On the Metaphysics of the Incarnation

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According to St. Thomas Aquinas, natural reason can fulfil an important role in the faith of a Christian believer. That is, as Aquinas writes, 'Since grace does not destroy nature but perfects it, natural reason should minister to faith as the natural bent of the will ministers to charity'. A way in which natural reason has been able to do this, within a contemporary context, is within the academic field of 'Analytic Theology' (AT), which has been pioneered by Oliver Crisp, Michael Rea (2009) Richard Swinburne (1994) amongst others. Analytic Theology, as a field of inquiry, focuses on utilising the tools and techniques of contemporary analytic philosophy to investigate the meaning and justification of theological doctrines. Christian Analytic Theology, in particular, thus focuses on utilising the tools and techniques of contemporary analytic philosophy to investigate the meaning and justification of Christian doctrines. Traditionally, three particular doctrines have been at the centre of inquiry within this field: the doctrines of the Trinity, Incarnation and Atonement. We can now focus our attention on the second doctrine: the Incarnation, which, in its historically precisified form, has been termed by Timothy Pawl 'Conciliar Christology'. At a more specific level, Conciliar Christology is the specific theological teaching that is derived from the central definitions and expositions of the creeds, canons, and anathemas of the first seven ecumenical councils. Central to the theological teaching found within these documents, with regards to the Incarnation, is that of God the Son (hereafter, GS), the second person of the Trinity, intervening in human history by becoming incarnate in the person of Jesus Christ. This specific doctrine was first formally defined at the Council of Chalcedon (451 CE), which established, through the 'Chalcedonian Definition', a conceptual and linguistic foundation centred on two constraints. This is expressed through **(1)** of your handout which states

> (1) (Chalcedon)   **(i)** At the moment of the Incarnation, GS became a human that was a single person.
> **(ii)** In his incarnate state, GS was truly (i.e., fully and genuinely) divine and truly (i.e., fully and genuinely) human.

As expressed by (1), an 'orthodox' construal of the doctrine of the Incarnation must posit, in line with the second condition, that Christ had two *distinct* yet *united* natures: a divine and human nature. Furthermore, an 'orthodox' construal of the doctrine must also posit, in line with the first condition, that Christ was a single person (*hypostasis*). Now, over the course of time, theologians have sought to provide an explanation of (1) that allows an individual to affirm the true divinity and true humanity of Christ whilst also simultaneously affirming the singularity of his personhood. However, despite the amount of effort that has been given to this task, doing so has proven to be challenging. As either the explanations provided by individuals have, on the one hand, overstressed the distinctiveness of the natures—which has resorted in the issue of *Nestorianism* (i.e., the claim that in Christ there were two subjects of experience or persons: one human person and one divine person). Or, the explanations provided by these individuals have, on the other hand, overstressed the unity of the natures—which has resorted in the issue of *Eutikianism* (i.e., the claim that Christ's divine nature mixes with or (in some way) swamps his human nature). Hence, the aim of an 'orthodox', or, 'Conciliar' construal of the Incarnation is to provide an explication of the meaning of (1), without, however, dividing the one person

of Christ into two, or, dividing/confusing the natures—let's call this challenging task the *Clarification Task*.

Now, over the course of time, various theologians have identified a conceptual issue that forestalls one from completing the Clarification Task, which has been termed the 'Fundamental Problem'. The Fundamental Problem (FP) has been a focus of the work of Richard Cross (2011), Thomas Morris (2009), Marilyn McCord Adams (2009), Swinburne (1994) and Pawl (2016). And it raises the issue of certain predicates that are aptly said of Christ, such as the candidate predications of 'Christ is impassible' and 'Christ is passible', are inconsistent. And thus, given this inconsistency, irrespective of the Clarification Task, Conciliar Christology must be taken to be false. This logical problem is expressed through **(2)** of your handout which states:

> (2) (Fundamental Problem) By the action of GS becoming incarnate as Christ, the following predicates are apt of him:
> (i) Christ is: 'omniscient', 'omnipotent', 'omnipresent', 'eternal', 'infinite' and the 'creator of the universe'.
> (ii) Christ is: 'limited in knowledge', 'limited in power', 'bounded by location', 'has a beginning in time', 'finite' and 'part of God's creation'.

At a general level, any entity that possesses one divine nature and one human nature will have inconsistent predicates that are true of it and thus face the logical problem stated in (2). However, no entity can have inconsistent predicates that are true of it. And thus, any theory that takes this to be the case must be false. And thus, as Conciliar Christology, as defined by the Chalcedonian Definition, requires one to assert that Christ, a single being, does, in fact, possess a dual nature—that instantiates these incompatible attributes—it seems that the doctrine must indeed be incoherent, and thus false And so, in taking this issue of the FP into account, John Hick famously quipped that 'for one to say, without explanation, that the historical Jesus of Nazareth was also God is as devoid of meaning as to say that this circle drawn with a pencil on paper is also a square'. The task presented to the analytic theologian by the FP is thus that of providing an explanation that shows how the candidate predicates – and others like it – are not, in fact, incompatible in the case of Christ.

Therefore, in addressing this problem, some theologians and philosophers, such as Adams (2006) and Swinburne (1994) have turned to analytic metaphysics, a branch of philosophy investigating the fundamental nature of reality, for some needed help. We will now follow suit by utilising certain metaphysical theses to, first, address the FP and, second, to fulfil the Clarification Task. The ultimate goal being to showcase that the characteristics of Christ are not contradictory and offer a potential explanation for the Incarnation doctrine without falling into the pitfalls of Nestorianism or Eutikianism. We will now focus on these issues and their proposed metaphysical solutions in turn.

2. The Reduplicative Strategy and the Fundamental Problem

2.1 The Nature of the Reduplicative Strategy

The method of reduplicative predication (RP), or the 'Qua' move, is a classical method for addressing the FP. This specific method traces back to Cyril of Alexandria in the fourth century, where he explained that while the divine Word of God couldn't physically suffer, the body he assumed did. This method is also rooted in the Chalcedonian Definition, which differentiates between the specific attributes that are to be predicated

of Christ in virtue of his two natures. For Cyril and the Chalcedonian fathers, Christ suffers in his human nature and does not suffer in his divine nature. RP thus offers a way to make sense of the specific predications made about Christ. And so this method for dealing with our problem is expressed through **(3)** of your handout which states:

(3)   (Reduplication)   Christ *qua* his human nature is P and Christ *qua* his divine nature is ~P

The method of RP predicates attributes to Christ based on his divine or human nature. Such that one can logically predicate opposing attributes to the same individual, with respective to a certain nature, which thus diffuses any incoherence issues. However, a challenge, termed the 'underdevelopment issue', can be raised that questions the clarity of statements like "Christ qua divine is impassible" and "Christ qua human is passible". As Pawl suggests this approach seems superficial and only addresses this issue at a linguistic level, and thus lacks metaphysical depth. However, Pawl also offers further clarity on the role of 'qua' clauses in RP, through the Subject (or S) method. This is expressed through **(4)** of your handout which states:

(4) (Reduplication (S))   Christ-qua-Human is P and Christ-qua-Divine is ~P.

