THE LOGICAL PROBLEM OF THE TRINITY

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate School
of the University of Notre Dame
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

by

Beau Branson

_____
Richard Cross, Director

Graduate Program in Philosophy
Notre Dame, Indiana
April, 2014

The Logical Problem of the Trinity

Abstract

by

Beau Branson

The doctrine of the Trinity is central to mainstream Christianity. But insofar as it posits "three persons" (Father, Son and Holy Spirit), who are "one God," it appears as inconsistent as the claim that 1+1+1=1.

Much of the literature on "The Logical Problem of the Trinity," as this has been called, attacks or defends Trinitarianism with little regard to the fourth century theological controversies and the late Hellenistic and early Medieval philosophical background in which it took shape. I argue that this methodology, which I call "the Puzzle Approach," produces obviously invalid arguments, and it is unclear how to repair it without collapsing into my preferred methodology, "the Historical Approach," which sees history as essential to the debate. I also discuss "mysterianism," arguing that, successful or not, it has a different goal from the other approaches. I further argue that any solution from the Historical Approach satisfies the concerns of the Puzzle Approach and mysterianism anyway.

I then examine the solution to the Logical Problem of the Trinity found in St. Gregory of Nyssa's writings, both due to his place in the history of the doctrine, and his clarity in explicating what I call "the metaphysics of synergy." I recast his solution in standard predicate logic and provide a formal proof of its consistency. I end by considering the possibilities for attacking the broader philosophical context of his defense and conclude that the prospects for doing so are dim. In any case, if there should turn out to be any problem with the doctrine of the Trinity at all, it will not be one of mere logical inconsistency in saying that "These Three are One."

Dedication

To Kathleen Kaufman,
for allowing me to think for myself.

I thank you on behalf of all of us. For you touched the lives of so many, and in so many ways, "...*the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written.*"

Contents

Acknowledgments

I would like most especially to acknowledge my advisor, Richard Cross. Despite a bachelor's in Classics and a strong interest in patristics, I originally came to Notre Dame thinking I would focus only on logic and contemporary analytic metaphysics. I knew that there was a lot of very serious philosophical thought going on in many of the church fathers, and I felt that it deserved careful attention from philosophers and that it was mostly obscured in bad (when even existent) English translations. But I couldn't imagine how to bring them into conversation with current analytic philosophy and never thought I would be the man for that job in any case. That is, until reading Richard's careful analysis of Gregory of Nyssa's theory of universals several years ago showed me an example of how one might give the church fathers exactly the kind of careful philosophical analysis I felt they deserved. It was his work that originally inspired me to do my dissertation on the Trinity and to take it in the historical direction I've taken it in. It was only after I had already begun the dissertation that fate would bring him to Notre Dame and allow me to finish it under his direction. Even when critical, his advice and feedback along the way has been consistently helpful and encouraging, both of which qualities are absolutely essential when slogging through the difficult work of one's dissertation.

The dissertation was originally begun under Mike Rea, and although he was ultimately unable to be on my committee, I owe him a great deal of gratitude for his feedback during the initial stages of the dissertation. Much of the material that has ultimately made it in was originally written while he was director, and a great deal more was ultimately not incorporated into the final version. I thank him for his monumental efforts in reading through and commenting on this massive amount of material and for consistently forcing me to state my positions and arguments more clearly and precisely and to answer certain questions I had not considered. I really would not have had anything interesting to say about methodology at all were it not for him challenging me to clarify and distill my views on that issue. Finally, I thank him for ultimately being gracious enough to allow me to change advisors to Richard after he came to Notre Dame and it seemed to make more sense. I'm also extremely thankful to Fritz Warfield for taking Mike's place as a reader at my defense at the last minute, when scheduling problems made it difficult for Mike, who was on leave.

Peter van Inwagen was the main reason I wanted to come to Notre Dame in the first place. Although I ultimately went in a slightly different direction

from what I had anticipated, I was privileged to have him both as my advisor for my oral exams and as a reader for my dissertation. I'm very thankful to him for the considerable investment of time he has made in me and for all of the feedback he has given me on the dissertation (not to mention papers completed for graduate school). No one has such a keen eye for detail or ability to hone in on the root of a philosophical dispute and bring clarity to it. Though his insightful comments have often left me embarrassed at some slip up, or sent me back to the drawing board entirely on some issue, I have always found him helpful and kind – *Christian* in every sense of that word.

Finally, I was happy on so many levels to have Fr. Brian Daley on my committee as well. On a scholarly level, I felt it was important to have a theologian on the committee for accountability on the historical and theological parts of the dissertation, and few people in the world would be more qualified for that job than Fr. Daley. I benefited greatly both from sitting in on his classes from time to time and from conversations over lunch and coffee. And on a personal level, I consider Fr. Daley a friend and have always admired his gentleness and his willingness to share his time and learning. I feel very privileged that he agreed to spend time slogging through an unusually lengthy and symbol-filled dissertation from the Philosophy department when he could have been reading through a dissertation in the Theology department or pursuing his own research. The highlight of my dissertation defense was hearing him say that he "learned a lot about Gregory" from my dissertation. Whether truth or flattery, it was probably one of the best compliments I could have received.

Besides the thanks due to my readers, I should mention that, while at Notre Dame, I was also privileged either to take or to sit in on numerous courses on Neo-Platonism by Stephen Gersh. I would likely not have understood a word of Plotinus had it not been for his instruction.

Likewise, Mike Loux managed to turn Aristotle from absolutely incomprehensible and frustrating, to one of my favorites. His comments were always helpful and he was always available to discuss nearly any topic I might ever be interested in. Both his depth and breadth of learning were and continue to be an inspiration and model for me.

I also owe a great deal of thanks to Catherine DeFauw and LinDa Grams, administrative assistants in the Philosophy Department, and to Montey Holloway, formerly Chair and now assistant to the Chair of the Philosophy Department at Notre Dame. I know they are the unsung heroes who make everything work, and without them I would never have been able to navigate the bureaucracy of graduate school at all.

Some kind of thanks is surely also due to Winnebago, makers of the LeSharo™ and Rialta™ models of RV, as much of the more purely logical sections of this dissertation was completed either inside of one or while living and traveling the country in one.

Finally, I benefited from a great deal of help (mostly in the form of napping) from Mr. Max Power – my honorary co-author – and the rest of my furry family at the time: Tallulah, Mr. Fezziwig, and the much-beloved and much-missed Snickers (R.I.P.).

Introduction

Why a Philosophical Evaluation of the Doctrine of the Trinity?

For decades after the rise of logical positivism, philosophers frequently took talk about God to be, not merely false, but without meaning altogether. If it was admitted that talk about God was more than meaningless, the next lines of argument from the skeptic were typically first the negative point that there was not sufficient evidence for God's existence, and second the positive points that there were internal contradictions among God's supposed attributes themselves, or external contradictions between the Divine attributes and manifest facts about the world, such as our own free will or the existence of evil.

As the positivists' verificationist position on meaning crumbled, these next lines of argument began to be chipped away at as well. New developments in epistemology led some to take the position that belief in God could count among the "properly basic" beliefs an individual might hold. Others revived various strands of the tradition of natural theology. Likewise, new developments in modal logic helped to clarify arguments involving God's attributes, the existence of evil, and free will. Soon there was an explosion in the philosophy of religion, as religious belief ceased to be an occasion for embarrassment among philosophers and came to be seen as rationally defensible. While theistic philosophers have by no means won the day, they have certainly made religious belief much more respectable. Where is the debate likely to go from here?

One can see the "New Atheists" of the current science and religion wars – Dawkins, Dennet, Gould, Harris, Hitchens, etc. – as continuing along the trajectory that addresses the evidence or lack thereof for traditional religious beliefs. Without necessarily relying on problematic assumptions in the foundations of epistemology, they take up the issue of the relation of religious belief to the findings of our best science (as well as adding to the mix the issue of how various religious beliefs might affect the believer's behavior in ways that are unhealthy or even dangerous).

But while the alleged war of science and religion has received more press, there are equally serious issues to be addressed that lie along the other trajectory, the one that addresses the very consistency of religious beliefs.

Arguments about the compossibility of the traditional Divine Attributes,

and their compatibility with obvious facts about the world, seek to discredit all traditional monotheistic religions on the basis of very general features they share in common. On the assumption that arguments based on such general features of all forms of monotheism have been or could be adequately addressed, the next reasonable step would seem to be to move to more specific features of particular versions of monotheism. (If one cannot defeat all forms of monotheism at once, one can try to do so piecemeal.) In the case of mainstream Christianity, no doctrine could be at the same time more centrally important, or more apparently incoherent, than the doctrine of the Trinity. Insofar as the doctrine posits three distinct "persons" (Father, Son and Holy Spirit), each of whom "is God," and yet at the same time that there is only one God, the doctrine would appear to be as contradictory as the claim that 1+1+1=1 and thus an easy target for anti-Christian polemic. This problem has come to be called "the Logical Problem of the Trinity," and given the brief history of recent philosophy of religion sketched above, it should come as no surprise that a great deal of attention has begun to be given to the doctrine of the Trinity by analytic philosophers of religion in recent decades... *Or has it?*

Why *Another* Philosophical Evaluation of the Doctrine of the Trinity?

There now exists a quite substantial philosophical literature on the Logical Problem of the Trinity. Philosophers have constructed, analyzed and evaluated a number of different accounts of the Trinity in an attempt to defend the logical coherence of the doctrine of the Trinity. This might seem puzzling since we have formal languages in which we can decide questions of logical consistency with mathematical precision. However, once we define the problem carefully, we can see that what is really being disputed is the very logical form of the doctrine itself, and that different proposed solutions correspond to different logical forms attributed to the doctrine of the Trinity. This raises a question as to how one could determine which logical form a doctrine truly has, or barring that, at least find some indirect way to determine its consistency, when the logical form of that doctrine is itself a matter of dispute.

Though there are infinitely many possible logical forms one could ascribe to the doctrine of the Trinity, I show that they can all be grouped together into a small number of related "Families" based on a few general logical features that correlate to some of the major criticisms of various proposed solutions in the literature. This shows that if the major proposed solutions are all flawed due to the features used to construct this taxonomy, then there can be no solution to the Logical Problem of the Trinity at all. One fact this taxonomy therefore reveals about the debate is that some Trinitarians have been overly critical of the on-offer solutions. That is, although they hold out hope that *some* solution can be found, they have not realized that their reasons for rejecting the on-offer solutions in fact rule out all possible solutions.

There then remains the project of determining, of all of the possible logical forms to ascribe to the doctrine, which one(s) would be correct. I note that, while some of the philosophers involved in this debate have done their fair share of research into the history of the doctrine, many have quite consciously attempted to carry out this project in relative isolation from the historical data. Some have even more or less explicitly committed to the view that historical inquiry is not strictly necessary for completing it. Yet others, while not explicitly disavowing history, have presented arguments in defense of the doctrine with no mention of history, apparently tacitly presuming that grounding their account in history is not necessary.

I refer to this general methodological approach within philosophical theology, viewing the history of a doctrine as inessential, as "the Puzzle Approach" (and its followers "puzzlers") as they seem to be modeling their methodology in the field of philosophical theology on an analogy to familiar metaphysical "puzzles." I contrast this with my preferred methodology, which sees historical inquiry as essential to arguments in philosophical theology, and which I call "the Historical Approach" (and its followers "historicists"). I argue that, to the extent that the arguments in this literature fail to be appropriately grounded in the relevant history, they thereby fail to be valid arguments for or against the logical consistency of the doctrine of the Trinity.

The result is that the vast majority of what has been written in this literature consists of arguments (sets of premises) that have been left logically unconnected to their conclusions in a way that renders them either *non-sequitur* or obviously question-begging. I argue that it is unclear whether there is any way for the puzzler to patch up his methodology in a way that would make these arguments valid, but which would not either simply collapse into the Historical Approach or at least render the essence of the Puzzle Approach literature superfluous.

I also explore what has come to be called "mysterianism," or as I will also call it "the Mysterian Approach." There are deep questions about whether the Mysterian Approach is, or could be, successful in its aims. But I argue that, ultimately, it simply aims at a different goal from the Puzzle Approach and the Historical Approach alike, and so counts not so much as a rival methodology as simply a methodology for a different project.

I further argue that any solution to the Logical Problem of the Trinity to come out of a successful application of the Historical Approach methodology will also count as a successful solution by the lights of Puzzle Approach, and that achieving the goal of the Historical Approach will also achieve the goals of the Mysterian Approach. So that we have nothing to lose, and much to gain, in seeking a solution to the Logical Problem of the Trinity through the Historical Approach.

At the same time, while I argue that most philosophical discussion of the doctrine of the Trinity has not paid enough attention to history, inquiry into this doctrine on the part of historians and historical theologians has typically failed to be done in a way rigorous enough to satisfy the analytic philosopher. Often this is simply because the historian and the theologian have not been operating with precisely the same set of concerns as the analytic philosopher.

The result of these tendencies in philosophy and theology is that there has so far been relatively little inquiry specifically into the Logical Problem of the Trinity that is at once philosophically rigorous and also historically sensitive.

It would be unfair for the philosopher to blame this situation on the historian. The historian, as such, is not trained in the methodology of the analytic philosopher. And if the historian's concerns are not the concerns of the philosopher, it is no shortcoming on the historian's part if the results of his investigation do not adequately address the philosopher's concerns. To the extent that inquiry into and evaluation of the relevant history is necessary for the philosopher's ends, and to the extent that the historian's work has not already satisfied those ends, it falls to the philosopher to complete what is lacking.

To that end, I have chosen to examine the solution to the Logical Problem of the Trinity found in the writings of St. Gregory of Nyssa. I have chosen Gregory, first because he is uncontroversially acknowledged to be at the heart of the development of the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity, and second because, among the more significant figures in that development, he is one of the most careful and precise in his statements of certain views of central importance in evaluating the logical coherence of the doctrine. In particular, he is to my mind the clearest about what I will call "the metaphysics of synergy," which lies at the heart of his defense of the doctrine of the Trinity against the Logical Problem of the Trinity, and which I believe was common within what has come to be called the "pro-Nicene consensus." I examine his writings, mapping out the logic of his views on the Trinity precisely, and give a formal proof of the consistency of the doctrine of the Trinity as found in St. Gregory's writings.

An Outline of the Dissertation

The dissertation thus proceeds in five parts. In Part I, I give a precise definition for the Logical Problem of the Trinity and what would count as a solution to the problem. I next construct a taxonomy of all possible answers to the Logical Problem of the Trinity, showing that any non-heretical solution to the Logical Problem of the Trinity will exhibit the same (allegedly) problematic formal features as those of the familiar Social Trinitarian and Relative Identity types of accounts.

In Part II, I exhibit the invalid nature of Puzzle Approach Methodology discussed above. I also discuss the Mysterian Approach. The questions about whether mysterianism can be successful are deeper than can be decided in this dissertation. But I argue that, whether successful or not, it does not actually constitute a rival methodology to either the Puzzle Approach or Historical Approach, even if it initially appears to.

In Part III, I turn to history, examining St. Gregory of Nyssa's proposed solution to the Logical Problem of the Trinity. I argue, among other things, that a failure to adequately appreciate his *purposes* has led to a misunderstanding of his actual views. Further, I point out an important but under-appreciated distinction in his metaphysics of action and event individuation. Once we un-

4

derstand this, we can understand what I call his "metaphysics of synergy."

In Part IV, I organize the results of Part III more systematically and formulate Gregory's account of the Trinity more precisely in predicate logic, providing a formal proof of the consistency of his account, completing the project taken on in Part I.

Finally, in Part V, I step outside the primary scope of the dissertation (the alleged *logical* problem with the doctrine of the Trinity) to the overall philosophical framework in which Gregory situates his solution. I present some general considerations to show that it would be difficult to fault his view on the grounds of implausibility of his metaphysical and semantic assumptions. In any case, not in any way that would still count as the simple, "logical" problem alleged by anti-Trinitarians.

Part I

Defining the Problem

Chapter 1

Definitions

> In the case of divine dogma, the indiscriminate use of words is no longer free from danger. For in these subjects, that which is of small account is no longer a small matter.
>
> –St. Gregory of Nyssa

1.1   What is the Logical Problem of the Trinity?

Consider the claims made by the following set S of natural language sentences:

(S1) The Father is God

(S2) The Son is God

(S3) The Holy Spirit is God

(S4) The Father is not the Son

(S5) The Father is not the Holy Spirit

(S6) The Son is not the Holy Spirit

(S7) There is exactly one God

Let us call the set of propositions that the sentences of S express P and let us call each of the propositions each S-n expresses P-n. Of course, P is not the entirety of the doctrine of the Trinity.[1] But it is at least a very important subset of, or is otherwise logically entailed by, the doctrine of the Trinity.[2] Intuitively, what is called "the logical problem of the Trinity" (LPT) is just the question how, or whether, all the members of P can be true at the same time, for they seem inconsistent.

---

1. See below, 1.2, p. 17.
2. (CARTWRIGHT 1987) seems to be the first to have formulated it this way in the current debate, and most follow him.

But what does it mean for them to be inconsistent? Following Plantinga,[3] let us distinguish between three different senses in which a set of propositions can be consistent or inconsistent:

1. A set of propositions is *explicitly inconsistent* if and only if (at least) one member of the set just is the denial or negation of (at least) one member of the set.

2. A set of propositions is *formally inconsistent* if and only if a(n explicit) contradiction can be derived from its members using only "the rules of ordinary logic."

3. A set of propositions is *implicitly inconsistent* if and only if adding some necessarily true proposition(s) to it yields a formally inconsistent set.

(And if, in one of these senses, a set of propositions is *not inconsistent*, it is, in that sense, consistent.)

Notice the three form increasingly large supersets of propositions. Any set that is explicitly inconsistent is formally inconsistent, though not vice-versa. And any set that is formally inconsistent is implicitly inconsistent, though not vice-versa.

They also correspond to decreasingly bad problems for a view. There are decreasing levels of cognitive deficiency one would have to exhibit to hold such an inconsistency in one's belief system, and there are decreasingly good reasons for us to chastise a person for having such an alleged cognitive defect. Explicit inconsistencies are *obviously* false, and it is a serious problem if we embrace one. Formal inconsistencies run the gamut from almost as obviously false as explicit contradictions, to points so subtle they trip up a great many students in formal logic classes. Finally, the obviousness of the falsehood of an implicit inconsistency depends both on the obviousness of the *necessity of the truth* of the auxiliary proposition we have to add to the set to yield a formal inconsistency *and* on the obviousness of the logical relations between the auxiliary proposition and the rest of the set. Even though, once we're clear on the logical forms of the relevant propositions, one can't very well question a proof of their consistency or inconsistency, one can often reasonably question the modal intuitions behind the claim that the auxiliary proposition is not only true but *necessary*.[4]

Explicit inconsistencies, of course, are rarely embraced by anyone, and nobody accuses the doctrine of the Trinity of being one. But the situation is nearly as bad, as the problem raised in the literature about the doctrine of the Trinity seems to be the allegation that the doctrine of the Trinity is *not even formally consistent*. This seems to be what is meant by calling it the *logical* problem of the Trinity.[5]

On the other hand, we could call the accusation that the doctrine of the Trinity is merely *implicitly* inconsistent "the metaphysical problem of the Trinity" (MPT). Since the accusation made by anti-Trinitarians seems to be that

---

3. (A. Plantinga 1974), pp. 12–16.
4. See (van Inwagen 1998) for a good discussion of this issue.
5. See, for example, (Yandell 1994).

the doctrine of the Trinity is not even *formally* consistent, my focus will be on the *logical* problem of the Trinity. However, current responses to the LPT often make an elision between the LPT and the MPT. Therefore, since I want to address the methodology of the current literature, it will not always be possible to narrow the discussion down to the logical problem alone.

For now, we should keep in mind two things. First, on the one hand, at a certain level the anti-Trinitarian only wants to prove that the doctrine of the Trinity is impossible. And the anti-Trinitarian wins on that point if the doctrine of the Trinity is even *implicitly* inconsistent, even if it is still *formally* consistent. Thus, while the Trinitarian certainly wants some way to dissolve the LPT, it may seem not to be enough in the grand scheme of things. A solution to the LPT is not necessarily a solution to the MPT.

But second, on the other hand, it would still be a major embarrassment to the anti-Trinitarian if the logical argument against the doctrine of the Trinity were to fail. In that case, the debate between Trinitarians and anti-Trinitarians would be less like a debate between people who can't count and people who can – as the anti-Trinitarian wants to portray it – and more like a debate between, say, endurantists and perdurantists in the metaphysics of time. The anti-Trinitarian portrays his argument as a knock-down – a matter of simple logic – not as just another of the many uncertain arguments found in metaphysics and in philosophy generally. We will return to this issue in our final evaluation in Part V.

I believe that the doctrine of the Trinity (or at least the particularly "problematic" part of it, P) can be *shown* to be consistent using the "rules of ordinary logic." That result alone is significant in that it decisively shifts the debate from the level of *formal* consistency (the LPT) to the level of *implicit* consistency (the MPT).

Since P will have been shown to be *formally* consistent, the burden of proof for the anti-Trinitarian will be to either:

1. find some additional proposition that is plausibly "part of," or entailed by, the doctrine of the Trinity, that when added to P, yields a formally inconsistent set, or

2. find some necessarily true auxiliary proposition that, when added to P, yields a formally inconsistent set (or some combination of such propositions).

But this of course is a distinct question from the LPT. I will not attempt to prove that no such additional proposition exists that could show the doctrine of the Trinity to be implicitly inconsistent in one of the above ways. But in Part V I do discuss these broader questions, and give some considerations to show that the prospects for attacking the doctrine of the Trinity in this way are dim.

Formal Consistency and the "Rules of Ordinary Logic"

If the LPT is about formal consistency, and formal consistency is determined by the "rules of ordinary logic," what exactly are the "rules of ordinary logic"? And how would one show whether or not a set of propositions entails an explicit contradiction using them?

Logic as practiced today does not deal *directly* with propositions, or even with their expressions in sentences of ordinary, natural human languages. Rather, the modern logician constructs artificial languages with (so far) less expressive power than natural languages, but with no possibility for ambiguity in the logical forms of its sentences. With no such ambiguity possible in these artificial languages, precise rules and methods can be given for determining the consistency or inconsistency of a set Φ of sentences of these languages.

There are two senses in which we might say that a set of sentences Φ in a formal language L is inconsistent. It may be that, given the rules of inference that are valid in L, Φ entails a contradiction, entails its own negation, or for whatever reason the inference rules for that language say that the conjunction of the members of Φ must be false. If this is so, Φ is "*syntactically inconsistent* in L." If there is no such valid proof in L, Φ is "*syntactically consistent*" in L. This is the strict meaning of "consistency," and pertains, obviously, to syntax.

On the other hand, it may be that there is no interpretation I of the non-logical constants of L such that all of the members of Φ are true in L on I (i.e. there is no "model" for Φ in L). If this is so, Φ is not "*satisfiable*" with respect to the class of possible interpretations of the non-logical constants of L. If there is such an interpretation (a model) for Φ in L, Φ *is* satisfiable in L. This is not strictly consistency. It pertains not to syntax but to semantics. But it is just as important a consideration, and in a formal language with the features of *soundness* and *completeness*, the syntactic feature of consistency and the semantic feature of satisfiability go hand in hand.

Since the "rules of ordinary logic" should encompass both syntax and semantics, it would seem that the phrase "formally inconsistent" should cover both strict, syntactic inconsistency, and the semantic notion of unsatisfiability. That is, it would seem we should say that a set Φ of formulae of L is "formally inconsistent in L" if and only if it is *either* inconsistent in L *or* unsatisfiable in L. Φ is "formally consistent" in L if and only if it is *both* consistent in L *and* satisfiable in L.

In any formal language L worth studying, any language with the property logicians call "*soundness*," if Φ is inconsistent in L, then it will be unsatisfiable in L as well. (Otherwise there could be "valid" proofs from true premises to false conclusions, and what good is a language like that?)[6] So, although these are not the only ways to do so, a usually good strategy for showing "formal inconsistency" is to *give a proof* of the negation of the conjunction of the members of Φ (because the syntactic feature of inconsistency will show the semantic feature of unsatisfiability as well), and a usually good strategy for showing "formal con-

---

6. On the other hand, we know that there *are* interesting languages where a formula can be semantically unsatisfiable, but still syntactically consistent – languages that are *incomplete*.

sistency" is to *give a model* for all of the members of Φ (because the semantic feature of satisfiability will show the syntactic feature of consistency as well).

But since the modern logician's methods of determining consistency and inconsistency only apply within the artificial languages they construct, how does one determine whether a set of *propositions* P is consistent or inconsistent?

In order to make any use of the tools developed by the logician, the set P of propositions must be given some regimentation Φ in some formal language L such that the logical forms of the sentences in Φ accurately represent the logical forms of the propositions in P. Within this artificial language, questions of consistency can be determined (if at all) with mathematical precision. Thus, if a regimentation, Φ in L, of P can be found such that all parties to the debate can agree that:

1. the formal language L is suitably expressive that there are possible sentences (well-formed formulae, "wffs") of L that could capture the logical forms (or at least all of the relevant aspects of the logical forms) of the propositions in P (for short "L is a formally adequate language for P"), and

2. the logical forms of the sentences of Φ in L do reflect the logical forms (or at least the relevant aspects of the logical forms) of the propositions in P (for short "Φ is a formally adequate regimentation of P")

then the question of the formal consistency of the propositions in P can be decided on the basis of the formal consistency of the sentences Φ in L.

Could there be different formally adequate regimentations, Φ_1 in L, and Φ_2 in L, of a set of propositions P such that Φ_1 is formally consistent in L, but Φ_2 is not? Similarly, could there be different formally adequate languages, L_1 and L_2, such that a regimentation Φ is, in L_1, both formally adequate for P and consistent, while in L_2 it is formally adequate for P but inconsistent?

Presumably in the first case either the sentences of Φ_1 or the sentences of Φ_2 (or both) do *not* "reflect the logical forms of the propositions in P in *all relevant ways*," i.e. either Φ_1 in L or Φ_2 in L (or both) must not be "a formally adequate regimentation of P."

Likewise, in the second case, presumably either:

1. one or the other of L_1 or L_2 (or both) are not expressive enough that their sentences can capture the relevant aspects of the logical forms of the propositions in P, or

2. Φ has an importantly different logical form as interpreted according to the grammar of L_1 as compared to its form as interpreted according to the grammar of L_2. And either Φ in L_1 or Φ in L_2 (or both) is (are) not "a formally adequate regimentation of P."

Thus, either *every* pair of formally adequate language plus formally adequate regimentation for P is formally consistent, or *none* is.

So, in any debate over the formal consistency of a set of propositions P, the real work, and matter for debate, ironically does not lie so much in proving the formal consistency or inconsistency of any set of sentences, but in finding a suitable artificial language L and a suitable regimentation Φ, such that it can be shown that:

1. L is a formally adequate language for P, and

2. Φ in L is a formally adequate regimentation for P.

(With one important exception, most philosophers involved in this debate would probably agree that some standard version of predicate logic with (classical, absolute, non-relative) identity ("PLI" for short) would be a formally adequate language for P. What will be called "pure" Relative Identity Trinitarianism seems to be the only camp in the debate that demands the use of an importantly different formal language in which to address the issue. Since rejecting PLI is controversial in itself, we will adopt a certain mild "prejudice" toward PLI throughout the dissertation. Specifically, as long as a view *can* be given a formally adequate regimentation in PLI, we will regiment it in PLI. In other words, if it is *possible* to represent a certain logical form *via* formulae of PLI, we will use formulae of PLI as the means by which we will represent that logical form.)

So, why does the anti-Trinitarian think that the logical form of P is inconsistent?

Suppose we take "Father," "Son," and "Holy Spirit" univocally as names for individuals wherever they appear in P. Suppose we take "God" in S1 through S3 univocally as the name of an individual. Suppose we take "is" univocally as the "is" of (classical) identity in S1 through S6. And suppose we analyze the counting statement expressed by S7 in the standard way, and understand "is God" as it occurs there in the same way we did in our interpretation of S1 through S3. The logical form of the claims expressed by S on this interpretation of it can be represented in PLI as:

$\Phi_{\text{LPT-1}}$:
$(1_{\text{LPT-1}})$ f=g
$(2_{\text{LPT-1}})$ s=g
$(3_{\text{LPT-1}})$ h=g
$(4_{\text{LPT-1}})$ f$\neq$s
$(5_{\text{LPT-1}})$ f$\neq$h
$(6_{\text{LPT-1}})$ s$\neq$h
$(7_{\text{LPT-1}})$ $(\exists x)(\forall y)(x=g \,\&\, (y=g \to y=x))$

$\Phi_{\text{LPT-1}}$ is inconsistent in PLI.[7] $((7_{\text{LPT-1}})$ is not strictly necessary to derive a contradiction here, but I include it for completeness' sake.)

---

7. Proof is trivial.

On the other hand, suppose we instead take "is God" in S1 through S3 univocally and take "God" to be a predicate and "is" to be the "is" of predication. Suppose we analyze the counting statement expressed by S7 in the standard way, and understand "is God" as it occurs there in the same way we did in our interpretation of S1 through S3. And suppose we otherwise leave our regimentation unchanged. The logical form of the claims expressed by S on this interpretation of it can be represented in PLI as:

$\Phi_{\text{LPT-2}}$:
($1_{\text{LPT-2}}$) Gf
($2_{\text{LPT-2}}$) Gs
($3_{\text{LPT-2}}$) Gh
($4_{\text{LPT-2}}$) f$\neq$s
($5_{\text{LPT-2}}$) f$\neq$h
($6_{\text{LPT-2}}$) s$\neq$h
($7_{\text{LPT-2}}$) $(\exists x)(\forall y)(Gx \,\&\, (Gy \rightarrow y=x))$

$\Phi_{\text{LPT-2}}$ is also inconsistent in PLI.[8]

Since both of the logical forms we have in mind here *can* be represented in PLI, we will use PLI. So, a more precise way to put the anti-Trinitarian argument would be as follows:

1. PLI is a formally adequate language for P, and

2. at least one of $\Phi_{\text{LPT-1}}$ in PLI or $\Phi_{\text{LPT-2}}$ in PLI is a formally adequate regimentation of P, and

3. both $\Phi_{\text{LPT-1}}$ and $\Phi_{\text{LPT-2}}$ are (syntactically) inconsistent in PLI.

As mentioned above, since at least one formally adequate regimentation of P in a formally adequate language for P is inconsistent, all are. So, by definition of "formally adequate language" and "formally adequate regimentation," P is formally inconsistent. So, since the doctrine of the Trinity contains or entails P, the doctrine of the Trinity itself is inconsistent.

But, if this is the "problem"... what exactly would count as a *solution*?

1.2   What Would Be a Solution?

In the previous section, we saw that the logical problem of the Trinity could be seen intuitively as the question how, or whether, all of P1 through P7 could be true at the same time. We saw that the LPT could be seen more precisely as the question what, if anything, is wrong with the following anti-Trinitarian argument:

---

8. Proof is trivial.

1. PLI is a formally adequate language for P, and

2. at least one of $\Phi_{\text{LPT-1}}$ in PLI or $\Phi_{\text{LPT-2}}$ in PLI is a formally adequate regimentation of P, and

3. both $\Phi_{\text{LPT-1}}$ and $\Phi_{\text{LPT-2}}$ are formally inconsistent in PLI,

4. therefore, P is formally inconsistent.

But if that is the "problem," what would count as a solution or answer to it?

If the anti-Trinitarian is right that PLI is a formally adequate language for P, and that one or the other of $\Phi_{\text{LPT-1}}$ in PLI or $\Phi_{\text{LPT-2}}$ in PLI is a formally adequate regimentation of P, then that just is the answer. There is no "solution." So the Trinitarian must maintain that neither regimentation, in PLI, is formally adequate for P (or else that PLI itself is not formally adequate for P).

Let us say that a "*proposed* answer" to the LPT is a set that includes:

1. Exactly one formal language L in which to regiment P, and

2. Exactly one set Φ of sentences of L with which to regiment P,[9] and

3. A proof of the formal consistency or inconsistency of Φ in L.

Let us say that a "*formally adequate* answer" to the LPT is a proposed answer to the logical problem of the Trinity such that:

1. L is a formally adequate language for P, and

2. Φ in L is a formally adequate regimentation of P

(3. and the proof of formal consistency or inconsistency of Φ in L is correct.)

