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## UNIT 3    NIHILISTIC AND POSITIVE VIEWS ON ‘LIFE AFTER DEATH’

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### 3.0   OBJECTIVES

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- To understand the positive and negative views on life after death.
- To enable the students to appreciate some of the philosophical arguments for life after death.

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### 3.1   INTRODUCTION

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In unit we continue with a phenomenology of death. Then we take some of the nihilistic responses to life after death. This is followed by some of the positive views on what comes after death.

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### 3.2   FUNERAL CUSTOMS

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It is not so much the fact of death that strikes us as a basic datum, but the more or less elaborate rites and customs with which different religions and cultures have surrounded it. Hence, we shall turn our attention first to a reflection on these. Very often they very clearly express certain convictions about death itself. We know, for instance, that as early as 60,000 years ago prehistoric people were observing special ceremonies while burying their dead. Neanderthal graves contain tools, weapons and even traces of flowers. The ancient Egyptians, together with many early peoples placed food, jewels, furniture and other goods in tombs. This would seem to be a clear enough indication that they believed that a person continued to live even after death and would have more or less the same needs as in this life: Hence s/he would require these things at some time. The Egyptians also developed the art of embalming into a sophisticated technique called *mummification*. They believed that the spirit or soul would (eventually) return to inherit the body it had quit. Thus it was necessary to keep the body incorrupt and ready to receive back the vagrant soul which, otherwise, would be condemned to an endless vagabondage.

Burial is the common method of disposal of corpses among Jews, Christians, Muslims as it had also been fairly widespread in ancient civilisations. It may be linked to a belief that a dead body, planted in the ground, like a seed, will one day yield new life. Cremation is customary among Hindus as also among followers of religions more or less derived from it, such as Buddhism. It is nowadays spreading among Westerners, too. Traditionally, conservative groups of Catholics, Protestants and Jews have opposed this method as being disrespectful to the body which is the Temple of the Holy Spirit. At any rate, corruption and being devoured by worms – the natural outcome of burial – hardly seems more respectful to the said Temple. Other societies have other ways of disposing of the dead. The Parsis, as we know, expose their dead in lofty enclosures called towers of silence where bodies are picked clean by birds. This is because Parsis believe that fire and earth are sacred and must both not be contaminated by burning or burying a corpse. In Tibet, bodies are sunk in water. Some Amerindian tribes, like the Sioux, place their dead on big platforms. Some groups of aborigines in Australia leave dead bodies in trees.

Mourning is the expression of grief after a death. In some societies this is done in a very stylised fashion and one is even supposed to hire professional mourners to weep, howl and scream at funerals. Common mourning customs require bereaved family members (particularly next of kin) to dress in black or wear black armbands for a certain period of time. Sometimes people in mourning are also required to deny themselves certain foods and forms of amusement. We should remember that in many cultures (as in India) white is the colour of mourning. Certain lesser known religions and cultures, in order to emphasise the belief in an afterlife, require signs of celebration at death, for example an elaborate funeral feast.

In many so-called developed nations, as in the United States, funeral ceremonies are elaborate and extremely costly affairs and take place in a funeral parlour with the embalmed body on display, surrounded by banks of flowers and an orchestra playing solemn music. There is often a funeral eulogy, a pedantic oratorical exercise, proclaiming the real or fancied virtues of the person before the body is conducted to the graveyard (or crematorium in a very formal procession, borne in a hearse). Many people, recognising the needless expense and the empty show of such practices, opt for quieter ceremonies at home with family and close friends in attendance. The Catholic Church, since Vatican II, has learnt to stress less the traditionally gloomy and terrifying aspect of death in favour of a more Christian affirmation of the hope of the resurrection. No longer does the celebrant vest in black and no more are we required to listen to the unchristian (if poetic) strains of *Dies Irae*, famous thirteenth century Latin hymn meant for masses for the dead. White vestments, flowers and hymns of faith and trust, with even an occasional Alleluia are to be observed and the prayers have less references to the departed's sins and his/her need to be rescued from eternal damnation.

Whatever one may feel about the religious beliefs expressed in the various funeral customs, it is certain that they fulfil an important psychological and social function. It focuses public attention on the person of the departed as also provides a forum of public support and consolation to the survivors. It also gives them a cathartic opportunity to give vent to their feelings and discharge their grief.