Using the (S) method of (RP), 'Christ is passible qua human' is now reframed as 'Christ-qua-human is passible', and 'Christ is impassible qua divine' becomes 'Christ-qua-divine is impassible'. This posits the existence of distinct subjects: Christ-qua-divine and Christ-qua-human, with each referring to Christ's respective natures. And thus, by doing so, contradictions seem eliminated. However, despite this initial success, this contradicts Conciliar Christology, which insists that both divine and human attributes of Christ refer to a singular individual. As highlighted by Pawl (2016, 128), both attributes must relate to 'Christ simpliciter'. Hence, the (S) method may not align with Conciliar Christology unless it can both address the contradiction and remain faithful to its core teachings. And thus this is where contemporary metaphysics can come in, specifically through the thesis of Ontological Pluralism and the concept of an 'aspect', which will potentially offer a way to deal with the FP, whilst also reconciling (S) with Conciliar Christology.

2.2 The Nature of the Ontological Pluralism and Aspects

Now Ontological Pluralism (OP), as developed by Kris McDaniel and Jason Turner, posits that there are diverse, irreducible 'ways' or 'modes' of being. This means that entities can exist in different manners, represented by various distinct existential quantifiers. Yet, these entities are still taken to possess what is termed a 'generic existence'. In contrast, the notion of an 'aspect', introduced by Donald L.M. Baxte), is invoked within the context of 'qualitative self-differing', where an entity qualitatively differs from itself. Focusing our attention now first on OP, the following two central tenets of this thesis are as follows: first, *ways of beings*: at the heart of the idea of a 'way of being' is the fact that an entity's specific ontological kind dictates *how* it exists. Consider numbers and tables; they differ ontologically—as while numbers fall under the abstract category, and thus exist in a certain way (such as being non-spatiotemporal), tables, on the other hand, are concrete, and exist in a distinct way (such as being spatiotemporal). This differentiation suggests that they exist in varying manners and ways—rather than that of a single manner and way. An adherent of OP thus posits the existence of multiple ways of being in order to account for the different types of entities that display distinct features from one another. This contrasts with Ontological Monism (OM), which proposes a singular way of

being for all entities. Turner (2010) clarifies OP using a pegboard analogy that illustrates different ontological structures and properties. Which is depicted in **Figure 1** of your handout.

Monists view reality as one pegboard with interconnected pegs (entities) and bands (properties, relations). Pluralists envision multiple pegboards for different entities and ways of being. In OM, abstract and concrete entities coexist on a single pegboard, while in OP, they occupy different pegboards (Turner 2010). Thus, as is expressed by this particular analogy, the different ways of being featured within the framework of OP correspond to *different structures or domains of reality*

Second, *elite quantifiers*: right at the intersection of existence and existential quantification lies the concept of 'elite quantifiers'. OP challenges the monistic view of a single existential quantifier ('∃'), instead positing the existence of several. These elite quantifiers are considered 'semantically primitive' and integral in carving out distinct domains of reality. For example, while one quantifier might be tailored to abstract entities ('∃a'), another might be suited for the concrete realm ('∃c'), This is rooted in Theodore Sider's (2011) extension of David Lewis' (1983) notion of 'perfect naturalness', implying these quantifiers 'carve nature at its joints'. So, abstract and concrete entities, having unique ways of being, can be expressed using distinct elite quantifiers, each semantically primitive and deeply indicative of nature's intrinsic structure. So, having laid out the foundational components of OP, we can now turn our attention to the notion of an aspect.

The concept of 'aspect' focuses on qualitative self-differing. which we can be illustrated as follows: let's take can individual called David, who is a philosophy professor and a father. David faces a dilemma: he has a pending keynote speech for a philosophy conference, but he also promised his children, Jacob and Melissa, a camping trip for their A-level achievements. David, the dedicated professor, wants to prepare for the conference. Conversely, David, the committed father, wants to reward his children. David is in a situation of qualitative self-differing—and it's the notion of an aspect that can help to bring further light to the situation. As the conflicting desires of David do not represent David, but rather David's two aspects. Now, semantically, aspects use qualifiers like 'insofar as', and ontologically, they represent individual ways of being, which aligns with OP's core thesis. Unlike mere properties, aspects are abstract entities, numerically identical to their bearer but differing qualitatively.

So with this understanding to hand, the example of David's dilemma can be formally articulated as follows: we can represent 'David as a philosopher' and 'David as a father' as two numerically identical but qualitatively differing aspects, 'David *insofar* as he is a philosopher', and ''David insofar as he is a father'. And thus we now can take it to be the case that it is David *insofar* as he is a philosopher that does not want to camp and David insofar as he is a father that does want to camp. While at face value, these seem contradictory, however, the nominal qualification used here actually removes the explicit contradiction. For instance, David insofar as he is a philosopher may not wish to camp, but this doesn't mean David, unqualified, feels the same. Aspects ensure there's no contradiction in such cases. There is thus a blocking of the *secundum quid ad simpliciter inference* expressed in an aspectival context, which means that just because an aspect of a complete individual is a certain way, it doesn't also mean the individual unqualifiedly is that way. Furthermore, every aspect is numerically identical to a complete individual—such that, for David, both his philosopher and father aspects are identical to him and to each other. This highlights how an individual can possess multiple, numerically identical but qualitatively differing aspects.

The challenge emerges with Leibniz's Law (Indiscernibility of Identicals). Aspects seem to violate it, as numerically identical entities can differ qualitatively. Baxter (2018) counters this however, suggesting the law might not universally apply, distinguishing between versions for complete and incomplete entities. Aspects only challenge the latter, and thus commitment to aspects requires a nuanced view of Leibniz's Law—with a distinction been able to be drawn between the 'Indiscernibility of Identical Individuals' (i.e., if x is numerically identical with y, then for any quality F, F is possessed by x if and only if it is possessed by y) and the

'Indiscernibility of Identical Aspects' (i.e., if x is numerically identical with y, then for any quality F, an aspect numerically identical with x has it if and only if an aspect numerically identical with y has it). Aspects do not oppose the *Indiscernibility of Identical Individuals*, which remains silent on aspects. That is, identicals unqualifiedly are indiscernible, but qualifiedly might be discernible. Non-contradictory internal negation suggests Leibniz's Law doesn't necessarily apply to aspects. Thus, Leibniz's Law doesn't prevent numerically identical aspects from being qualitatively different. That is, by being committed to the existence of aspects, it does not require that one reject Leibniz's Law outright—only an *unrestricted* understanding of Leibniz's Law that encompasses both complete and incomplete entities. More can indeed be said here, however ,in taking this all into account, we thus have a metaphysical foundation for a further precisification of the (S) method of the RP strategy.

2.3 A Contemporary Reduplicative Strategy

As noted previously, Conciliar Christology posits that Christ possesses two distinct natures: a divine and a human nature. Accordingly, specific incompatible predicates are thus apt of Christ nature—for instance, Christ 'is impassible' and Christ 'is passible' are both apt of Christ in virtue of his dual-nature. This dichotomy raises the FP, as no entity can possess contradictory attributes. To counter this, the RP strategy is employed, ascribing each contradicting predicate to its respective nature: Christ-qua-human is passible, and Christ-qua-divine is impassible. While this offers a linguistic solution, critics argue it lacks metaphysical depth and/or does not align with Conciliar Christology, thus urging for a more robust methodology that addresses the inherent inconsistencies.