A "proposed *solution*" to the LPT is a proposed answer to the logical problem of the Trinity that proves that Φ is formally consistent in L.

A "proposed *non-solution*" to the LPT is a proposed answer to the logical problem of the Trinity that proves that Φ is formally inconsistent in L.

A "formally adequate *solution*" to the LPT is a formally adequate answer that is a proposed solution (i.e., a formally adequate answer to the LPT that proves that Φ is formally consistent in L).

A "formally adequate *non-solution*" to the LPT is a formally adequate answer that is a proposed non-solution (i.e., a formally adequate answer to the LPT that proves that Φ is formally inconsistent in L).

(Since, as mentioned above, either every pair of formally adequate language for P plus formally adequate regimentation of P is formally consistent, or none

---

9. We will relax this requirement in an obvious and non-problematic way in the case of a couple of dilemmas, where two different possible regimentations are offered, and the claim made is only that at least one of them is formally adequate. Specifically, the anti-Trinitarian LPT_1 and LPT_2, and the Naïve Modalist NM_1 and NM_2.

is, either every formally adequate answer to the logical problem of the Trinity will be a (formally adequate) solution to the LPT, or every formally adequate answer to the LPT will be a (formally adequate) non-solution to the logical problem of the Trinity.)

Thus, the anti-Trinitarian argument above can be seen as a constructive dilemma. One of two proposed non-solutions to the LPT (call those LPT_1 and LPT_2) is formally adequate. Thus, there is some formally adequate non-solution to the LPT. (Thus, all formally adequate answers to the logical problem of the Trinity are non-solutions.) So, by definition of "formally adequate language" and "formally adequate regimentation," P is formally inconsistent.

We focus on P here because, in order for the anti-Trinitarian to show the doctrine of the Trinity is inconsistent, he need not regiment the doctrine of the Trinity in its entirety. It is enough to argue that the doctrine of the Trinity contains or entails all the propositions in P, and that P is inconsistent.

There are undoubtedly other propositions that count as elements of the doctrine of the Trinity. For example, the propositions that the Father is unoriginate, that the Son is the only-begotten, and that the Holy Spirit proceeds from (at least) the Father, are all parts of the doctrine of the Trinity, along with other propositions. And additional propositions can never yield a consistent set from an inconsistent set. But they can yield an inconsistent set from a consistent one. So, the fact that there is more to the doctrine of the Trinity than just P can only help the anti-Trinitarian and can only harm the Trinitarian.

So, showing that P is formally consistent is not strictly enough for the Trinitarian to show that the doctrine of the Trinity is formally consistent. Nonetheless, most of the literature seems to take the question whether the doctrine of the Trinity is formally consistent to still be *nearly* equivalent (close enough for practical purposes) to the question whether P is formally consistent, i.e., whether the LPT as I have defined it here has a formally adequate solution or a formally adequate non-solution. That is, they seem to assume that:

1. if there is a formally adequate non-solution to the LPT, then the doctrine of the Trinity is *certainly* (formally) inconsistent, since the doctrine of the Trinity does in fact include or entail all of the propositions in P. (That is true, and should be uncontroversial), and

2. if there is a formally adequate solution to the LPT, then the doctrine of the Trinity is at least *probably* formally consistent.

How so?

Philosophers on both sides of the argument would probably agree to the following. It is true that there are other aspects of the doctrine of the Trinity, and that adding additional propositions to P, such as that the Son is the only-begotten, that the persons are consubstantial, etc., could in theory produce an inconsistent set, even though P itself is consistent. Nevertheless, no such alleged inconsistency has so far been raised. Further, it is hard to see how such additional elements could cause a bigger problem than what we've already seen.

So, arguably, the Trinitarian may safely ignore that possibility – unless and until the anti-Trinitarian actually proposes some such auxiliary proposition as a problem for the doctrine of the Trinity. But no such auxiliary propositions have been pointed out by the anti-Trinitarian. And the LPT, as we've defined it, will probably be the most difficult problem facing the doctrine of the Trinity. So, if the Trinitarian can show that there is a formally adequate solution to the LPT, i.e. show the formal consistency of P, then, although there is no guarantee that there will not be other problems for the doctrine of the Trinity, there probably are not, and if it turns out that there are, they would probably not be as difficult to deal with as the LPT. Finally, even if such a proposition were found, it is not clear that the resulting problem would deserve to be called by the same name as the LPT. It seems it would most usefully be counted as some distinct argument It is in this sense that finding a formally adequate solution to the LPT is "nearly" equivalent to showing that the doctrine of the Trinity is (formally) consistent.

As things stand, however, anti-Trinitarians have presented their proposed non-solutions to the LPT (LPT$_1$ and LPT$_2$), which one must admit at least *prima facie* seem like the most plausible, straight-forward ways of understanding P. Thus, to defend P, the Trinitarian must argue at least that it might (for all we know) be the case that neither LPT$_1$ nor LPT$_2$ is a formally adequate answer to the LPT, that is, either:

1. PLI is not a formally adequate language for P, or

2. Neither $\Phi_{\text{LPT-1}}$ in PLI nor $\Phi_{\text{LPT-2}}$ in PLI is a formally adequate regimentation of P.

   (Or both.)

In principle, this very weak response ("for all we know," either the language is inadequate or the regimentations are) would be a sufficient defence of Trinitarian beliefs. But most philosophers in the literature have wanted to do more. They have wanted to argue that it can be *shown* that P really is consistent (not just that it's not unreasonable for us to *believe* that it is).[10] But it might seem hard to see how one would argue that PLI is not formally adequate for P, except by arguing that some other language L *is* formally adequate for P, and that L is importantly different from PLI in some relevant way. Likewise, assuming that PLI is formally adequate for P, it might seem hard to see how one would argue that neither $\Phi_{\text{LPT-1}}$ in PLI nor $\Phi_{\text{LPT-2}}$ in PLI is a formally adequate regimentation for P, except by arguing that some other regimentation Φ in PLI *is* a formally adequate regimentation for P, and that Φ's being a formally adequate regimentation of P in PLI is somehow incompatible both with $\Phi_{\text{LPT-1}}$ in PLI being a formally adequate regimentation of P and with $\Phi_{\text{LPT-2}}$ in PLI being a formally adequate regimentation of P (as will be the case if the alternative proposed answer has an importantly different logical form, which of course must be the case if it is a proposed solution). And so, the majority of the literature

---

10. I discuss this issue in much greater detail below in Chapter 3.2 p. 80 ff.

has centered around the search for alternative proposed answers to the LPT to supplant LPT_1 and LPT_2.

But if one wants to replace LPT_1 and LPT_2... *what alternative answers could one propose*?

1.3 Proposed Solutions

In the previous section, we saw what form an answer to the logical problem of the Trinity must take. But how could that outline be filled in in such a way as to avoid both of the non-solutions proposed by the anti-Trinitarian: LPT_1 and LPT_2?

Of course, contemporary philosophers are not the first to have addressed the issue of the logical consistency of the doctrine of the Trinity. Thinking on the subject goes back to ancient times, to the earliest centuries of the church. And not just any way of understanding the "three-ness" and "one-ness" of God has been received as within the bounds of orthodoxy. Certain views, consistent though they may have been, were rejected as heretical during the course of the Trinitarian controversies of roughly the 3rd through the 5th centuries AD. I will refer to these as the "Classical Trinitarian Heresies" (CTHs). Most philosophers seem to count avoiding being some form of a CTH as a constraint on what Dale Tuggy has called "Trinitarian theorizing."[11] That is, contemporary philosophers attempt to construct accounts of the Trinity that avoid *both* (1) inconsistency, and (2) being just another form of one of the CTHs.

So, for completeness' sake, we will discuss the CTH's in some detail. However, I think contemporary views will be easier for most of my readers to understand, will certainly require less textual interpretation, and will be easier to regiment in a standard way. Also, some of that discussion will help to shed light on the CTHs. And so, we will begin with contemporary proposed solutions to the LPT.

Our purpose at the moment is to collect various proposed solutions to the LPT. And what concerns us most at the moment is the matter of formal consistency. So we will not try to give an exhaustively detailed discussion of any of these views, but only so much as to give us a clear enough idea of its *logical form* that we can represent it in a formal language and determine its consistency or inconsistency.

1.3.1 Contemporary Proposed Solutions

Social Trinitarianism (ST)

Probably the easiest contemporary proposal to understand is Social Trinitarianism (ST). Paradigmatic versions of ST hold that Father, Son and Holy Spirit are straightforwardly numerically distinct persons – in the fullest sense of the term

---

11. (Tuggy 2003).

"person" – each of whom is fully divine, omniscient, omnipotent, etc. Instances of the phrase "is God" in reference to the persons individually are read as *predications* ("is divine" or "is god" with a little "g") rather than as *identifications* to an individual called "God." But it is the Trinity *as a whole* – the collective or "community" or "society" they compose – to which the term "God" is properly applied when we speak of "one God" (either as a *name* for the collective or as a predicate that is not, at least not precisely, univocal with "is God" as applied to the persons).

One might suspect the equivocation on "is god" as a predicate applied to the persons and "is God" as either a name or equivocal predicate applied to the one God of being merely an *ad hoc* logical escape route invented by Social Trinitarians. But in fact there is some biblical warrant for it. In Greek, there is a distinction between using "θεός" without a definite article, which looks like a predication ("is divine," or "is a god") and "ὁ θεός" with the definite article, which looks more like a proper name or definite description ("God," or "the divine thing"). And the Bible itself seems to make this distinction. For example, John 1:1, usually translated as "...the Word was with God and the Word was God," is "...ο λογος ην προς τον θεον και θεος ην ο λογος," which looks like the Logos bears a relation (literally "was towards") to an individual called "God," and also has a certain property ("is divine").

Also, the Cappadocians made use of analogies between the persons of the Trinity and human persons such as Paul, Silas and Timothy (clearly numerically distinct individuals) to describe the distinctness of the persons,[12] and support for ST often relies heavily on the authority of the Cappadocians.[13, 14]

This kind of view can potentially raise questions regarding mereology and the metaphysics of composition (if composition is the relation an ST-er posits between the persons and God, or the Trinity, which the persons... *compose*?), the ontological status of "communities" (if that is the sort of thing God is supposed to be), etc. At its least palatable, ST would have the unwelcome consequence that God was just an abstract object, a particular *set* (among many other sets), or that "God" was just a word, useful in abbreviating some otherwise complicated talk about divine persons ("arranged God-wise," perhaps?), but denoting nothing of a sufficiently ontologically "beefy" status. (Think of how certain libertarians and anarchists would claim that talk about "the state" is just abbreviated talk about uses, and threats of use, of force by various individuals against various other individuals.) However, as we will be focusing on

---

12. We'll see an example of this in St. Gregory of Nyssa's *Ad Ablabium* below.

13. E.g., (C. Plantinga J. 1986), (C. Plantinga J. 1988), (C. Plantinga J. 1989), etc.

14. This seems legitimate enough as far as concerns the distinctness of the persons. Indeed, see my discussion of modalism below; I am in need of no persuading that they had a consensus on the very strong, numerical distinctness of the persons. However, as we will see, that is not the logical feature that saves ST from inconsistency. It is rather the equivocation on "is God" or "is god." Thus, to find patristic support for ST, one would need to find patristic support for this equivocation, not for a strong distinction between the persons. Furthermore, I think that, understood in context, the Cappadocians provide little support for Social Trinitarianism, if not outright opposition to it. See 4.2.1, p. 126 ff., and 4.2.2, esp. p. 132, footnote 47 below for more.

the *logical form* of the doctrine, such objections need not detain us.

Both proponents and critics of ST tend to focus on its taking the divine "persons" to be fully "*persons*" in our modern, post-Cartesian sense – fully aware centers of consciousness, reason, will, etc. This is thought to be its distinctive feature. But again, from the point of view merely of logical form, the issue is irrelevant. The "persons" could be *beans* as far as the LPT is concerned. But if there are three of them, and each is a bean, yet there is only one bean, LPT_2 would provide a formally adequate regimentation of the view, and ST would not.

So what features of ST *are* relevant to our concerns?

First, it is clear that Social Trinitarians insist on making a very strong, real distinction between the persons. But classical non-identity ($\neq$) is the weakest (real) distinction one can make. (If it doesn't entail x$\neq$y, then in what sense is it a "real" distinction between x and y? If it *is* a "real" distinction between x and y, surely it (at least) entails x$\neq$y.)

It's clear then that Social Trinitarians will agree with LPT_1 and LPT_2 on their regimentation of P4 through P6. (Indeed, Social Trinitarians often want to go even *further* in distinguishing the persons, but they must *at least* admit the non-identity of the persons.) And in so doing they will (they may as well) take PLI to be a formally adequate language for P. In keeping with this emphasis on the distinctness of the persons, it is also clear that Social Trinitarians will want to treat "is god" in P1 through P3 not as identity claims to some individual, but as predications. (Perhaps these will mean "is divine," perhaps something related. Again, the *content* here need not concern us at present.) Thus, Social Trinitarians will deny the formal adequacy of $1_{\text{LPT-1}}$ through $3_{\text{LPT-1}}$ in PLI.

It is also clear that Social Trinitarians make no distinctions *between* the persons as to their divinity, omniscience, etc. That is, each person is divine, is omniscient, is a person, etc., in exactly the same sense as either of the other two persons. So, whatever "is God" might mean (again, it could mean "is divine" or even "is a bean" as far as we are concerned right now), it will mean the same thing with respect to each person. There will be no equivocation. Thus, while Social Trinitarians will deny the formal adequacy of $1_{\text{LPT-1}}$ through $3_{\text{LPT-1}}$ in PLI, they will admit to the formal adequacy of $1_{\text{LPT-2}}$ through $3_{\text{LPT-2}}$ in PLI (or something relevantly similar, in a sense that will become clear later.)

ST, then, so far agrees with LPT_2. If ST is to count as a *solution*, then, it must regiment P7 differently. But there is no indication in ST literature that Social Trinitarians have any problem with standard logical regimentations of counting statements, either with the general schema that logicians usually employ, or with the classical identity relation ($=$) in particular. (Indeed, one of the motivations for adopting ST is precisely to avoid having to give up on classical identity. See the discussion of Relative Identity Trinitarianism below for more.) The only way, then, that ST could possibly avoid contradiction would be to equivocate on "is god," not among its applications to the persons themselves, individually (in P1 through P3) but between its application there on the one hand and in P7 on the other. And it is this purely *formal* feature that lies at the heart of a major criticism of ST. Brian Leftow writes:

But even if Trinity monotheism avoids talk of degrees of deity, it faces a problem. Either the Trinity is a fourth case of the divine nature, in addition to the persons, or it is not. If it is, we have too many cases of deity for orthodoxy. If it is not, and yet is divine, there are two ways to be divine – by being a case of deity, and by being a Trinity of such cases. If there is more than one way to be divine, Trinity monotheism becomes Plantingian Arianism. But if there is in fact only one way to be divine, then there are two alternatives. One is that only the Trinity is God, and God is composed of non-divine persons. The other is that the sum of all divine persons is somehow not divine. To accept this last claim would be to give up Trinity monotheism altogether.

I do not see an acceptable alternative here. So I think Trinity monotheism is not a promising strategy for ST.[15]

Leftow here uses "Trinity monotheism" for what he takes to be just one *version* of ST. But as we've seen, if all versions of ST admit the non-identity of the persons, and if all versions of ST treat "is god" as univocal across P1 and P3, and if no versions of ST take issue with standard logical regimentations of counting statements, then all versions of ST will have to confront the problem Leftow raises. (At least, they will have to confront the purely *formal* problem Leftow's argument relies on.) Namely, first, that ST must equivocate on "is god" in P1 through P3 on the one hand and "is God" in P7 on the other hand (otherwise we end up with *four* gods instead of *one*). But then it follows that either (1) there is more than one "way" of legitimately being divine or being "a god" (a position Leftow calls "Plantingian Arianism"), or else (2) the persons are not legitimately divine or "god," or else (3) the one God (the Trinity) is not legitimately divine or "god."

So, although, again, both proponents and critics tend to characterize ST in terms of its taking the divine "persons" to be distinct centers of consciousness and so forth (a particular aspect of its content), for our purposes it will be more useful to characterize it in terms of the formal feature Leftow's criticism relies on. For even if "x is god" means *that x is a bean*, we can run essentially the same argument to the effect that one will have to equivocate on "is god." If the persons (for whatever reason) satisfy that predicate (whatever it means), and they are all non-identical, yet there is only one thing that (for whatever reason) satisfies that predicate (whatever it means), then LPT_2 is formally adequate.

So, if ST is to count as a solution (i.e., not be inconsistent), it must reject the formal adequacy of $7_{\text{LPT-2}}$ and replace it with an equivocation on "is god." Thus, we can pin down a formal regimentation for ST and give an ST proposed solution to the LPT as follows:

1. PLI is a formally adequate language for P.

2. Φ_{ST} in PLI is a formally adequate regimentation of P:

---

15. (LEFTOW 1999), p. 221.

Φ_{ST}:

(1_{ST}) G_1f

(2_{ST}) G_1s

(3_{ST}) G_1h

(4_{ST}) $f \neq s$

(5_{ST}) $f \neq h$

(6_{ST}) $s \neq h$

(7_{ST}) $(\exists x)(\forall y)(G_2x \ \& \ (G_2y \rightarrow x=y))$[16]

3. Φ_{ST} is formally consistent in PLI.[17]

("Pure") Relative Identity Trinitarianism (Pure RI)

The major strand of Relative Identity Trinitarianism (RI) in contemporary philosophy of religion, called "pure" RI by Mike Rea,[18] began with Peter Geach's discussions of relative identity, and his application of it to the doctrine of the Trinity.[19] A. P. Martinich also endorsed an RI view a few decades ago,[20] as did James Cain.[21] But probably the clearest, fullest and most influential statements of the view are van Inwagen's.[22] In his earlier statement of the view, van Inwagen does not answer the question whether classical identity exists or not.[23] But in his later statement, he explicitly rejects the existence of classical identity.[24]

Pure RI may be, in some sense, the most difficult proposed solution to the LPT to wrap one's head around, given that it rejects the existence of classical identity altogether, and given how intuitive classical identity seems to most of us. But in another sense (happily, the sense that will matter for us), it is among the easiest. This is especially so as it appears in van Inwagen's work, which, also happily, is what we might call the canonical version of Pure RI. As I noted

---

16. It might be objected that this treats "is god" in P7 as another predication, whereas Social Trinitarians might claims it should be treated as a name in P7, thus: (7_{ST})´ $(\exists x)(\forall y)(x=g \ \& \ (y=g \rightarrow x=y))$. However, that is still an equivocation, and so, when we give a more general characterization of a "Family" of views into which ST will fall, such a version of ST will be included in our "Family" anyway.

17. It should be obvious that there is a model for Φ_{ST}, and the proof is left as an exercise for the reader.

18. The distinction begins in (REA 2003) p. 433 and *passim*.

19. See (GEACH 1968), pp. 43-48 and 69-70; (GEACH 1967) and (FELDMAN and GEACH 1969), both reprinted in (GEACH 1972); and his chapter, (GEACH 1973).

20. (MARTINICH 1978) and (MARTINICH 1979).

21. (CAIN 1989).

22. (van INWAGEN 1988), and (van INWAGEN 2003) in (REA 2009a), pp. 61-75.

23. In (van INWAGEN 1988), p. 241, van Inwagen considers three arguments concerning classical identity and its relation to relative identity, and says "I regard these arguments as inconclusive. In the sequel, therefore, I shall assume neither that classical identity exists nor that it does not exist." Thus, strictly speaking, in this paper, van Inwagen counted as an adherent of "impure" Relative Identity theory, to be discussed below.

24. In (van INWAGEN 2003), p. 70, he says, "I deny that there is one all-encompassing relation of identity... there is no relation that is both universally reflexive and forces indiscerniblility."

23

above,[25] many in this debate have an unfortunate tendency to slide from the purely formal, *logical* problem of the Trinity, to the *metaphysical* problem of the Trinity, to biblical hermeneutics, etc. in illegitimate ways.[26] Van Inwagen (wisely in my view) keeps the discussion always at the level of logic. So, distilling merely the formal aspects of his view is no trick.

First, Pure RI very explicitly rejects the very existence, or intelligibility, of classical identity, and so explicitly rejects PLI as a formally adequate language for P (PLI being "predicate logic *with identity*"). Van Inwagen has given his own preferred formal language for this purpose, Relative Identity Logic, which he shortens to "RI-logic,"[27] and which I will shorten even further to "RIL." So, first we can say that Pure RI will not accept PLI as a formally adequate language for P, but will claim that RIL is a formally adequate language for P.

Second, Pure RI replaces the classical (non-)identity predicate "$\neq$" in the regimentations of P1 through P6 with various relative (non-)identity predicates, the two relevant for our purposes being: "is the same being as" in its equivalents of P1 through P3, and "is (not) the same person as" in its equivalent of P4 through P6.[28] It can then use the "is the same being as" predicate in its equivalent of P7 without generating inconsistency. Although van Inwagen uses the English "is the same being as" and "is (not) the same person as," I will shorten these to "$=_{\text{B}}$" and "$\neq_{\text{P}}$," respectively.

One might think we could now state a Pure RI proposed solution to the LPT as:

1. RIL is a formally adequate language for P.

2. $\Phi_{\text{Pure-RI}}$* in RIL is a formally adequate regimentation of P:

   $\Phi_{\text{Pure-RI}}$*:

   $(1_{\text{Pure-RI}}$*) f $=_{\text{B}}$ g

   $(2_{\text{Pure-RI}}$*) s $=_{\text{B}}$ g

   $(3_{\text{Pure-RI}}$*) h $=_{\text{B}}$ g

   $(4_{\text{Pure-RI}}$*) f $\neq_{\text{P}}$ s

   $(5_{\text{Pure-RI}}$*) f $\neq_{\text{P}}$ h

   $(6_{\text{Pure-RI}}$*) s $\neq_{\text{P}}$ h

   $(7_{\text{Pure-RI}}$*) $(\exists x)(\forall y)$ (x $=_{\text{B}}$ g & ((y $=_{\text{B}}$ g) $\rightarrow$ (y $=_{\text{B}}$ x)))

3. $\Phi_{\text{Pure-RI}}$* is formally consistent in RIL.

However, this would not be accurate. At least, not without some qualifications about the uses of "f," "s," and "h" in RIL. As van Inwagen points out,

---

25. (Chapter 1.1, p. 11).

26. My reasons for taking these distinctions to be important should become clear in my concluding evaluation in Chapter 6, p. 265 ff.

27. (van INWAGEN 1988), p. 231.

28. It will become clear why I say its "equivalents" shortly.

The philosopher who eschews classical, absolute identity must also eschew singular terms, for the idea of a singular term is – at least in currently orthodox semantical theory – inseparably bound to the classical semantical notion of reference or denotation; and this notion, in its turn, is inseparably bound to the idea of classical identity. It is a part of the orthodox semantical concept of reference that reference is a many-one relation. And it is a part of the idea of a many-one relation – or of a one-one relation, for that matter – that if x bears such a relation to y and bears it to z, then y and z are absolutely identical.[29]

To cut a long story short, RIL must replace singular reference with *relative* singular reference, and this boils down to certain kinds of general or quantified statements employing relative identity relations. Thus, a Pure RI proposed solution to the LPT would instead come to something like this:

1. RIL is a formally adequate language for P.

2. $\Phi_{\text{Pure-RI}}$ in RIL is a formally adequate regimentation of P:

   $\Phi_{\text{Pure-RI}}$:

   $(\exists x)\ (\exists y)\ (\exists z)$

   $(Gx\ \&\ Gy\ \&\ Gz\ \&$ (cf. P1 to P3)

   $x \neq_{\text{P}} y\ \&\ x \neq_{\text{P}} z\ \&\ y \neq_{\text{P}} z\ \&$ (cf. P4 to P6)

   $(\forall v)\ (\forall w)\ ((Gv\ \&\ Gw) \rightarrow (v =_{\text{B}} w)))$ (cf. P7)

3. $\Phi_{\text{Pure-RI}}$ is formally consistent in RIL.[30]

$\Phi_{\text{Pure-RI}}$ is just one long formula. I have split it onto different lines for ease of reading. Obviously the first line is just the initial three quantifiers, which we must use in the place of singular terms. With that in place, the second line corresponds in a way to P1 through P3. The third line corresponds in a way to P4 through P6. And the fourth line corresponds in a way to P7. Thus, the different parts of $\Phi_{\text{Pure-RI}}$ are in some sense the "equivalents" of different parts of P. (One can usefully compare $\Phi_{\text{Pure-RI}}$ to other proposed answers by taking the conjunction of their regimentations of P1 through P7 in order, and then "Ramsifying" away the names of the persons.)

"Impure" Relative Identity Trinitarianism (Impure RI)

The final contemporary proposal we will look at has been defended by Mike Rea (and his sometimes partner in philosophical crime, Jeff Brower). In the Rea-Brower account of the Trinity, the persons stand in a "constitution" relation to one another, and the word "God" is systematically ambiguous between the

---

29. (van INWAGEN 1988), p. 244.
30. I will give no proof of this. It is easy enough to see that this will be consistent, but for more, one can see (van INWAGEN 1988) pp. 249-250.

persons.[31] That relation does not entail classical identity, but the account does not deny the existence or intelligibility of classical identity as on the "pure" RI view. It simply holds, as does Pure RI, that *our ordinary counting practices* rely not on classical, or "strict," identity, but on various relative identity relations. The constitution relation either is, or at least entails, a species of relative identity between the persons, such that we should count them as three persons but one god. (For the time being, we will follow Rea's terminology in calling this "impure Relative Identity" (Impure RI) as distinguished from "pure" RI. We will see later why there may be a more useful term to cover both of these views.)

Since Impure RI accepts classical identity, it can (it may as well) accept PLI as a formally adequate language in which to regiment P. Furthermore, it can regiment P4 through P6 as classical non-identity claims just as in LPT_1 and LPT_2. However, like Pure RI, it rejects classical identity as the relation by which we *count*, and instead analyzes counting statements as operating by way of relative identity relations. So, it will regiment P7 differently.

To claim that we count by *classical identity* is to claim that we count one or two (... or n) Fs when there are one or two (... or n) terms (t_1, t_2, ... t_n) of which "F" is true and the appropriate claims of classical non-identity involving those terms ($t_1 \neq t_2$, ...) are all true, and any other term t_{n+1} of which "F" is true is such that at least some claim of classical identity involving t_{n+1} and one of the previous terms is true (thus, $t_{n+1} = t_1$ or $t_{n+1} = t_2$, or ... $t_{n+1} = t_n$).

To claim that we count by *relative identity* is to claim that we count one or two (... or n) Fs when there are one or two (... or n) terms (t_1, t_2, ... t_n) of which "F" is true and the corresponding claims of *relative* non-identity involving those terms and that predicate ($t_1 \neq_F t_2$, ...) are all true, and any other term t_{n+1} of which "F" is true is such that at least some claim of relative identity involving t_{n+1} and one of the previous terms and the appropriate predicate is true (thus, $t_{n+1} =_F t_1$ or $t_{n+1} =_F t_2$, or ... $t_{n+1} =_F t_n$).

Thus, Impure RI's regimentation of P7 will look much like Pure RI's in a way, but stated in PLI instead of RIL. But how does Impure RI analyze P1 through P3?

Over the course of several papers, the Rea-Brower view becomes fairly complex, involving the sharing by the persons of a trope-like divine nature that "plays the role of matter" for the persons, each of which is constituted by the divine nature plus its own hypostatic property (Fatherhood, Sonship, Spiritude). But the deeper importance of that theoretical machinery lies in its licensing of a relative identity claim involving the term "God" (here used as a name or other singular term again) and each of the names of the persons. Namely, the claim that the "same god as" relation obtains. We can symbolize this relative identity relation as "$=_G$," which allows us to regiment the view more simply, and give an Impure RI proposed solution to the LPT as follows:

---

31. The view is explicated, defended, and developed in more detail over the course of a number of articles. See (REA 2003), (BROWER and REA 2005a), (BROWER and REA 2005b), (REA 2006), and (REA 2009b). See also Rea and Michael Murray's discussion of the Trinity in (MURRAY and REA 2012).

1. PLI is a formally adequate language for P.

2. $\Phi_{\text{Impure-RI}}$ in PLI is a formally adequate regimentation of P:

   $\Phi_{\text{Impure-RI}}$:

   $(1_{\text{Impure-RI}})$ f $=_{\text{G}}$ g

   $(2_{\text{Impure-RI}})$ s $=_{\text{G}}$ g

   $(3_{\text{Impure-RI}})$ h $=_{\text{G}}$ g

   $(4_{\text{Impure-RI}})$ f $\neq$ s

   $(5_{\text{Impure-RI}})$ f $\neq$ h

   $(6_{\text{Impure-RI}})$ s $\neq$ h

   $(7_{\text{Impure-RI}})$ $(\exists x)(\forall y)(x =_{\text{G}} g \ \& \ (y =_{\text{G}} g \rightarrow y =_{\text{G}} x))$

3. $\Phi_{\text{Impure-RI}}$ is formally consistent in PLI.[32]

Is it really OK to just ignore whatever more intricate logical structure might, given Rea and Brower's fuller account, be entailed by the "$=_{\text{G}}$" relation, such as a reference to the divine nature and the constitution relation? Yes. How so?

Whatever the "same god as" relation might entail, as long as "x is the same god as y":

1. is not in itself formally inconsistent, and

2. does not entail (classical) identity between x and some other term t_i,[33]

then $(1_{\text{Impure-RI}})$ through $(7_{\text{Impure-RI}})$ is still consistent.

On the other hand, if "x is the same god as y" *does* entail a (classical) identity between x and some other term t_i, then $(1_{\text{Impure-RI}})$ through $(6_{\text{Impure-RI}})$ will be inconsistent without even appealing to $(7_{\text{Impure-RI}})$. But not for any reasons interestingly related to Impure RI. It will be inconsistent for the same reasons $(1_{\text{LPT-1}})$ through $(6_{\text{LPT-1}})$ were.

More precisely, for any formula ϕ, where $\phi^{t1,t2}{}_{x,y}$ is the result of replacing every occurrence of the variables x and y in ϕ with the terms t_1 and t_2, respectively, if:

$$\phi^{t1,t2}{}_{x,y} \models t_1 = t_i \text{ for some } t_i \neq t_1$$

then

$$\phi^{f,g}{}_{x,y} \ \& \ \phi^{s,g}{}_{x,y} \ \& \ \phi^{h,g}{}_{x,y} \ \& \ f \neq s \ \& \ f \neq h \ \& \ s \neq h$$

is inconsistent anyway, but if:

---

32. It should be obvious that there is a model for $\Phi_{\text{Impure-RI}}$, and the proof is left as an exercise for the reader.

33. I include 1 merely to aid comprehension. Given 2, 1 is in fact redundant.

$\phi^{t1,t2}{}_{x,y} \nvDash t_1 = t_i$ for any $t_i \neq t_1$

then

$\phi^{f,g}{}_{x,y}$ & $\phi^{s,g}{}_{x,y}$ & $\phi^{h,g}{}_{x,y}$ & f $\neq$ s & f $\neq$ h & s $\neq$ h &
$(\exists x)(\forall y)(\phi^{g}{}_{y}$ & $(\phi^{y,g}{}_{x,y} \rightarrow \phi^{y,x}{}_{x,y}))$

is consistent.

So, as long as "x is the same god as y" doesn't entail a classical identity claim between x and some other term, we are safe. And it doesn't seem that it would on the Rea-Brower account. The only other term that might be involved would be "the divine nature." But on the Rea-Brower account, the divine nature is definitely *not* classically identical to any of the persons. So, we needn't go into more detail on the precise logical structure, or further semantic content, of the "same god as" relation. The above will do.

1.3.2 Classical Trinitarian Heresies

Arianism

Although not the first chronologically, the CTH of all CTHs was Arianism. It was Arianism that occasioned the First (and Second) Ecumenical Council(s) and the heated controversies of the 4th century and beyond. Historically, Arianism was not *motivated* by the search for a solution to the LPT. Nor was its rejection by the orthodox motivated by concerns about the LPT. Still, the logical problem of the Trinity did have a role in the debate, albeit a more minor one, more as an after-thought or "back-up" argument tacked onto what seemed like more serious issues in the debate.