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### 3.3 RECOGNISING THE MOMENT OF DEATH

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Just when does death set in? This is not an easy question to answer. In fact it's largely a matter of semantics, depending on which precise phenomenon or set of phenomena we take as evidence that death has set in. The problem is that very often people who've been pronounced "clinically" or medically dead – on the basis of this or that evidence – have been known to "revive" or respond to some method of resurrection. Shall we say that the person had earlier died or that he/she had only fallen into some sort of coma or suspended animation and had now "become normal"? Most people would prefer the second alternative.

Scientists, in fact, recognise three types of death that occur during the life of all organisms, except that of those consisting of only one cell. These are *necrobiosis*, *necrosis* and *somatic death*. *Necrobiosis* is the continually going on in us. It refers to the death and replacement of individual cells throughout life. Indeed, except for the nerve cells, all the cells of an organism are constantly being replaced. For instance, new skin cells form under the surface as the old one die and flake off. *Necrosis* is the death of tissues or even an entire organ. This may or may not cause somatic death. During a heart attack, for instance, a blood clot cuts off circulation of the blood to part of the heart. The affected part dies, but the organism continues to live – unless, of course, the damage has been severe.

*Somatic death* (from the Greek *soma*, body) is generally defined as the end of all life processes in an organism. A person whose heart and lungs have stopped working is usually considered *clinically* dead, but somatic death may not yet have occurred. The individual cells of the body continue to live for several minutes. The person may yet live if the heart lungs can be made to start working again and give the cells the oxygen they need. Once the brain cells – which are very sensitive to a lack of oxygen – begin to die, it is practically impossible to resuscitate or revive the person. The last cells to die are those of the bone, hair and skin and these may continue to grow for several hours after the person has been certified dead. Since not all life processes come to a stop necessarily at the same time, there arises the problem of selecting the phenomenological criteria to decide that death has taken place.

Some people would identify "death" with the absence of clinically detectable vital signs. Phenomenologically speaking, this would mean that a person is "dead" if her/his heart stops beating and s/he quits breathing for an extended period of time, her/his blood pressure drops so low as to be unreadable, her/his body temperature begins to go down, etc. This is the clinical definition, and it has been employed for centuries by physicians and lay persons alike. In fact, most people who have ever been pronounced dead were deemed so on the basis of these criteria. The difficulty is that when advanced techniques of resuscitation have been applied *after* many of these facts were observed, the person has revived. Can we speak of a genuine "coming back to life" here?

Nowadays, however, the advancement of technology has brought the development of more sensitive techniques for detecting biological processes, even those which cannot be observed overtly. The electroencephalograph (EEG) is one such. It amplifies and records the minute electrical potentials of the brain. With such sophisticated equipment, one tends to identify "real" death with the absence of electrical activity of the brain, that is, with "flat" EEG tracings. Generally

speaking, “brain death” is taken to have set in when it is deprived of oxygen for about three minutes. But rare cases have shown that patients have been revived after a lapse of five and even seven minutes.

Many changes can be observed once a person is well and truly dead. The temperature of the body slowly drops to that of its surroundings. The muscles develop a stiffening called *rigor mortis* (literally, a stiffening of death). The blood, which no longer circulates, settles and produces a reddish-purple discoloration in the lower areas of the body. Eventually, bacteria and other tiny organisms grow on the corpse and cause it to decay. These parasites are inactive at very low temperatures and so frozen bodies can be preserved. Similarly, blocks of ice or exposure to relatively cold environments can slow down the process of corruption.

**Check Your Progress I**

**Note:** Use the space provided for your answer

1) What are some of the different ways of disposing the dead?

2) What is necrobiosis?

3.4

ALTERNATIVE INTERPRETATIONS OF LIFE AFTER DEATH

Fundamentally, there are two basic responses to the question of the after-life. One is *positive*, holding that there is some form of life after life and the other is *nihilistic*, denying that there is any such. One could also cite a third possibility: the view of the *indifferentists* – those who refuse to entertain discussion on the issue. For such people this is an irrelevant question, one which should be ignored in the face of other matters of greater moment. It would appear that from the earliest times the majority opinion has been in favour of the positive reply. Indeed, as anthropology and palaeontology seem to surface more and more evidence of some kind of belief in life beyond the grave and this is practically at all times and in all cultures, there have not been lacking some thinkers who have even hazarded the opinion it constituted some kind of primitive revelation to mankind. However, to get the record straight, let us not forget that the ancient Jews had such an integrated concept of the human person they did not sanction the belief until a

short time before the birth of Christ. In fact, one of the doctrinal points that divided the Pharisees and Sadducees of Jesus' time was this precise issue. The more conservative Pharisees denied any such idea whereas the more progressive Sadducees, under the influence of Hellenistic thought, upheld it. Still the ancient Hebrew did speak of a *Sheol*, inhabited by the souls (more properly, the "shadows") of the dead.

