to it (in opposition to those who claim that visible and corporeal things are subject to the power of a contradictory principle); (2) thanks to His presence, as all things are bare and open to His eyes (in opposition to those who deny God's presence in inferior bodies); (3) in virtue of His essence, as the cause of being of all things (in opposition to those who assume that there are creatures mediating being from God down to the lower creatures) (ST I, 8, 3). This allows us to show that although the world is dependent on God for its existence, "the natures and activities of creatures cannot affect or have a real feedback effect on God" (Tabaczek 2021, 163). On the other hand, another contemporary Thomist, Brian Shanley, presents the issue of the omnipresence of God in the following terms when he writes that

> Aquinas clearly thinks that God is "related" to the world in the sense that he creates, loves, knows, wills, governs, and redeems the world. The denial that God is "really related" to the world does not dispute any of these claims. It simply denies that God's causal activity, and any relational terms thereby ascribed to him, implies any alteration in his being. When God acts so as to bring creatures into relationship with him, all of the "happening" is located in creation rather than in God. (Shanley 2002, 59)

The position of traditional theism thus allows for an account of God's immanence and omnipresence in the world that in no way violates the perspective of radical transcendence so clearly rejected by the proponents of panentheism, who advocate evolutionary theology.

Therefore, in the more cautious conceptions of divine embodiment in creation, it is maintained that the position of panentheism will prove true only in an eschatological reality, when—in the words of St. Paul—God will be "all in all." It is for this reason that John Polkinghorne emphasizes that "in my view, panentheistic language is best reserved to express eschatological destiny rather than to describe present reality" (Polkinghorne 2000, 95).

5. Conclusion

The project of evolutionary theology is, in fact, a proposal of a kind of scientific and theological positivism, which claims that the only proper path to theology runs from contemporary science. It seems that this cannot be

considered a form of theology *simpliciter*, but rather is a theology of nature which, with reference to contemporary science, tries to solve certain theological problems in a new way. It is therefore a contextual theology, practiced in the context of the contemporary empirical sciences. It stems from the conviction that theology cannot fall into a "metaphysical ghetto," but instead must conduct a dialogue with other ways of investigating reality. There are certain issues that science itself takes over from philosophy, such as the nature of the mind, of causality, or of temporality. These require at least preliminary meta-scientific research. As John Polkinghorne says,

> I believe that too many theologians fail to treat what science has to offer with the appropriate degree of seriousness that would enable them to acknowledge adequately their contextual role. (Polkinghorne 2009, 8)

Polkinghorne believes that there are not many theologian-scientists. However, if theology is to be effectively pursued in the context of science, it must be able to answer the important questions that classical theology has addressed to the latter. It must therefore be pursued in a manner similar to science itself: that is, in terms of a bottom-up approach to thinking. He writes that "I strongly believe that it is possible to do theology in a bottom-up fashion and that its pursuit in the context of science will indeed require just this kind of approach" (Polkinghorne 2009, 30). Science and theology are, of course, different, but they complement each other in the search for truth. They are partners in the human effort to seek truth and understanding. Grygiel and Wąsek fully agree with such a dialogical approach to the relationship of theology and science, but does this mean an unequivocally scientific contextualization of theology? Is it not enough to assume that today's science is an auxiliary discipline of theology, just as archaeology is an auxiliary discipline of biblical studies. Science, according to this view, would only provide raw material for the work of the theologian, who seeks truth by assessing the motivations of faith. On this approach, the project of evolutionary theology would not be a new evolutionary paradigm of theology, but rather some sort of (more modest) theological reflection on the contemporary state of the empirical sciences. It seems that Grygiel and Wąsek are doing just that when they try to reconsider the old (traditional) formulations of Christian dogmatics regarding evil, original sin, and the existence of the soul in the light of new achievements in biology and neuroscience. We may say that they succeed very well in that regard, but it is separate issue, and one that we will not seek to address here.

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