Now, by introducing the thesis of OP, one might indeed have found some help. As according to this metaphysical framework, reality includes within it various ontological structures—for example, an abstract and concrete structure—but also, within a theistic context, a human and a divine structure. These structures can again be visualised using pegboards, where each peg symbolises entities within that ontological domain. This is depicted in **Figure 2** of your handout.

Within this framework, as Chris has two natures, he exists with *two ways of being*: a divine and human way of being, and exists in *two ontological structures*: a divine and human ontological structure. That is, Christ exists humanly ('∃h') in the human structure and divinely ('∃d') in the divine structure. So, on the basis of the different ways of being that are had by Christ, we take the qua-clauses utilised by the method of RP to pick out these two ways of being, which allows us to re-construe (S) in the way expressed through **(5)** of your handout, which states:

(5)   (Reduplication (S_1))   Christ-qua-human way of being is P and Christ-qua-divine way of being is ~P.   This

differentiation avoids contradiction, in a metaphysically substantial way, by recognising Christ's distinct modes of existence, and by aligning each of the apt predicates to these modes of existence. Thus, with this perspective in hand, one can see that how the contradictions actually arose in the first place, which is due to the fact of one having assumed that Christ possesses only a *singular way of being within a singular ontological structure*. This assumption would force one to accept the paradox of Christ being both passible and impassible simultaneously. However, through OP, which acknowledges Christ's existence in multiple ontological structures—with corresponding ways of being—no contradiction emerges. Christ is passible through his human way of being, and in the human domain ('∃h'), and impassible in his divine way of being, and the divine domain ('∃d'). Consequently, RP transforms from just a linguistic tool to a metaphysical strategy, that successfully sidesteps the FP. Yet, a challenge remains—namely, that of ensuring correspondence with the Conciliar position that predicates

about Christ refer to a singular entity. We can now deal with this problem by reconstruing all of this within an aspectival framework, which is expressed through **(6)** of your handout, and which states:

(6)   (Reduplication (S_2))   Christ insofar as he is divine is P and Christ insofar as he is human is ~P.

This approach is based on the notion that Christ has distinct 'aspects' corresponding to his two natures and ways of being. These aspects aren't mere properties but are qualitatively differing, abstract particular entities, that are numerically identical to Christ. While Christ exists as a complete entity, his aspects are incomplete, and thus dependent entities. Each aspect represents a way in which Christ exists, which is derived from his dual natures, and the ontological structures that he is a part of. Therefore, by this interpretation, 'Christ insofar as he is divine, is impassible' thus means that Christ, in his divine aspect, is impassible, while 'Christ insofar as he is human, is passible' now means that Christ, in his human aspect, is passible. The contradiction arises if one claims that Christ, as a singular entity, is both impassible and passible. But, using the thesis of OP and the concept of aspects, one can qualify the predicates in relation to Christ's distinct ways of being: Christ insofar as he is divine and Christ insofar as he is human . The use of qualifiers, like 'insofar as,' prevents direct contradictions, as instead of stating Christ is simultaneously impassible and passible, it's specified that Christ's divine aspect is impassible and his human aspect is passible. The contradiction is thus negated by specifying the context in which each predicate is valid. Furthermore, both aspects, though distinct in qualities, are *numerically identical* to Christ. This means Christ, in his divine or human way of being, is still Christ. And, due to the transitivity of identity, the two aspects are also identical.

Taking this all into account, in an aspectival context, Christ can be understood in multiple ways without inconsistency. There is one Christ, identical to two aspects that are also identical to each other. Thus, Christ's possession of two ways of being, which informs the predicates ascribed to him, is seen as possessing two qualitatively different, yet numerically identical, aspects. This aspectival distinction allows for the recognition of two qualitative aspects within Christ. Yet numerically, there's just one entity: Christ, viewed differently in a qualitative sense. Thus, within the metaphysical picture painted here, the predicates related to Christ's human nature and way of being and divine nature and way of being are ascribed to the same entity, without contradiction. This *aspectival* RP strategy thus provides a means for one to deal with the FP, and it is able to do this whilst still staying true to the teaching of Conciliar Christology. It will be important to now turn our attention to how one can also utilise contemporary metaphysical notions and theses to help one also fulfil the Clarification Task.

3. The Compositional Model and the Clarification Task

3.1 The Nature of the Compositional Model

The primary strategy posited here for fulfilling the Clarification Task is through formulating a philosophical 'model' that seeks to demonstrate how the theological teaching expressed by (1) could, in fact, be true. One prominent set of models within the contemporary literature is that of 'compositional' models (CM), which have recently been championed by a number of analytic theologians such as Crisp, Pawl, Brian Leftow, Eleonore Stump, Andrew Loke, Thomas Flint and William Hasker. At a general level, a compositional model is what Hill (2011) terms a 'relational account' of the Incarnation. In that, it is an account that postulates that GS *became related* to a human X—rather than transforming into X. In other words, GS become incarnated as a human (i.e., took on X) by entering into a specific relationship with a

human being that *would have* been a fully endowed human being if it was not for that relationship. Thus, as Crisp notes, according to this account, GS 'assumes a concrete particular at the first moment of the incarnation comprising a human body + soul'. One can thus state the central tenets of this model more succinctly as follows, which expressed through **(9)** of your handout:

(7) (Compositional Model)

    (i)   At the moment of the Incarnation, GS became a part of Christ, who was a single person.

    (ii)   In his incarnate state, Christ was a whole consisting of three parts: GS + B [the particular human body that was assumed by GS] + S [the particular human soul assumed by GS].

Central to the CM is that of it positing a 'concrete' and 'three-part' Christology. For concreteness, Christ's human nature is viewed not as a 'property-pile' but as a concrete particular, a tangible entity with a rational soul. The three-part nature divides this particularity into three segments: GS, B, and S. Jesus' human nature, a blend of B and S, has a contingent relationship with GS. The Incarnation thus posits the fact of GS adopting a human nature in the sense of him becoming a composite entity: Christ, consisting of GS, his Body, and a Soul. However, even though this model is grounded within the conciliar tradition, as Pawl takes it to be, it faces a number of issues—most pertinently that of the CM failing in the Clarification Task by it falling into Nestorianism. That is, in the standard case, as noted by Thomas Senor, a 'human body and mind combination composes a human person. So, one might think that the human body and mind of Christ will compose a human person too'. Now, this is indeed problematic as if the Body and Soul of Christ compose a person on their own, then it looks as though the CM will clearly be Nestorian. As if Christ's Body and Soul compose a person on their own, there are clearly two persons in the composite whole that is Christ. Adherents of the CM, such as Leftow, have seen this problem and have provided responses centred around two main points: firstly, the action of GS becoming incarnate at the moment of his conception offsetts the production of the person that would have come about *if* GS was not joined to that particular body and soul. And, secondly, the principle that a person cannot be a proper part of another person. This is indeed an intriguing response, however, issues can, and have been, raised against it. So, to escape diving into this complex debate, one can simply respond to this problem, by re-situating the CM within a different metaphysical framework.