In the next section we shall present, under two main headings, the various responses to this question. We shall begin with the negative response and distinguish two variants at the practical level. Then we shall pass over to the views of those who are in favour of the opinion that there is some kind of life after death. The main two currents of thought here are reincarnation (which, historically, goes back to India) and resurrection (which, it seems, was first developed in ancient Egypt).

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### 3.5 THE NIHILISTIC RESPONSES

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Under this rubric we include the views of all those who deny that there is any life after the grave: any conviction about the "after-life" is dismissed as wishful thinking or, at any rate, an irrelevant issue that distracts us from matters of greater moments, as we have already had occasion to point out. However, not all these people advocate, as a result, a licentious and orgiastic form of the socially committed people have also held this view. Let us take a closer look at these.

#### The "Eat, Drink and Be Merry" School

It is more than likely that adherents of this "school" of thought exist only in the simplistic imaginations of their detractors. If the Stoics and Epicureans of Western classical antiquity denied life after death, neither of them advocated licentious abandon – not even the much-maligned "people of the Garden", as many *Ancient Western Philosophy* sources will remind us. As for the Stoics, well, even the popular understanding of the term calls up the image of a proud, detached individual in perfect control of her/his passions. Of course, there is the whole system of Carvaka, in ancient Indian thought, that is usually trotted out as an instance of such an inhuman and debased life-style resulting from the denial of life beyond the grave. Even here we would do well to be cautious. We know this school mostly from the descriptions and summaries left by the dominant schools of Indian thought who were challenged by this minority. It is more than likely that the Carvaka school advocated, in practice, a life-style more similar to the Stoics and Epicureans of old and ranged themselves disgustedly against the idealistic, overly spiritual and world-negating world views of the majority. These, in turn, consciously or not have left us a highly prejudiced and distorted vision of their adversaries (Desbruslais 1977).

#### The Socially Committed

Very many of those thinkers who deny the existence of God and any form of afterlife have actually called for a life of serious social responsibility and commitment. Since this is the only life we have and since there is no God to clean up the mess – either in this world or in the next – we must do all we can to make this world a better place for everyone. After all, there is no heaven to "make up" for those who've had a raw deal on this earth. We should live a life of love, service and sharing, be a voice for the voiceless and try to establish a world

of justice, love and peace for all people, even if we feel sure that this is a forlorn hope, a never to be realised dream because this is the only human way to live. This is the philosophy of “courageous despair” proposed by people like Albert Camus (1913 – 1960). This attitude is well summed up in the words of the song from *The Man from La Mancha*, “The Impossible Dream”.

*“To dream the impossible dream,  
To fight the unbeatable foe,  
To bear with unbearable sorrow,  
To run where the brave dare not go.  
To right the unrightable wrong,  
To love, pure and chaste, from the fire,  
To strive, when you are to weary  
To reach unreachable star.  
This is my quest, to follow that star,  
No matter how hopeless, no matter how far.  
To strive for the right, without question or pause  
To be willing to march into hell for a heavenly cause.  
To this glorious quest.  
That my heart will be peaceful and calm  
When I’m laid to my rest.  
And the world will be better for this  
That one man, scorned and covered with scars,  
Still strove, with his last ounce of courage  
To reach the unreachable star.”*

Such people would never agree with the character in Dostoevsky’s *The Brothers Karamazov* who remarked that if God did not exist – if there were no “after life”, we might well add – “everything would be permitted” (i.e. there’d be no moral system possible). People like these are real prophetic voices that can shame us out of our social unconcern in spite of all our prattling about working for God’s kingdom.

**Check Your Progress I**

**Note:** Use the space provided for your answer

1) Who are the indifferentists, with regards to life after death?

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2) What is “courageous despair” faced with death?

### 3.6 THE POSITIVE RESPONSES

Among the three positive responses we take the first two in the next unit.