The more central concerns of that debate were in some sense ultimately Christological. Was the Logos a creature, or uncreated? Did it have the same nature as the Father, or a different one (that is, were the Father and Son *homoousios,* "consubstantial" or "co-essential," or merely *homoiousios*, "similar in essence"? Or were they outright *anomoios* or *heteroousios,* "not of the same essence" or "of a different essence")? These were the important questions, and especially as they in turn led to soteriological consequences. (If we want to hold the traditional, Irenaean soteriological claim that "God became man, that man might become god," then must the pre-incarnate Logos be "god," or "divine" in the fullest sense, as the orthodox held, or not necessarily, as the Arians held?)

But how do these issues bear on a solution to the LPT?

Some Arians clearly thought that the LPT *was* a problem for orthodox Trinitarians, but *not* for Arians, for they raised the LPT as an objection to orthodox Trinitarianism.[34] Gregory Nazianzen in his *Fifth Theological Oration*

---

34. Are these Arians best described as raising the purely formal, logical problem of the Trinity, or the broader, metaphysical problem of the Trinity?

The fact that no formal languages existed at the time does not settle the issue. The

(On the Holy Spirit) discusses this Arian argument:[35]

εἰ θεός, φασι, καὶ θεός, καὶ θεός, πῶς οὐχὶ τρεῖς θεοί· ἢ πῶς οὐ πολυαρχία τὸ δοξαζόμενον·[36]	"If," they say, "there is God, and God, and God, how are there not three gods? Or how is that which is glorified not a poly-archy?"[37]

But why did those Arians not think the LPT was a problem for *them*? What was *their* proposed solution to the LPT?

For the first part of the answer, we have to go back to Gregory's *Third Theological Oration* (*On the Son*). Arians took the position that Father and Son have different natures (that they were not "consubstantial"). Second, they took the position that "is god" as applied to the Father expresses the divine nature. (*Both* of these views, we shall see, were rejected by Gregory of Nyssa, and for that matter all of the Cappadocians and most "Eastern" Trinitarians in general).[38] It follows directly from these two views that applying "is god" to the Son could only be done equivocally (regardless of concerns about the LPT).

And this is a consequence they themselves acknowledged. We read in Gregory's *Third Theological Oration*:

Ὅταν δὲ ἀνθυποφέρωμεν αὐτοῖς·	And when we advance this objection against them,
τί οὖν· οὐ κυρίως θεὸς ὁ υἱός, ὥσπερ οὐδὲ ζῷον τὸ γεγραμμένον·	"What do you mean to say then? That the Son is not properly God, just as a picture of an animal is not properly an animal?[39]
πῶς οὖν θεός, εἰ μὴ κυρίως θεός·	And if not properly God, in what sense is He God at all?"

distinction between the two problems does not turn on whether we rely on recasting the argument in a modern, formal language to *determine* the formal (in)consistency of the relevant propositions, rather than expressing those claims in a natural language like Greek. Rather, the distinction between the two problems is whether (a) a certain set of propositions is by itself formally inconsistent, or whether (b) there exists some allegedly necessarily true *auxiliary proposition* that, when added to the original set, would produce a formally inconsistent set.

The Arians here seem to be saying that the orthodox Trinitarian understanding of P1 through P7 is formally inconsistent all by itself, not that there are additional propositions that, when added to the orthodox understanding of P, would produce an inconsistency. So, at least in this particular instance, Arians and orthodox in the original debate seemed to be focusing on the logical, not the metaphysical, problem of the Trinity.

35. Note that for all Greek text in this dissertation, I have relied on the text available online at the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae*, and so in certain cases cannot give page numbers, in which case I supply whatever section numbers or other information is available on the TLG.

36. (St. Gregory Nazianzen 1963), Fifth Theological Oration (31), *On the Holy Spirit*, section 13.

37. Translation mine.

38. On the point that the Cappadocians, and specifically Gregory of Nyssa, rejected the claim that "is god" expresses the divine nature, see below, Chapter 4.2.3, p. 134. On the point that this was a fairly widespread assumption in the pro-Nicene tradition, see below, Chapter 4.2.3, p. 146.

τί γὰρ κωλύει, φασί, καὶ ὁμώνυμα ταῦτα εἶναι, καὶ κυρίως ἀμφότερα λέγεσθαι·

They reply, "Why should not these terms be [both] ambiguous [*homonyma*], and <yet> in both cases be used in a proper sense?"

καὶ προσοίσουσιν ἡμῖν τὸν κύνα, τὸν χερσαῖον, καὶ τὸν θαλάττιον, ὁμώνυμά τε ὄντα, καὶ κυρίως λεγόμενα,

And they will give us such instances as the land-dog and the dog-fish; where the word "dog" is ambiguous, and yet in both cases is properly used,

—ἔστι γάρ τι καὶ τοιοῦτον εἶδος ἐν τοῖς ὁμωνύμοις, —
καὶ εἴτε τι ἄλλο τῇ αὐτῇ προσχρῆται προσηγορίᾳ, καὶ μετέχει ταύτης ἐπ' ἴσης, τῇ φύσει διεστηκός.[40]

for there is such a species among the ambiguously named,

or any other case in which the same appellative [*prosegoria*] is used for two things of different nature.[41]

So there is step one in the Arian solution to the LPT: equivocate on "is god." Not between P7 on the one hand and P1 through P3 on the other, as in ST, but among P1 through P3 themselves.

Step two is that they paired the characteristically Arian equivocation on "is god" with a related view about counting statements involving ambiguous count nouns. Gregory continues a little later in the *Fifth Theological Oration*:

Τοὺς δὲ σοὺς λόγους οὐκ οἶδα πότερον παίζοντος εἶναι φήσομεν, ἢ σπουδάζοντος, οἷς ἀναιρεῖς ἡμῶν τὴν ἕνωσιν.

As for the arguments with which you would overthrow the Union which we support, I know not whether we should say you are jesting or in earnest.

τίς γὰρ δὴ καὶ ὁ λόγος·
τὰ ὁμοούσια συναριθμεῖται, φής·

For what is this argument?
"Things of one essence," you say, "are counted together,"

συναρίθμησιν λέγων τὴν εἰς ἀριθμὸν ἕνα συναίρεσιν·

and by this "counted together," you mean that they are collected into one number.

οὐ συναριθμεῖται δὲ τὰ μὴ ὁμοούσια·
ὥστε ὑμεῖς μὲν οὐ φεύξεσθε τὸ λέγειν τρεῖς θεοὺς κατὰ τὸν λόγον τοῦτον·
ἡμῖν δὲ οὐδὲ εἷς κίνδυνος·

"But things which are not of one essence are not thus counted;
so that *you* [=orthodox Trinitarians] cannot avoid speaking of three gods, according to this account,
while *we* [=Arians] do not run any risk at all of it,

οὐ γὰρ ὁμοούσια λέγομεν.[42]

inasmuch as we assert that they

---

39. In Greek, ζῷον means either an animal or a painting.

40. (St. Gregory Nazianzen 1963) Third Theological Oration (29), *On the Son*, section 14.

41. Translation from (St. Cyril of Jerusalem and St. Gregory Nazianzen 1894), p. 306.

are not consubstantial."[43]

So the accusation made against Trinitarians by Arians is something like this. When we count by a count-noun F, for example "dog," that noun must express some essence or nature, in this case dog-hood. And the number of Fs will be the number of things instantiating this essence or nature. So, if there are three things that all instantiated dog-hood, then there are three dogs.

Applied to the Trinity, the Arian argues as follows. The orthodox Trinitarian holds precisely this sort of view with respect to the persons of the Trinity. That is, the orthodox Trinitarian holds that each of the persons instantiates god-hood (or "the Godhead," as the old-fashioned like to call it). So, given the Arian view of counting, the orthodox Trinitarian will have to say that there are three gods.

On the other hand, if we have a count-noun that is ambiguous between two essences or natures, then we have to precisify (whether explicitly, or tacitly, given a certain context), and only given that precisification can we answer the question how many Fs there are. For example, if "dog" is ambiguous between a kind of mammal and a kind of fish, and there is one land-dog and one dog-fish in the vicinity, and we ask "how many dogs are there?" the Arian will say that we have to precisify. In this context, there are two admissible precisifications. On one, the question comes to, "how many land-dogs are there?" and the answer is "one." On the other , the question comes to, "how many dog-fish are there?" and the answer is "one." So, on every admissible precisification in this context, the answer is "one." And on no admissible precisification in this context is the answer anything other than "one." So, it is right to answer "one" in a context like that.

Applied to the Trinity, the Arian argues as follows. The Arian doctrine of the Trinity holds precisely that the three persons do *not* exemplify a single essence or nature, expressed by the count-noun "god." Rather, there are three *different* essences or natures – one for each of the persons. So, in this context, there are three admissible precisifications of the predicate "is god." On any admissible precisification of the question "how many gods are there?" in this context, the answer will be "one." And on no admissible precisification of the question in this context is the answer anything other than "one." So, it is right (*for the Arian*) in a context like this to answer "one" to the question "how many gods are there" (likewise for, "how many gods do you believe in, or worship?" etc.)

Gregory goes on in the *Fifth Theological Oration* to argue against *both* sides of the Arian biconditional about counting, proposing counter-examples to each. But these need not detain us at present. For, although I think Gregory is right in his criticisms, Arianism need not be *true*, or even formally adequate for P, to be *logically consistent*. And for the time being that is all that concerns us. So, for our current purposes, we can understand well enough the logical form that

42. (St. Gregory Nazianzen 1963), Fifth Theologian Oration (31), *On the Holy Spirit*, section 17.

43. Translation from (St. Cyril of Jerusalem and St. Gregory Nazianzen 1894), p. 323.

Arians *attribute* to P and how it is consistent, and can thus end our inquiry into Arianism, and state a proposed Arian solution to the LPT as follows:

1. PLI is a formally adequate language for P.[44]

2. Φ_{AR} in PLI is a formally adequate regimentation for P:

   Φ_{AR}:

   (1_{AR}) G_1f

   (2_{AR}) G_2s

   (3_{AR}) G_3h

   (4_{AR}) $f{\neq}s$

   (5_{AR}) $f{\neq}h$

   (6_{AR}) $s{\neq}h$

   (7_{AR}) $(\exists x)(\forall y)(G_i x \ \& \ (G_i y \rightarrow x{=}y))$

   (for every admissible precisification of G_i in this context)

3. Φ_{AR} is formally consistent in PLI.[45]

---

44. One might object that it is anachronistic to put into the mouths of Arians the statement that "PLI is a formally adequate language for P," and so forth, given that they had no concept of PLI, perhaps no concept even of formal adequacy, and certainly did not, and would not have been able to, formulate their views in sentences of PLI. None of this, however, is being claimed here.

First, we put into the mouths of Arians the statement that PLI is a formally adequate language for P, not because they thought so, or would have thought so, but because of the "prejudice" we have adopted in favor of PLI ourselves (see 1.1, p. 14). That is, unless there is a reason to reject the formal adequacy of PLI, and specifically classical identity, we assume it is formally adequate, as a concession to the anti-Trinitarian. Arians do not seem to have rejected the existence of classical identity, so we will "force" them to use PLI (since they may as well use it, and we have adopted the "prejudice" of using it if we can.)

Second, as to the regimentation itself, we are not saying that Arians would have given, much less that historically they *did* give this *regimentation*. Rather, we are here saying that the formulae of this regimentation have the logical forms that Arians attributed to the propositions in P. Of course they did not *use* this regimentation, or PLI at all, *as the means by which* they attributed a certain logical form to P. They used Greek. But there is nothing preventing *us* from using a different language, and a regimentation within that language, as the means by which to attribute the same logical form to the same set of claims. (If it was illegitimate to use anything other than the exact formulae, or sentences, that Arians used, then not only would it be illegitimate to employ PLI here, but it would be illegitimate even to use *English*, or any language other than Greek. Furthermore, we could not even use the PLI regimentations we have given of ST and Impure RI, since their proponents have not given these regimentations themselves.)

In principle, of course, we could eschew PLI, and formal languages altogether, throughout the dissertation, as long as we have *some* way of saying with precision what logical form this or that person takes P to have. And that could all be done in English, or Greek, or any other language. The use of formal languages is not essential. It is merely a (very great) convenience and means of clarification, given that, as we said before (refrulesoflogic, p. 12), formal languages permit no ambiguity in the logical forms of their sentences.

45. Proof is left as an exercise for the reader.

(Naïve) Modalism

Modalism, variously known as monarchianism, patripassianism or Sabellianism (after one of its more famous proponents, Sabellius) was an early Trinitarian heresy, or family of heresies, that in some way denied the *distinctness* of the divine "persons" or "hypostases."

We are in a more difficult position to determine precisely the content of Modalist doctrine, as compared to Arianism or orthodox Trinitarianism, due to lack of evidence. No complete modalist writings survive; what we have are fragments quoted by the church fathers and descriptions of their views by the church fathers. And the Fathers may not always have shared our concern for charitably interpreting one's opponents. Perhaps because of this, or perhaps for some other reasons, a certain interpretation of modalism has been quite popular. I have misgivings about the historical accuracy of that account, but since we will be able to do well enough with the standard account, I will not explore the issue, but will simply label the standard account of modalism "Naïve Modalism" and merely note that, in my opinion, there were probably at least some versions of modalism that were more sophisticated.

Now, what seems to me the less charitable interpretation (or perhaps a perfectly good interpretation of a much less plausible *version* of modalism) can be seen in passages such as this one from St. Basil:

σφάλλονται γάρ, ὡς ὅτι ὁ πατὴρ αὐτός ἐστιν ὁ υἱός, καὶ ὡς ὅτι ὁ υἱὸς αὐτός ἐστιν ὁ πατήρ, ὡσαύτως καὶ τὸ ἅγιον πνεῦμα, ὥστε εἶναι ἓν πρόσωπον, τρία δὲ ὀνόματα.[46]

For they get tripped up [thinking] that the Father is the same as the Son, and that the Son is the same as the Father, and similarly also the Holy Spirit, so that there is one person, but three names.[47]

Similar statements can be found in other patristic descriptions of Sabellianism (as well as the related heresies of Praxaeus, Noetius, etc.)

Perhaps it has seemed reasonable to some philosophers and theologians to reason in something like the following way. If we today were to say that "Samuel Clemens" and "Mark Twain" are two names for the same person, then we would express that in PLI by making, say "s" in PLI have the same semantic value as "Samuel Clemens" in English, "m" in PLI have the same semantic value as "Mark Twain" in English, and asserting "s=m" in PLI. (At least, those of us who accept classical identity probably would.) So, if "Father," "Son," and "Holy Spirit" (in English, or their equivalents in Greek) are just three names for the same person, then, the persons of the Trinity are related in the way we would express using the "=" sign in PLI. So, it would be appropriate to think of modalism as asserting the classical identity of the persons of the Trinity. And a formally adequate way to regiment that view in PLI would be "f=s," "f=h," and "s=h." I will call this view "Naïve Modalism" (NM).

---

46. (St. Basil the Great 1897), pp. 308-310.
47. Translation mine.

So, if a Naïve Modalist accepts PLI (and he could), the NM view might be regimented as either of:

$\Phi_{\text{NM-1}}$: $\Phi_{\text{NM-2}}$:
($1_{\text{NM-1}}$) f=g   ($1_{\text{NM-2}}$) Gf
($2_{\text{NM-1}}$) s=g   ($2_{\text{NM-2}}$) Gs
($3_{\text{NM-1}}$) h=g   ($3_{\text{NM-2}}$) Gh
($4_{\text{NM-1}}$) f=s   ($4_{\text{NM-2}}$) f=s
($5_{\text{NM-1}}$) f=h   ($5_{\text{NM-2}}$) f=h
($6_{\text{NM-1}}$) s=h   ($6_{\text{NM-2}}$) s=h
($7_{\text{NM-1}}$) $(\exists x)(\forall y)(x{=}g \ \& \ (y{=}g \rightarrow y{=}x))$ ($7_{\text{NM-2}}$) $(\exists x)(\forall y)(Gx \ \& \ (Gy \rightarrow y{=}x))$

And we can give a proposed NM solution to the LPT as:

1. PLI is a formally adequate language for P.

2. At least one of $\Phi_{\text{NM-1}}$ in PLI or $\Phi_{\text{NM-2}}$ in PLI is a formally adequate regimentation for P.

3. Both $\Phi_{\text{NM-1}}$ and $\Phi_{\text{NM-2}}$ are formally consistent in PLI.[48]

(Similar considerations to those discussed in reference to Impure RI show that it doesn't matter what further logical content might be packed into the Naïve Modalist understanding of "is god" in a regimentation of P1 through P3 as long as "x is god" doesn't entail $x \neq f$, $x \neq s$, or $x \neq h$. More precisely, if:

$$\phi^{t1}{}_x \models t_1{\neq}f \vee t_1{\neq}s \vee t_1{\neq}h$$

then

$$\phi^f{}_x \ \& \ \phi^s{}_x \ \& \ \phi^h{}_x$$

is inconsistent anyway. On the other hand, if:

$$\phi^{t1}{}_x \nvDash t_1{\neq}f \vee t_1{\neq}s \vee t_1{\neq}h$$

then

$$\phi^f{}_x \ \& \ \phi^s{}_x \ \& \ \phi^h{}_x \ \& \ f{=}s \ \& \ f{=}h \ \& \ s{=}h \ \& \ (\exists x)(\forall y)(\phi x \ \& \ (\phi y \rightarrow y{=}x))$$

is consistent.)

But although both of these regimentations are consistent (given the caveat in the preceding paragraph), neither is much in the way of a regimentation of P, because however P4 through P6 ought to be analyzed, *this isn't it*. NM avoids the inconsistency of LPT$_1$ and LPT$_2$, not by so much by offering *legitimate*

---

48. It should be obvious that there is a model for $\Phi_{\text{NM-1}}$ as well as a model for $\Phi_{\text{NM-2}}$, and each proof is left as an exercise for the reader.

alternative regimentations of P4 through P6, but by simply *denying* them. NM is *certainly* heretical by the lights of historical orthodoxy, and entails what I think the orthodox saw as problematic in SM anyway. So for our current purposes, this will complete our discussion of alternative answers to the LPT that have actually been proposed, both in ancient times and in our own.

But one wonders... are these the *only* ways one could *possibly* solve the LPT? And if not, *what other options could there be* for the Trinitarian? If there are no other options, *how could we know that*?

Some philosophers seem to hope that further "Trinitarian theorizing" may bring forth creative new solutions to the LPT.

But is that even possible?

Chapter 2

Taxonomy of Possible Solutions

> They find fault with those who keep silent
> They find fault with those who speak much
> They find fault with those who speak moderately
> In this world, there is no one they do not find at fault
>
> – *The Dhammapada*, verse 227

In the last section, we saw several alternative proposed answers to the LPT. But are these the only *possible* answers to the LPT? Or could we invent new ones?

Some philosophers find fault with all of the on-offer solutions to the LPT, but hold out hope for new avenues in "Trinitarian theorizing." They hold that the "business of Trinitarian theorizing" is simply "unfinished," and that there may be fresh, new ways of creatively answering (and hopefully solving) the LPT. For example, Dale Tuggy in "The Unfinished Business of Trinitarian Theorizing," asks us to consider an analogue of what I have called P. He writes:

> Consider the following six Trinitarian claims:
>
> (1) God is divine.
>
> (2) The Father of Jesus Christ is divine.
>
> (3) The Son, Jesus Christ, is divine.
>
> (4) The Holy Spirit is divine.
>
> (5) The Father is not the Son is not the Holy Spirit is not God. That is, these four – Father, Son, Holy Spirit, God – are numerically distinct individuals.
>
> This last claim can be broken into two parts:

(5a) These three are numerically distinct: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

(5b) God is numerically distinct from any of these: Father, Son, Holy Spirit.

(6) Whatever is divine is identical to at least one of these: the Father, the Son, or the Holy Spirit.[1]

And in an endnote, Tuggy gives a regimentation of these claims in PLI:

In contemporary logical symbolism:

(1) Dg

(2) Df

(3) Ds

(4) Dh

(5) $f \neq s \neq h \neq g$ (That is, $f \neq s$ & $s \neq h$ & $f \neq h$ & $f \neq g$ & $s \neq g$ & $h \neq g$.)

    (5a) $f \neq s$ & $s \neq h$ & $f \neq h$

    (5b) $f \neq g$ & $s \neq g$ & $h \neq g$

(6) $(x)\,(Dx \rightarrow (x = f \lor x = s \lor x = h))$

(5) is compatible with $g=(f,\ s,\ h)$, the claim that God is identical to the mereological sum of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.[2]

Tuggy claims that (5b) is the only claim that is "not a datum of the New Testament."[3] He explores a few of what he seems to think of as different "versions" of the doctrine of the Trinity,[4] and finds fault with all of them. However, at least at the time of writing, he still held out hope. "We Christian theologians and philosophers came up with the doctrine of the Trinity; perhaps with God's help we will come up with a better version of it."[5] I think the sentiment is not atypical of many philosophers in the field. In this paper, Tuggy claims that, if we reject (5b), "There are materials left ((1)–(4), (6)) for a different kind of Trinitarian theory, whatever we replace (5) with... Whatever we come up with won't be a version of either LT [i.e., RI] or ST."

But could there really be any *importantly different* solution to the LPT? Something that is neither a form of RI nor of ST? Is there hope that further "Trinitarian theorizing" may someday pay off in a creative, new way of

---

1. (TUGGY 2003), p. 166. It should be noted that Tuggy has since abandoned altogether the project of "Trinitarian theorizing" and now simply adheres to what he calls "humanitarian unitarianism," more commonly called by its proponents, "biblical unitarianism."

2. (TUGGY 2003), p. 181.

3. (TUGGY 2003), p. 167.

4. See Chapter 3.1, p. 65, for criticism of such talk of "versions" of the doctrine of the Trinity.

5. (TUGGY 2003), p. 179.

understanding the Trinity, heretofore undreamt of, and that avoids the anti-Trinitarian's criticisms in some previously unimagined way? Is "the business of Trinitarian theorizing" really "unfinished" in this sense?

No.

This can be proven in the following way. First, we will note the key logical features of the already proposed answers to the LPT. Second, we will use these features to create a *jointly exhaustive* (though *not* mutually exclusive) taxonomy of sets, or "Families," of answers to the LPT.

Method, Briefly

Of course, there are infinitely many possible languages in which to regiment P, and within many of those languages, infinitely many sets of sentences with which to regiment P. But for the purposes of showing there to be a formally adequate solution to the LPT, it would be "overkill" to map out all of them.

For example, once we see how Pure RI avoids inconsistency by eschewing classical identity and positing alternative, relative identity relations in its place, it doesn't matter whether we go on to equivocate on "is god" among P1 through P3 or not. Once we see what minimal set of logical features of Pure RI allows it to avoid formal inconsistency, we can group together all proposed answers to the LPT that share those features into one set, or "family," of answers to the LPT. Then we can go on to consider only other proposed answers that *do not* share those features.

We will proceed in 7 steps, plus three initial caveats.

Three Caveats

First, aside from the Pure RI-er, everyone involved in the debate seems to accept some version of PLI as a formally adequate language for P. Or in any case, they may as well. Therefore, we will continue with our "prejudice" towards PLI. Specifically, we will assume (or pretend) that: PLI is a formally adequate language for P if and only if there is such a thing as classical identity. And if we accept that PLI is a formally adequate language for P, PLI is what we will use to regiment P.

Second, nobody involved in the debate takes it to be legitimate to equivocate on the terms "the Father," "the Son," or "the Holy Spirit." Nor does anyone take them to be anything other than singular terms, *if* there are such things as singular terms.[6] So, we will also adopt the policy that, so long as we are working within a language in which there are such things as singular terms, we will insist on treating "the Father," "the Son," and "the Holy Spirit" as singular

---

6. There is an exception to every rule. See (BABER 2008).

terms, and on regimenting them univocally wherever they appear.[7] (RIL, as we have seen, has its own way of analyzing what appear to be singular terms in natural languages that gets around the too-cozy relation between singular terms and classical identity.)

Third, while both Pure and Impure RI-ers count by a relation other than classical identity, neither they nor anybody else rejects the general *schema* with which logicians typically analyze counting statements. In other words, nobody denies that, a formally adequate regimentation of "There is exactly one God" would have the *schema*:

(7_{SCHEMA}) $(\exists x)(\forall y)(\phi x \ \& \ (\phi y \rightarrow y \ \mathbb{R} \ x))$

(where $\mathbb{R}$ is a meta-linguistic variable to be filled in with a predicate standing for whatever relation we count by).

Further, it's hard to see what other schema one *could* count by. So, we will only consider answers to the logical problem of the Trinity where P7 is regimented as *some* instance of (7_{SCHEMA}), whether those instances give $\mathbb{R}$ the value of classical identity, some relative identity relation, or whatever.

(It should be noted that, even if one were to disagree with *all three* of these provisos, it would by no means wreck the attempt to create a complete taxonomy of possible answers to the LPT. It would only mean that there would be, at most, an additional three Families of answers to the LPT – one Family of answers that does not treat "Father," "Son" and "Holy Spirit" as singular terms (despite accepting the formal adequacy of a language that includes singular terms) and/or equivocates on those terms, one Family that acknowledges classical identity but that for some reason does not find PLI formally adequate, and one Family that regiments P7 according to some schema other than the usual one. I don't find any of those suggestions plausible enough to warrant attention, and I think few in the debate would. But again, even if I am wrong, we could still give a complete taxonomy of all possible answers to the LPT. In other words, we can group all answers to the LPT that have any of these three features into "the Bastard Step-Child Family," which we will then simply ignore.)[8]

---

7. In what follows, we shall always let those singular terms be, respectively, "f," "s," and "h," when we are using PLI. Strictly speaking, then, we are leaving out regimentations that use other terms, other logical names, in PLI, such as "a," "b," and "c," to refer to the persons. To be more logically precise, we should instead use meta-linguistic variables such as "α," "β," and "γ" to range over all possible terms in the language, with the stipulation that $\alpha \neq \beta \neq \gamma$ (i.e., that the values of these meta-linguistic variables, the *terms* or "logical names," be distinct, *not* necessarily that their *bearers* be distinct, which would be the substance of P4 through P6 in all non-NM regimentations). But while this latter course is the more logically precise, it would introduce needless complexity, in this context, in what will already be a complex taxonomy. So, we will simply choose always to use "f," "s," and "h," in PLI as the terms for the persons.

8. In conversation, Donald Smith has expressed, not quite endorsement, but enthusiastic curiosity and willingness to explore, a view in which "Father," "Son," and "Holy Spirit" would be something like mass terms, and "God" a count noun, designating a thing constituted out of three different kinds of stuff. I hasten to emphasize, then, that I would count only such a

2.1   The LPT$_1$ Family

As we did in Section 1, suppose that in P1 through P3 we take "is God" to be univocal, treat "God" as the name of an individual, and treat "is" as the "is" of (classical) identity. Then suppose we take "is not" in P4 through P6 as univocal claims of (classical) non-identity. In this case, there is such a thing as classical identity, so we take PLI to be a formally adequate language for P, and we use it. The result is, or at least entails, LPT$_1$, or something just like LPT$_1$ except for 7$_{\text{LPT-1}}$.

But since 7$_{\text{LPT-1}}$ is not necessary in order to derive a contradiction, we will group together any proposed answers to the LPT that share the problematic features of its regimentation of P1 through P6. What exactly are those problematic features?

It might seem that the most salient feature of LPT$_1$ is that it treats "God" as a logical name instead of a predicate. But of course, a contradiction would arise even if there were another name being used besides "God." And a contradiction would arise even if we treated P1 through P3 not as identity claims, but in a way that *entailed* a certain kind of identity claim.

For example, suppose I regiment "x is God" as a predication meaning "x is divine," but then analyze "x is divine" as meaning "x is identical to Lucifer." I will still have a contradiction, and for essentially the same reasons, logically speaking, as LPT$_1$. Indeed, if there is any term t_i such that $t_i \neq x$ and my analysis of "x is God" entails "$x = t_i$" I will end up with a contradiction. That is because "The Father is God" will now entail "The Father $= t_i$" and "The Son is God" will entail "The Son $= t_i$." And those will entail "The Father $=$ the Son," and that will contradict 4$_{\text{LPT-1}}$, or anything that entails 4$_{\text{LPT-1}}$. So, we can group together any answers to the LPT that:

(1) use PLI, and

(2) give some univocal regimentation ϕ to "is God" in P1 through P3, such that

(3) $\phi\alpha \models \alpha = t_i$ for some term t_i such that $t_i \neq \alpha$, and

(4) either regiment "is not" in P4 through P6 univocally as $\neq$, or for any other reason entails 4$_{\text{LPT-1}}$, 5$_{\text{LPT-1}}$, and 6$_{\text{LPT-1}}$

into the "LPT$_1$ Family."[9] Any member of the LPT$_1$ Family will be a non-solution to the LPT.

So, from here on, we will only consider proposed answers to the LPT that do at least one (or more) of the following:

---

view as falling within a category I have merely *stipulatively* tagged with the label of "Bastard Stepchild." I would not of course count *adherents* of such views as having the *nature* of a bastard stepchild.

9. 1 is strictly speaking redundant, given 3 and our "prejudice" that, as long as there is such a thing as classical identity, PLI is a formally adequate language for P, and the language we will use to regiment P.

(1) use a language other than PLI (and so reject the existence of classical identity), *or*

(2) fail to give a univocal regimentation ϕ to "is god" in P1 through P3, *or*

(3) give a univocal regimentation ϕ to "is god" in P1 through P3 such that $\phi\alpha \nvDash \alpha = \mathrm{t}_i$ for any term t_i such that $\mathrm{t}_i \neq \alpha$, *or*

(4) regiment "is not" in any of P4 through P6 in some way other than $\neq$, and do not for any other reason entail $4_{\text{LPT-1}}$, $5_{\text{LPT-1}}$, or $6_{\text{LPT-1}}$.

2.2   The Non-PLI (Pure RI) Family

We've seen how Pure RI escapes inconsistency by rejecting classical identity, and with it PLI (option (1) above). By doing so, Pure RI obviously need not treat "is god" in P1 through P3 as being (or entailing any) classical identity claims at all. Nor need it treat "is not" in P4 through P6 as being (or entailing any) classical non-identity claims. Nor need it treat "one god" in P7 as involving classical identity.

Since we are assuming (or pretending) that PLI is a formally adequate language for P if and only if there is such a thing as classical identity, we will group together all answers to the LPT that reject classical identity, and with it PLI, into the "Non-PLI Family" of answers – the family of answers all of which choose option (1) above. Since we have already seen at least one member of the Non-PLI Family that has a logically consistent regimentation of P (our Pure RI proposed solution), we know that the Non-PLI Family contains solutions to the LPT.[10]

So, from here on, we will only consider proposed answers to the LPT that accept the existence of classical identity and that (therefore, given our "prejudice" towards PLI) use PLI as the language in which to regiment P.

2.3   The Naïve Modalist Family (and Cousins)

We've seen how NM escapes inconsistency by analyzing P4 through P6 in such a way as to essentially *reject* them.

A related move would be to regiment P4 through P6 in a a non-committal way that simply *does not entail* any of the relevant classical identity claims, i.e. $4_{\text{LPT-1}}$, $5_{\text{LPT-1}}$, or $6_{\text{LPT-1}}$, despite accepting that there is such a thing as classical identity, thus falling into option (4) above.

We've seen that orthodox Trinitarians intended to draw a strong, real distinction between the persons. And, assuming classical non-identity exists, it is the *weakest* real distinction that can be drawn. But P4 through P6 seem to be intended to draw that distinction between the persons.

---

10. It also contains non-solutions, but that will not matter for present concerns.

So, if the orthodox Trinitarian accepts the existence of classical (non-)identity, he himself will insist on regimenting P4 through P6 as classical non-identity claims (4_{LPT-1}, 5_{LPT-1}, and 6_{LPT-1}). Or in any case, he would certainly *accept, and not deny,* what such a regimentation expresses. Indeed, he would insist on it. If the orthodox Trinitarian wanted to analyze P4 through P6 as drawing an *even stronger* distinction than classical non-identity, he would still at least *accept* 4_{LPT-1}, 5_{LPT-1}, and 6_{LPT-1}. Indeed, if his preferred analysis involved a "stronger" relation, he would no doubt insist that, in some way or another, his preferred analysis *entailed* 4_{LPT-1}, 5_{LPT-1}, and 6_{LPT-1}.