Specifically, rather than taking the CM to be one that is a *relational, three-part account*, one can instead construe this model as a *transformational, two-part* account. More specifically, at general level, a transformational account, as conceived of by analytic theologians such as Morris, Swinburne and Alvin Plantinga, focuses on conceptualising the Incarnation of GS as that of a 'transformation'. Thus, instead of construing the CM as a 'Relational-Compositional Model', we can reconceive of the CM as a particular type of transformational account, termed the 'Transformational-Compositional Model' (the TCM for short). The central tenets of the TCM are stated in **(10)** of your handout as follows:

(8) (T-Compositional Model)

    (i)   At the moment of the Incarnation, GS transformed into a human soul, and was related to the body of Christ.

    (ii)   In his incarnate state, Christ was a whole consisting of two parts: S [the particular human soul that GS had transformed into],

and B [the particular human body that was assumed by GS].

(iii) As a human soul, GS' nature was composed of two parts: a complete abstract divine nature, that included a set of abstract divine properties, and a complete abstract human nature, that included a set of abstract human properties. This soul possessed one concrete will that can be conceived of in two ways: in a divine way and in a human way.

Central to the TCM is the notion of transformation (or metamorphosis), where an entity transforms into another entity by losing certain properties that it possesses and acquiring certain new properties—in a natural case you can picture a caterpillar transforming into a butterfly. Thus, in the context of the Incarnation, the CTM is one that postulates that GS performed the action of becoming a human by being *transformed* into one. More specifically, the CTM postulates that in the Incarnation, GS actually *became* human through gaining the necessary and sufficient properties that make him into a human soul—without, however, ceasing to be divine. At the heart of the transformative action of the Incarnation is thus a specific conception of the *human nature* that was assumed by GS in the Incarnation—namely, there existing an *abstract* human nature, rather than a *concrete particular* human nature (i.e., a real, flesh and blood entity that is endowed with a rational soul). That is, according to the adherents of the CTM, an abstract human nature is a set of *abstract* properties that are necessary and sufficient for being human—and thus provide one with a human way of 'thinking and acting'. Hence, in the Incarnation, according to the CTM, there are *two parts* to the person of Christ: GS, who has now been transformed into a human soul by acquiring a set of abstract properties, *and* a human body. This is depicted in **Table 1** of your handout, which states:

Action	Transformation	Transforming into a human soul
Nature	Abstract	Properties that are necessary and sufficient for being human

The CTM, rather than being a 'concrete' and 'three-part' Christology' is an 'abstract' 'two part' Christology, and thus, in the Incarnation, GS thus assumed an abstract nature in the sense of a human way of thinking and acting alongside that of a physical body. Moreover, through the Incarnation, in a similar manner to his thinking and acting, GS possessed a divided (or dual) will. However, this divided will is not to be construed as that of GS possessing a *concrete human will* and a *concrete divine will*—since being a single soul, GS would only possess a *single* concrete will. Instead, according to the CTM, GS possesses a single concrete will that has been (in some manner) divided into two by the Incarnation—viewed in a human way and a divine way—which the proponents of the CTM believe is sufficient to ground the fact of GS having two wills. With the CTM, we thus have a clear explication of (1) that centres on the transformational action of GS and his acquisition of an abstract human nature and human body. Importantly, this specific model of the Incarnation is successful in *not* overstressing the first

condition of (1)—and thus not falling into Nestorianism—as the CTM posits the existence of solely *one* subject in Christ: GS. Furthermore, the CTM is also successful in *not* overstressing the second condition of (1)—and thus not falling into Eutikianism—as the CTM conceives of Christ as possessing *two* natures: an abstract human nature and an abstract divine nature.

The CTM thus seems to be able to fulfil the Clarification Task; however, in doing so, it does face two important problems: the 'Transformation Problem' and the 'Assumption Problem'. Firstly, the Transformation Problem raises the question of how GS could become human without compromising his divinity. A proponent of this objection would thus state that "GS, through his transformation, must have ceased to be divine by losing the divine properties and gaining the human ones that are necessary and sufficient for him being categorised as a human soul!" And, secondly, the Assumption Problem raises an issue concerning GS's human nature in the Incarnation. According to the CTM, GS adopts an abstract human nature, essentially gaining a new way of 'thinking and acting'. This conflicts with traditional conception that human natures are not just property sets but are substantial entities—'real flesh and blood entities'. Moreover, as the CTM takes GS to have a single concrete will—viewable in two ways—rather than two concrete wills, it seems as if GS did not assume a true human nature. Now, addressing these challenges requires refining the CTM's ontology in light of contemporary metaphysics—which will be done now by integrating it with Jonathan Lowe's philosophical framework, centred on Non-Cartesian Substance Dualism and the four category ontology. This would thus position GS's transformative process as a 'kenotic' type of model, that centres on a certain type of 'self-emptying'. Yet, unlike traditional kenoticism, this interpretation allows Christ to remain divine—with all his divine properties in tow—and thus provides a pathway to address the CTM's challenges and finally fulfil the Clarification Task.

3.2 The Nature of the Non-Cartesian Substance Dualism and the Four Category Ontology

Now, non-Cartesian Substance Dualism (NCSD) is a form of interactionist substance dualism, that differentiates between two substances: a person (or self) and a body. A person is described as a simple psychological substance, a conscious entity distinct from but closely tied to its physical counterpart, the body. Substances are objects that are property bearers that persist through time. There are two main types: psychological substances, which possess mental attributes and abide by specific psychological laws, and physical substances, such as human bodies and their components. Unlike Cartesian Substance Dualism (CSD), which separates mental and physical properties, NCSD proposes that while a person is primarily a psychological entity, it can also possess physical attributes. This aligns with the intuitive notion that humans occupy space and have distinct physical characteristics. However, the core identity of an individual is anchored in their mental experiences, which emphasises the difference between being a psychological substance and just a biological entity. Thus, in NCSD, while persons undergo cognitive processes such as thoughts and emotions, they also exhibit physical characteristics. This framework presents a person as an experiential subject that's distinct from their body but not necessarily separable. Importantly, persons in NCSD are not complex but simple substances, different from their bodies. And the relationship between a person and their body is described as 'embodiment', somewhat analogous to how a statue relates to its constituent material. This analogy, though not exact, showcases the deep intertwining of two separate entities that share certain properties. In sum, NCSD introduces two unique substances connected by embodiment: a person, with both physical and psychological properties, and a body with purely physical properties. This central tenets of this thesis is depicted in **Figure 3** of your handout

We can now turn our attention onto the four category ontology, now whilst I am briefly unpacking this ontology I will recommend for you to have a look at **Figure 4** of your handout, which helps to visualise the four-category ontology.