- a. Reincarnation (More about it will be studied in the next unit.)
- b. Resurrection of the body (More about it will be discussed in the next unit.)
- c. The Immortality of the Soul

#### Compared to Reincarnation

All reincarnation theory pre-supposes the immortality of the soul. But if one accepts immortality of the soul (that is, the conviction that it is, in itself, unable to die) one is not obliged straight-away to hold that it will be reincarnated subsequently. In this sense, the doctrine of the immortality of the soul is (at least logically) prior to that of reincarnation. In fact, we shall find both theories using the same basic arguments to establish the immortality of the human psyche. The reincarnationists will then proceed to try and establish re-birth as a further property of the animating principle. Some careless thinkers assume that the very same argument which establishes the immortality of the soul is nigh automatic “proof” that there is such a thing as reincarnation. Even Plato himself seems to do this from time to time. Whatever, I think it is good, at least for pedagogical purposes, to separate these two moments. It will also be useful as a help to understanding the evolution of the vocabulary to express, in traditional terms, the Christian teaching of life after life.

#### Views of the Human Person

The greater degree of dichotomy we accept in our understanding of the human person, the easier is it to provide theories and arguments in favour of life after death. In the face of death, decay and putrefaction, it is difficult to argue that there is some kind of survival – unless, of course, we grant that there is something over and above that which is corrupting and rotting before our eyes and it is this something that “goes marching on”. Now the Hindu or reincarnationist perspective, in our opinion, is the view that implies the greatest split within the human person. Indeed, one particular body is seen so much a superfluous appendage to the *atman* or soul, that it is possible for the former to be cast aside while the latter, without losing its identity would be able to animate any other material reality, even one of another sex, perhaps a sub-human being, too. The next view is one which implies a little less disjunction between body and soul. At any case, it does not necessarily ask for a commitment to reincarnation. Thereby it would not ask us to maintain that a human soul could indifferently animate any human or sub-human embodiment – which would imply no real positive and active contribution to personal identity from the material element.

## The Arguments

The two arguments most commonly rehearsed in favour of the existence of an immortal soul in human beings are (a) the fact that we can form abstract ideas and (b) the fact that we are capable of a total reflection. Aquinas and some others also add a kind of argument from the fact that we seem to have a natural desire for eternal life and such a natural desire could hardly be in vain. Other arguments have also been presented from time to time, but we will not consider them as they are too implicitly bound up with a world-view that comes across – to me, at least – as too oppressive and alien to any integrated conception of the human person.

### The Argument from our Abstractive Ability

It is possible for the human mind, so the argument runs, to form abstract ideas. That is, we can form the notion of justice, love, peace and so on. However, we have no direct experience of any of these things. We do encounter a situation of justice or injustice, we experience the powerful feeling of loving or being loved. We know some concrete occasion of peace coming after conflict. From these we abstract (or “leave out, without denying their existence”) particular individual elements and consider what is most basic or constitutive to these. Mere sense-knowledge cannot provide us with such, for sense knowledge is always of the concrete, the individual. There is also an element of universality and necessity in these ideas (recall Kant). This would imply that there is in us something over and above matter, which has the ability to transcend or go beyond matter. It is this “something” which will be able to continue to exist over and above matter when the latter has ceased to exist.

It is significant to note that Plato, in his presentation of this argument (Cf. *Phaedo* 70 d 7 – 72 e 2 and *Meno* 84 ff) is more concerned with arguing to the fact of the soul’s pre-existence than to its posthumous survival. Plato, however, has the good grace to make Simmias remark that further refinement is required to make the argument conclusive. Aquinas is more precise and rationally satisfying in his argumentation. We shall sum it up in Copleston’s neat phraseology: “St. Thomas argues ... that the human soul must be a spiritual and subsistent form, because it is capable of knowing the nature of all bodies. If it were material, it would be determined to a specified object, as the organ of vision is determined to the perception of colour...” (*History*, Vol. II, Lo., Burns, 1950, 384. The relevant texts in Aquinas are ST Ia 75, 6 and SCG 2, 79.)

### The Argument from Total Reflection

It is an undeniable fact of experience that two of our activities are capable of a total reflection – that is, they can “turn back” (Latin, *re-flectere*) on themselves. These two activities are knowing and willing. When I know, I know that I know and it is also possible for me to will to will. Our sense activities are not “self transparent”, that is, they cannot be “present to themselves”. I cannot see my seeing or hear my hearing, though I can know that I see or hear. Now, it is argued, it is characteristic of matter that it has parts outside of parts and that, as a consequence, one part of it can only be touched by another part. For instance, my body is material: this is borne out of the fact that my right hand lies outside of my left hand, my right foot lies outside of my left foot and so on. Now, I cannot touch my right hand by my right hand – no more than I can see my seeing. In other words, my seeing – just as much as my right hand – cannot “turn back” or



make a total reflection on itself. Now the fact that my intellect and will can do this is a sign that they do not have “parts outside of parts”. They are thus not material, that is, spiritual. As such, they have no material parts to fall back into. These “spiritual faculties” then are indication that I have a spiritual soul which, by that token is immortal.