Thus, we will group together all proposed answers to the LPT that (a) accept the existence of classical (non-)identity, but (b) do *not* entail all of 4_{LPT-1}, 5_{LPT-1}, and 6_{LPT-1}, into the "Naïve Modalist Family" ("NM Family") of answers.[11] Since we have already seen at least one member of the NM Family that has a logically consistent regimentation of P, we know that the NM Family contains solutions to the LPT.[12]

Note that defining the NM Family this way means there will be certain "cousins" of Naïve Modalism included in the NM Family that will regiment, for example, "the Father is not the Son" simply as some "ho-hum" relation, "f R s," that neither commits us to the classical identity of the persons (characteristic of NM), *nor* the classical non-identity of the persons (characteristic of orthodox Trinitarianism). Is it right to include such non-committal answers in the NM Family?

I think so. Again, the *intent* of the orthodox Trinitarian in saying that "the Father is not the Son," is to draw a strong, real distinction between the two, and, at least within a framework that accepts classical non-identity in the first place, classical non-identity will be the weakest real distinction there is. Thus, any regimentation of "is not" that does not even *entail* classical non-identity (within a framework that admits the existence of classical non-identity) clearly subverts the intent of the claim. Or in any case, it clearly fails to say what the orthodox Trinitarian wants to be saying when he says "the Father is not the Son." On the other hand, regimentations of "is not" in P4 through P6 that are *not* classical non-identity statements but that *do entail* them will still be inconsistent with anything that 4_{LPT-1}, 5_{LPT-1}, and 6_{LPT-1} are inconsistent with anyway (since they will entail 4_{LPT-1}, 5_{LPT-1}, and 6_{LPT-1}).

---

11. A bit of logical housekeeping is in order. What about an answer to the LPT that, say, entails 4_{LPT-1}, but fails to entail either 5_{LPT-1} or 6_{LPT-1}? Thus, the Father and Son would be identical, but the Holy Spirit would be distinct from the Son/Father, a possibility St. Photios calls "a semi-Sabellian monster" in his arguments against the *filioque*, ((Photius 1983), p. 73.)

As we've defined the NM Family (any regimentation that does not entail 4_{LPT-1}, 5_{LPT-1}, *and* 6_{LPT-1} – all three), it includes such "semi-Sabellian monstrosities." And this seems like a reasonable grouping. Clearly the orthodox Trinitarian wants to understand P4 through P6 univocally. Any kind of semi-Sabellian view is just about as bad, from the point of view of orthodoxy, as all-out Sabellianism.

Of course, this will mean that some members of the NM Family will still be inconsistent, and for just the same reasons (at least *some subset of* the same reasons) as LPT_1 is. But that is fine. All I am claiming here is that *some* members of the NM Family are consistent.

12. It also contains non-solutions, but that will not matter for present concerns.

So, from here on, we will only consider proposed answers to the LPT that do not reject P4 through P6 and that either *do* regiment them univocally as classical non-identity claims between the persons, or else as some formula χ that in some other way at least *entails* those classical non-identity claims.

That means that at this point we can "lock in" our regimentation of P4 through P6 as:

($4_{\text{LPT-2-FAMILY}}$) χ_1 such that $\chi_1 \models f \neq s$
($5_{\text{LPT-2-FAMILY}}$) χ_2 such that $\chi_2 \models f \neq h$
($6_{\text{LPT-2-FAMILY}}$) χ_3 such that $\chi_3 \models s \neq h$

2.4   The Equivocation$_1$ Family (Arian)

We've seen how Arianism escapes inconsistency by equivocating on "is god" among P1 through P3 (option (2) above). So, we will group together all such answers to the LPT into the "Equivocation$_1$ Family" of answers. Since we have already seen at least one member of the Equivocation$_1$ Family that has a logically consistent regimentation for P, we know that the Equivocation$_1$ Family contains solutions to the LPT.[13]

So, from here on, we will only consider proposed answers to the LPT that do not equivocate on "is god" among P1 through P3.

Thus, we can now "lock in" at least the univocality of our regimentation of P1 through P3 as follows:

($1_{\text{LPT-2-FAMILY}}$) ϕf such that $\phi\alpha \nvDash \alpha = t_i$ for any term t_i such that $t_i \neq \alpha$
($2_{\text{LPT-2-FAMILY}}$) ϕs such that $\phi\alpha \nvDash \alpha = t_i$ for any term t_i such that $t_i \neq \alpha$
($3_{\text{LPT-2-FAMILY}}$) ϕh such that $\phi\alpha \nvDash \alpha = t_i$ for any term t_i such that $t_i \neq \alpha$

Why will ϕ be such that $\phi\alpha \nvDash \alpha = t_i$ for any term t_i such that $t_i \neq \alpha$? After Step 1 we decided to only consider answers to the LPT that do one of the following:

(1) use a language other than PLI (and so reject the existence of classical identity), *or*

(2) fail to give a univocal regimentation ϕ to "is god" in P1 through P3, *or*

(3) give a univocal regimentation ϕ to "is god" in P1 through P3 such that $\phi\alpha \nvDash \alpha = t_i$ for any term t_i such that $t_i \neq \alpha$, *or*

(4) regiment "is not" in any of P4 through P6 in some way other than $\neq$, and do not for any other reason entail $4_{\text{LPT-1}}$, $5_{\text{LPT-1}}$, or $6_{\text{LPT-1}}$.

---

13. It also contains non-solutions, but that will not matter for present concerns.

44

After Step 2 we decided only to consider proposed answers to the LPT that do use PLI (so, option (1) is no longer open). After Step 3 we decided only to consider proposed answers to the logical problem of the Trinity that *do* regiment "is not" in P4 through P6 as $\neq$ (or at least for some other reason entail $4_{\text{LPT-1}}$, $5_{\text{LPT-1}}$, and $6_{\text{LPT-1}}$) (so, option (4) is no longer open). After Step 4, we decided to no longer consider answers to the LPT that equivocate on their regimentation of "is god" among P1 through P3 (so, option (2) is no longer open).

But since we are only considering answers to the LPT that choose at least *one* of the above four options, we can now only consider answers that take option (3), that is, that give a univocal regimentation ϕ to "is God" in P1 through P3, but such that $\phi\alpha \nvDash \alpha = t_i$, for any term t_i such that $t_i \neq \alpha$.

Since $\phi\alpha \nvDash \alpha = t_i$, for any term t_i such that $t_i \neq \alpha$, it will not contradict any of:

$(4_{\text{LPT-2-FAMILY}})$ χ_1 such that $\chi_1 \vDash f \neq s$
$(5_{\text{LPT-2-FAMILY}})$ χ_2 such that $\chi_2 \vDash f \neq h$
$(6_{\text{LPT-2-FAMILY}})$ χ_3 such that $\chi_3 \vDash s \neq h$

simply on the basis of the non-identity claims. That is, whatever other logical form may be buried within χ_1, χ_2, and χ_3, could still generate a contradiction, but the non-identity claims themselves will not.

So, from here on out, we know we are dealing with families of answers to the LPT such that their regimentations of P1 through P6 will be consistent barring any problematic logical features that might be tucked away in the regimentation of "is not" beyond mere non-identity. Their regimentations of P1 through P6 will certainly be consistent if "is not" in P4 through P6 is simply analyzed univocally as classical non-identity.

So, our focus now will be on the regimentation of P7.

2.5   The Equivocation$_2$ Family (Social Trinitarian)

We've seen how Social Trinitarianism escapes inconsistency by equivocating on "is god" between P7 on the one hand, and P1 through P3 on the other. Thus, different versions of ST will give regimentations of the form:

$(1_{\text{LPT-2-FAMILY}})$ ϕf such that $\phi\alpha \nvDash \alpha = t_i$ for any term t_i such that $t_i \neq \alpha$
$(2_{\text{LPT-2-FAMILY}})$ ϕs such that $\phi\alpha \nvDash \alpha = t_i$ for any term t_i such that $t_i \neq \alpha$
$(3_{\text{LPT-2-FAMILY}})$ ϕh such that $\phi\alpha \nvDash \alpha = t_i$ for any term t_i such that $t_i \neq \alpha$
$(4_{\text{LPT-2-FAMILY}})$ χ_1 such that $\chi_1 \vDash f \neq s$
$(5_{\text{LPT-2-FAMILY}})$ χ_2 such that $\chi_2 \vDash f \neq h$
$(6_{\text{LPT-2-FAMILY}})$ χ_3 such that $\chi_3 \vDash s \neq h$
$(7_{\text{SCHEMA-}\psi})$ $(\exists x)\, (\forall y)\, (\psi x\ \&\ (\psi y \rightarrow y\ \mathbb{R}\ x))$

That is, the regimentation ϕ of "is god" for P1 through P3 will be different from the regimentation ψ of "is god" in P7. As we said earlier, not all such answers to the LPT will involve anything particularly "social." This is simply the salient *logical* feature of ST that allows it to escape contradiction. So we will group together all such answers to the LPT into the "Equivocation$_2$ Family" of answers.[14] Since we have already seen at least one member of the Equivocation$_2$ Family that has a logically consistent regimentation, we know that the Equivocation$_2$ Family contains solutions to LPT.[15]

So, from here on, we will only consider proposed answers to the LPT that do *not* equivocate on "is god" between P7 on the one hand, and P1 through P3 on the other.

We have already "locked in" regimentations of P1 through P6. We are no longer considering answers to the logical problem of the Trinity that equivocate on "is god" between P7 on the one hand, and P1 through P3 on the other. So, however we regiment "is god" in P1 through P3, it will have to be the same as it appears in P7. Since we are assuming that counting can only work according to the usual schema (only the precise relation may be disputed), we can now "lock in" regimentations of all of P1 through P7 as:

$(1_{\text{LPT-2-FAMILY}})$ ϕf such that $\phi\alpha \not\models \alpha = \text{t}_i$ for any term t_i such that $\text{t}_i \neq \alpha$
$(2_{\text{LPT-2-FAMILY}})$ ϕs such that $\phi\alpha \not\models \alpha = \text{t}_i$ for any term t_i such that $\text{t}_i \neq \alpha$
$(3_{\text{LPT-2-FAMILY}})$ ϕh such that $\phi\alpha \not\models \alpha = \text{t}_i$ for any term t_i such that $\text{t}_i \neq \alpha$
$(4_{\text{LPT-2-FAMILY}})$ χ_1 such that $\chi_1 \models \text{f} \neq \text{s}$
$(5_{\text{LPT-2-FAMILY}})$ χ_2 such that $\chi_2 \models \text{f} \neq \text{h}$
$(6_{\text{LPT-2-FAMILY}})$ χ_3 such that $\chi_3 \models \text{s} \neq \text{h}$
$(7_{\text{SCHEMA-}\phi})$ $(\exists\text{x})(\forall\text{y})(\phi\text{x} \;\&\; (\phi\text{y} \to \text{y} \,\mathbb{R}\, \text{x}))$
              (such that $\phi\alpha \not\models \alpha = \text{t}_i$ for any term t_i such that $\text{t}_i \neq \alpha$)

leaving open only the question of precisely what relation "$\mathbb{R}$" will represent in $(7_{\text{SCHEMA-}\phi})$.

2.6   The Non-Classical-Identity-Counting Family

We've seen how Impure RI escapes inconsistency by claiming that our counting practices (at least sometimes) employ some relation(s) other than classical identity. We are assuming that the logical form of "is god" is not itself formally

---

14. Note that, as we are defining the Equivocation$_2$ Family, it *is* necessary that a member of the Equivocation$_2$ Family family equivocate on "is god," but it is *not* necessary that it employ classical identity. A view that *both* equivocates in this way *and* employs a relation other than classical identity here would still fall into the Equivocation$_2$ Family as we are defining it. Of course, if one finds it more useful, one could have a separate "hybrid" family, the members of which would both equivocate on "is god" and count by a relation other than classical identity, then have a "pure" Equivocation$_2$ Family, the members of which equivocate on "is god" and *do* count by classical identity. For now, I will find it more convenient simply to group these all together into one Equivocation$_2$ Family, albeit a family, like Joseph's, that is "splittable" into the half-tribes of "Pure Equivocation$_2$ Family" and "Hybrid Equivocation$_2$ Family."

15. It also contains non-solutions, but that will not matter for present concerns.

contradictory and that it does not entail a classical identity claim to some single individual.[16] Thus, as long as the relation we give for $\mathbb{R}$ in ($7_{\text{SCHEMA-}\phi}$) is not classical identity and as long as y $\mathbb{R}$ x does not *entail* y=x, no contradiction will be derivable.

So, we will group together all answers to the LPT that analyze counting statements *via* a relation other than classical identity, and that do not entail classical identity, into the "Non-Classical-Identity-Counting Family" ("NCIC Family") of answers.[17] Since we have already seen at least one member of the NCIC Family that has a logically consistent regimentation of P, we know that the NCIC Family contains solutions to the LPT.[18]

So, from here on, we will only consider proposed answers to the LPT that *do* count by classical identity. Since we are assuming that we must use the usual schema for counting, and since we are not equivocating on "is god" between P7 on the one hand, and P1 through P3 on the other, if we use classical identity as the relation to count by in P7, we fill in the variable $\mathbb{R}$ in:

($7_{\text{SCHEMA-}\phi}$) $(\exists x)(\forall y)(\phi x \,\&\, (\phi y \rightarrow y \,\mathbb{R}\, x))$

with "=" and have:

($7_{\text{LPT-2-FAMILY}}$) $(\exists x)(\forall y)(\phi x \,\&\, (\phi y \rightarrow y = x))$

(And if we used any other relation R such that R *entails* classical identity, then our regimentation of P7, whatever it might be, would still at least *entail* ($7_{\text{LPT-2-FAMILY}}$).)

Thus, we are now out of formally consistent alternatives to LPT$_1$. We can now "lock in" our entire regimentation of P1 through P7 as:

2.7 The LPT$_2$ Family

($1_{\text{LPT-2-FAMILY}}$) ϕf such that $\phi\alpha \nvDash \alpha = t_i$ for any term t_i such that $t_i \neq \alpha$
($2_{\text{LPT-2-FAMILY}}$) ϕs such that $\phi\alpha \nvDash \alpha = t_i$ for any term t_i such that $t_i \neq \alpha$
($3_{\text{LPT-2-FAMILY}}$) ϕh such that $\phi\alpha \nvDash \alpha = t_i$ for any term t_i such that $t_i \neq \alpha$
($4_{\text{LPT-2-FAMILY}}$) χ_1 such that $\chi_1 \models f \neq s$
($5_{\text{LPT-2-FAMILY}}$) χ_2 such that $\chi_2 \models f \neq h$
($6_{\text{LPT-2-FAMILY}}$) χ_3 such that $\chi_3 \models s \neq h$
($7_{\text{LPT-2-FAMILY-SCHEMA}}$) $(\exists x)(\forall y)(\phi x \,\&\, (\phi y \rightarrow y \,\mathbb{R}\, x))$
(such that $\phi\alpha \nvDash \alpha = t_i$ for any term t_i such that $t_i \neq \alpha$)

---

16. Again, the assumption that the logical form of "is god" is not in itself contradictory is redundant, given the assumption that it doesn't entail a certain kind of identity claim. A contradiction entails anything.

17. Note that this means that Pure RI will fall into *both* the Non-PLI Family *and* the NCIC Family. That is fine, since this is only intended to be a jointly exhaustive, not mutually exclusive, taxonomy of answers to the LPT. I will have more to say about this below under the heading "Consolidating our Taxonomy of Proposed Answers."

18. It also contains non-solutions, but that will not matter for present concerns.

(such that y $\mathbb{R}$ x $\models$ y = x)

All proposed answers to the LPT that fall into the LPT_2 Family will be non-solutions.

Consolidating our Taxonomy of Proposed Answers

We can now usefully reduce the number of options by grouping together some of these families of answers.

First, anti-Trinitarians need not be picky about whether it is some member(s) of the LPT_1 Family or of the LPT_2 Family that is(are) formally adequate. So we can group these together and talk simply of the "LPT Family." This leaves only 6 families of answers to the LPT.

Second, orthodox Trinitarians will want to reject *all* of the answers in the $Equivocation_1$ Family and *all* of the answers in the NM Family as heretical. Thus, we can usefully group all of these answers together into the "CTH Family." (And since we are including the $Equivocation_1$ Family into the CTH Family, we will also now allow ourselves to refer to the $Equivocation_2$ Family simply as "the Equivocation Family.")

Of course, this is not to say that other regimentations contained in other families of answers might not in some way involve us in some kind of heresy. So, while we will call the set of answers to the LPT that includes both the $Equivocation_1$ Family and the NM Family the "CTH Family," we will do so with the caveat that while *only* heretical views on the Trinity will have regimentations that fall into the CTH Family, not *all* heretical views about the Trinity will have regimentations that fall into the CTH Family. (One can usefully think of the "CTH Family" as the "*Purely* Heretical Family," while regimentations of P found in other families of answers to the logical problem of the Trinity could still be used to express heretical views about the Trinity, once the content is filled in.)[19] This leaves only 5 families of answers to the LPT.

Third, by rejecting classical identity altogether, Pure RI perforce counts by a relation other than classical identity. But that is the characteristic feature of Impure RI that allows it to escape contradiction. So, from the point of view of formal consistency, it is really irrelevant whether one then goes on to accept or reject the existence of classical identity and the formal adequacy of PLI. That is, as long as a Pure RI answer agrees with an Impure RI answer in its regimentation of P7 (or its equivalent of P7) as involving a relation other than classical identity, and which *doesn't entail* classical identity (and Pure RI *must* agree with Impure RI about that), and as long as whatever formula ϕ it uses in its regimentations of P1 through P3 (or its equivalent of P1 through P3) is such that $\phi\alpha \nvDash \alpha = t_i$ for any term t_i such that $t_i \neq \alpha$ (and Pure RI *must* agree with Impure RI about that as well), then it is irrelevant whether we say that there is such a thing as classical identity or not. And it is irrelevant whether

---

19. "God is good" and "God is evil" have the same logical form. Clearly, there is more to heresy and orthodoxy than simply logical form.

we regiment P4 through P6 (or the Pure RI equivalent of P4 through P6) as involving classical non-identity, as in:

($4_{\text{Impure-RI}}$) f $\neq$ s
($5_{\text{Impure-RI}}$) f $\neq$ h
($6_{\text{Impure-RI}}$) s $\neq$ h

or as involving only some relative non-identity relation, as in:

($\Phi_{\text{Pure-RI}}$): ... x $\neq_{\text{P}}$ y & x $\neq_{\text{P}}$ z & y $\neq_{\text{P}}$ z ... (cf. P4 to P6)

(Either can yield consistent regimentations, as has already been proven.)

And since we grouped together all answers to the LPT that claim that counting works by some relation other than classical identity, and that does not entail classical identity, into the NCIC Family of answers, Pure RI is already included in it anyway.[20]

We can see that the appearance of Pure RI being importantly distinct from Impure RI (in a sense relevant simply to the question of formal consistency at least) is an illusion. Pure RI may have *rhetorical* (or other) advantages (if there is no such thing as classical identity, then we *must* count by a relation other than classical identity). But any advantages it may have are not *formal*.

The rejection of PLI is in itself controversial. And no proposed answers to the LPT have been presented that fall into the Non-PLI Family that do not also fall into the NCIC Family. And it is hard to imagine what such an answer might look like, and what might motivate such a view.

Thus, it seems to me we may as well ignore any members of the Non-PLI Family that are not also members of the NCIC family, relegating them to the "Bastard Stepchild Family," while their NCIC brothers will remain in the NCIC Family.

That leaves only 4 families of answers to the LPT,[21] namely:

1. the Equivocation Family,

2. the NCIC Family,

3. the CTH Family, and

4. the LPT Family.

All answers in the LPT Family are non-solutions. All answers in the CTH Family will be unacceptable to the orthodox Trinitarian. So, if the orthodox Trinitarian wants to give an answer to the LPT that is both (a) non-heretical and (b) a *solution* to the LPT, it must fall into either:

---

20. This is one example of why the categories of our taxonomy are jointly exhaustive, but not mutually exclusive.

21. Aside from the Bastard Stepchild Family, of course, which we are, appropriately enough, ignoring.

(a) the Equivocation Family, which equivocates on "is god" between P7 and P1 through P3, or

(b) the NCIC Family, which counts by a relation other than classical identity.[22]

Thus, anyone who takes the "business of Trinitarian theorizing" to be "unfinished," who is holding out hope for some fresh, new way of understanding the doctrine of the Trinity (or at least P), is out of luck. Every answer to the LPT must fall into one (or more) of the categories we have discussed. Only two of these categories contain any solutions to the LPT that are non-heretical. These two categories do indeed roughly correspond to the usual divide between Social Trinitarianism and Relative Identity Trinitarianism (or "Latin Trinitarianism" as it is sometimes, but unfortunately, called).[23]

Anyone who rejects ST on the basis of its characteristic equivocation must reject *all* answers in the Equivocation Family. And anyone who rejects RI on the basis of its analysis of counting must reject *all* answers in the NCIC Family. As for any new twist that a philosopher's Trinitarian theory might incorporate, it may help with the *metaphysical* problem of the Trinity, or have some rhetorical benefit or other nice features, but from a purely formal point of view, they will be just another member of one of the families of answers to the LPT we have defined in this section.[24]

So, we know what the LPT is. We know what form a proposed answer to the LPT must take. We also have a useful taxonomy of "families" into which all proposed answers to the LPT must fall.

But none of this tells us which proposed solution(s) or non-solution(s) to the LPT is (are) *right* (viz. formally adequate). How would we *tell* a formally adequate answer if we saw it? And here is where we will see that there is a parting of ways in the methodology of the literature.

---

22. It could fall into both, since, again, these categories are jointly exhaustive but *not* mutually exclusive. If one prefers a mutually exclusive taxonomy here, one could stipulate that the NCIC Family *not* equivocate on "is god," then split the Equivocation$_2$ Family into the "pure" and "hybrid" ST families, and relabel them as the "pure NCIC Family," "pure ST family" and "hybrid family," respectively.

23. Although we have seen that it is the feature of *equivocation* and not the "social" aspect of ST that matters to the question of consistency. Also that the family corresponding to Latin or Relative Identity Trinitarian views is perhaps broader than one might have thought. There is, however, still a *rough* correspondence, at least.

24. What, then, was wrong with Tuggy's way of formulating the LPT? It clearly leaves something out of the equation. If we look at his formalization of the problem, we can see that it is not, in fact, equivalent to P. One could escape the inconsistency he points to just by admitting that while all three persons are "divine," the word "God," when used as a proper name, refers to the Father (f=g), but not to the Son or Spirit. Indeed, this is eventually the position taken by Tuggy. Despite Tuggy's idiosyncratic definitions of "Trinitarian" and "Unitarian," this view seems "Trinitarian" enough, and doesn't even seem particularly unorthodox, and it would avoid the contradiction *he* points out. But it doesn't solve the LPT at all. Thus, Tuggy's formulation of the logical problem of the Trinity is inadequate. That is the source of the false hope it gives.

Those I will call "puzzlers" hold that the question is something like a metaphysical "puzzle" to be solved. *More Trinitarian theorizing* is what we need.

Those I will call "historicists" hold that the question is best seen as a *historical* one, as an inquiry into what beliefs certain people in the past actually held. *Historical inquiry* is what we need. . .

. . . Which is the *right* way to proceed with our inquiry?

Part II

Methodology

Chapter 3

Methodology

> I wanted to [...] warn him, while there was still time, against such
> English hypothesis-mongering into the blue. It is quite clear which
> color is a hundred times more important for a genealogist than blue:
> namely grey, which is to say, that which can be documented, which
> can actually be confirmed and has actually existed...
>
> But it is unfortunately a fact that historical spirit itself is lacking in
> them... As is now established philosophical practice, they all think
> in a way that is essentially unhistorical. ...
>
> – Nietzsche, *The Genealogy of Morals*

> Business Plan:
>
> Phase 1: Collect Underpants
> Phase 2: ?
> Phase 3: Profit
>
> – South Park, Season 2, episode 17 – *"Gnomes"*

We ended the last section with the question, of all of the possible logical forms
we might ascribe to P, which one is *right*. (Or, if more than one is right, which
ones?)

Not much has been written explicitly about the methodology of this question, but the literature reveals that most authors dealing with the LPT seem to approach it with a similar set of methodological assumptions on which the LPT can be treated as something like a philosophical "puzzle." I call their methodological approach "the Puzzle Approach" and its followers "puzzlers." This methodology centers around giving accounts of the Trinity that have the virtue of being logically consistent, and in most cases some other theoretical virtues as well. But I will argue that, if their conclusion is supposed to be that the doctrine of the Trinity (or at least P) is logically consistent, then, like the methodological approach of the Underpants Gnomes, theirs is missing a critical

link. And this lacuna renders their arguments either invalid or question-begging in the context of the LPT. Furthermore, I will argue it is not clear how they could shore up the methodology without simply collapsing into the methodology I will advocate, which I call "the Historical Approach" (and its followers "historicists").[1]

Next, I will consider another identifiable methodological approach I will "the Mysterian Approach," or (following Dale Tuggy's nomenclature) "mysterianism" (and its followers "mysterians"). The mysterian eschews giving any definite answer to the LPT, but still maintains that the doctrine of the Trinity is consistent, and that it can be reasonable to believe in the doctrine of the Trinity despite its being apparently contradictory. We will look at a bit of the debate about mysterianism, though we will not have the space to adjudicate it. However, I will add one novel criticism to the mix – namely that mysterianism likely seems attractive to its defenders only because they have been working in ignorance of the extent of what solutions are possible – an issue which is clarified by our taxonomy. But I will argue that, once the taxonomy is in place, we can see that what is required in order to make sense out of a mysterian position is at odds with what is likely the deeper motivation for the position. Finally, we will show that, while the Mysterian Approach may initially appear to represent a rival methodology to the Puzzle Approach and the Historical Approach, it in fact turns out to be compatible, in principle, with either. Upon examination, it turns out that mysterians do not have *a rival methodology* for achieving the same goals as those of historicists and puzzlers; rather, mysterians simply have *a different goal* they are trying to achieve.

Finally, I will discuss my preferred methodology, the Historical Approach, briefly explaining it and then defending it from a few potential objections by puzzlers, mysterians and anti-Trinitarians. I conclude by noting that any solution to the LPT that meets the standards of the Historical Approach will also meet those of the Puzzle Approach, and that achieving the goals of the Historical Approach also achieves the goals of the Mysterian Approach. So that, even if puzzlers and mysterians want to argue the Historical Approach is "overkill," they have no reason to *object* to any solution to the LPT that happens to arise out of the Historical Approach.

I want to emphasize that I do not claim that the considerations I will put forward against these other approaches are "knock-down" arguments. But I do think the criticisms I will present in this section, particularly of the Puzzle Approach are serious concerns that need to be addressed.[2]

---

1. I do, however, accept that the methodology of the Puzzle Approach is appropriate in the context of the metaphysical and other philosophical "puzzles" from which the methodology seems to be drawn.

2. I should also perhaps emphasize that this division is not intended to be exhaustive either. It only gives what seem to me the most common approaches in the literature.

In particular, van Inwagen's papers on the Trinity are hard to place, and do not fit neatly into any of the categories I'll discuss. Although van Inwagen's methodology is probably closest to the Mysterian Approach, he does more than to merely say that there is "some" kind of solution or, in James Anderson's terms some "unarticulated equivocation," leaving it at that (even though, at one point, he might seem to say exactly that). Rather, on examination, he

3.1 The Puzzle Approach

The essence of the Puzzle Approach is that it attempts to show the consistency of the doctrine of the Trinity through what I will call an "account" of the Trinity in a way that is fundamentally ahistorical. We can characterize the Puzzle Approach as seeking to prove P to be consistent by:

1. providing some fairly explicit "account" A of the Trinity,

2. showing that A is consistent (and, optionally, that it has various other theoretical virtues),

and, the critical distinction from the Historical Approach,

3. *supporting* A on the basis of its consistency (and/or other theoretical virtues), rather than historical considerations.

What I am calling "accounts" are called by various names by different authors, but they seem to all be recognizably the same sort of thing. An account of the Trinity is just some more or less clear story about how the Trinity "works." Much like a philosophical paraphrase, an account will in some sense go beyond P, but primarily it seems to be intended to preserve the important content of P while somehow explaining or clarifying that content so as to show how it is consistent. Thus, an account is supposed to (at least implicitly) provide a proposed answer to the LPT. The proposed answer to the LPT that is implicitly being given by A is just the one that attributes to P the same logical form A has. The proponent of a given account then argues in favor of accepting his particular account on the basis of its consistency and other theoretical virtues.

Accounts run a wide gamut. Some are clearly meant to be taken merely as analogies. E.g. Brian Leftow's time-traveling Rockette(s).[3,4] Others seem to

---

seems very much committed to that equivocation being specifically about the identity relation, and not the predicate "is God" (as Arians and Social Trinitarians would say). Additionally, in multiple casual conversations he has mentioned his apparently quite earnest wish that Social Trinitarianism had existed in the fourth century so that it could have been officially declared a heresy at that time. Presumably, then, he is firmly committed to the view that the correct answer to the LPT falls within the NCIC Family and not the Equivocation Family.

Thus, although he may take the content of P to be a mystery, and does not actually offer any specific metaphysical account of the workings of the Trinity (departing there from the Puzzle Approach), there seems to be no mystery as to what he takes the logical form of P to be, at least in a general way (departing somewhat from mysterians like Anderson.) Thus, his work does not fall neatly into either the Puzzle Approach or the Mysterian Approach. Finally, as we will see, he very clearly acknowledges the main thrust of the historicist argument – that merely giving a consistent account of the Trinity is not sufficient, by itself, to defend the doctrine of the Trinity, and that what is necessary in addition has to do with historical facts about the doctrine of the Trinity itself. We will thus discuss his view in a somewhat scatter-shot manner throughout this chapter.

3. Originally put forward in (LEFTOW 2004). Leftow further elaborates and defends his view of the Trinity in (LEFTOW 2007), (LEFTOW 2010), (LEFTOW 2012a) and (LEFTOW 2012b). Much of this in response to Hasker. See esp. (HASKER 2009) and (HASKER 2012).

4. Presumably these are supposed to be analogies in which we can somehow see that the analogue would be logically consistent and logically isomorphic to P. See p. 61 ff.

be very in-depth philosophical explanations of the metaphysics involved in the Trinity along with discussions of the semantic links between these explanations and the corresponding linguistic expressions in S. E.g., Moreland and Craig's version of Social Trinitarianism seems to be intended as the literal truth about the metaphysical workings of the Trinity, along with some discussion of the semantics of analogous predication to obviate objections to equivocating on "is God."[5] Finally, some accounts seem to be intended to fall somewhere in-between mere analogy and literal explanation. E.g., Mike Rea and Jeff Brower's "Material Constitution" account, in which the divine nature *can be thought of* as "playing the role of matter" and what we will later call the *idiomata can be regarded as* playing the role of form, in three non-identical, but accidentally numerically one, persons who bear constitution relations to one another.[6]

Once some account A of the Trinity is explained in some detail, the methodology of the Puzzle Approach is to show that A is consistent, and, for many puzzlers, that it also has various other theoretical virtues the author may identify as desiderata. This is taken to be somehow definitive of the "success" of an account. Importantly, the other major defining feature of the Puzzle Approach

---

5. See (Moreland and Craig 2003). Craig also defends his version of Social Trinitarianism against criticisms in (Howard-Snyder 2003) in (Craig 2006) with, among other things, photographs of various two-headed animals, quite hilariously used to defeat Howard-Snyder's assertion that such a thing is metaphysically impossible.

6. I say it falls somewhere in-between, since, on the one hand, it provides a much more philosophically rich understanding of how P could possibly be true than a mere analogy like Leftow's Rockette(s). Yet, on the other hand, Rea and Brower don't appear to want to commit to whether they have found "the sober metaphysical truth" about the Trinity.

In (Brower and Rea 2005a) (p. 68), Brower and Rea state:

> Thus, *we can think of* the divine essence as playing the role of matter; and *we can regard* the properties *being a Father*, *being a Son*, and *being a Spirit* as distinct forms instantiated by the divine essence, each giving rise to a distinct Person. As in the case of matter, moreover, *we can regard* the divine essence not as an individual thing in its own right but rather as that which, together with the requisite "form", constitutes a Person. Each Person will then be a compound structure whose matter is the divine essence and whose form is one of the three distinctive Trinitarian properties. On this way of thinking, the Persons of the Trinity are directly *analogous to* particulars that stand in the familiar relation of material constitution.