At a general level, The four-category ontology posits four cross-categorial fundamental ontological categories, which we can be understand as follows: firstly, objects or substances are unique entities with distinct properties and identity conditions, and are instances of kinds. Secondly, kinds, or substantial universals, determine the very essence or identity of its members, and are characterised by attributes. Thirdly, attributes, which are non-substantial universals, are universal ways in which entities exist, and are instantiated by modes. Lastly, modes are particular ways an entity exists, and they characterise objects. Closely related to the notion of an attribute and mode is that of a 'power'. Powers, within the four-category ontology, enable objects to act and manifest specific actions, and can be distinguished as 'token powers' or 'power types', each of which is defined by its manifestations and bearers. On the basis of this, a human will, according to Lowe, is a unique 'two-way power', that is, active, spontaneous, and influenced by rational considerations,

Now, for the four ontological categories as a whole, one can see that these categories are grounded on three formal ontological relations: instantiation, characterisation, and exemplification. For the latter type of relation, exemplification, an important distinction can be drawn between the 'dispositional' and 'occurrent 'exemplification of an attribute. A given object *dispositionally* exemplifies an attribute by it instantiating a kind, that is, in turn, characterised by an attribute. Conversely, an object *occurrently* exemplifies an attribute by it being characterised by a mode that then, in turn, instantiates an attribute.

This is the four-category ontology laid out, and so with it and the thesis of NCSD to hand, we can now focus on addressing the issues that were raised against the CTM.

3.3 A Contemporary Transformationalist Model

As was noted previously, the CTM posits that the GS became a human by transforming into one, without, however, ceasing to be divine. In now further explicating the nature of this type of account through the thesis of the NCSD, we can re-name it the CTM_2 and state its central tenets as expressed by **(11)** of your handout:

(9) (T-Compositional$_2$)	(i)	At the moment of the Incarnation, GS transformed into a human 'person' (or subject of experience) and became intimately related, through a relation of embodiment, to the organised physical body of Christ.
	(ii)	In his incarnate state, Christ was a whole consisting of two parts: P [the particular human person that GS had transformed into], and B [the particular human body that was assumed by GS].
	(iii)	As a human person, GS's nature was composed of two parts: a complete abstract divine nature and a complete concrete and abstract human nature, that included a concrete particular that possessed a set of abstract human properties. This person had two concrete wills: a divine concrete will and a human concrete will.

The CTM_2 posits that the act of the Incarnation is focused on GS's transformation into a human 'person'. In this state, GS has psychological attributes— both sensory experiences and cognitive states—while being connected to a physical entity: his organised physical body. Importantly, GS's mental experiences are not synonymous with his body's physical states. Instead, his cognitive and emotional states belong to him and interact with his body through a unique

embodiment relationship. Thus, the CTM$_2$ differentiates between two substances post-incarnation: GS, with both physical and psychological properties, and his organised physical body, with only physical properties.

Now, in dealing with the Assumption Problem, this model is able to keep this issue at bay, as GS does not assume an incomplete human nature; rather, GS becomes a fully-fledged human—and thus has a concrete human nature—which aligns with NCSD's definition of personhood. Hence, unlike the CTM of Swinburne and Plantinga, within the framework of the CTM$_2$, GS does not become human by only beginning to possess a human way of thinking and acting. Rather, GS becomes human by becoming a *human concrete particular*: a human person, a psychological substance, that is, firstly, intimately related to a particular human body and, secondly, who has, in virtue of this particular body, certain abstract (physical and mental) properties that are necessary and sufficient for being human. The CTM$_2$ thus conceives of the human nature that is assumed by Christ to be a concrete *and* abstract nature: a human person who is a real, flesh and blood entity, who possesses abstract (physical and mental) properties that render this person as human. Given this, we can thus provide a modification to our previous table through **Table 2,** which states:

The CTM$_2$ is thus a concrete *and* abstract, two-part Christology. Moreover, one also has a means of addressing the Transformation Problem within this model, as, before the Incarnation, GS was solely a divine *immaterial* entity. However, through the Incarnation, GS underwent a transformation, losing certain attributes—specifically, his immateriality—and gaining certain attributes—which was that of becoming a material object (i.e., possessing certain physical attributes in virtue of being connected to an organised physical body). The gaining and losing of properties thus enables this account to affirm the fact of a real transformation having taken place in the Incarnation. And thus, again, contrary to the CTM, THE CTM$_2$ contends GS became human not merely by adopting human thinking but by wholly becoming a human

Action	Transformation	Transforming into a human person
Nature	Concrete & Abstract	A concrete particular that has properties that are necessary and sufficient for being human

entity—a human person—connected to a specific body that has essential human psychological and physical attributes. That is, *GS transforms from a divine person to a human person*. We can illustrate the schematic framework provided by the CTM$_2$ in **Figure 5** of your handout.

Yet, despite GS transforming from a divine person to a human person, the CTM$_2$ still wants to maintain the fact of GS *remaining divine in a certain sense*. However, a challenge remains: how can GS lose divine attributes yet stay divine? To address this, we turn to Lowe's ontological framework. That is, in explicating the nature of this type of account through the four-category ontology, we can now provide a final re-construal of the CTM (termed CTM$_3$) in the manner stated by **(12)** of your handout:

(10) (T-Compositonal$_3$)   (i)   At the moment of the Incarnation, GS transformed into a human 'person' (i.e. a subject of experience) and became intimately

related, through a relation of embodiment, to the organised physical body of Christ.

(ii)   In his incarnate state, Christ was a whole consisting of two parts: P [the particular human person that GS had transformed into], and B [the particular human body that was assumed by GS].

(iii)   As a human person, GS's nature had two parts: a complete abstract divine nature, that included a set of non-substantial universals: the deity-attributes (that also included within it a divine concrete will (i.e. an active, non-causal power)), which he dispositionally exemplified. And a complete concrete and abstract human nature, that included a concrete particular that possessed a set of non-substantial universals: the human-attributes (that also included within it a human concrete will (i.e. an active, non-causal power)), that he dispositionally and occurrently exemplified.

This is indeed a mouthful! But we can now break it in a simpler manner and I would recommend you to take a look at **Figure 6** of your handout as we are walking through this.

Now, within the framework of the four category ontology, GS, post-transformation, instantiates two kinds: Deity and Humanity. And the essence or very identity of the members of the kinds Deity and/or Humanity is determined by them instantiating those specific kinds. In addition to this, Deity and Humanity would also each be characterised by attributes—which we can term the Deity-attributes (or *D*-attributes) for the kind Deity, and Humanity-attributes (*H*-attributes) for the kind Humanity. D-attributes would be the collection of attributes essential for being a deity. And, H-attributes would be a collection of attributes essential for being human—with these attributes, each being essential 'features' pr 'characteristics' of the kind Deity and the kind Humanity. Now, prior to the Incarnation, GS was solely an instance of Deity, and exemplified all of the D-attributes dispositionally—through being an instance of Deity, which is then, in turn, characterised by the D-attributes. And he also exemplified these attributes occurrently—through being characterised by 'D-modes', which are, in turn, instances of the D-attributes. However, post-Incarnation, a transformational shift becomes evident: GS begins to instantiate two kinds: Deity *and* Humanity, and thus exemplifies *both* the D and H-attributes. However, of vital importance here is that of GS now, firstly, only *dispositionally* exemplifying the D-attributes post-Incarnation—by being an instance of Deity, which is then, in turn, characterised by the D-attributes. And, secondly, solely dispositionally *and* occurrently exemplifying the H-attributes. For the latter form of exemplification, GS is characterised by 'H-modes', which are, in turn, instances of the H-attributes. This transformation, however, doesn't signify an abandonment of GS's divine nature, as GS is still an instance of the kind Deity *and* exemplifies the D-attributes—albeit in a dispositional manner. Hence, even in his post-transformation states, GS preserves his two natures—by being of two kinds and exemplifying two attributes. However, he has still transformed into a human person by, on the one hand, *ceasing* to possess the D-modes—and thus ceasing to exemplify the D-attributes occurrently—and, on the other hand, *beginning* to possess H-modes—and thus beginning to exemplify the H-attributes occurrently. Consequently, GS, post-Incarnation, is thus related differently to the D-attributes and H-attributes—which are the attributes essential for an object *being* divine or *being* human. This is through GS *being* a deity-instance and by him being characterised by H-modes (which are particular ways of *being* human). GS thus *changes* from