Plato seeks to establish the uncompounded or spiritual nature of the soul in *Phaedo* (Cf. 78 b 4 – 80 e 1.) not so much by its ability to make a total reflection but from the fact that it can survey the invisible and unchanging, imperishable Forms. Hence, it is more like to them than to corporeal things which are visible, changing and perishable. This way of arguing, of course, binds us to accepting the Platonic doctrine of the Forms as well as the pre-existence of the soul. Hence, it is little relevant to us, here.

Aquinas, in his disputed questions *On Truth* (I, 9; cf. The translation of Robert Mulligan, Henry Regnery Company, Chicago, 1952, 42) develops the argument along the lines we have sketched out above. He writes: “... the most perfect beings, such as, for example, intellectual substances, return to their essence with a complete return [we have rendered this idea as “total reflection”, above]: knowing something external to themselves, in a certain sense they go outside of themselves; but by knowing that they know, they are already beginning to return to themselves, because the act of cognition mediates between the knower and the thing known. That turn is completed inasmuch as they know their own essences ... And right after this, the Angelic Doctor feels constrained to quote the anonymous author of *The Causes*, “A being which is such as to know its own essence returns to it by a complete return.”

### Plato vs Aristotle on the Soul

In the Platonic vision, the body is something harmful to the soul. It is its prison and hence should have no part to play in the afterlife. As we have said, it is easy to save life after death, if we are prepared to barter away as integrated understanding of the unity of the human composite. In Christian *Weltanschauung*, however – especially in the light of the Incarnation – the body is seen in a much more positive, a healthier light. In other words, a definitely more integrated and unified understanding of the human person is called for. Now, Aristotle, unlike his erstwhile master, had such an approach to reality. He viewed matter in general and the body with much more sympathy and appreciation. Aristotle, rather than Plato, seemed more amenable to the development of Christian doctrine, so thought Aquinas. But this very strong point in the Stagyrte favour presented a chink in that self-same armour. Let Copleston summarise the problem for us: “St. Thomas rejected the Platonic Augustinian view of the relation of the soul to body and adopted the Aristotelian view of the soul as form of the body. ... The question then arises whether the closeness of the union between soul and body has not been so emphasised that the possible subsistence of the human soul apart from the body must be ruled out. In other words, is not the Aristotelian doctrine of the relation of the soul to the body incompatible with personal immortality? If one starts with the Platonic theory of the soul, immortality is assured, but the union of the soul and body is rendered difficult to understand; whereas if one starts with the Aristotelian theory of the soul, it might seem that one has to sacrifice immortality, that the soul is so closely bound to the body that it cannot subsist apart from the body.” (Op. Cit., 383.)

To put it another way, Aquinas' Christian convictions seemed to demand of him an impossible task: the integration of two revealed truths which seemed to be mutually exclusive: an integrated view of the human composite (which included also a positive understanding of the body) plus total personal immortality. How Aquinas was able to reconcile these two views is a testimony to his creative thinking and is a further instance of how he was no mere passive student of Aristotle, reproducing parrot-like his master's voice.

### **Aquinas' Contribution**

Aquinas' insightful offering to the problem was the famous distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic dependence. True, he remarked, knowing and willing can transcend or abstract from matter. But they need matter to get started. I cannot, for example, form any abstract idea or build up the notion of anything supersensible without first passing by way of matter. I can only arrive at the notion of God or First Cause by seeing, hearing, smelling, touching or tasting the tangible things of this world. Or, to take another example, I can only form the notion of truth, (an abstraction), starting from my sense perception of some true sensible data. Thus, my spiritual activity of thinking (and, it can be shown, of willing, too) is at least indirectly dependent on matter for its functioning. He called this *extrinsic* dependence. The spiritual activities of knowing and willing (and consequently their spiritual principle, the human soul) are dependent on matter only for the *beginning* of these activities. For their continuance and completion they can carry on without the help of matter – they can “transcend” it, as we say. Our other human activities – those we have in common with animals (sensitive life and locomotion) and plants (nourishment, repair, growth and reproduction) – however, are intrinsically dependent on matter; they involve matter all the way through, i.e., for the beginning, continuance and completion of their activities. Now we apply the famous metaphysical principle of “as is the operation so is the agent”. Humans have some activities (operations) which are only extrinsically dependent on matter – i.e. require matter only to start off; subsequently, they can carry on without matter. Therefore, the agent of these actions – in effect our spiritual soul – only needs matter to begin its existence. Thereafter it can continue to exist without matter, that is, when the matter element, at death, decomposes. Hence there can be life after death. A more detailed presentation of these arguments – in not so many words, of course – can be found in *Summa Theologica*. (ST, Ia, 75, 6 as well as in SCG 2, 79 and *On the Soul* a 14, c.)