> Of course, *there are also some obvious disanalogies...* (Emphasis mine.)

So the idea, I believe, is something like the following. This metaphysics, *or something very much like it*, may be how the Trinity works, or at least it may be *very similar to* how the Trinity works. Similar enough, and in the right sorts of ways, that it at least shows that there are ways in which P *could* be true, because things *very analogous to* P (to the right degrees and in the right ways) could be true.

Finally, although I put them in the puzzler camp during this paper, Rea's work has become ever more and more historically grounded over time. (See, in particular, his chapter on the Trinity in (Rea 2009b), in which he goes into just the sorts of historical issues the historicist would advocate. Whether or not he regards that sort of discussion as *essential* in the way historicists would, I don't know. Also, we will see later that the view I am here attributing to Rea and Brower in (Brower and Rea 2005a) would also have much in common with the Mysterian Approach, and at the end of the section on mysterianism, I will give a friendly suggestion as to how puzzlers might modify or clarify their arguments in service of a slightly different, more mysterian, conclusion.

is what the puzzler then does *not* do: seriously discuss the historical credibility of his account, more on which below (3.3, p. 95, ff.).

A good example of the sorts of criteria puzzlers give for a successful account of the Trinity, as well as the way in which they believe it possible, even desirable, to set aside the sorts of historical concerns I will argue shouldn't be set aside, can be found in, "The Unfinished Business of Trinitarian Theorizing," by Dale Tuggy, in which he writes:

> The doctrine of the Trinity has a long and interesting history... In this paper *I will avoid as much of this post-biblical tradition as I can*, along with its Latin and Greek terminology. I do this not out of disrespect, lack of interest, or a mistaken belief that folks from the distant past have nothing relevant to say, but only because I want to focus on the most difficult philosophical problems facing various versions of the doctrine, *problems which are often obscured by historical concerns*...[7]

Tuggy does well in noting that he avoids the relevant history "not out of disrespect, lack of interest, or a mistaken belief that folks from the distant past have nothing relevant to say." Yet he still obviously considers it *possible* to avoid discussing the history of the doctrine of the Trinity to a great extent, and yet still provide a satisfying discussion of it. Indeed, he seems to think it not only possible, but apparently even *preferable*. In his view, the relevant philosophical problems are "often obscured by historical concerns..." rather than being illuminated by them, and he clearly doesn't see history as *essential* in the way I will argue it is.

So then, with his account A of the Trinity described and explained, the puzzler believes that if he can demonstrate the consistency of A (plus perhaps his favorite other theoretical virtues – intelligibility, biblicality, etc.), this by itself (no serious discussion of history necessary) will be – somehow – sufficient to show the coherence of the doctrine of the Trinity itself (or at least of P).

A clear, and possibly the most entertaining, example of this sort of view is found in "Divine Fission: A New Way of Moderating Social Trinitarianism," by Peter Forrest,[8] which uses the term "speculation," or some inflection thereof, to refer to his and others' accounts of the Trinity a total of 34 times in barely over 16 pages. Indeed, he explicitly describes his project in the paper as providing a "speculation" about the Trinity that relies heavily on what he describes as Swinburne's "important speculation" about the Trinity, and in the course of arguing that his speculation is coherent, makes it very explicit that he regards this as all that is required. (But required for what? He never fully explains.)

In the abstract of the paper, Forrest states:

> ... I follow Swinburne... in the important speculation that the Trinity arose from a primordial 'unitarian' God. In this paper I

---

7. (Tuggy 2003), pp. 165-166. Emphasis mine.
8. (Forrest 1998).

explain why I disagree with Swinburne's account of how the Trinity came into being and I propose an alternative...[9]

Then in the first paragraph, we read, "The topic of this paper is a way of speculating about the Trinity..."[10]

As is typical of this kind of approach, Forrest spends almost the entirety of his paper explaining his speculation about (i.e., account of) the Trinity, arguing for its coherence and showing how it satisfies various other desiderata. Only briefly does he touch upon methodology, saying:

> I grant that the above argument is just the sort of thing that brings metaphysics into disrepute. How could anyone know, readers might protest, about such matters? ... I grant that all this is speculative. But *in order to defend a moderate Social Trinitarianism it suffices to provide a speculative metaphysics which is no worse than its rivals...*[11]

Defend it from what, or in what sense? He never says. Likewise, concerning what, if any, relation his own, personal "speculation" about the Trinity might bear to the actual, historical, orthodox doctrine of the Trinity itself, again he says nary a word. And while one must praise Forrest for his honesty in describing his account of the Trinity as nothing more than a "speculation," one must fault him for his logic.

For one imagines that the conclusion he wants to establish is that "the doctrine of the Trinity (or at least P) is consistent." But without saying anything about the relation between his speculation about the Trinity and the doctrine of the Trinity itself, "providing a speculative metaphysics which is no worse than its rivals" (even if that is meant to include showing it to be consistent) certainly does not suffice to show the the doctrine of the Trinity itself (or even only P) is consistent. One would have to also show that one's account is, say, identical to, or entails, or is logically isomorphic to, or is in some other manner logically related in the right way to, the doctrine of the Trinity (or at least P).

Otherwise, the anti-Trinitarian could of course admit that Forrest's speculation is consistent, while still maintaining that the doctrine of the Trinity itself is incoherent, since they may be logically unrelated – or, for all we know, even logically incompatible. For example, both modalism and Arianism are accounts of the Trinity (descriptions of how the Trinity "works"), but neither could count as a *defense* of doctrine of the Trinity itself. Indeed, atheism would technically be one account of the Trinity – and a logically consistent one at that. It is the account of the Trinity that says there is no Trinity (or binity, or...). But that clearly isn't a *defense* of the doctrine of the Trinity. So why shouldn't the Anti-Trinitarian agree with everything Forrest has to say about his speculation, and simply conclude that Forrest's (apparently perfectly consistent) speculation

---

9. (Forrest 1998), p. 281.
10. (Forrest 1998), p. 281.
11. (Forrest 1998), p. 293 – emphasis mine.

about the Trinity is simply *better than* the (apparently inconsistent) doctrine of the Trinity itself. In the best case scenario, we can only *validly* conclude that Peter Forrest's own, personal speculation about the Trinity is coherent – not that the doctrine of the Trinity itself is coherent.

And that is the historicist's objection to the Puzzle Approach in a nutshell. That it is simply a large body of invalid arguments. Or, perhaps collections of premises in search of a conclusion (we will suggest an alternative conclusion for puzzlers at the end of 3.2, p. 93).

But what's worse is that it isn't at all obvious what could be done to get the argument into a valid form. Not in a way that both:

1. would allow for the the puzzler to give us good reasons for thinking his premises are all true, and

2. would not, in doing so, simply collapse into the Historical Approach, or at least render superfluous the whole business of *constructing* some speculative account of the Trinity.

For, to make the argument valid, the puzzler must demonstrate that there is a very particular sort of relation between his account A of the Trinity, and the doctrine of the Trinity itself (or at least P. And since the LPT focuses on P, to cut down on verbiage, I'll stick to talking just about P from here on out.)

Specifically, it needs to be some relation R, such that, if A bears R to P, then if A is consistent, P is also consistent. Let us call any such a relation a "consistency transferring relation."

More precisely, we can give the following definitions (more intuitive characterizations immediately afterwards):

For any relation R, for any propositions P and Q,
R is a consistency transferring relation *from P to Q* iff$_{\text{Def}}$:
If P bears R to Q, and if P is consistent,
then Q is consistent.

For any relation R, for any proposition P,
R is a consistency transferring relation *from P* iff$_{\text{Def}}$:
For any proposition Q,
if P bears R to Q and P is consistent,
then Q is consistent.

For any relation R, for any proposition Q,
R is a consistency transferring relation *to Q* iff$_{\text{Def}}$:
For any proposition P,
if P bears R to Q and P is consistent,
then Q is consistent.

For any relation R,
R is a *general consistency transferring relation* iff$_{\text{Def}}$:

61

For any propositions P and Q,
if P bears R to Q, and if P is consistent,
then Q is consistent.

Intuitively, to say that R is a consistency transferring relation *from P to Q* means that R "transfers consistency" from P to Q – but that does not imply that it transfers consistency between any other two propositions.

Intuitively, to say that R is a consistency transferring relation *from P* means that R "transfers consistency" from P to any given proposition – but that does not imply that it transfers consistency "from" any other proposition besides P.

Intuitively, to say that R is a consistency transferring relation *to Q* means that R "transfers consistency" from any given proposition to Q – but that does not imply that it transfers consistency "to" any other proposition besides Q.

Intuitively, to say that R is a *general consistency transferring relation* means that R "transfers consistency" between any two propositions whatsoever.

For example, identity, logical entailment, and logical isomorphism are all general consistency transferring relations.

Strictly speaking, then, to use his account A to show the consistency of P, the puzzler only needs to show, for his particular account A of the Trinity, that:

1. A is consistent, and

2. there exists some relation R such that

    (a) R is a consistency transferring relation *from A to P*, and such that
    (b) A bears R to P.

From those two premises, together with the definition of a consistency transferring relation from A to P, it would indeed follow validly that:

3. P is consistent.

Call this argument (although really a general argument schema) "the Puzzler Argument."[12]

Puzzlers, of course, have provided lengthy explanations of the content of their preferred accounts of the Trinity, and arguments that these accounts are consistent. (Or even "broadly logically possible," a step above the "narrowly logical" consistency we are discussing in the LPT. The same considerations I'll present here will apply to being broadly logically possible, given parallel definitions of "possibility transferring relations" or indeed to any other theoretical virtue, given parallel definitions of various "virtue-transferring relations.")

So, let us simply grant, for argument's sake, that all puzzlers are always successful in supporting step 1 of the Puzzler Argument, that any given puzzler's

---

12. Perhaps it would be better to use "the Puzzler Argument," to refer to the above argument *minus premise 2*, since that is essentially what I am accusing puzzlers of offering. But the point is to think about what it might look like if the puzzler were to attempt to offer an argument that was at least *valid*.

account A will be consistent (indeed, that it will have whatever other theoretical virtues the puzzler likes as well).

As with the business plan put forward by the Underpants Gnomes, the problem comes in step 2. In particular, there seem to be some tensions involved in supporting both parts of step 2 at the same time. Here's why I think so.

First, it's of course easy to find all sorts of relations A bears to P (the "I mentioned X at T_1, just before I mentioned Y at T_2" relation, for example), taking care of 2b. Pick one such relation R, and grant that A bears R to P. But, although for 2a it is only necessary to show R to be a consistency transferring relation *from A to P* (or a consistency transferring relation *from A*, or *to P*), how would one *show* that R is a consistency transferring relation from A to P (or from A, or to P) unless one simply picks some general consistency transferring relation (like identity or logical entailment)? But then, pick some known general consistency transferring relation R. Now how would one *show* that A bears this relation to P? How, without doing so much history that essentially one has given up the Puzzle Approach altogether, and fallen into the Historical Approach after all? Or, if some other way can be found, then at least making all the business of giving an account of the Trinity superfluous? Let me now explain this further worry in a bit more detail.

Take again the trivial, "I mentioned X at T_1, just before I mentioned Y at T_2" relation as an example. It's easy to show A bears that to P (check off 2b). But what about showing that it's a consistency transferring relation from A to P (what about 2a)? We can show that it's a consistency transferring relation from A to "it's raining or not raining," because we can show that *every* relation is a consistency transferring relation to "it's raining or not raining," because we can show that (we have an *independent way* to show that) "it's raining or not raining" is consistent. (Likewise, we can show that any relation is a consistency transferring relation *from* "it's raining and not raining" or *to* "it's raining or not raining," because we have an independent way to show that "it's raining and not raining" is inconsistent and an independent way to show that "it's raining or not raining" is consistent.) But, unless some relation R is just a general consistency transferring relation, how would we show it to be a consistency transferring relation from A to P (or from A, or to P), unless we had some independent way to show that P was consistent?[13,14] But first, how would we have some independent way of showing P to be consistent except by just examining it "directly"? And what would it mean to examine it "directly," except to do some kind of historical inquiry into what it is? Second, even if the puzzler has some response to the first question that doesn't involve historical inquiry, if we had *any* independent way to determine that P was consistent,[15] then the whole business of providing an "account" of the Trinity and going through the Puzzler Argument would be superfluous.

---

13. Independent of account A, that is.

14. Or or showing that A is *inconsistent*. But that would obviously not help the puzzler at all.

15. Independent of account A, that is.

So, even though, theoretically, the Puzzler Argument could be done with one of the more limited consistency transferring relations we've defined, it seems likely that the puzzler will ultimately need to deal with general consistency transferring relations (like identity, entailment, isomorphism, etc.) to make his case.

But in that case, let us begin, not with a relation we know A bears to P, but with a relation we already know is a general consistency transferring relation, like logical entailment. In this case, in contrast to the trivial relation we picked above, it's easy to show that logical entailment is a general consistency transferring relation (check off 2a). But now what about showing that A actually bears R to P (what about 2b)? We can show that A bears the logical entailment relation to "it's raining or not raining," because we can show that everything does, because "it's raining or not raining" is a tautology. And we can similarly show that a contradiction entails anything. But could we show that P is a tautology? Not likely. Alternatively, the puzzler could show his own account A to be inconsistent. But that would wreck his project in the end (premise 1 of the Puzzler Argument would no longer be true). How then would we show that a *non-contradictory* account A entails a *non-tautological* P? How unless we explicate *both* the logical forms of A *and* of P, along with the overlap of their content,[16] in enough detail that we could have just determined P to be logically consistent anyway,[17] once again rendering the whole business of providing an "account" of the Trinity superfluous?[18]

Furthermore, once again, how would the puzzler come to a sufficient understanding of the relevant *content* shared by A and P in the first place without doing the sort of historical work he intends to avoid?[19] Wouldn't he need to know what the authors of various Trinitarian creeds intended by those creeds (or at least what they intended by S in particular)? Or what the words used in the original (in this case Greek) expressions of the doctrine of the Trinity (or at least S), meant, given the linguistic practices of the linguistics communities of which the originators of the doctrine of the Trinity were a part (i.e., Greek-speaking, fourth-century theologians with a particular philosophical and theological technical vocabulary, stemming from a particular historical tradition)? In short, how would the puzzler explicate enough of the content of P

---

16. What I mean by "overlap of content" is this. For example, "P → Q" and "Q → R" entail "P → R," not merely in virtue of their logical forms (not just any two conditionals entail just any third conditional), but in virtue of their logical forms plus the further fact that the first premise shares the same antecedent as the conclusion and the second premise shares the same consequent as the conclusion. Any two propositions with the logical forms of conditionals such that one has the same content in its antecedent as and the other has the same content in its consequent as a third conditional, entail that third conditional. This is what I mean by saying that, to show that A entails P, one would have to both explicate the logical forms of A and P and show certain relevant "shared" or "overlapping" content.

17. Obviously this holds all the more so for identity or logical isomorphism than for entailment.

18. Of course, one could show that A entails P in an indirect way, by showing that A entails B, B entails C, C entails. . . P. But eventually we will come to *some* proposition such that we will have to *show* that it entails P, and we will face the same problem.

19. See footnote 16 just above on what I mean by "shared content."

without doing just the sort of historical work the puzzler wants to avoid but that the historicist claims is necessary? How would the Puzzle Approach not simply collapse into the Historical Approach?

Here is another way to see the point.

Imagine a debate between a puzzler and an anti-Trinitarian. While they disagree about the consistency of P, they would surely agree to one thing: that the following is an inconsistent set.

1. A is consistent.

2. There is some relation R such that

   (a) R is a consistency transferring relation from A to P, and such that

   (b) A bears R to P.

3. Yet P is inconsistent.

Although the puzzler ultimately wants to say that P is consistent, surely the puzzler grants that the anti-Trinitarian is right in thinking that, *prima facie*, P at least *appears* to be inconsistent. (If the puzzler thought P didn't even *appear* to be inconsistent, why bother writing a more-than-Gettier-sized paper about it?)

So, the anti-Trinitarian will simply say that, since 3 is *prima facie* true, the more the puzzler does to back up 1, in the absence of saying anything about 2, the more reason he has to deny 2.

And that, in turn, means that, the more the puzzler does to back up 2a, in the absence of backing up 2b, (or vice-versa), the more reason he has to deny 2b (or 2a). And that means that the puzzler must find some way to argue for both parts of 2.

But puzzlers have typically simply *assumed* that 2 is true, or, as in Peter Forrest's case, explicitly disavowed the need for it altogether(!) This is untenable. In order both to have a valid argument in the first place, and not to simply beg the question against the anti-Trinitarian, the puzzler must back up 2.

Yet, so far, puzzlers have not so much as even made the attempt to do so. Indeed, most puzzlers either spend little to no time even explaining what relation they believe their account bears to the doctrine of the Trinity, or, like Forrest, go so far as to explicitly deny they need to say anything at all about what relation their accounts might bear to the doctrine of the Trinity.

True, many puzzlers make passing uses of phrases like "model of," "version of," "form of," etc., saying that their accounts bear one or more of these relations the doctrine of the Trinity. But so far none, to my knowledge, have ever stopped to explain *the nature* of these relations in any detail, and certainly not in enough detail to ensure us that they both (A) are consistency transferring relations, and (B) actually hold between their accounts of the Trinity and the doctrine of the Trinity itself.

So, as it stands, all the anti-Trinitarian needs to say is, "I don't know precisely what the 'model of' relation is, but if it is some kind of consistency transferring relation, then it appears that A doesn't bear it to P (because it appears that no consistent proposition does, because it appears that P isn't consistent)." Or "I don't know precisely what the 'form of' relation is, but if A bears it to P, then it appears that it must not be a consistency transferring relation (because it appears that no relation any consistent proposition bears to P is a consistency transferring relation, because it appears that P isn't consistent)." In other words, the anti-Trinitarian, quite reasonably, will simply challenge the puzzler to explain what exactly R is, in such a way that it's clear both that A bears R to P and that R is a consistency transferring relation (at least from A to P).

On the other hand, suppose that, rather than appealing to undefined relations like "form of," the puzzler chooses a well-defined relation that is clearly a consistency transferring relation, for example, identity or logical entailment. Or, suppose he gives a definition of "version of" such that a "version" of a doctrine is a superset of the doctrine or in any case it can be shown that when P is a version of Q, P logically entails Q or bears some other well-defined logical relation to Q. Certainly the anti-Trinitarian will then have to agree that we are dealing with a consistency transferring relation. But of course, now he will just say that, in the absence of any support for the claim that A really is identical to P, or that A really does logically entail P, or that A really is a version of P (in this more well-defined sense), it would appear that A in fact does not bear this relation to P. So once again the Puzzler Argument relies on an unsupported premise that, admittedly, it ought to appear, at least prima facie, must be false.

Finally, suppose the puzzler wants to take up the challenge of actually defending the claim that A bears some well-defined logical relation R, like identity, entailment or isomorphism to P. Then to show A actually bears R to P it clearly isn't sufficient merely to say, "I speculate that A is, or could be, the case" or "My speculation has X, Y and Z theoretical virtues," and conclude that, "Therefore, it bears logical relation R to P." For the anti-Trinitarian – quite correctly – will respond, "I agree that A could be the case. But it appears that P couldn't be. Therefore, it appears that A does not bear any consistency transferring relation to P."

So how could the puzzler argue that A does in fact bear R to P? Just as before, it would seem that the puzzler would need to explicate both the logical form of A and that of P, and the content on which they overlap.[20] But in doing so, he likely will end up showing enough of the logical form of P that he could have just determined that it was logically consistent *without reference to A*. In which case, the whole business of providing an "account" of the Trinity and going through the Puzzler Argument was superfluous.

And likewise, once again, if he relies on identity or entailment, how would he explicate enough of the content shared by A and P to show they are identical, or that A entails P, without doing just the sort of historical work the historicist would advocate and that the puzzler seeks to avoid? How would the Puzzle

---

20. See footnote 16, p. 64 above.

Approach not simply collapse into the Historical Approach?

Note also that if we want to introduce other theoretical virtues besides consistency – "Biblical fit," "intelligibility," and so on – we will need to sort through the same sorts of considerations for "Biblicality transferring relations," "intelligibility transferring relations," and so on. Identity would seem to work as a "transferring relation" for any theoretical virtue that doesn't somehow involve intensional contexts, and it may be that logical entailment would as well. But as we've seen, it's difficult to see how either of those relations wouldn't ultimately collapse the Puzzle Approach into the Historical Approach or at least render the giving of accounts in the Puzzle Approach superfluous. (And it is these accounts that are really the heart of the Puzzle Approach.)

(Before leaving this point I will simply note that, in some unpublished material I have chosen not to incorporate due to limitations of space, I argue that there may be a further problem on the assumption that "version of" and other puzzler relations are something like logical entailment, or at least that versions of doctrines logically entail those doctrines. For most puzzlers seem to want to say not only that their own accounts of the Trinity are versions of the doctrine of the Trinity. They want to admit that rival accounts in the literature are as well. E.g., most Social Trinitarians want to admit that Relative Identity accounts are "versions of" the doctrine of the Trinity, and and most Relative Identity Trinitarians want to admit that Social Trinitarian accounts are "versions of" the doctrine of the Trinity. They only want to claim their own versions are superior. Yet, since logical entailment is monotonic, when P entails Q the information "contained in" Q must be a subset of that in P. Thus, if the relation the puzzler posits between A and P just is logical entailment (or if A's bearing it to P entails that A entails P), then this spirit of tolerance is fitting only if the doctrine of the Trinity is, or is a subset of, the intersection of the information contained in all of the competing puzzler accounts. But, arguably, there are accounts of the Trinity on-offer that have no overlap at all, in which case the doctrine of the Trinity must be the empty set of information, i.e., a tautology. Even if my arguments on that point are wrong, there are certainly puzzler accounts A_1, A_2 ... A_n such that it is by no means obvious that the small amount of information that might be contained in $A_1 \cap A_2 \ldots \cap A_n$ (if it is not indeed the empty set after all) would be enough information to plausibly count as the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity. Unfortunately, however, I won't have space to develop that argument here.)

A Note on van Inwagen

As noted above, it's hard to place van Inwagen's methodological approach neatly. But, although on a cursory reading he may seem to fall into the Puzzle Approach camp, upon examination it seems that he accepts something like the main thrust of the historicist's position. Especially in his second paper on the subject, "Three Persons in One Being: On Attempts to Show that the Doctrine of the Trinity is Self-Contradictory."

In the abstract of the paper, he says:

> Enemies of the Church have frequently contended that the doctrine
> of the Holy Trinity is not only false, but violates various elementary
> logical principles. In this essay, I show that, on one understanding
> of the doctrine, this charge is unfounded.[21]

The talk of "one understanding of" the doctrine might initially bring to mind something like the puzzler's accounts, and their un- (or under-)defined relation. Furthermore, he goes on with what might initially appear to be a Puzzle Approach methodology:

> I shall proceed as follows. I shall try to imagine a way of stating
> the doctrine of the Trinity that has the following feature: when
> the doctrine is stated in this way, it can be shown not to be self-
> contradictory.[22]

Again, talk about merely "imagining" a "way of stating" the doctrine might call to mind Peter Forrest's "speculating." So, one might initially think that he falls squarely within the Puzzle Approach. This diagnosis might even seem to be confirmed by the fact that the vast majority of both of his papers on the Trinity are taken up with discussions of logic and relative identity, with almost nothing said about the views of any church fathers or how his discussion relates to those views.

But that appearance, I think, is ultimately misleading. For he immediately follows with:

> I shall leave the following question to theologians (for I am a philoso-
> pher, not a theologian): Is what I describe as 'a way of stating the
> doctrine of the Trinity' properly so described – or should it be called
> a way of *mis*stating the doctrine of the Trinity? I claim only this:
> a strong case can be made for the thesis that the formulation of
> the doctrine of the Trinity I shall propose does succeed in being a
> statement of what has historically been called 'the doctrine of the
> Trinity'; and an even stronger case can be made for the thesis that
> this formulation is consistent with historical orthodoxy. Even if these
> theses are false, they are, in my view, plausible enough to be worthy
> of a considered refutation.[23]

Thus, van Inwagen seems to acknowledge that *merely* providing a consistent account of the Trinity is not sufficient to show the doctrine of the Trinity itself to be consistent. He seems to acknowledge that some further premise is necessary, and that what is necessary is to show a certain kind of logical relation between one's account of the Trinity and the doctrine of the Trinity itself. That any given attempt at a *re*statement of the doctrine of the Trinity might simply end up being a *mis*statement of the doctrine of the Trinity. Furthermore, he seems to

---

21. (van INWAGEN 2003), p. 83
22. (van INWAGEN 2003), p. 83.
23. (van INWAGEN 2003), p. 83.

admit that whether one's account of the Trinity bears the appropriate relation to the doctrine of the Trinity itself is a matter of *historical facts* about what the doctrine of the Trinity actually is. He goes on:

> Whether my attempt at apologetic in fact distorts Christian belief is a point on which I humbly (and sensibly) defer to trained theologians. In matters of speculative theology – and particularly when the question at issue is whether certain theological speculations are in accord with historical orthodoxy – theologians must sit in judgment over mere philosophers. (Just as, in my view, bishops and councils must sit in judgment over theologians.) I claim only one kind of authority that is denied to theologians: I am the ultimate arbiter of what my own words mean. If a theologian tells me that my proposed way of stating the doctrine of the Trinity is wrong (that is, that what I have proposed as a way of stating "the doctrine of the Trinity" has implications inconsistent with what the Church has always understood by "the doctrine of the Trinity"), I allow myself only one defense: "If I had said what you think I've said, you'd be right; but I didn't say what you think I said."[24]

Last but not least, the fact that he does not go into any substantial discussion of history might lead one to think he is only paying lip service to history. But that again, I think, would be a mistake. For besides discussing an essentially historical methodological principle in the abstract, he seems to make *substantive use* of some such principle in evaluating Swinburne's account of the Trinity:

> But there is a modern attempt at a demonstrably consistent statement of the doctrine of the Trinity – at least I should be willing to say that its consistency was demonstrable – according to which there are three Gods, and its author's defense of its historical orthodoxy is well thought out and not simply to be dismissed. (I have in mind Professor Swinburne's important essay on the Trinity, "Could There Be More Than One God?") But whether Professor Swinburne's account of the Trinity is, or is consistent with, historical orthodoxy is a subtle question, and one that is not in the end, to be answered by a philosopher.[25]

Here again, he seems to claim that he is only competent to rule on whether Swinburne's account is consistent, but acknowledges that it must also bear the appropriate relation to the doctrine of the Trinity itself. One might object that he nowhere attempts to discredit the views of other philosophers on the basis of historical arguments. But as he states, the historical question is "not... to be answered by a philosopher,"[26] but by "trained theologians."[27] That is, while it is

---

24. (van INWAGEN 2003), pp. 83-84.
25. (van INWAGEN 2003), p. 88.
26. (van INWAGEN 2003), p. 88
27. (van INWAGEN 2003), p. 84

true that van Inwagen says almost nothing substantive about the history of the doctrine of the Trinity, it does not seem as though he avoids historical questions because he thinks they are *inessential* (as puzzlers such as Tuggy and Forrest seem to think), but because he simply doesn't claim to be competent in the field. In short, he seems to have the good sense (as the historicist sees things) to at least *assert* his belief that his account is appropriately related to the historical doctrine of the Trinity itself, showing, it seems to me, that he agrees with the historicist that such a premise is required. He merely doesn't attempt to *defend* that premise, leaving the question to others whom he regards as more competent than himself to determine whether this one particular premise is actually true.

Thus although, as we'll see, van Inwagen doesn't neatly fall into the historicist camp, nor does he even fall neatly into the mysterian camp, it seems we can *certainly* place him safely outside the puzzler camp. Even if he doesn't want to *enter into debate about* the relation between his account and the historical doctrine of the Trinity, he, like the historicist, and unlike the puzzler, at least acknowledges that the relation must be there.

An Objection Based on An Analogy to Metaphysical Puzzles

Here is an objection the puzzler might reasonably bring up. The LPT looks and feels, so to speak, very much like a lot of puzzles dealt with by metaphysicians – we have an apparently inconsistent set of propositions that one wants to argue isn't really inconsistent after all. And it seems as though the puzzler is just doing the same sort of thing that metaphysicians normally do in such cases – offering various competing ways of restating things in an attempt to show how the propositions in that set could all turn out to be true after all. So, unless the historicist is prepared to argue that the methodology metaphysicians ordinarily employ in these puzzles is flawed (invalidating an enormous amount of literature in metaphysics), why shouldn't the puzzler be able to use the same sort of methodology for the same sort of problem or puzzle?

Let us work with a specific example of a standard metaphysical "puzzle" or "problem" of this very recognizable type, one that might seem parallel to the "puzzle" or "problem" with the doctrine of the Trinity. Namely, the Problem of Temporary Intrinsics (PTI).[28]

Here is a very simple way of putting PTI.[29] Consider the set of propositions (P-TI) expressed by the following set of sentences (S-TI):

S-TI-1. Mr. Stick at t_1 is bent.
S-TI-2. Mr. Stick at t_2 is not bent.
S-TI-3. Mr. Stick at t_1 is the same stick as Mr. Stick at t_2.

---

28. (D. Lewis 1986), pp. 203-204 and ff. for one of the most important contemporary discussions of the problem.
29. Overly simple if one wanted to discuss it for its own sake. But sufficient for the purpose of analogy.

Here is one formalization of TI, call it Φ-TI:

Φ-TI-1. Bs_{t1}
Φ-TI-2. $\neg Bs_{t2}$
Φ-TI-3. $s_{t1} = s_{t2}$

The anti-change-itarian says that Φ-TI is the most straight-forward way of reading the logical forms of P-TI. But Φ-TI is inconsistent. So, if Φ-TI is a formally adequate regimentation of P-TI, then P-TI is inconsistent.

But of course, to conclude that P-TI is inconsistent would be absurd. And so metaphysicians offer various *philosophical paraphrases* of claims about change, paraphrases with very different (and consistent) logical forms. And if one of those paraphrases seems to preserve the relevant content of the original claims, then this would show the set of claims to be consistent after all.

We could say, then, that just as the LPT is the question how, if at all, P could be consistent, the "Problem of Temporary Intrinsics" (PTI) is the question how, if at all, P-TI could be consistent.

And in cases of metaphysical puzzles such as these, metaphysicians carry on in much the same way puzzlers do. When offering paraphrases for P-TI, most metaphysicians would agree that, as Forrest says about his Trinitarian account, "it suffices to provide a speculative metaphysics which is no worse than its rivals. . ."[30]

In the case of PTI, there are various accounts of the metaphysics of change, and various corresponding proposed solutions to PTI.

On one account, Mr. Stick is really a four-dimensional object with some "temporal parts" that are bent and some that are not. So, in much the same way that Social Trinitarians say there is a single God and that the three hypostases are not identical to God, but that they are all "parts" of the one God, four-dimensionalists say that there is a single, four-dimensional Mr. Stick, and that Mr. Stick at t_1 and Mr. Stick at t_2 are not identical to Mr. Stick, but that they are both temporal "parts" of Mr. Stick.

Thus, the logical forms of P-PTI are implicitly being claimed to be:

4D-TI-1. Bs_{t1}
4D-TI-2. $\neg Bs_{t2}$
4D-TI-3. $s_{t1} \ R \ s_{t2}$

where "R" is some relation that does not entail classical identity (specifically, it is the "is a temporal part of the same four-dimensional object as" relation, or what Quine would call "being stick-kindred").[31]

Another proposed solution is that properties are "time-indexed," so that, while the stick we refer to at t_1 is in fact classically identical to the stick we refer to at t_2 (both are just Mr. Stick itself), the properties we are affirming and denying of Mr. Stick are not the same.

---

30. (FORREST 1998), p. 293.
31. E.g., (QUINE 1950), p. 622, ff.

Thus, the logical forms of P-PTI are implicitly being claimed to be:

TIP-TI-1. $B_{t1}s$
TIP-TI-2. $\neg B_{t2}s$
TIP-TI-3. $s_{(t1)} = s_{(t2)}$

And of course there are other proposed solutions. But one gets the gist. With various proposed solutions on-offer, the game is more or less to argue that one account is superior to its rivals, and whichever is superior to (or at least no worse than) its rivals, wins. (What counts as a superior-making property of an account? Things like not conflicting with common sense, not conflicting with science, being simpler, not positing too many entities or too many types of entities, and so on.)