being a particular object that is dispositionally and occurrently divine to now being a particular object that is, on the one hand, divine and human (i.e. is a deity and human-instance), yet, on the other hand, is solely occurrently a particular human. There is thus a change in *what* GS (dispositionally) is: divine to divine and human, and a change of *how* GS is (occurrently) characterised: divine to human.

In addition to all of this, GS, as a concrete human entity possessing the D- and H-attribues, also exemplifies a set of powers within each attribute set, encompassing both a divine will and a human will. The human will, tied to human actions, and the divine will, associated with divine actions, are unique powers differentiated by, first, their manifestation, second, their bearer (GS), and, third, their time of possession; with the divine will being dispositionally exemplified by GS, and the human will being occurrently exemplified by him. Ultimatley making GS a possessor of two distinct and concrete wills.

Taking all of this into account, we can thus see that the metaphysical theses of NCSD and the four-category ontology, when applied to the Incarnation, offer a comprehensive framework for conceiving of the dual nature that is possessed by Christ. And thus, the issues faced by the previous iterations of the model are not forthcoming as the CTM_3 is able to sidestep the Transformation and Assumption Problems. The transformative act of the Incarnation is able to be truly realised here as GS is able to truly transform into a (concrete) human 'person', that is intimately connected to an organised physical body—and this is able to be underwritten by the possession of the (abstract) h-attributes, which grounds the acquisition of a complete human nature. Moreover, irrespective of the transformation that takes place during the Incarnation, GS's dual nature remains post-Incarnation, on the basis of the consistent exemplification of the D-attributes—which ensures the continued possession of GS's divine nature. And one is also able to affirm the possession of two concrete wills by GS that are taken to be independent, spontaneous powers that are exemplified by him in his incarnate state. Now, in addition to it warding off these problems, one is also utilise this mode in a way provide a helpful exegetical strategy for certain challenging biblical passages concerning the person of Christ. To this final issue, we now turn.

3.4 A Contemporary Exegetical Strategy

According to Christian tradition, Christ is taken by individuals to have exemplified various human characteristics, as attested to by Scripture. Some of these characteristics and their supporting scriptural passages can be seen in **Table 3** of your handout

Human Characteristics	Verses
1. Ignorance of the Last Hour	"But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father." (Mark 13:32, NIV)
2. Temptations	"For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathise with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are— yet he did not sin." (Hebrews 4:15, NIV)
3. Emotional Responses	"Jesus wept." (John 11:35, NIV) and "And he said to them, 'My soul is very sorrowful, even to death. Remain here and watch.'" (Mark 14:34, ESV)
4. Physical Needs	"Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well." (John 4:6, NIV)
5. Growth and Development	"And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man." (Luke 2:52, NIV)
6. Jesus' Death	"And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit." (Matthew 27:50, ESV)

In interpreting these verses, within a Conciliar context, the underlying principle is the belief in the hypostatic union: that Jesus is both truly divine and truly man. Thus, whilst these human experiences highlight Jesus' humanity, they do not negate his divinity from a Conciliar Christological perspective—rather, they underscore the depth of his identification with the human condition. One specific model that has been proposed recently within this type of framework is that of the 'Divine Preconscious Model' (DPM) introduced by Loke. The DPM presents a psychological framework to understand the Incarnation, positing that GS existed initially as an undivided, unembodied mind. At the Incarnation, GS's mind split into a conscious and a preconscious part, transferring divine attributes like omniscience to the preconscious, while acquiring human attributes in the conscious mind. This model allows for the retention of the divine nature while being genuinely human. In application to Mark 13:32 featured in **Table 3** of your handout, Loke suggests that Christ's statement of not knowing the hour refers to a lack of conscious awareness, not an absence of knowledge, which aligns with the DPM's distinction between consciousness and preconsciousness. However, the DPM faces certain challenges, particularly regarding the rejection of a human unconscious in Christ, which critics argue would mean Christ did not assume a true human nature, ultimately impacting the soteriological efficacy of the Incarnation. Additionally, the exegetical strategy for interpreting Mark 13:32 is critiqued for its unconventional translation of the Greek term 'oida' diverging from its consistent New Testament translation as 'know', which potentially makes the move seem ad hoc and less convincing. Hence, given the issues faced by the DPM, and the exegetical strategy offered by it, one should seek a different model and strategy to deal with this problem—namely, that of adopting the CTM$_3$ and its proposed strategy of interpreting all of

the previous verses in the *literal sense*, which can be stated succinctly in **Table 4** of your handout as follows:

By adopting the CTM$_3$, one is able to interpret all of the verses concerning the person of Christ literally such that, in Mark 13:32, Christ really did not know (oida) the hour—rather than having to interpret this in exegetically ad hoc fashion. That is, as GS really did *transform* into a human person, he possessed a true human unconscious—as with all other humans—and ceased occurrently to exemplify the D-attributes at the time in which the verses pick out. And thus, as a human person he really did not know the hour in the normal, everyday understanding of knowledge. However, this does not take away from the fact that he was *still* divine in virtue of him being an instance of the kind Deity and thus also dispositionally exemplifying the D-attributes at those specific times. The model proposed here thus offers an insightful exploration into the profound transformation of GS that takes place through the Incarnation, which corresponds well with the literal interpretation of Scripture. In all, the use of various concepts of contemporary metaphysics has helped us to unravel the intrinscate relationship between the two natures of Christ, thus providing a comprehensive understanding of the Incarnation, as required by the Chalcedonian Definition, and Conciliar Christology as a whole.

Characteristics	Transformational (Literal) Interpretation
1. Ignorance of the Last Hour	By ceasing to be occurrently divine (but still remaining dispositionally divine), Christ did not know the hour of the end.
2. Temptations	By ceasing to be occurrently divine (but still remaining dispositionally divine), Christ was vulnerable to temptations, but did not sin.
3. Emotional Responses	By ceasing to be occurrently divine (but still remaining dispositionally divine), Christ was able to experience and express genuine human emotions, from sorrow to joy, without restrictions.
4. Physical Needs	By ceasing to be occurrently divine (but still remaining dispositionally divine), Christ felt genuine human needs such as thirst, hunger, and fatigue.
5. Growth and Development	By ceasing to be occurrently divine (but still remaining dispositionally divine), Christ experienced genuine human growth, both in wisdom and stature, and maturing as any other human being.
6. Jesus' Death	By ceasing to be occurrently divine (but still remaining dispositionally divine), Christ was able to genuinely die on the cross, experiencing the fullness of human death.