To complete the picture, we might also cite St. Thomas' other argument in favour of life after death, based on the natural desire for it: “Natural tendency cannot be frustrated. But we notice that men desire ceaseless existence. This desire is rooted in reason, for since to exist (*esse*) is in itself desirable, any intelligent being who knows existence as absolute and not merely as relative, must desire existence as absolute and forever. So it is evident that this is not a vain desire but that man, inasmuch as his soul is intellectual, is incorruptible.” (*On the Soul*, a 14, c.)

### **Critical comments**

As we have pointed out, it is in his handling of the ticklish question of life after death, beginning with the more integrated Aristotelian conception of the human person, that Aquinas revealed his own creativity and originality. As Van Steenberghen has so aptly summed it up: “to formulate his own psychology in

Aristotelian terms, it was necessary [for Aquinas] to go beyond Aristotelianism itself.” (L. Johnston (tr), Louvain, 1955, 186.) In fact some of the earlier critics of Aquinas, like Scotus and Cajetan, faulted him on this point in that he was not following Aristotle faithfully (Pandikattu 2011).

I think no one can deny that Aquinas offers the finest rational demonstration for life after death, a proof which is more attuned with the Christian positive understanding of the body. However, I think we must remind ourselves in all fairness that Aquinas’ proof is ultimately based on an interpretation of matter, its nature and limits. And this interpretation is precisely that – *an* interpretation, not the only one, and like most (all?) interpretations it is not subject to rational proof. For Aquinas is assuming that matter can never transcend: if the embodied, materialised human person can transcend, it is only because there is in her/him something over and above matter that can enable her/him to do this. But what if one were to subscribe to a more dynamic vision of reality – one in which matter *at a certain level of complexity can* transcend, without there being any need to postulate a spiritual soul to account for this and which would be able to survive the material decomposition of the body? Of course, this dynamic vision of reality and its corresponding conception of matter and the human person is no more rationally provable either. Interpretations, as we know from hermeneutics, are not the fruit of rational proofs or refutations. Consciously or no, we “opt” for that particular interpretation of reality or an aspect of it which “clicks with”, harmonises or resonates with the various values I have integrated into my personal life and *Weltanschauung*.

As for the “natural desire” argument, its strength will obviously depend on the reason one holds why so-called “natural desires” cannot be in vain. On what grounds do we claim that “nature” won’t put in us an ineluctable desire for the impossible? And are we sure that the desire for immortality is “natural”? Could it not be wishful thinking, a survival or primitive superstition, etc.? All this would need to be established before we can take this argument seriously, however strong an “invitation to believe” it affords us

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### 3.7 LET US SUM UP

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In this unit after continuing with a phenomenological study of death, we have tried to see the positive and nihilistic understanding of the possible life after death.

**Check Your Progress III**

**Note:** Use the space provided for your answer

1) What is ‘total reflection.’?

2) What is “extrinsic dependence”?

3.8 KEY WORDS

- Necrobiosis

:

refers to the death and replacement of individual cells throughout life. Indeed, except for the nerve cells, all the cells of an organism are constantly being replaced. For instance, new skin cells form under the surface as the old one die and flake off.
- Necrosis

:

is the death of tissues or even an entire organ. This may or may not cause somatic death . During a heart attack, for instance, a blood clot cuts of circulation of the blood to part of the heart. The affected part dies, but the organism continues to live – unless, of course, the damage has been severe.
- Dies Irae

:

Literally it means, “Day of Wrath.” *It is a* medieval Latin hymn describing Judgment Day, used formerly for the masses for the dead
- Weltanschauung

:

*World-view or* a comprehensive view of the world and human life.

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