I am of course presenting the methodology summarily. One could argue that I'm presenting the methodology in too simplistic a light. And one might be right, if my task were to argue either for or against it. But my task here is neither to praise nor to bury this kind of methodology, at least as it is employed by metaphysicians dealing with metaphysical puzzles. Rather, my task is simply to show how such metaphysical puzzles are *importantly disanalogous* to allegedly parallel "theological puzzles" such as the LPT. So that, even given the appropriateness of this kind of methodology in the realm of metaphysics, it is still not appropriate in philosophical theology. (And for the record, I do accept that this sort of approach makes sense within the context of metaphysics, but again, I am not here either defending or attacking a Puzzle Approach in metaphysics.)

Φ-TI, of course, parallels LPT_1 and LPT_2, the regimentations the anti-Trinitarian offers of P. And the metaphysics of four-dimensional objects with temporal parts or of time-indexed properties parallel proposed solutions to the LPT such as Social Trinitarianism and Relative Identity Trinitarianism.[32] And so this may seem to parallel the way in which the Trinitarian puzzler offers different accounts, with different logical forms, of the propositions in P.

What, then, is the difference between taking a Puzzle Approach in metaphysics and a Puzzle Approach in theology?

Although there is a certain parallel in their *logical structures*, PTI and LPT have importantly different *epistemic structures*. For it is a *Moorean fact* that P-TI is consistent. But it is certainly *not* a Moorean fact that the doctrine of the Trinity (P) is consistent.[33] Indeed, in general, any set of apparently contradictory propositions dealt with in the puzzles of metaphysics (and philosophy

---

32. In fact, four-dimensional objects with temporal parts seem very parallel to Social Trinitarianism, while time-indexed properties seem more parallel to Arianism. But one sees the point

33. Anyone who has read John Keller's dissertation on paraphrase, (KELLER 2010), will see how very much influenced I have been by it. What I will present here as my view on how the Puzzle Approach methodology applies to philosophical puzzles is essentially just Keller's view about how philosophical paraphrase works. Thus, I don't take any credit for originality here. Nor will I try to defend it, as I have nothing to say to improve on Keller's own defense of this view. I merely present it as what I take to be the most plausible explanation of how this sort of methodology works in philosophy generally, along with my explanation of why

more generally) will be such that it is a Moorean fact that it is consistent, while the same cannot be said for those dealt with in philosophical theology. And this is the crucial difference, as I see it, between the application of this methodology in philosophy versus philosophical theology.

What then creates a "puzzle" is that we sometimes find that the most straight-forward reading of the logical forms of each of the propositions individually is such that they would turn out not to form a consistent set. This creates a scenario in which it really is the case that almost any alternative reading of their logical forms would do.

One might think it counter-intuitive that, strictly speaking, a stick is not a three-dimensional object, but a four-dimensional object, and that when I say Mr. stick is bent, I really am only saying that a certain *temporal part* of Mr. Stick is bent, and when I say the stick from t_1 is the same stick as the stick from t_2, I really am only saying that they are "stick kindred," i.e., that both are temporal parts of the same four-dimensional Mr. Stick. But even as counter-intuitive as it may be, it's not nearly so counter-intuitive as saying that change is logically impossible. Though my four-dimensional account of Mr. Stick may be merely a "speculation," unless and until some better theory is proposed, the theory of temporal parts gains at least a modicum of credibility due to the fact that the alternative is simply intolerable. Thus, one can truly say that, in a case like this, "it suffices to provide a speculative metaphysics which is no worse than its rivals..."[34]

But then if yet another alternative to the anti-change-itarian reading can be given that is less counter-intuitive than four-dimensionalism, say time-indexed properties (supposing for argument's sake that time-indexed properties are less counter-intuitive than temporal parts), then it would seem that this new theory must inherit at least all the benefits of the first (namely, that it allows us to avoid saying that change is impossible – which was intolerable) but with less of the costs (in terms of being inherently counter-intuitive), and thus becomes the new winner.

Thus, what drives the Puzzle Approach methodology in metaphysics, as it seems to me, is a certain *epistemic structure*. There is a premise (whether explicit or implicit) that the set of propositions we are attempting to paraphrase has some kind of significant *prima facie* warrant such that giving up the game and admitting that it is inconsistent should only be a last resort.

But the same epistemic structure is simply not there in the LPT, nor generally in philosophical theology.

---

it wouldn't apply in philosophical theology. The puzzler, of course, is free to substitute his own alternative explanation of how this methodology works, to evade my criticisms. But that must be left to the puzzler himself to do.

I should note that, although I have essentially lifted wholesale the story about how philosophical paraphrase works, and the assertion that this is what is going on in metaphysical puzzles, from Keller, I believe from conversations about the topic that he entirely disagrees with me about most of my methodological views in the realm of philosophical theology. Any shortcomings one might attribute to my own views should not be attributed to him.

34. (Forrest 1998), p. 293.

Indeed, not only is it not a Moorean fact that the doctrine of the Trinity is logically consistent – an intellectually honest Trinitarian must admit that, at least *prima facie*, the doctrine of the Trinity *appears* to be inconsistent. While anti-*change-itarianism* is so intolerable that any decent alternative really would do, it simply is not the case that anti-*Trinitarianism* is so intolerable that just any decent alternative will do. (At least, not in the same sense.)

If the anti-*change-itarian* asks us why a four-dimensionalist or time-indexed-property reading of P-TI is preferable to the anti-change-itarian reading, we can honestly say it is because that reading has a result that is downright crazy. So, *almost any* reading would be better than his.

But if the anti-*Trinitarian* asks us why a Social Trinitarian or a Relative Identity Trinitarian reading of P is preferable to the the anti-Trinitarian reading, we can't honestly say it is because that reading has a result that is downright crazy. So the question still remains, why should he accept our alternative account of the Trinity over just thinking the doctrine of the Trinity is inconsistent?

We can make a bit more clear how the argument that generates the puzzle (call it "the PTI Puzzle Argument") works by reconstructing it as follows:

1. Φ-TI in PLI is a formally adequate regimentation of P-TI.

2. Φ-TI in PLI is logically inconsistent.

3. Therefore (by the definition of "formally adequate") P-TI is logically inconsistent.

The change-itarian of course denies the conclusion, and so denies the soundness of the argument. But the argument is clearly valid, and the second premise is clearly true. So for the change-itarian to deny the conclusion, he must deny the first premise, the formal adequacy of Φ-TI in PLI. And, given that Φ-TI in PLI is not a formally adequate regimentation of P-TI (and similarly for any regimentation of P-TI on which P-TI is logically inconsistent), if we want to know what the logical form of P-TI really is, we only have to argue about which of various consistent alternatives of P-TI seems the most plausible.

And since the validity of the PTI Puzzle Argument and the truth of premise 2 are not in question, the debate becomes a straight-forward tug-of-war between the alleged truth of premise 1 and the alleged falsehood of the conclusion. Anything that counts as warrant for one counts as warrant against the other, and vice-versa.

Yet premise 1 simply says that Φ-TI in PLI is a formally adequate regimentation of P-TI.[35] And indeed, Φ-TI in PLI attributes a logical form to P-TI that is in some sense a "default." It is the most straight-forward way of reading P-TI, reading the logical form of P-TI off of the grammatical form of the sentences we ordinarily use to express it (S-TI). So, it seems to be incumbent upon those of us who reject the PTI Puzzle Argument to at least say something about the logical form of P-TI.

---

35. Or, a "logically perspicuous" regimentation.

The proponent of the PTI Puzzle Argument is within his rights to ask, "If Φ-TI in PLI is not formally adequate for P-TI, then why not? And what is the logical form of P-TI, if not what Φ-TI in PLI attributes to it?

That is, for any given alternative, consistent regimentation, Φ-TI*, of P-TI for the plausibility that:

1*. Φ-TI* in PLI is a formally adequate regimentation of P-TI.

to be greater than or equal to the plausibility that:

1. Φ-TI in PLI is a formally adequate regimentation of P-TI.

the plausibility of 1* only has to be greater than or equal to the plausibility that:

3. P-TI is logically inconsistent.

But since 3 is so massively implausible, it's incredibly easy for 1* to be as or more plausible than 3. So, (almost) any alternative regimentation will do.[36] Indeed, even if, say, belief in time-indexed properties were the only possible way to get around the problem of temporary intrinsics, and even if a belief in time-indexed properties was massively implausible, that would be preferable to simply accepting the logical impossibility of change of intrinsic properties.

Once one decent proposed solution has been given, our view of the "problem" will likely shift. Further disagreement will no longer center on *whether* there exists any solution to the problem, but simply on *which* proposed solution is the best, or right, solution. And this will (quite rightly) involve just the sorts of theoretical virtues that followers of the Puzzle Approach tend to focus on in philosophical discussions. Since the occurrence of change is a Moorean fact, any paraphrase of P-TI that is formally adequate should be consistent, and any paraphrase that expresses the same content should be plausible, metaphysically possible, etc.

So, if the view I've taken about metaphysical puzzles here is roughly correct,[37] a proposed solution to a philosophical puzzle is essentially a proposed philosophical paraphrase, another way of stating the same content, but one that is more logically perspicuous, and which shows us how the original claim could be logically consistent after all, despite the perhaps misleading way it was originally expressed.

The puzzle will seem puzzling precisely because each proposition of the set, taken individually, initially seems to have been given a formally adequate analysis (its most straight-forward reading, based on the grammatical form of the

---

36. I say *almost.* Why? Suppose I regiment S-TI-1 as a biconditional between a singular proposition and an existential quantification, S-TI-2 as a universally quantified conjunction, and S-TI-3 as the predication of a 5-place relation involving 3 different terms. That is so bizarre a way to read the logical forms of these claims that its absurdity at least rivals the absurdity of the claim that change is logically impossible, if it doesn't beat it. So, there may be *some* consistent alternatives that still wouldn't do.

37. Again, correct, but not original. See (KELLER 2010).

sentences in which it was expressed). That is, there is a certain amount of warrant behind each of the individual analyses of each element of the set. Yet, collectively, the set seems not to have been given a formally adequate analysis. That is, there is a massive amount of warrant for rejecting the conjunction of the analyses of logical form taken together. This epistemic structure is why almost any alternative reading will do, even if it is just something made up (a "speculative metaphysics") – because any consistent analysis automatically begins with a certain level of plausibility or warrant, as compared to the puzzle-generating analysis, simply in virtue of the fact that it allows us to maintain the consistency of what, *prima facie*, seems to be a consistent set of propositions.

But if what I am saying here about standard philosophical puzzles is correct, then to maintain that the same epistemic structure exists in the LPT would be to assume at the very outset that there is a massive amount of warrant for rejecting the view that P is logically inconsistent. That is, the very adoption of a Puzzle Approach methodology itself constitutes a begging of the question against the anti-Trinitarian.

As an analogy, consider what I'll call the "problem" of Socrateic Immortality (PSI). Consider the set P-SI of propositions expressed by the following natural language sentences (S-SI):

S-SI-1. All humans are mortal.

S-SI-2. Socrates is a human.

S-SI-3. Socrates is immortal.

Here is one regimentation, Φ-SI in PLI, of P-SI:

Φ-SI-1. $(\forall x)\,(Hx \rightarrow Mx)$

Φ-SI-2. Hs

Φ-SI-3. ¬Ms

But Φ-SI is inconsistent. So, if Φ-SI in PLI is a formally adequate regimentation of P-SI, then P-SI is inconsistent. Again, the argument goes like this:

1. Φ-SI in PLI is a formally adequate regimentation of P-SI.

2. Φ-SI in PLI is logically inconsistent.

3. Therefore (by the definition of "formally adequate") P-SI is logically inconsistent.

It doesn't seem tempting to think of this as a "puzzle" at all. Suppose I want to defend, for some reason, the view that P-SI is consistent. I propose the following alternative regimentation of P-SI, Φ-SI*:

Φ-SI*-1. $(\forall x)(Hx \rightarrow Mx)$

Φ-SI*-2. Hs

Φ-SI*-3. Is

That is, I propose to take the predicate "immortal" as basic, not definable by negating the predicate "mortal," and I deny any conditional linking the two, so that I can consistently maintain all of the propositions in P-SI. *Voila!* "Problem" solved!

This does not seem like a "solution" to a "problem." It does not even seem legitimate at all. And that is because the *epistemic structure*, the structure of warrant, *prima facie* plausibility, and so on, is just the reverse of the situation in the case of PTI. There, the very fact that a given alternative analysis Φ-TI* is consistent just constitutes reason to think it is *more* logically perspicuous than Φ-TI. But in the case of PSI, it is so *prima facie* implausible to think that P-SI is *not* inconsistent, that the very fact that a given alternative analysis Φ-SI* is consistent now constitutes reason to think it is *not* as logically perspicuous as Φ-SI.

Obviously, the question the anti-Trinitarian will want to raise is whether solutions to the LPT are more like solutions to PTI or more like "solutions" to PSI. In the case of time and change, Parmenides himself would admit that the result that P-TI is inconsistent is *prima facie* implausible. (That's why he distinguishes in his poem between "the way of appearance" and "the way of truth." His ideas *appear* to be nuts – and he knows it.) But in the case of Socrateic Immortality, everybody would admit that it is the result that P-SI *is consistent* that is *prima facie* implausible. (Indeed, it not only seems wrong "at first glance," but even "in the final analysis.")

The problem with treating an account of the Trinity as a "solution" to a "philosophical puzzle" (if, as I claim, a solution to a philosophical puzzle is in essence a philosophical paraphrase for a puzzling set of claims like P-TI) is that not just any apparently inconsistent set of propositions counts as a "puzzle." It's only a philosophical puzzle if it is hard to believe that the set should turn out to be inconsistent, and yet hard to believe that the inconsistent analysis of it should turn out to be wrong. But the anti-Trinitarian, quite rightly, will point out that it's not at all hard to believe that the doctrine of the Trinity should turn out to be inconsistent. Indeed, he might point out that in abandoning the doctrine we would be making things easier on ourselves.

To relate this to the earlier point about consistency transferring relations, with a metaphysical puzzle like the Problem of Temporary Intrinsics, *nobody is claiming* that there is any consistency transferring relation between their speculative metaphysics about the nature of time and change and a description of an object changing over time. Rather, as I've argued, in standard philosophical puzzles, it is simply *assumed* that the target doctrine (set of propositions) is consistent. Thus, if I am right about how Puzzle Approach methodology works in the context of metaphysical and other philosophical puzzles, then the very

assumption that the Puzzle Approach methodology is appropriate in the first place simply begs the question against the anti-Trinitarian.

Before concluding, as a side note, even if we *did* have excellent reason to simply assume at the outset that P must be consistent, an argument of the Puzzle Approach type would not automatically give us reason to suppose that any *particular* puzzler's account is more likely than any other to have the same content as P, substantially similar content to P, etc. Nor would it automatically give us reason to suppose that any particular puzzler's account of the Trinity even shares the same, or a substantially similar, logical form as P.

For all we can validly deduce from the assumption that P is consistent and a demonstration that A is consistent is that, barring any other information, A at least epistemically could be the same or substantially similar (in content, or in form) to P, while any interpretation of S that is not consistent certainly could not be. Thus, a consistent account A is more likely to be, or be substantially similar to, P than any account in the LPT Family (since the probability that any such account has things right is, by hypothesis, zero). But the same can be said for any proposed account of the Trinity that is not inconsistent.

Typically, of course, puzzlers want to argue in favor of their own account over those of others on the basis of various theoretical virtues that their account has. Some of these are just general theoretical virtues (like being "consistent" and "intelligible" – e.g., (Tuggy 2003), p. 166); others are the sorts of things that would be nice for a bit of specifically Christian theology to have (like being "scripturally kosher" – also at (Tuggy 2003), p. 166.)

But none of these qualities automatically makes a particular account A of the Trinity any more likely to be the same as or substantially similar to P than any other account. Unless, of course, one simply *assumes* at the outset that the doctrine of the Trinity (or at least P) also has all of these theoretical virtues, and has them to the highest, or at least a very high, degree (for any virtue that comes in degrees).

Indeed, unless we assume that the doctrine of the Trinity, or at least P, has a given theoretical virtue that admits of degrees to the highest (or at least a very high) degree (rather than, say, only to a mediocre degree) – then showing that one's account has more of that virtue than another account could actually show one's account to be *less* likely to be the same as or substantially similar to the doctrine of the Trinity, or to P. Thus, to make sense of the Puzzle Approach in such an instance, we really need to assume that the doctrine of the Trinity, or at least P, is not only consistent, but has whatever other theoretical virtues we are judging accounts by, and that it has any of those virtues that come in degrees to the highest (or at least a very high) degree.

The question of course is, is it right (and is it not begging the question against the anti-Trinitarian) to assume *a priori* that the doctrine of the Trinity, or at least P, must not only turn out to be consistent, but to have all of the relevant theoretical virtues and have them to a very high degree?

Of course, one might argue that *the truth* is more likely to have these theoretical virtues, and to a high degree, and thus that these all follow from the

assumption that the doctrine of the Trinity, or at least P, is true. But then the question is, is it right – and is it not begging the question against the anti-Trinitarian – to assume *a priori* that the doctrine of the Trinity, or at least P, *is the truth?*

There are no doubt cases in which similar assumptions are fine, epistemically speaking. I, for example, don't know as much as one probably should about the history of the holocaust. But I do think that, were I to do a study of it, there would be nothing wrong in more or less ignoring the possibility that it never happened. And, whatever theoretical worries might be brought up in an epistemology classroom, I probably wouldn't worry myself too much about the possibility that the holocaust wasn't real.

However, it's one thing to say that, in doing history *for myself*, I don't need to worry too much about conspiracy theories and crazy scenarios that deny the reality of the holocaust. But it's another thing altogether to say that *this counts as a defense* of the point of view that the holocaust happened. It of course is not a defense. It is precisely *the denial that there needs to be any defense.* (We'll see in the next section the similarities between this kind of position and mysterianism.)

To conclude, then, one might disagree with me on my assumptions about how and why a Puzzle Approach methodology works for standard philosophical puzzles. But without saying anything more about how one thinks it *does* work, we are just back to the problem of answering what the relation is, then, between a puzzler's speculative account of the Trinity and the doctrine of the Trinity itself. Without saying more, we seem to either have an invalid argument in defense of the doctrine of the Trinity, or one that begs the question against the anti-Trinitarian.

Furthermore, I strongly suspect that the foregoing two general ways of fleshing out the Puzzle Approach (i.e., one that involves some kind of consistency transferring relation, and one that is question-begging) are exhaustive. For the definition of "consistency transferring relation" is essentially just *whatever* relation would make the Puzzler Argument valid. So, suppose the puzzler's methodology neither assumes *a priori* that the doctrine of the Trinity is consistent and "works backwards," as it were, from there to his account, nor involves a valid argument "going forward," so to speak, from his account of the Trinity to the doctrine of the Trinity itself. In that case, what kind of reasoning process could we have that would somehow essentially involve (1) an account of the Trinity, (2) the doctrine of the Trinity itself, and (3) the property of logical consistency?

Those, then, are the considerations I bring against the Puzzle Approach. Again, I don't claim to have given a "knock-down" argument. After all, it might in theory be possible for a puzzler to specify some consistency transferring relation that holds between his proposed account of the Trinity and the doctrine of the Trinity itself (or P), allowing him to avoid the charge of invalidity. Or again, a puzzler could argue that Puzzle Approach methodology, as it operates in metaphysics and other areas of philosophy, in fact works differently than I

have assumed, and that the way it in fact works is, after all, analogous to how it would work in philosophical theology in some such way as not to be question-begging after all. However, as it stands, unless some puzzler can come forward and say more about how his methodology works, we would seem to be left with quite a large amount of literature that consists either of invalid arguments, or question-begging arguments. The next move, then, belongs to the puzzler. Unless and until the puzzler can answer these questions about his methodology, we must pursue our inquiry through other means.

3.2   The Mysterian Approach

In the current literature, the discussion of mysterianism mainly takes place between the once-but-no-longer-Trinitarian Dale Tuggy, and mysterian Trinitarian James Anderson, although both are elaborating in detail on some points made much more briefly by van Inwagen, who in turn takes a cue from some suggestions of John Polkinghorne. While, as we saw, the Puzzle Approach centers on giving an account of the Trinity (thus, implicitly, a proposed solution to the LPT corresponding to the logical form of his account) to show P to be consistent, the Mysterian Approach attempts to defend as rational the belief in P, despite its being an apparent contradiction, without giving any proposed solution or alternative account of the Trinity at all. Yet, the mysterian does not advocate believing in contradictions or willfully ignoring arguments against one's views. How then can he maintain belief in P despite admitting it is an apparent contradiction, and without proposing any alternative?

Simply put, the mysterian claims that, from the fact that something is an *apparent* contradiction, we cannot always conclude that it is a *real* contradiction. Even when P and Q appear to constitute a formal contradiction, we can believe instead that P and Q form a "merely apparent contradiction" or "MAC," as James Anderson abbreviates it.[38] In particular, Anderson holds that the doctrine of the Trinity is a "merely apparent contradiction resulting from an unarticulated equivocation," or MACRUE.[39]

In other words, the mysterian claims that some formally adequate solution to the LPT does exist, but he does not base this belief on his actually accepting any particular account of the Trinity or any particular proposed solution to the LPT. Indeed, according to Anderson it may be that the solution to the LPT involves conceptual distinctions we are not even cognitively equipped to grasp.[40] Thus, methodologically, while I have argued that the puzzler's accounts, by themselves, are not *sufficient* to show the doctrine of the Trinity to be consistent, the mysterian argues they are *unnecessary* anyway. He may find none of the accounts on-offer to be satisfactory, but no matter. For the mysterian's project – and this is the key issue for our purposes – is not to show the doctrine of the Trinity to be consistent. Rather, it is to maintain the rationality and/or

---

38. (ANDERSON 2005), p. 148.
39. (ANDERSON 2005), p. 148.
40. (ANDERSON 2005), p. 153.

warrant of one's belief in the doctrine of the Trinity anyway – even though it really appears to be contradictory.

Let us begin our exposition of Mysterianism with van Inwagen. In "And Yet They Are Not Three Gods But One God,"[41] van Inwagen gives an analogy between the doctrine of the Trinity and quantum physics in support of a position that looks like mysterianism.

> Have we ever been promised by God that we shall understand everything he tells us well enough to resolve all the intellectual difficulties it raises? God's concern with us – just at present, at any rate – is not the concern of a tutor who fears that we shall fail to grasp some nice point: God fears that we shall lose the end for which we were made. His concern with us is entirely practical... As to alleged demonstrations of contradiction – well, our faith is: There is some way to answer these demonstrations, whether or not we can understand it.

> The world, of course, has a handy word for this sort of thing: 'obscurantism.' I would remind the world of certain cases that have arisen in twentieth-century physics. An electron, we are told, is both a wave and a particle. One can ask pointed questions about this thesis. A wave is a spreading, periodic disturbance; a particle is a lump of stuff; How can something be both? I think that there are two equally respectable answers to this question: (1) No one knows; (2) Quantum field theory explains how something can be both a wave and a particle. Let us suppose that the second of these answers is correct, and that some people, those who are at home in quantum field theory, know how something can be both a wave and a particle. Still, there was an interval during which physicists went about saying that electrons were both waves and particles, and had no satisfactory reply to the childishly simple question, "How can something be both a disturbance and a lump of stuff?" ... And I do not think that anyone should blame the physicists for this. I do not think that anyone should have blamed them even if quantum field theory had somehow never been discovered. There were certain undeniable but absolutely astounding experimental data (a "revelation" from nature, as it were); there was a theory that explained those data (a human invention, to be sure, and an extraordinarily brilliant one at that, but not a human invention in the way a motet or an abstract painting is – the theory purported to represent physical reality); and that theory implied that an electron had both a mass and a wavelength.

> Might it not be that the Christian who accepts the doctrine of the Trinity, even though he is unable to answer certain pointed questions about it, is in a position analogous to that of quantum physicists before the advent of quantum field theory? The world, of course, will

---

41. (van Inwagen 1988), Philosophy and the Christian Faith (Morris, ed.): pp. 241-278.

reply that the Christian "revelation" is a fantasy, while the revelation disclosed by nature in the double-slit experiment or in the phenomenon of electron diffraction comprises hard facts of observation. But may we not ask the world to consider the question hypothetically? Suppose the Christian revelation were not a fantasy. If the Holy Spirit really existed and had led the mind of the Church to the doctrine of the Trinity, then might not the Trinitarian be in a position analogous to that of the physicist to whom nature had revealed the doctrine of the Duality? The world may abuse us for believing in God and revelation if it will, but I think the world should admit that once we have accepted something as a revelation, it is reasonable for us to retain it even if we cannot answer all the intellectual difficulties it raises; or at least the world should admit this if the subject matter of the putative revelation is one that it is plausible *a priori* to suppose we should find it very difficult to understand.[42]

Thus, one can see how van Inwagen brings into the discussion a deeper, epistemological contour. He raises the question, does the Trinitarian even *need* to offer any solution to the LPT? Need he be able to actually demonstrate the logical consistency of P? Is it ever OK to believe in an apparent contradiction, even if we can't dispel that apparent contradiction?

In "The unfinished business of Trinitarian theorizing,"[43] after rejecting all of the Trinitarian accounts currently on-offer in the literature (including van Inwagen's relative identity proposal),[44] Dale Tuggy discusses van Inwagen's analogy above and takes up the epistemological question, saying:

> . . . Can one reasonably believe an apparent contradiction?

> It seems to me that one can, if two somewhat hard-to-specify conditions are met. First, one must have very strong grounds for believing the claim or claims in question. Second, one must have some reason to suspect that the contradiction is only apparent. Unless these two conditions are met, one ought not believe any apparent contradiction[.][45]

But Tuggy claims that neither condition holds. He gives a rough analogue of P as follows:[46]

    (1)   God is divine.

---

42. (van Inwagen 1988), pp. 243-244.

43. (Tuggy 2003).

44. I use "proposal" here, since the things van Inwagen says about the Trinity do not constitute an "account" in the specific sense in which we are using that term. (See 3.1, p. 57 ff.) Van Inwagen offers a *proposed solution* (a logical form), but consciously avoids filling it in with specific *content* about the metaphysical workings of the Trinity.

45. (Tuggy 2003), p. 176.

46. Why only rough? See footnote 55, p. 84.

(2)   The Father of Jesus Christ is divine.

(3)   The Son, Jesus Christ, is divine.

(4)   The Holy Spirit is divine.

(5)   The Father is not the Son is not the Holy Spirit is not God. That is, these four – Father, Son, Holy Spirit, God – are numerically distinct individuals.

This last claim can be broken into two parts:

> (5a)   These three are numerically distinct: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
>
> (5b)   God is numerically distinct from any of these: Father, Son, Holy Spirit.

(6) Whatever is divine is identical to at least one of these: the Father, the Son, or the Holy Spirit.[47]

Then in reference to these claims, he states:

> With our claims (1)–(6) above, or the inconsistent triad (1), (5), (6), the second of these conditions is not met, for the contradiction is crystal clear. Even if one denies that, it is doubtful that we have strong enough grounds for (1)–(6) to swallow the apparent contradiction. The only way we could have strong grounds for (1)–(6) or any version of the doctrine would be if we very reasonably believed it had been revealed by God.[48]

No doubt van Inwagen would claim that he does "very reasonably believe" the doctrine of the Trinity has been revealed by God. But, after making the claim that the doctrine of the Trinity is not explicitly found in scripture,[49] Tuggy continues:

> But whether one grounds the doctrine in the Bible or in council documents, one will be hard pressed to show that we are so justified in believing that God revealed doctrine X that we should believe X, even though it seems as contradictory as the claim that there is a square circle. This is why so much energy has recently been spent by those in the ST and LT camps on coming up with a clearly consistent (or at least, a not clearly inconsistent) version of Trinitarian doctrine.[50]

---

47. p. 166

48. (Tuggy 2003), p. 176.

49. See Chapter 6.4, p. 292 ff., and esp. p. 305 on theological objections, for my deep misgivings about this sort of claim.

50. (Tuggy 2003), p. 177.

That is, even if we have a great deal of warrant for accepting P, Tuggy simply denies that this belief is highly warranted enough that it can outweigh P's apparent inconsistency. This question of how much *antecedent* warrant there might be for the doctrine of the Trinity seems to be one of the key issues for Tuggy.

Tuggy concludes:

> ... when we discover a contradictory, impossible, or unintelligible claim in Trinitarian theorizing, we should consider it the product of misguided or confused human theorizing, and not something which dropped into our laps from above. We Christian theologians and philosophers came up with the doctrine of the Trinity; perhaps with God's help we will come up with a better version of it.[51,52]

Next into the fray comes James Anderson, with a 2005 paper,[53] and later a 2007 book on the subject.[54]

At the time of "Unfinished Business," Tuggy was still a Trinitarian who would seem to have been in the puzzler camp, and he gives some hints that the LPT could be solved by identifying God with the Father alone.[55] So Anderson first (and rightly, in my view) argues that the doctrine of the Trinity is more paradoxical than Tuggy's discussion reveals, and that all parts of the paradox are pretty firmly rooted in scripture. To Tuggy's (1)–(6), Anderson adds the "biblical data" that:

(7) The Father of Jesus Christ is identical to God.

And

(8) The Son, Jesus Christ, is identical to God.[56]

He also suggests that there is reasonable biblical support for:

(9) The Holy Spirit is identical to God.[57]

Finally he suggests that the following is probably a biblical datum as well:

---

51. (Tuggy 2003), pp. 178-179
52. Note what seems to be a puzzler presupposition – that we need to "come up with" a better "version of" the doctrine of the Trinity, rather than simply *discover* what it is.
53. (Anderson 2005).
54. (Anderson 2007).
55. Note that Tuggy's (1)–(6) is consistent with this kind of unitarianism, which Tuggy later adopts, whereas our P is not consistent with Tuggy's unitarianism. This is why I call them only "rough" analogues. In my view, Tuggy's unitarianism is misguided. Within a certain community, the singular expression, "the philosopher," referred specifically to Aristotle. This did not mean that the predicate "philosopher" could not be applied to anyone else, yielding the conclusion that there is more than one philosopher. Anderson's criticism of Tuggy's formulation seems to be another way of getting at much the same issue.
56. (Anderson 2005), p. 146.
57. (Anderson 2005), p. 147.

(10) There is one divine being.[58]

With these in place, he says:

> ...the biblical data which Trinitarian theorizers need to accommodate turn out to be rather more extensive (and awkward) than Tuggy's assessment would suggest. His contention that a version of the doctrine which satisfies the triple constraints of consistency, intelligibility, and good fit with the Bible can be achieved by rejecting (5b) – as well as, one assumes, (8)–(10) – is subject to considerable doubt. Yet the logical problem that motivates Tuggy's proposal is not yet resolved, for, even leaving aside (5b), a seeming contradiction arises simply from adding (8) to the mix. Tuggy's arguments against ST and LT are persuasive; I concur with his conclusion that they fail to deliver in their promises. So what is a rational, biblical Trinitarian to do?[59],[60]

Before giving his positive proposal, he considers the option of just accepting a contradiction, and agrees with Tuggy that simply accepting a contradiction will not do. "Now, I quite agree with Tuggy that it will not do to say that the Trinity is really contradictory... We should avoid, if at all possible, falling back on the idea that the law of non-contradiction does not apply when theorizing about God."[61]

Instead, Anderson proposes that the doctrine of the Trinity may appear to be contradictory due to being a "Merely Apparent Contradiction Resulting from an Unarticulated Equivocation" or MACRUE.

> ... [A]n intelligible distinction may be made between apparent contradiction and real contradiction; thus an intelligible distinction may be made between apparent-and-real contradiction and apparent-but-not-real contradiction. Let us refer to an instance of the latter as a merely apparent contradiction (MAC). Having dismissed as untenable the idea that the Trinity is genuinely contradictory, we are left with the possibility that the theological claims suggested by the biblical data constitute a MAC.

> ... [K]nowing that the relevant distinctions could in principle be articulated and explicated is sufficient grounds for distinguishing a

---

58. (ANDERSON 2005), p. 147.

59. (ANDERSON 2005), p. 147.