Thank you very much for your attention today.

Handouts (1): Key Concepts and Definitions

Concept	Definition
(1) Chalcedon	(i) At the moment of the Incarnation, GS became a human that was a single person. (ii) In his incarnate state, GS was truly (i.e., fully and genuinely) divine and truly (i.e., fully and genuinely) human.
(2) Fundamental Problem	By the action of GS becoming incarnate as Christ, the following predicates are apt of him: (i) Christ is: 'omniscient', 'omnipotent', 'omnipresent', 'eternal', 'infinite' and the 'creator of the universe'. (ii) Christ is: 'limited in knowledge', 'limited in power', 'bounded by location', 'has a beginning in time', 'finite' and 'part of God's creation'.
(3) Reduplication	Christ *qua* his human nature is P and Christ *qua* his divine nature is ~P
(4) Reduplication (S)	Christ-qua-Human is P and Christ-qua-Divine is ~P.
(5) Reduplication (S$_1$)	Christ-qua-human way of being is P and Christ-qua-divine way of being is ~P.
(6) Reduplication (S$_2$)	Christ$_y$[$_y$ is divine] is P and Christ$_y$[$_y$ is human] is ~P.
(7) Christ =	Christ insofar as he is divine and Christ insofar as he is human.
(8) Christ insofar as he is divine =	Christ insofar as he is human .
(9) Compositional Model	(i) At the moment of the Incarnation, GS became a part of Christ, who was a single person. (ii) In his incarnate state, Christ was a whole consisting of three parts: GS + B [the particular human body that was assumed by GS] + S [the particular human soul assumed by GS].
(10) T-Compositional Model	(i) At the moment of the Incarnation, GS transformed into a human soul, and was related to the body of Christ. (ii) In his incarnate state, Christ was a whole consisting of two parts: S [the particular human soul that GS had transformed into], and B [the particular human body that was assumed by GS]. (iii) As a human soul, GS' nature was composed of two parts: a complete abstract divine nature, that included a set of abstract divine properties, and a complete abstract

		human nature, that included a set of abstract human properties. This soul possessed one concrete will that can be conceived of in two ways: in a divine way and in a human way.
(11) T-Compositional₂ Model	(i)	At the moment of the Incarnation, GS transformed into a human 'person' (or subject of experience) and became intimately related, through a relation of embodiment, to the organised physical body of Christ.
	(ii)	In his incarnate state, Christ was a whole consisting of two parts: P [the particular human person that GS had transformed into], and B [the particular human body that was assumed by GS].
	(iii)	As a human person, GS's nature was composed of two parts: a complete abstract divine nature and a complete concrete and abstract human nature, that included a concrete particular that possessed a set of abstract human properties. This person had two concrete wills: a divine concrete will and a human concrete will.
(12) T-Compositonal₃ Model	(i)	At the moment of the Incarnation, GS transformed into a human 'person' (i.e. a subject of experience) and became intimately related, through a relation of embodiment, to the organised physical body of Christ.
	(ii)	In his incarnate state, Christ was a whole consisting of two parts: P [the particular human person that GS had transformed into], and B [the particular human body that was assumed by GS].
	(iii)	As a human person, GS's nature had two parts: a complete abstract divine nature, that included a set of non-substantial universals: the deity-attributes (that also included within it a divine concrete will (i.e. an active, non-causal power)), which he dispositionally exemplified. And a complete concrete and abstract human nature, that included a concrete particular that possessed a set of non-substantial universals: the human-attributes (that also included within it a human concrete will (i.e. an active, non-causal power)), that he

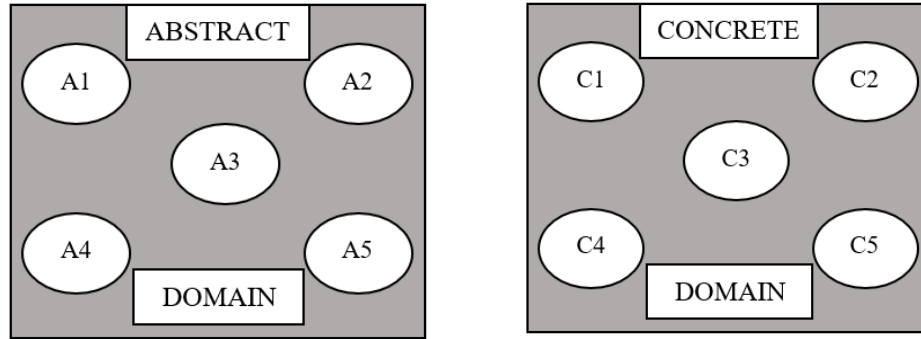|	dispositionally and occurrently exemplified.

Handouts (2): Figures

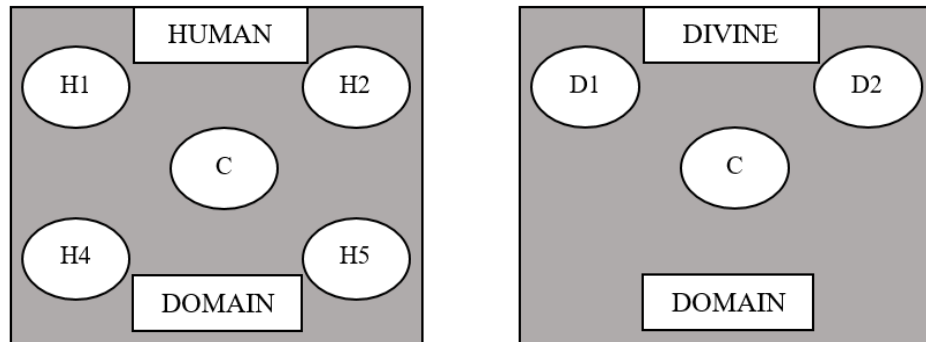**Figure 1. Ontological Structure: Pegboard (i)**

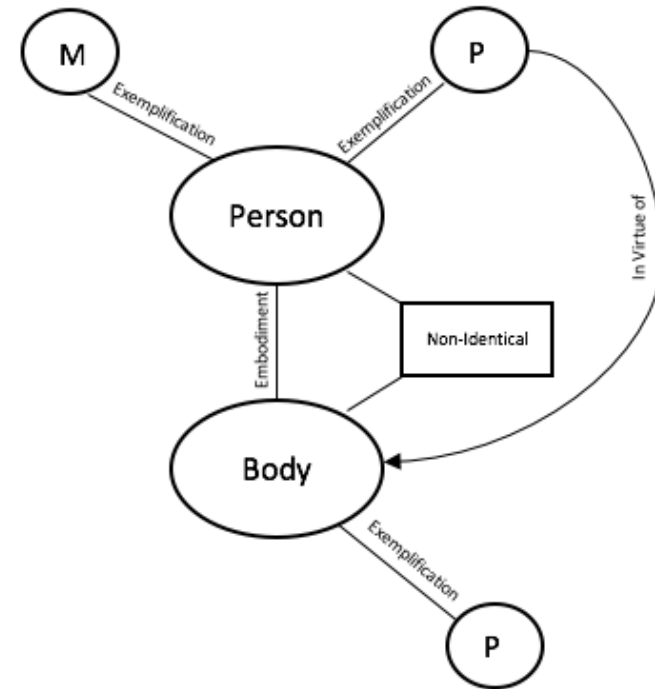**Figure 2. Ontological Structure: Pegboard (ii)**