60. I note, in passing, Tuggy and Anderson's apparent shared assumption of the appropriateness of a puzzle approach methodology – the search for "a version of the doctrine which satisfies the triple constraints of consistency, intelligibility, and good fit with the Bible..." with no discussion of how to determine whether any given account of the Trinity that satisfies those theoretical constraints genuinely counts as a "version of" the doctrine of the Trinity. As it seems to me, mysterianism per se is free either to agree or disagree with puzzle approach methodology, as the mysterian simply has a different goal from the puzzler. In this particular case, Anderson seems not to challenge the general thrust of the puzzle approach. More on which below. (3.2, esp. p. 92.)

61. (ANDERSON 2005), p. 148.

MAC from a genuine contradiction. MACs of this kind are thus accounted for by the presence of unarticulated equivocation among key terms involved in the claims. For the sake of brevity, I will hereafter refer to an instance of this phenomenon as a MACRUE (Merely Apparent Contradiction Resulting from Unarticulated Equivocation).[62]

A few pages later, Anderson rehearses some of the ways in which the doctrine of the Trinity might turn out to rest on equivocations and how those could be articulated:

... [A] formally consistent expression of Trinitarian doctrine can be constructed simply by explicitly articulating distinctions between the relevant terms: distinguishing 'is$_1$' and 'is$_2$', say, or 'divine$_1$' and 'divine$_2$'. Alternatively, problematic terms can be appropriately qualified so as to eliminate formal inconsistency; for example, the term 'one' can be redefined to accommodate the enumerative oddities raised by the metaphysics of divine personhood (while still applying in the usual way to non-divine persons and other mundane entities). Whatever route is taken, however, the essential point is this: given that we are dealing with a MACRUE, the vocabulary used to express the doctrine can in principle be adapted so as to eliminate any formal contradiction.[63]

With his account of a MACRUE in place, Anderson goes on to address the question whether it is reasonable to believe a paradoxical doctrine. In reference to Tuggy's two conditions of having very strong grounds for believing the paradoxical claim or claims in question and having some reason to suspect that the contradiction is only apparent, Anderson says:

Now it seems to me that the second of these conditions will normally be met, at least in part, by way of the first being met. After all, if I have 'very strong grounds' for believing a set of claims that seem contradictory, don't I thereby have good reason to suspect that the inconsistency is merely apparent? This principle is certainly supported by the examples of MACRUEs offered earlier. Furthermore, it is plausible to hold that Christians can have very strong grounds for believing those claims typically taken to constitute the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity, namely, the fact that each of those claims is implied by an array of scriptural data. If the Bible is indeed inspired by God, and if the Holy Spirit can induce in a person's mind a firm conviction that this is so, then Christians can be warranted in believing both direct biblical claims and also whatever follows from those claims 'by good and necessary consequence' (as the Westminster Confession puts it). In favourable circumstances, those beliefs may be warranted to a high degree.[64]

---

62. (ANDERSON 2005), p. 148.
63. (ANDERSON 2005), p. 151.
64. (ANDERSON 2005), p. 154.

Thus, Anderson seems to be basing his argument on a presupposition that Trinitarians are (or might be) highly warranted in their belief in the doctrine of the Trinity. He ties this into the warrant Christians have for believing in the divine inspiration of the Bible:

> There is excellent scriptural support for the individual components of the doctrine of the Trinity, as any good systematic theology text will document. And if the belief that the Bible is divinely inspired (or at least that the relevant biblical data are of divine origin) can be warranted to a high degree, as Plantinga and others have argued, then so can the derivative Trinitarian beliefs. This in itself can provide reasonable grounds for resisting the inference from apparent contradiction to genuine contradiction.[65]

In Tuggy's response to Anderson,[66] Tuggy admits that there are scenarios in which we are warranted in believing P and warranted in believing Q, and warranted in believing I: that P and Q are inconsistent, but in which the rational thing to do is maintain belief in P and Q. But this can occur, on Tuggy's view, only when the warrant for I is less than the warrant for P and Q.[67] In this case, although we are warranted in believing I (even, potentially, highly warranted, possibly even so warranted it would count as knowledge, if it were true and we believed it), it is still permissible to reject it.[68] He further argues that, while belief in an apparently contradictory pair of propositions "may be reasonable for some people at some times," it "is unstable or fragile, in that new information rather easily knocks one out of one's reasonable belief in an apparent contradiction."[69]

This is because in his view, first of all, the warrant we have for religious beliefs will never be maximal, since firmness of belief is a necessary condition on warrant, and "religious claims themselves will never seem true [. . .] at the maximal level."[70] Furthermore, the warrant for believing I can be increased "through the study of metaphysics, logic, and/or precise (philosophical) theology."[71] And finally the strength of our beliefs in P and Q (again, a necessary condition on warrant in his and Anderson's views, both following Plantinga's epistemology) can be decreased "through the study of the Bible, biblical exegesis, and historical and recent systematic theology."[72]

Anderson, on the other hand, rejects both the claim that the only rational course of action when warrant for I is equal to or greater than that for P or for Q is to reject P or reject Q (by either denying or withholding)[73] and the claim

---

65. (ANDERSON 2005), pp. 156-157.
66. (TUGGY 2011).
67. (TUGGY 2011), pp. 19-20 of online version.
68. (TUGGY 2011), p. 19 of online version
69. (TUGGY 2011), p. 15 of online version.
70. (TUGGY 2011), p. 16 of online version.
71. (TUGGY 2011), p. 18 of online version.
72. (TUGGY 2011), p. 18 of online version.
73. (ANDERSON 2011), pp. 21-23 of online version.

that warrant for I is likely to be increased and/or the warrant for P or for Q likely to be decreased (and argues that it is, after all, *probability* here that is the question, rather than mere *possibility*).[74]

As I said, we we will not have space for a full explication and adjudication of the dispute, and hopefully it is clear why now. However, without settling all of the epistemological questions raised in the Tuggy-Anderson debate, we can, first, add a novel problem for the mysterian to grapple with, and second, clarify why mysterianism is not so much *an alternative methodology* to the Puzzle Approach or the Historical Approach, as a methodology with *an alternative goal* (or set of related goals). Finally, we will explore the friendly suggestion for the puzzler we mentioned earlier – a way of combining the Puzzle Approach methodology with the goals of the mysterian.

A Challenge for Mysterianism

First then, I believe the taxonomy we presented in the first chapter creates a certain challenge concerning the *motivation* for mysterianism.

Of course there might be many reasons one would be a mysterian, but it appears that one strong motivation working in the background for mysterians like Anderson is a certain dissatisfaction with all of the on-offer proposed solutions to the LPT. Anderson seems to want to be able to reject *all* of the proposed solutions currently on offer, but still believe that there exists *some* solution. (Indeed, at the time of "Unfinished Business," Tuggy seemed to share much in common with this position, in the sense that he rejected all of the on-offer solutions to the LPT, but still held out hope that that the "business of Trinitarian theorizing" was simply "unfinished." That "perhaps with God's help we will come up with a better version of [the doctrine of the Trinity]."[75] But of course, he already disagreed with the epistemological stand of the mysterian.)

It's no mystery why this desire to be free to reject all on-offer accounts of the Trinity would motivate one to take the Mysterian Approach. Both the Puzzle Approach and the Historical approach require one to say in essence, "The doctrine of the Trinity is consistent... and here's an explanation of *how* it is or could be." On the Mysterian Approach, one also maintains that the doctrine of the Trinity is consistent. The difference is just that the mysterian doesn't have to tell us *how* that could be. To put it in other terms, the mysterian is only seeking to give an *undercutting* defeater-defeater in response to the LPT (an alleged defeater for Trinitarian belief). While the puzzler and the historicist seek to give a *rebutting* defeater-defeater. (See below, Chapter 3.2, p. 90.) Thus, the mysterian won't be pushed toward giving an account of the Trinity or proposed solution to the LPT in the way that the puzzler or historicist would be.

But then why would one be attracted to mysterianism, unless one found fault with, and wanted to reject, all of the accounts or proposed solutions presented in the literature?

---

74. (Anderson 2011), pp. 18-20 of online version.
75. (Tuggy 2003), pp. 178-179.

And yet, it seems that the mysterian will actually not be able to reject *any* of the proposed solutions in the Equivocation Family or the NCIC Family – at least, not on the basis of certain arguments one might have assumed would have been his motivation.

Specifically, he will not be able to reject any of the proposed solutions in those Families based on two of the most prominent reasons usually given – namely, that they employ an unpalatable equivocation on "is God" or an appeal to non-classical-identity counting.[76] This is because, as we saw in the previous chapter, our taxonomy shows that if we rule out proposed solutions to the LPT *based on* those purely syntactic features, we thereby rule out the entirety of the Equivocation Family and the entirety of the NCIC Family, and therefore all possible, non-heretical solutions to the LPT.[77]

Anderson hints at his motives when he states: "Tuggy contends that neither Social Trinitarianism nor Latin Trinitarianism can offer us an interpretation of the doctrine of the Trinity that is both logically consistent and biblically faithful. I concur."[78]

Unfortunately, Anderson himself does not give his specific *reasons* for rejecting Social Trinitarianism and Latin Trinitarianism, though he does state, "Tuggy's arguments against ST and LT are persuasive,"[79] perhaps indicating that he agrees with Tuggy's arguments (which do seem to commit Tuggy to rejecting all possible, non-heretical solutions to the LPT). In any case, it seems unlikely to me that Anderson, or other mysterians, would only want to reject specific accounts of the Trinity on a case-by-case basis or other piecemeal fashion, rather than rejecting all Equivocation Family accounts, and all NCIC accounts, precisely in virtue of the logical features that define those Families of solutions. But if that is so then our taxonomy shows that Anderson would ultimately be committed to rejecting all possible, non-heretical solutions to the LPT.[80]

---

76. He could, for example, remain agnostic about whether there are any successful Equivocation Family solutions to the LPT but still reject all *currently on-offer* Social Trinitarian solutions piecemeal. Say, by rejecting one particular version of Social Trinitarianism on the grounds that one makes God out to be a set, another a community, another a whole, etc. (i.e., on the basis of some objectionable aspect of the content of the view.) But it seems more likely he would want to reject the entire Equivocation Family due to it's saying that God "is God" in a different sense than the sense in which the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are. Likewise, he could remain agnostic about whether there are any successful NCIC Family solutions to the LPT but still reject all current such solutions by rejecting each particular version of Relative Identity Trinitarianism on the grounds of the *specific* relation it involves – the constitution relation, the synergy relation we will see later, etc. (i.e., again, because of some objectionable aspect of the content of the view). But it seems more likely he would reject the entire NCIC Family due to its counting gods by a relation other than classical identity.

77. Since van Inwagen actually puts forward a Relative Identity account of the Trinity, clearly he does not wish to reject such accounts. Thus, the issue I raise for motivation clearly does not apply to his views.

78. (ANDERSON 2005), p. 160.

79. (ANDERSON 2005), p. 147.

80. The same holds for Tuggy and anyone else who rejects the standard Trinitarian accounts *on the basis* of the syntactic features we've used to taxonomize them. Of course, now that Tuggy has abandoned Trinitarianism altogether, he might welcome this result.

To put the point in a very summary way, then, one might distinguish mysterianism into two types. One type would say, in essence, "I don't know what the logical form of P is, because *none* of the on-offer accounts of the Trinity strike me as plausible (due to the formal features we've noted.)" Another type would say, very roughly, "I don't know what the logical for of P is, because *multiple* on-offer accounts of the Trinity seem plausible enough." It seems likely that only the latter type would be workable, but that only the former type would satisfy the mysterian's real motivations.

Mysterianism's Goal

Next, I want to argue that mysterianism is in an important sense not in competition with the the Historical or Puzzle approaches. To see this, recall that in our analysis of the Puzzle Approach, we faulted the puzzler for simply begging the question against the anti-Trinitarian, at least on a certain way of fleshing out the Puzzle Approach, by presupposing a great deal of warrant for belief in the doctrine of the Trinity. Since it seems that the mysterian presupposes a great deal of warrant for his belief in the doctrine of the Trinity, can one argue that the mysterian is guilty of the same sort of question begging?

This turns out, I think, to be a much subtler question than may initially appear. Again, this is the question that occupies a central role in the Tuggy-Anderson debate, and unfortunately a complete analysis would simply take us too far afield. However, we can certainly say the following. One reason it is much more difficult to say whether the mysterian begs the question against the anti-Trinitarian is that, as I said at the outset, and as we can now see much more clearly, the mysterian simply has a different aim from either the historicist or the puzzler. That is, he is arguing for a very different conclusion.

If we view the anti-Trinitarian's argument as an attempt to give a *rebutting defeater* for belief in the doctrine of the Trinity, it seems the puzzler and the historicist alike want to give a *rebutting defeater-defeater*, whereas the mysterian's project is only to give an *undercutting defeater-defeater*. That is, both the puzzler and the historicist want to *demonstrate* that P is logically consistent, showing the anti-Trinitarian's *conclusion* to be false. But the mysterian isn't trying to do this. He only wants to show that one of the anti-Trinitarian's *premises* is either false, *or* simply not sufficiently well supported. He wants to maintain that it's possible for the Trinitarian to have a warranted belief in the doctrine of the Trinity (or that it's rational to believe in the doctrine of the Trinity, or some such related conclusion), despite the anti-Trinitarian's argument. As Anderson points out, his arguments "... can still serve as a defeater-defeater (or defeater-insulator) with respect to theological paradox (i.e., as an undercutting defeater for the inference from D appears to be logically inconsistent to D is false)."[81] The puzzler and historicist, then, are engaged in a project analogous to theodicy in the problem of evil, whereas the mysterian's project is analogous

---

81. (ANDERSON 2011), p. 12 of online version.

to a defense.[82],[83]

If the mysterian's project really just aims at a different conclusion, what *precisely* is that conclusion? It seems to me that there are a number of related, but importantly different, conclusions the mysterian might be aiming at. And whether or not the mysterian project is successful depends both on precisely what that project is (i.e., precisely what property the mysterian wants to ascribe to his Trinitarian beliefs) and a number of factors about one's overarching epistemological theory.

Anderson seems to want to argue that the Trinitarian's belief either is or might be warranted. Warranted enough to count as knowledge, if true. Again, I don't want to pronounce on the question whether that project can be made to work (in the absence of the kind of defense attempted by historicists and puzzlers). But Anderson does (rightly) point out that Tuggy's criticisms of his position at many points seem to rest on underlying internalist epistemological assumptions, while Anderson's epistemology, following Plantinga's, is externalist.[84] If the conclusion a mysterian wanted to arrive at had to do with internalist justification of Trinitarian beliefs, the position might be more clearly problematic. Given Anderson's externalism, it's more difficult to say.

However, in my view a clearer path is the one that appears to be taken by van Inwagen.[85] Without going into great detail, his remarks indicate that the conclusion he wants to draw is not even as strong as saying that Trinitarian belief is, or even that it might be, highly warranted. Recall this:

> The world, of course, will reply that the Christian "revelation" is a fantasy, while the revelation disclosed by nature in the double-slit experiment or in the phenomenon of electron diffraction comprises hard facts of observation. But may we not ask the world to consider the question *hypothetically*? *Suppose* the Christian revelation *were* not a fantasy. *If* the Holy Spirit really existed and *had* led the mind of the Church to the doctrine of the Trinity, *then* might not the Trinitarian be in a position analogous to that of the physicist to whom nature had revealed the doctrine of the Duality? The world may abuse us for believing in God and revelation if it will, but I think the world should admit that *once we have* accepted something as a revelation, it is *reasonable* for us to retain it even if we cannot answer all the intellectual difficulties it raises. . .[86]

The repeated use of hypothetical terms – "hypothetically," "suppose," "if" – suggests that his intended conclusion is of a merely hypothetical character. *If*

---

82. (ANDERSON 2011), pp. 12-13 of the online version.

83. I will briefly discuss below the prospects for a Puzzle Approach that would also adopt a more modest, defense-like goal.

84. (ANDERSON 2011), p. 18.

85. To the extent that van Inwagen fits into the mysterian camp, which as we've seen is not totally.

86. (van INWAGEN 1988), p. 244. Emphasis mine.

a Trinitarian's beliefs *were* highly warranted, would the anti-Trinitarian argument count as a defeater, or would mysterian considerations count as adequate defeater-defeaters? That is, while Anderson's book extends Plantinga's Aquinas / Calvin model of warranted Christian belief to encompass the doctrine of the Trinity to argue that Trinitarian belief *really could be* warranted,[87] it seems van Inwagen only wants to argue that *if* Trinitarian belief *were* warranted, anti-Trinitarian arguments would not defeat it (without even committing on whether they are or might be warranted).

Furthermore, reading a bit more deeply into the final sentence of the quote from van Inwagen above, it may also be that van Inwagen is not only arguing for a hypothetical conclusion that would have a consequent involving an externalist, Plantingian-Andersonian concept of warrant, but one involving a perhaps related but distinct concept of *reasonableness*. This might be a more deontic notion, like being "within one's epistemic rights." (Note van Inwagen's use of the term "blame" in his analogy, "I do not think that anyone should *blame* the physicists for this. I do not think that anyone should have *blamed* them even if quantum field theory had somehow never been discovered.")[88] Not that, if Trinitarian belief were warranted, anti-Trinitarian arguments would not defeat it. But that, if Trinitarian belief were at least *reasonable* (un-blameworthy), then anti-Trinitarian arguments would not render it *unreasonable* (blameworthy). Trinitarians would still be within their epistemic rights in maintaining their belief in the doctrine of the Trinity.

This latter interpretation, in my view, might be even more easily defended, though as always in philosophy, one might argue that the progressively more defensible alternatives we have briefly touched upon are also progressively less exciting. But be that as it may, the features of what seems to be van Inwagen's position just discussed certainly render it more easily defensible. And this is why it turns out to be much less than clear that the mysterian is begging the question against the anti-Trinitarian in the way the puzzler (on one fleshing out of his view) was.

But happily, all of this also makes a refutation of the Mysterian Approach unnecessary for the historicist. For as should now be clear, the Mysterian Approach turns out to be, not so much another methodology in competition with the Historical Approach and the Puzzle Approach, but a methodology with a different goal, compatible, in principle, with either. The mysterian is only seeking to show something about the epistemic status of *his own beliefs* (that they are *reasonable*, or that they are *warranted*, or that *hypothetically* they could *remain undefeated*, or *remain reasonable*, in the face of the LPT, or something along these lines). The historicist and the puzzler, on the other hand, are trying to show something about *the doctrine of the Trinity itself* – that it is *consistent*.

---

87. See esp. Chapter 6 of (Anderson 2007).
88. (van Inwagen 1988), p. 244. Emphasis mine.

A Suggestion for the Puzzler

This in turn raises an additional important question about the Puzzle Approach. Namely, if it should turn out that the puzzler's methodology is insufficient to achieve its goal (or that the mysterian's methodology is insufficient to achieve its goal), would one be able to construct a sort of hybrid methodology, taking the goal of the Mysterian Approach but employing the accounts of the Puzzle Approach? This would be an attempt to use a speculative Trinitarian account to show, not that P is consistent (a rebutting defeater-defeater), but that the argument for its inconsistency is flawed (an undercutting defeater-defeater). The accounts, then, would not be intended to *reveal the actual logical form* of P, but only to demonstrate that *there are* logical forms that P epistemically might (for all we know) have that would be consistent. Perhaps the theoretical virtues an account has could be used to show it to be more charitable or for some other reason a more plausible reading than the anti-Trinitarian's reading(s) of P.

I think there would still be a few issues with such an approach.

First, again, without doing some historical work, the puzzler still has to admit that, for all he knows, his account may not actually turn out to be a version of the doctrine of the Trinity at all. Indeed, without saying anything more, puzzlers must admit that all of their accounts may just be logically consistent heresies, since, without saying anything more, for all we know, his account may not even be logically consistent with the doctrine of the Trinity. Thus, without saying anything more, the Trinitarian puzzler shouldn't actually *advocate accepting* his account as true – or even likely to be true – even if he does advocate accepting the doctrine of the Trinity itself as true (indeed, precisely *because* he advocates accepting the doctrine of the Trinity itself as true, and because, without delving into the history, for all we know, his account might entail the falsehood of the doctrine of the Trinity). So, on this proposal, without going back and answering the questions we posed in section 1, a puzzler's speculative account of the Trinity should at best be put forward only as a defeater-defeater, not as a way of understanding or conceptualizing the Trinity that it would be *actually acceptable* for Christians to believe. The existence of a possible interpretation of S that is consistent may defeat the *prima facie* warrant for thinking P is inconsistent. But that doesn't mean it constitutes a "version of" P itself (nor indeed that it is even logically compatible with P).

Second, without providing any reason to think that one's account bears any actual logical relation to the doctrine of the Trinity itself, it's still not clear how strong a puzzler account would be even as a defeater-defeater. Returning to the Problem of Socrateic Immortality,[89] suppose I believe that all men are mortal, that Socrates is a man, but that Socrates is immortal. One can easily give me a defeater for that conjunction, showing that the logical form that seems *prima facie* reasonable to attribute to it is inconsistent. On the other hand, we know that it's *possible* to give an account on which that conjunction is consistent. But without showing that it's *reasonable* to think the logical form of my account *really does reflect* the logical form of that conjunction, it's not

---

89. See p. 76 ff.

clear that I've succeeding in defeating the defeater.

In other words, it's still not immediately obvious whether this approach would work, without the additional premise that the puzzler's account either is identical to P or logically entails P or is logically isomorphic to P, etc. And just as before, it isn't clear how one would show *that* without explicating the logical form of P in enough detail that one might have just determined its logical consistency altogether (giving a *rebutting* defeater-defeater), without even making reference to the speculative account, making the speculative account, again, superfluous.

Conclusion on the Puzzle Approach and the Mysterian Approach

In conclusion, then, while there is much more to say about methodology, two points should be clear.

The first is that the Mysterian Approach, regardless of whether it turns out to be successful in its goal or not, is simply directed at *a different goal* from that of the historicist or the puzzler.

The second is that, to date, puzzlers have not been clear as to what precisely their arguments are supposed to *show*, so that it is unclear what role their speculative accounts of the Trinity are supposed to be playing in these arguments. In order to evaluate puzzlers' arguments fully, we would need to know, at a minimum, their *conclusion*. (Presumably the same as the historicist's, though perhaps it would turn out that some would prefer to adopt a more mysterian conclusion, were they to state their conclusion explicitly.) Next, whatever the conclusion turns out to be, we need to know precisely what the *premises* of the argument in support of it are. Once the project of stating those elements has been completed, then, the bigger question will be, "*What role* (if any) does the puzzlers' speculative account of the Trinity play in this argument?" (Whatever exactly the argument turns out to be.) But until the puzzler completes the project of stating his argument explicitly, it is at best unclear whether his accounts will ultimately play any essential role in that argument after all, or whether the project will not ultimately just collapse into the Historical Approach.

For the reasons given in section 1, it seems unlikely to me that puzzlers will get very far in trying to put their accounts to use in proving the conclusion that P is consistent (rebutting the anti-Trinitarian argument). It seems much more likely that they could use their accounts to make some kind of point about about the epistemic situation of the Trinitarian, *a la* the Mysterian Approach (undercutting the anti-Trinitarian argument). But even there it isn't immediately obvious precisely how their argument will go, whether it would be successful, or whether their accounts will actually end up playing any essential role in those arguments after all.

3.3   The Historical Approach

I've argued that the Puzzle Approach is insufficient for answering the question, "of all of the possible logical forms we might ascribe to P, which one is right? (Or, if more than one is right, which ones?)" And the Mysterian Approach is not even directly concerned with that question in the first place. How, then, does the Historical Approach recommend we answer the question?

We've already seen hints of this view in van Inwagen. We can also grasp the view that some historical relation between one's account and the doctrine of the Trinity itself is essential simply by looking at the way in which authors like Swinburne or Cross proceed with their discussions.[90]

Although complicated in its implementation, the Historical Approach is fairly simple in its essence. Put simply, the historicist claims that the *correct answer* to the LPT will be whatever answer (solution or non-solution) to the LPT is implicitly given by the accounts of the Trinity historically held by the authors of the (orthodox) doctrine of the Trinity itself.

That is, the historicist does not attempt to find a *solution* to the LPT *a priori*. On the Historical Approach, whether the answer to the LPT is a solution or non-solution is to be determined by examining the doctrine of the Trinity itself, or particular historical versions of it. Thus, the historicist admits that, without begging the question, it cannot be determined *a priori* whether that answer will be a solution or a non-solution. The historicist only claims that his answer to the LPT will be *correct*, not necessarily that it will be a *solution*.

That is a brief statement of the methodology. But let us examine some potential objections from puzzlers, mysterians, and anti-Trinitarians, which will at the same time give us occasion to elaborate a bit on the view as well.

3.3.1   Objection 1: The Puzzler's *Tu Quoque*

I said that one can carry out the Historical Approach by examining the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity itself, *or particular historical versions of* the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity. Does the Historical Approach, then, not fall prey to the same problem as the Puzzle Approach – namely that it will have to navigate between the Scylla of showing that the "version of" relation is a consistency transferring relation and the Charybdis of showing that some historical account of the Trinity actually is a(n orthodox) version of the doctrine?

No. This is because the accounts that the historicist advocates examining are just those that are *definitive of* the Trinitarian tradition itself, rather than ones deliberately constructed so as to be logically consistent or otherwise theoretically virtuous. To be sure, the historicist must say something about any account he examines being part of the Trinitarian tradition. And I will address that fact, albeit only briefly, at the end of the chapter. But, however one thinks about traditions and schools of thought, it seems that in practice we have perfectly

---

90. E.g., Swinburne's discussions of the historicity of his account in (SWINBURNE 1988) and (SWINBURNE 1994), or Cross's discussions of patristic accounts of the Trinity in response to Brian Leftow in (CROSS 2012).

good, practical ways of figuring out who lies in a certain intellectual tradition and who doesn't, and likewise what propositions are more central or less central to a given school of thought. One might wonder why, then, the puzzler couldn't avail himself of the same sorts of arguments and considerations, and simply give the same sorts of historical arguments to show that his theory was, in fact, within the same tradition. And of course, he could. Indeed, I would argue he *should*. Nothing wrong with it. But of course, to do so would be to no longer treat the project merely as a puzzle, divorced, or at least largely divorced, from historical concerns. It would be to collapse into the Historical Approach.

Think of Tuggy's statement, "The doctrine of the Trinity has a long and interesting history... In this paper *I will avoid as much of this post-biblical tradition as I can...*" or Forrest saying, "I grant that all this is speculative. But in order to defend a moderate Social Trinitarianism *it suffices* to provide a speculative metaphysics which is no worse than its rivals..."[91] Puzzlers could indeed go back and try to back up the claim that their accounts are orthodox version of the doctrine of the Trinity by using historical arguments. But in doing so, they would no longer "avoid... post-biblical tradition" or rely on nothing more than mere "speculation."

Now I said that the accounts that the historicist advocates examining are just those that are definitive of the Trinitarian tradition itself. What if one supposes that *there are no such accounts*?

In the introduction to *Analytic Theology: New Essays in the Philosophy of Theology*, Mike Rea gives several "prescriptions" characteristic of analytic philosophers' approach to theology, along with what he takes to be the major criticisms of these features. He relates my Historical Approach to his first prescription, labelled "P1":

> ...P1 recommends that we operate under the assumption that positions and conclusions can be formulated in sentences that can be formalized and logically manipulated. One might object, however, that this prescription misconstrues the nature of philosophical and theological positions. Consider empiricism, for example. This position is notoriously problematic when thought of simply as a thesis about sources of knowledge. It is significantly less so when thought of as somehow involving attitudes, preferences, dispositions, and so on. Though no one that I know of has said exactly this, one might easily imagine someone claiming that empiricism simply cannot be understood apart from extensive familiarity with the writings of various historical empiricists. Any attempt to distill the position down to a thesis would inevitably fail; any attempt to express it propositionally and reject it on the basis of its alleged "logical consequences" would be wholly misguided. And the problem would be that all such attempts are objectionably "ahistorical". They leave out the historical circumstances (whatever they might be—facts about particular

---

91. (FORREST 1998) p. 293 – emphasis mine.

authors and their intellectual climates, facts about what the position at various times is being defined in contrast with, and so on) that help constitute the position as whatever it is, and so they set up a mere caricature as an object of discussion or target for attack. Nobody that I am aware of has actually accused critics of empiricism of being 'ahistorical' in just this way; but the charge has been leveled against (for example) analytic philosophers who treat fundamental doctrines of Christianity in the way prescribed by P1. Such philosophers are often mystified by the criticism, in no small part because many of us often comment on (and thus show awareness of) the history of the relevant doctrines in the course of our philosophical treatments of them. But the objection lingers, I think, precisely because we do not regard the history as in any *meaningful* sense determinative of the doctrines.[92]

In a footnote to the final sentence, Rea states, "The first clear expression of this idea that I encountered was in Beau Branson's dissertation proposal (unpublished). I do not know whether he would endorse it exactly as I have articulated it here, however."[93]

If "this idea" means that "history [is] ... determinative of the [content of] doctrines," then I do endorse it. But not in any such way that "the first clear expression of this idea" Rea ever encountered could possibly have been in my dissertation proposal. For the idea I want to endorse is simply what anyone with at least roughly Kripkean views about naming would normally assume about any doctrine that has a name (e.g., empiricism, Stoicism, the doctrine of the Trinity, the doctrine of arbitrary undetached parts, etc.). Specifically, that it is historical facts about a name that determines its referent (in this case, a particular bit of content). And that is not in any obvious conflict with the idea that "positions and conclusions can be formulated in sentences that can be formalized and logically manipulated," nor would it be obvious why the historicist would be committed to the claim that formulating positions and conclusions in logically manipulatable sentences would (necessarily) "misconstrue the nature of philosophical and theological positions." So, let us explore the issue a bit further.

Rea rightly notes that "empiricism ... is notoriously problematic when thought of simply as a thesis about sources of knowledge. It is significantly less so when thought of as somehow involving attitudes, preferences, dispositions, and so on." But this is not the point of the Historical Approach or the criticism of the Puzzle Approach; it is simply an unfortunate feature of empiricism in particular. Let's substitute Stoicism instead. (Perhaps someone out there believes there are aspects of Stoicism that are similarly problematic, but I don't see why that should be, and in any case, for the sake of argument, let's suppose it isn't. Let's suppose the claim that "Any attempt to distill [Stoicism] down to a thesis would inevitably fail" is false.)

---

92. (Crisp and Rea 2011), pp. 30-31.
93. (Crisp and Rea 2011), p. 31, footnote 34.

Still, consider the claim that "[Stoicism] simply cannot be understood apart from extensive familiarity with the writings of various historical [Stoics]" and that to try to do so would "set up a mere caricature as an object of discussion or target for attack." Are these claims true? In a sense, clearly not. And in a sense, clearly so.

Of course, it would be theoretically possible to come to understand *the content* of the body of propositions that is in fact Stoicism if, say, a billion monkeys banged on a billion typewriters for a billion years and eventually happened to produce a clear and concise explanation of the body of propositions in question. Neither I nor the monkeys would then need any familiarity at all with the writings of any Stoics at all. Indeed, I could *grasp the content of* these propositions without knowing that they constituted Stoicism, indeed without having any concept of Stoicism or the Stoics in the first place.

But it is hard to see how I would *realistically come to know* (much less *prove*) that *this is Stoicism*, unless I already had a sufficient (which might be less than "extensive") familiarity with the writings of the Stoics, and could then *compare* those Stoic writings with the product of our philosophical monkeys. (Or, instead of reading the Stoics myself, I might rely on reputable secondary sources. But those secondary sources had better have read the Stoics, or in their turn be relying on others who had, or . . . etc.)

The problem, then, is not so much that there is no possible world in which one might somehow end up understanding the content of Stoic doctrine without doing the relevant historical inquiry. Perhaps some puzzler will even come up with some way to *prove* that a certain set of propositions is Stoic, or bears a consistency transferring relation to Stoicism, without having to engage in any serious historical discussion of the Stoic tradition (or of any authors who themselves discuss the Stoic tradition, etc.). After all, philosophers are tricky. The point is that *the standard way* one would attempt to get clear about the content of some difficult-to-understand Stoic doctrine would be precisely through "familiarity with the writings of various historical [Stoics]" (or familiarity with authors who themselves were familiar with the Stoics, etc.) In other words, *the standard way* to resolve disputes about difficult-to-understand doctrines is just through the methodological approach known as *reading the primary sources.*

And this is precisely because the history of a doctrine *is* what determines its content. (Or, more precisely, the history of a *name* – the name of the doctrine – is what determines *the referent* of that name.) And while I would love to claim credit for being the first person to think of the idea of reading primary sources, or for being the first person to express the idea clearly, this methodology has in fact been around for as long as there has been writing.