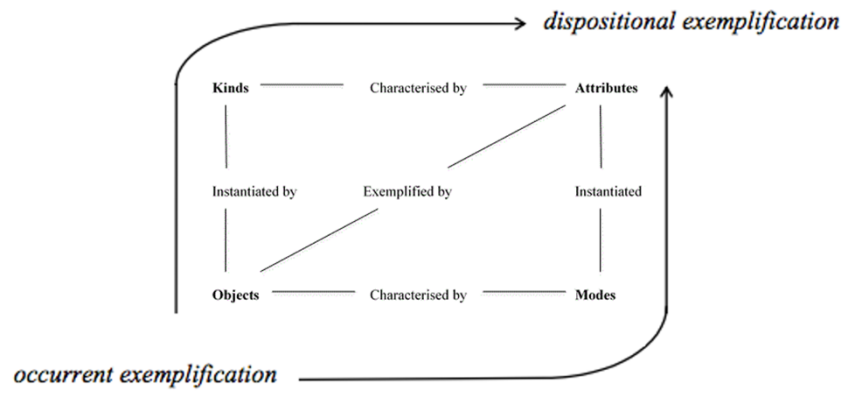**Figure 3. Non-Cartesian Substance Dualism**
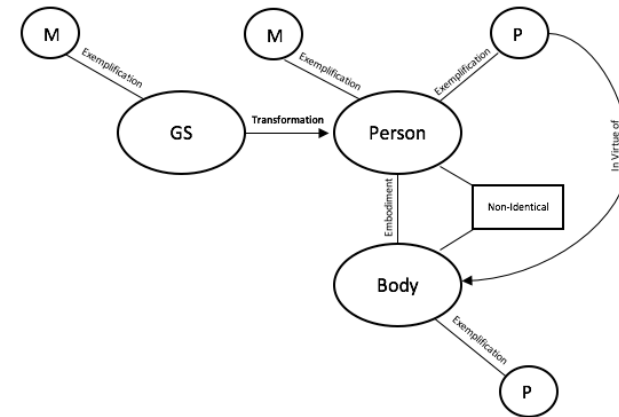
Figure 4. Ontological Square

Figure 5. Non-Cartesian Transformationalist Incarnation

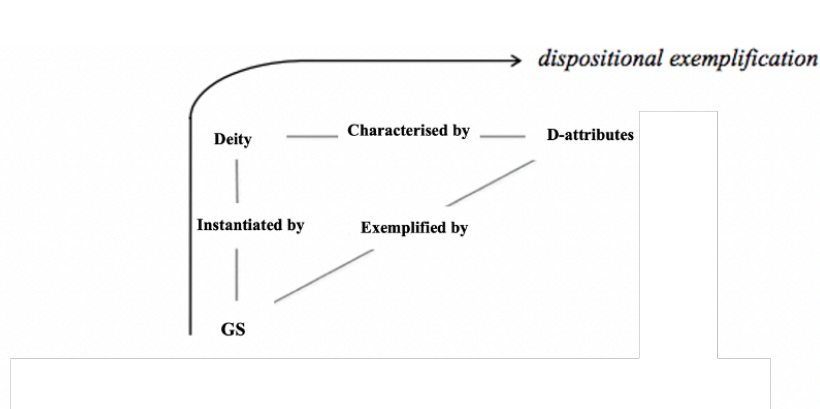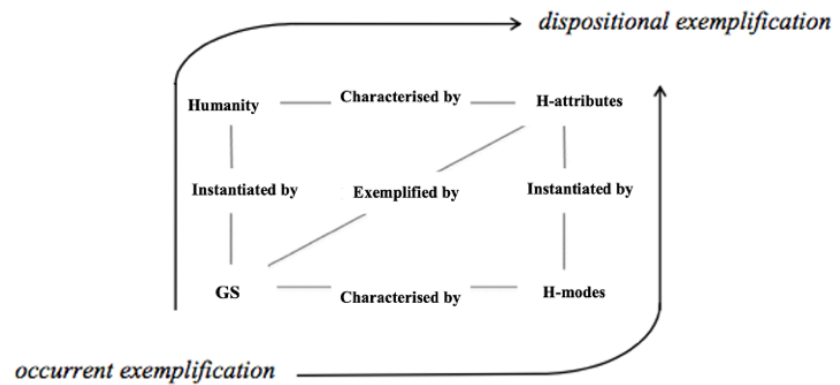**Figure 6. Ontological Square (Post-Incarnation Exemplification)**

Tables

Action	Transformation	Transforming into a human soul
Nature	Abstract	Properties that are necessary and sufficient for being human

Table 1. Central Tenets of Transformational-Compositional Model (1)

Action	Transformation	Transforming into a human person
Nature	Concrete & Abstract	A concrete particular that has properties that are necessary and sufficient for being human

Table 2. Central Tenets of Transformational-Compositional Model (2)

Human Characteristics	Verses
1. Ignorance of the Last Hour	"But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father." (Mark 13:32, NIV)
2. Temptations	"For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathise with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin." (Hebrews 4:15, NIV)
3. Emotional Responses	"Jesus wept." (John 11:35, NIV) and "And he said to them, 'My soul is very sorrowful, even to death. Remain here and watch.'" (Mark 14:34, ESV)
4. Physical Needs	"Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well." (John 4:6, NIV)
5. Growth and Development	"And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man." (Luke 2:52, NIV)
6. Jesus' Death	"And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit." (Matthew 27:50, ESV)

Characteristics	Transformational (Literal) Interpretation
1. Ignorance of the Last Hour	By ceasing to be occurrently divine (but still remaining dispositionally divine), Christ did not know the hour of the end.
2. Temptations	By ceasing to be occurrently divine (but still remaining dispositionally divine), Christ was vulnerable to temptations, but did not sin.
3. Emotional Responses	By ceasing to be occurrently divine (but still remaining dispositionally divine), Christ was able to experience and express genuine human emotions, from sorrow to joy, without restrictions.
4. Physical Needs	By ceasing to be occurrently divine (but still remaining dispositionally divine), Christ felt genuine human needs such as thirst, hunger, and fatigue.
5. Growth and Development	By ceasing to be occurrently divine (but still remaining dispositionally divine), Christ experienced genuine human growth, both in wisdom and stature, and maturing as any other human being.
6. Jesus' Death	By ceasing to be occurrently divine (but still remaining dispositionally divine), Christ was able to genuinely die on the cross, experiencing the fullness of human death.

Table 3. Christ's Human Characteristics Passages

Table 2. Christ's Human Characteristics Transformational Interpretation