Rea writes, "[T]he objection lingers, I think, precisely because we do not regard the history as in any *meaningful* sense determinative of the doctrines." ((Crisp and Rea 2011), p. 31.) But if the historical views of the Stoics themselves are not *in any meaningful sense* determinative of the doctrines of Stoicism, *what exactly would be?*

It is difficult to take very seriously the idea that history really is not "in any meaningful sense" determinative of the content of a doctrine. (What else

98

would be?) But I suspect it would be uncharitable to take Rea's comment here as really intended to rule out history *altogether*. I suspect that what is really going on is not that Rea has some fundamentally different view about how the content of a doctrine (essentially, the referent of the name for the doctrine) is defined or determined. My suspicion is that he likely shares the same intuitions as I about *how* the content of a doctrine is determined, but simply locates the *particular* determinative history of this *particular* doctrine at a different point in history than I do. Specifically, I suspect that he conceives of statements relevant to the Trinity that are found in *the Bible* as definitive of the doctrine of the Trinity, rather than similarly relevant statements found in *the church fathers* who constituted *the pro-Nicene consensus* (which I conceive of as being the determinative history of the doctrine).[94] If that suspicion is correct, then Rea would quite reasonably see the Bible as containing or describing the *determinative* history of the doctrine, and the pro-Nicene consensus as merely a part of the *subsequent* history of the doctrine. (Subsequent to the determinative history.)

Now *if* it were the case that the content of what in English is called "the doctrine of the Trinity" (in other words, the referent of the phrase, "the doctrine of the Trinity") were determined by the authors of the Bible, rather than the pro-Nicenes, then of course I would share Rea's lack of comprehension as to why anyone would fixate so much on the pro-Nicenes (merely another part of the subsequent history of the doctrine). It is for just this reason that I, for example, pay relatively less attention to St. Augustine (who comes to the party, in my view, just a bit too late). And, though valuable, the views of folks like Aquinas and Scotus, as I see it, are not even remotely determinative of the content of the doctrine of the Trinity. Aquinas really is on a par with Rea or anyone else in today's literature (at least in the sense of being only part of the subsequent, not the determinative, history of the doctrine.) And if "the doctrine of the Trinity" just meant (or if we knew that its reference had been fixed to) "what the Bible has to say about the Trinity," then what the pro-Nicenes had to say would be on the same level as Aquinas and Rea as well.

However, I don't think that this is standard English usage. If it were, then it would be *a priori* that the doctrine of the Trinity is biblical. But that is not at all *a priori*. As I discuss below in the concluding evaluation,[95] one of the major criticisms of the doctrine of the Trinity is precisely that it isn't biblical. As deeply misguided as I argue those criticisms are, they are not criticisms that can simply be ruled out *a priori*. The doctrine of the Trinity could turn out to be unbiblical, because the church fathers could have been wrong about how they interpreted the Bible (which is just the argument made by those who argue the doctrine of the Trinity is unbiblical.)

In any case, if we wanted to, we could just disambiguate and define "the doctrine of the Trinity$_{\text{Biblical}}$" and "the doctrine of the Trinity$_{\text{Pro-Nicene}}$." Now it

---

94. At least, I suspect this is his view, on the basis of various remarks of his in conversation and over email; I could be entirely mistaken as to whether he would actually endorse the claim.

95. Chapter 6.4, esp., p. 293, ff.

is *a priori* that the doctrine of the Trinity$_{\text{Biblical}}$ is biblical. But it is not obvious, even to someone who knows quite a bit about the history of the Trinitarian controversy, that the doctrine of the Trinity$_{\text{Biblical}}$ should be incompatible with modalism or Arianism. It is not even obvious, even to someone who knows quite a bit about the history of the Trinitarian controversy, that the doctrine of the Trinity$_{\text{Biblical}}$ might not be *identical to* modalism. (The modalists must have believed this. And the Arians certainly believed that the doctrine of the Trinity$_{\text{Biblical}}$ was identical to Arianism. And even if one thinks, as I do, that the heretics were wrong on all of this, it is not *a priori* or just obvious that they were wrong.)

On the other hand, it is not at all *a priori* that the doctrine of the Trinity$_{\text{Pro-Nicene}}$ is biblical. But it is obvious to anyone who knows anything about the history of the Trinitarian controversy that the doctrine of the Trinity$_{\text{Pro-Nicene}}$ is not compatible with modalism or Arianism. Likewise, if the pro-Nicenes believed that the hypostases are numerically three and yet *homoousios* with one another, then the doctrine of the Trinity$_{\text{Pro-Nicene}}$ entails that.

The question is which of these two disambiguations the unqualified use of "the doctrine of the Trinity" in standard English usage more likely corresponds to. It seems to me obvious that it is the latter. That is, it seems to me that it is not at all *a priori* that the doctrine of the Trinity is biblical. But it is obvious to anyone who knows anything about the history of the Trinitarian controversy that the doctrine of the Trinity is not compatible with modalism or Arianism. Likewise, if the pro-Nicenes believed that the hypostases are numerically three and yet *homoousios* with one another, then the doctrine of the Trinity entails that.

But what if we took the other option? Is it really plausible to say that it is *a priori* that the doctrine of the Trinity is biblical? That it is not obvious, even to someone who knows quite a bit about the history of the Trinitarian controversy, that the doctrine of the Trinity should be incompatible with modalism or Arianism? That it is not even obvious, even to someone who knows quite a bit about the history of the Trinitarian controversy, that the doctrine of the Trinity might not be *identical* to modalism. (Or Arianism?) That certainly doesn't seem like standard English usage to me.

But suppose I am wrong about that. Then wherever I write "the doctrine of the Trinity," read instead "the doctrine of the Trinity$_{\text{Pro-Nicene}}$." That is what I am concerned with in this dissertation. (I simply view it as a separate project to defend the view that the doctrine of the Trinity$_{\text{Pro-Nicene}}$ is biblical, i.e, is, or is a version of, the doctrine of the Trinity$_{\text{Biblical}}$.)

3.3.2   Objection 2: The Mysterian's Conundrum

In conversation, van Inwagen has more than once asked me the question: "In what sense, then, is the doctrine of the Trinity a 'mystery'?" I take the import of the question to be this. If indeed there is some fairly explicit and coherent account of the Trinity to be found in the church fathers, and if this is defini-

tive of the doctrine of the Trinity, then it seems there is nothing particularly "mysterious" about it. What we're doing here is not obviously different from, say, scholarship on the Stoics or the British Empiricists. Not exactly what one would call a "mystery." But isn't the doctrine of the Trinity supposed to be, in some sense, a mystery? (And on van Inwagen's theory, it's easy to see how the doctrine of the Trinity is "mysterious" in a very deep sense. We can see, perhaps, its logical form, but may understand very little of its content.)

Indeed, van Inwagen is right to think that, on the Historical Approach, there isn't any serious difference between investigating the doctrine of the Trinity and investigating, say, Stoicism or Empiricism. Thus, van Inwagen's question needs to be answered. And doing so will help make more clear how the historicist approaches the question of the logical form of P and why.

Let's return to van Inwagen's analogy between the wave-particle duality in quantum physics and the doctrine of the Trinity. Our best theories of quantum physics seem contradictory, particularly with respect to how we understand the nature of light. But it's also the case that each individual part seems well justified. It seems, then, that while the exact nature of light is a mystery, our theories about light are adequate (non- or extremely mildly-misleading, for most practical purposes)[96] descriptions of the behavior of light.

I think the analogy is a good one in many ways, but problematic in a few ways.

First, we have to be clear about the *kind* of mystery light is (or the *sense* which light is a mystery – what Tuggy dubs "positive" vs. "negative" mysteries, explained below). Secondly, we have to be clear about the distinction between *light itself* and *our theories about* light. Last but not least, we have to distinguish between *the theories themselves* and *summaries* of those theories that might be created under certain logical perspicuity-destroying constraints.

Let's take these in order.

First, the nature of light is certainly in some sense "mysterious." But it is mysterious in what Tuggy dubs a "positive" sense, rather than the "negative" sense in which the pro-Nicene tradition says God, or the Trinity, is a mystery.

To say that something is what Tuggy calls a "negative" mystery is to say, so to speak, that there is *too little* information there. It is a "something, I know not what." There is no contradiction, indeed not even an apparent contradiction, in saying that something exists but that it isn't similar enough to anything else we're acquainted with to be able to categorize it. For example, suppose Mr. Healthy, who is normally in good health and seldom gets sick, suddenly becomes ill. We might conclude that something made him sick. But whether it is a bacteria, or a virus, or some kind of poisonous or nauseous substance, or some strange auto-immune response to something, or merely psychosomatic for that matter, we wouldn't know. This doesn't create the appearance of a contradiction. It is a *negative* mystery, a mystery in the sense that it is something clearly real, but about which we lack certain information.[97]

---

96. For more on the distinction between misleading and non-misleading, see below, p. 106 ff.

97. (Tuggy 2011).

On the other hand, to say that something is what Tuggy calls a "positive" mystery is to say, so to speak, that there is *too much* information there. It is not a "something, I know not what." It is a "something which seems to be both P and not-P." Thus, there seems to be a contradiction (or at least a tension) when we describe it. For example, I know that the phenomenon of light is real, but it seems to fit into one category – particle – and seems to also fit into another category – wave – and these categories seem to be mutually exclusive. This does create the appearance of contradiction. It's a mystery in the sense that it is clearly real, yet apparently fits into multiple, *and mutually exclusive*, categories.

Tuggy rightly notes that the tradition of the early church treats God as a "mystery" in the negative sense.[98] There is much about God that we do not (and perhaps cannot) know. (In particular, what God is – His essence or nature, or as the fathers sometimes put it in Aristotelian terms, His "*ti esti*?"). But this in itself doesn't create any appearance of contradiction.

Second, while *light itself* is a mystery, *the content of our own theories about* light is no mystery at all. And this is my answer to van Inwagen. For while the church fathers frequently claim that God in Himself (or the Trinity in itself) is a mystery, they never claim that *the content of their own beliefs about* God or *the doctrine of the Trinity itself* is mysterious. Indeed, to say so would be non-sensical. A "doctrine" (*doctrina* in Latin, *dogma* in Greek) is, "that which is taught," and so, by definition, no dogma can, itself, be so mysterious as to be unteachable. Of course, that is not to say that there can't be perfectly teachable, and non-mysterious dogmata *about* mysterious and unteachable things (e.g., the proposition *that God's essence is mysterious* is not, *itself*, any more mysterious than the proposition *that Mr. Healthy's illness was mysterious*, and thus could be a dogma).

To continue the analogy, suppose you were teaching a course on quantum physics and assigned several texts to the students regarding wave-particle duality and other aspects of quantum physics, explaining to them that the nature of light is a mystery, and that there is much about the physics of things at a quantum level that nobody really understands, but that, nevertheless we are going to study *some of our best theories about* these things. On the test, you give several short-answer questions asking the students what Einstein's reaction was to the idea that probability might play an ineliminable role in describing the movements of fundamental particles. You ask what Heisenberg said about determining the position and velocity of photons. You ask what the thought experiment of Schrödinger's Cat was, and what it was supposed to show, and about the implications of Bell's Theorem.

Suppose one student returns his test with all of these short-answer blanks filled in with statements to the effect that "nobody really understands this precisely," and "quantum physics is a mystery," and so forth.

Perhaps justifiably annoyed, you return the exam with a low grade and

---

98. He says, "I have found mostly negative mysterianism among the catholic church fathers and the medieval traditions beholden to them." (TUGGY 2011), p. 5 of online version.

comments to the effect that, as a matter of simple, historical fact, the student's answers are wrong.

Now suppose the student comes to your office hours and demands a better grade. "After all," he says, "you yourself stated at the very beginning of class that quantum physics is a mystery. If there really are definite right and wrong answers to all of these questions, then in what sense is quantum physics a 'mystery'?"

Surely one would not say, "Good point," and change his grade. Rather, one would point out that the student was simply confused. It is not the theories about quantum physics, or in other words historical facts about what people have actually believed and written, that is "mysterious." Rather, it is light itself, the phenomenon the theories are about, that is mysterious. The question of what light itself actually is is difficult, perhaps impossible, for anyone to answer. The question what so-and-so believed about light is not.

Similarly, the Trinity itself is mysterious (although as we noted above, in a negative, as opposed to positive sense). Still, what the church fathers believed and wrote about the Trinity is not mysterious.

Last but definitely not least, we would do well to expand van Inwagen's analogy by including not only well-developed theories about light, but *summaries* of those theories – summaries made under certain severe constraints.[99]

For whatever reason, most philosophers working in this field show a predilection for choosing to deal with creedal statements and Trinitarian slogans that were originally intended as *summaries* of doctrines for the benefit of an audience mostly of illiterates and slaves, rather than with the fuller explications of those doctrines found in the catechetical lectures, sermons or other writings of the authors of those creeds.

Besides the constraint that these summaries were intended for a largely illiterate audience, in the early centuries of Christianity, it was forbidden to write a creed down.[100] Thus, a creed also needed to be brief enough that it could be memorized. To get an idea of just some of the constraints the authors of a creed would be working under, consider St. Cyril of Jerusalem's introduction to his creed in his *Catechetical Lecture V.12* (c. 350 AD):

Ἐπειδὴ γὰρ οὐ πάντες δύνανται τὰς γραφὰς ἀναγινώσκειν, ἀλλὰ τοὺς μὲν ἰδιωτεία, τοὺς δὲ ἀσχολία τις ἐμποδίζει πρὸς τὴν γνῶσιν· ὑπὲρ τοῦ, μὴ τὴν ψυχὴν ἐξ ἀμαθίας ἀπολέσθαι, ἐν ὀλίγοις τοῖς στίχοις τὸ πᾶν δόγμα τῆς πίστεως περιλαμβάνομεν.

For since not all are able to learn the scriptures, but lack of education hinders some from knowledge, and lack of free time others; so that the soul may not be destroyed from ignorance, we include the whole doctrine of the Faith in a few lines.

---

99. To be clear, my response to van Inwagen's question has ended. What follows is no longer a response to that question, but a useful clarification of the Historical Approach that can be given in light of his analogy – if we expand that analogy in the way I will say that we should.
100. On forbidding the writing of a creed, and more generally the requirement of keeping a creed secret, see (SCHAFF 1919), p. 18, as well as the quote from St. Cyril below.

Ὅπερ καὶ ἐπ' αὐτῆς τῆς λέξεως μνημονεῦσαι ὑμᾶς βούλομαι καὶ παρ' ἑαυτοῖς μετὰ πάσης σπουδῆς ἀπαγγεῖλαι, οὐκ εἰς χάρτας ἀπογραφομένους, ἀλλ' ἐν καρδίᾳ τῇ μνήμῃ στηλογραφοῦντας· φυλαττομένους ἐν τῷ μελετᾶν, μή πού τις Κατηχούμενος ἐπακούσῃ τῶν παραδεδομένων·...

Καὶ τέως μὲν ἐπ' αὐτῆς τῆς λέξεως ἀκούων, μνημόνευσον τῆς Πίστεως, ἐκδέχου δὲ κατὰ τὸν δέοντα καιρὸν τὴν ἀπὸ τῶν θείων γραφῶν περὶ ἑκάστου τῶν ἐγκειμένων σύστασιν.

Οὐ γὰρ ὡς ἔδοξεν ἀνθρώποις συνετέθη τὰ τῆς Πίστεως· ἀλλ' ἐκ πάσης γραφῆς τὰ καιριώτατα συλλεχθέντα, μίαν ἀναπληροῖ τὴν τῆς Πίστεως διδασκαλίαν.

Καὶ ὅνπερ τρόπον ὁ τοῦ σινάπεως σπόρος, ἐν μικρῷ κόκκῳ πολλοὺς περιέχει τοὺς κλάδους· οὕτω καὶ ἡ Πίστις αὕτη, ἐν ὀλίγοις ῥήμασι, πᾶσαν τὴν ἐν τῇ παλαιᾷ καὶ καινῇ τῆς εὐσεβείας γνῶσιν ἐγκεκόλπισται.

Βλέπετε οὖν, ἀδελφοὶ, καὶ κρατεῖτε τὰς παραδόσεις, ἃς νῦν παραλαμβάνετε, καὶ ἀπογράψασθε αὐτὰς εἰς τὸ πλάτος τῆς καρδίας ὑμῶν...[101]

Which I want you both to commit to memory and to rehearse it with all diligence among yourselves when I recite it, not writing it out on paper, but engraving it into your heart through memory; taking care in the recitation that some Catechumen not somehow overhear the things which have been delivered to you...

So for the present listen while I simply say the Creed, and commit it to memory; but at the proper season expect the confirmation out of Holy Scripture of each part of the contents.

For not as seemed good to men were the parts of the Faith composed; but out of all the scriptures the most important points were collected – one complete teaching of the Faith.

And just as the mustard seed in one small grain contains many branches, so also this Faith, in a few words, has embraced all the knowledge of godliness in the Old and New Testaments.

Take heed then, brethren, and hold fast the traditions which you now receive, and write them on the tablet of your heart...[102]

We can see that St. Cyril (as anyone of his time period would) sees the creed (the "Faith") as a *summary* of Christian dogma, constructed in such a way that it can be memorized by those who lack either the education (illiterates) or the time (slaves) to be able to study the scriptures directly. We do well here to remember also that, although in the West we call it a "creed" after the first word in Latin, *credo* ("I believe"), and although it was sometimes called in Greek simply ἡ πίστις ("the Faith"), its full title in Greek was τὸ σύμβολον τῆς πίστεως, "the symbol of the faith." Not "the exhaustive explanation of the faith" or "the fully logically perspicuous representation of the faith." For much the same reasons it would be absurd to take the pledge of allegiance to be an exhaustive explanation of US civics, it would be absurd to take any creed to be

---

101. (St. Cyril of Jerusalem 1967), *Catecheses ad Illuminandos*, V.12.
102. (St. Cyril of Jerusalem and St. Gregory Nazianzen 1894), p. 32.

an exhaustive explanation of Christian theology, or even any particular aspect of theology.

So, let us expand our analogy.

Suppose we were charged with the task of creating a brief summary of quantum physics for an audience of laymen, with, at a minimum, the the following considerations in mind:

1. Much of our audience is illiterate.

2. Many are also slaves, and have little or no free time.

3. For whatever reason, we want to keep the summary secret from outsiders.

What sorts of constraints would this put on us?

A great many, it would seem. And quite serious.

Since it must be kept secret, it should not be written down or put into any form that might become public. And anyway, a written creed would put literate and illiterate audience members on a different footing, so we would likely want to avoid that.

Thus, it likely will have to be memorizable via oral repetition.

Thus, it can only be so long and so detailed.

Thus, in all likelihood, we will only be able to discuss the most important facts about quantum physics, not necessarily all that it embraces. (Important for what? It turns out that our *purpose* will be crucial.)

Nor will we be able to give full, detailed explanations even of the things we do discuss.

Likewise, since we will be trying to encode as much information as possible in as few words as possible, brevity will often trump both clarity and precision.

Thus, it is not likely to be logically perspicuous.

Time constraints would likely prevent us from giving definitions of technical terms. (That would be more appropriate in an introductory class on quantum physics – the equivalent of a catechism.) So we would likely want to avoid technical terminology as much as possible.

That would further limit us to either only expressing propositions that can be stated briefly in layman's terms, or perhaps, if there is no other option on some absolutely critical point, in technical terms that we would have to leave undefined in the summary itself. But of course, there would be no point for us to include such terms unless we did have *some* sort of definition for them in mind, even if we left the explanation to the context of a catechism.

This would put constraints on just what propositions we could even discuss. Some things we might simply have to leave unsaid in the summary, even though they are important issues in quantum physics (though, perhaps not critical *for our purposes* in making the summary).

For example, there would likely be no concise way to explain, in non-technical terms, and in a way that would not invite confusion, the idea that quantum states can be represented as vectors in an infinitely-dimensional Hilbert space in which the relation between the quantum state vector and any given eigenvector

gives us the probability that the quantum system will "collapse" to the state represented by the eigenvenctor upon observation. (Notice that, even there, I couldn't resist using a bit of metaphor, as well as a number of technical terms that I did not define and that would be meaningless to most illiterates – indeed, even to literate and educated people who happen not to have studied quantum mechanics.)

Next, besides making it a practical impossibility to discuss certain propositions, time constraints would also prevent us from going into detail even on a great many of those propositions we might be able to adequately get across, if we had time. We may be forced to express certain ideas in summary ways that would be, strictly speaking, false, since what would be more important would be to give the expression that was *least misleading* given our intended audience and purpose, rather than what was most literally accurate.

To explain what I mean here by misleading, let me give a different analogy. In the context of the popular Atkins diet, it is technically *true* that "it is possible to gorge oneself on bacon and fried chicken, covered in cheese, to drink coffee with butter instead of cream, and still to lose weight." However, while technically *true*, without adding the further caveat that one must not eat any carbohydrates (or only very few), the statement could be devastatingly misleading. People might alter their current diet *in no other way* than by adding in heaps of calorie-dense foods of the types mentioned, which would lead to the exact opposite results of those intended.

On the other hand, a false *but non-misleading* summary of the principles of the Paleo diet would be that it advocates eliminating any food from one's diet that wouldn't have been eaten in the paleolithic era. This is not strictly true. Most people in the "paleo" community drink coffee and praise its health benefits, for example, despite coffee being unavailable in the paleolithic era. Likewise, there is some controversy about dairy, potatoes and other foods. Still, although the simplistic summary of the Paleo diet is not strictly speaking true, it is much less misleading than the proposition about the Atkins diet which *is* strictly speaking true.

When constructing a summary of any view, it is often more important to go with statements that are less misleading than ones that are more accurate. As St. Cyril states, the purpose of the creed is "that the soul not be destroyed." Thus, when creating a summary, the primary goal will be to lead the hearer into taking the right course(s) of action, and to *not* mislead the hearer into taking any soul-destroying course of action. And there is no reason to suppose this will be likely to lead to precise and logically perspicuous expressions of propositions that are all strictly true, rather than to statements that are simply the least misleading in terms of the hearer's salvation.[103]

The point is that constraints of the sort we are imagining will almost in-

---

103. To foreshadow, the distinction being made here between the pairs true / false and misleading / non-misleading (really, more misleading vs. less misleading) will arise again when discussing Gregory of Nyssa's response to the LPT in the next section. Some misunderstanding of Gregory's view in *Ad Ablabium* has resulted from failing to understand when he is attempting to say something true as opposed to something merely less misleading.

evitably create substantial distortions when we have *a different interest* from the authors of the summary (logical perspicuity as opposed to salvation). But this isn't really problematic – unless you forget the fact that what you are dealing with is only a summary, and a summary created for a very different purpose.

The deeper point, of course, is that it would be absurd to try to evaluate the body of beliefs known as "quantum physics" by discussing nothing other than our summary of it. This is equally true whether one is attacking or defending quantum physics.

Would it make sense for the anti-quantum-physicist to think he could discredit quantum physics by doing nothing more than discrediting *our summary* of it? And that based on what seems to be the most "straight-forward" way of understanding it – without regard to whether the "straight-forward" way of understanding the summary was as expressing what the author(s) of the summary intended it to summarize? (Again, the constraints involved in creating the summary make it highly unlikely that it would turn out to be entirely logically perspicuous – logical perspicuity would almost inevitably have had to be sacrificed in favor of other concerns.)

And if they did, would it make sense for a defender of quantum physics to let them get away with such a thing, and even follow suit? Would it make sense for a defender of quantum physics to think he could defend it by taking *the summary alone* as definitive of, or containing all that is essential to, these theories, then coming up with his own, speculative account of the workings of quantum particles, claiming that the consistency of one's own speculative account suffices to defend quantum physics itself, and treating the writings of Planck, Poincaré, Heisenberg, Born, Dirac, Schrödinger, Bell and so forth as on a par with one's own speculations – just so many different "versions of," "models of," "interpretations of" or "ways of understanding" the summary? Almost as though the summary had come *first* – before the very views it was intended to summarize?

The Historical Approach says no to these questions. According to the Historical Approach, regardless of whether one wants to attack or defend quantum physics, what must be done is to go further back than the summary, to the actual body of beliefs called "quantum physics," which the summary is supposed to be a summary *of*.

The *right* logical forms to ascribe to the beliefs being summarized in the summary will not (necessarily) be reflected by the grammatical forms of the sentences used in the summary, nor will they (necessarily) be those attributed to the statements in the summary by the most "straight-forward" way of understanding those statements. Nor will they (necessarily) be the logical forms found in some "speculation" based on the summary, even if that speculation displays various theoretical virtues and would seem to be a not unreasonable way of making sense of the summary. Rather, the *right* logical forms to ascribe to the beliefs being summarized in the summary will be the logical forms *actually had* by the beliefs that the authors of the summary were *actually* summarizing (whatever those turn out to be).

Likewise, according to the Historical Approach, the *right* logical form to ascribe to the beliefs summarized in a creed will not (necessarily) be reflected by the grammatical forms of the sentences used in the creed, nor will they (necessarily) be those attributed to the statements in that creed by the most "straight-forward" way of understanding those statements. Nor will they (necessarily) be the logical forms found in some "speculation" based on that creed, even if that speculation displays various theoretical virtues and would seem to be a not unreasonable way of making sense of the creed in question. Rather, the *right* logical forms to ascribe to the beliefs summarized in a creed will be the logical forms *actually had* by the beliefs that the authors of that creed were *actually* summarizing (whatever those turn out to be).

And in light of the fact that the statements in S are drawn from creeds authored by figures from what has come to be called the "pro-Nicene consensus," this means that, on the Historical Approach, the right logical form to ascribe to P (the propositions expressed by S) will be the logical form actually had by the content that the pro-Nicenes historically were actually summarizing in these creeds.

Thus, the methods and reasoning processes we will use will be no different from those we would ordinarily use in attempting to determine the content of any body of propositions defined by the beliefs of some group of individuals, e.g., the bodies of beliefs called "Stoicism," or "Empiricism," or "Quantum Physics." And, like proverbial pornography, while it would certainly be hard to spell out the nature of this process in an abstract, general theory, it is fairly easy to recognize and duplicate it in practice.

Central to the pro-Nicene consensus were the Cappadocians – St. Basil the Great, Basil's friend, St. Gregory Nazianzen, and Basil's younger brother, St. Gregory of Nyssa. And both Gregory's were important figures in the second ecumenical council, which produced the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed. (Gregory Nazianzen acted as president of the council for some time, and Gregory of Nyssa was soon afterwards mentioned by name in Roman law as someone whom it was necessary to be in agreement with in order to count officially as a catholic church.)[104]

In what follows, I will focus on the account of the Trinity found in the writings of St. Gregory of Nyssa – and examine it in some detail. Of course, we could do the same with St. Basil, St. Gregory Nazianzen, or any of a number of other figures from the pro-Nicene consensus, such as St. Athanasius, St. Jerome, St. Hilary, or others. But I think Gregory is simply more clear in his writings about a particular point that I think is critical to understanding the way the pro-Nicene consensus responds to the LPT, and that is still misunderstood – namely, the metaphysics of synergy – which will make my task easier.

---

104. See p. 271.

3.3.3   Objection 3: The Anti-Trinitarian's Challenge

Finally, suppose an anti-Trinitarian adopts a hyper-critical approach here, challenging us to *demonstrate* that Gregory's (or whatever particular church father's) view is orthodox or that he lies in the tradition definitive of Trinitarian belief.

If he has any interest in attacking the doctrine of the Trinity, presumably the anti-Trinitarian must have some grasp on what the doctrine of the Trinity is. Presumably the Trinitarian accounts of the figures who constituted the pro-Nicene consensus in the fourth century count as versions of the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity. Now perhaps one would argue that our standards of what counts as orthodox here should be loose enough to count certain *other*, importantly different accounts as well. But if he is willing to say that the Trinitarian theories of the figures who constituted the pro-Nicene consensus – indeed the Trinitarian theories of the very authors of the Nicene-Constantinopolitan creed itself – might *not* count as versions of the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity, then it would seem to be incumbent on the anti-Trinitarian to say what *would* count. For, to return to a question I asked of the puzzler, if the Trinitarian theories of these men don't count as orthodox, *whose would*?

Without any answer to that question, we face the question, "why should we any longer think that the doctrine of the Trinity even includes any of the propositions in P in the first place?" Because they are expressed by the statements in S, and those are contained in or implied by a certain creed or creeds? But why we should be concerned about the statements contained in what is intended to be a summary of a larger theory held by a group of persons (a creed), while not being concerned about the actual theory (or related theories) of any of those actual persons?

In short, the anti-Trinitarian would have to argue that we can somehow know that P – the set of propositions expressed by S – is *a subset* of the doctrine of the Trinity (so that if we show it to be inconsistent, we show the doctrine of the Trinity itself to be inconsistent), while we cannot know that any particular Trinitarian account of any of the church fathers involved in *authoring* the creeds from which S is drawn, is *a superset* of the doctrine of the Trinity (so that even if we show one of their Trinitarian accounts to be consistent, we haven't shown the doctrine of the Trinity itself to be consistent). But if one says that we have no reason to take the Trinitarian accounts of the very authors of the Nicene-Constantinopolitan creed themselves as versions of the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity, then what reason would we have to take any creed that they composed as summarizing the doctrine of the Trinity?

To be sure, we should allow anyone to present a case as to why a certain view should or shouldn't be considered an orthodox version of the doctrine of the Trinity. But any such arguments will have to be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. And it seems that at least *some* people will simply obviously fall within the pale of orthodoxy. In particular, the very authors of the creeds or other writings from which the anti-Trinitarian draws the sets of claims he is attacking. And if Gregory of Nyssa's Trinitarian theory does not count as a

version of the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity, then I no longer have any idea what the doctrine of the Trinity even is, nor do I any longer see why it would be important.[105]

Conclusion

We've seen that, regardless of what difficulties there may or may not be for the Mysterian Approach, it simply has *a different goal* from the Historical Approach. And whether it is ultimately a sound methodology for its more epistemological goals or not, it certainly will not be for our goals. The Puzzle Approach, on the other hand, may have the same goal as the Historical Approach, but if it does, it faces serious questions as to how it could achieve that goal. And although, again, the problems I raise for the Puzzle Approach might be answerable, I, in any case, don't have any good answers to the questions I have raised, so until puzzlers themselves answer them, I can see no other way of proceeding than by taking the Historical Approach.

But what's more, if the mysterian's goal is just to provide a defeater-defeater to the anti-Trinitarian's alleged defeater, it seems that a successful carrying out of the Historical Approach would also accomplish the mysterian's goal, insofar as proving P to be consistent provides a defeater-defeater as well. On the other hand, accomplishing the goal of the Mysterian Approach does not necessarily accomplish the goal of the Historical Approach as just providing any defeater-defeater would not necessarily show P to be consistent. So, there is no reason the mysterian should complain if the historicist attempts to prove the consistency of P, even if the mysterian considers it "overkill."

Additionally, it seems that if a satisfactory solution to the LPT can be found on the basis of the Historical Approach, that solution would satisfy the concerns of the Puzzle Approach as well, whereas the reverse is not necessarily so. That is, even if a puzzler comes up with a thoroughly satisfying account of the Trinity, according to the historicist it won't automatically be clear that this should count as a defense of the doctrine of the Trinity itself.[106]

On the other hand, if a historicist finds, through a historical investigation, that the church fathers who used certain creedal formulae to summarize their beliefs, in fact had a consistent account of the Trinity (or, say, a family of related accounts, at least some of which are consistent), then any such account that is consistent (and has whatever other theoretical virtues the puzzler wants) ought to count as a successful defense of P by the puzzler's lights as well. That is, if the puzzler can answer the questions I've raised for his methodology, at

---

105. For more on this, see below, Chapter 6.1, on the formal adequacy of Gregory's account, p. 266 ff.
106. Nor, for that matter, is it automatically clear that the anti-Trinitarian's attack on the logical form of P counts as any reason to think that P is inconsistent. Just as there is no reason to assume that a puzzler's account of the Trinity is logically related to P in the right way to defend it, there is no reason to assume that S itself is a logically perspicuous expression of the content summarized by P. Indeed, as we've seen, there is ample reason to doubt that it would be. (See p. 103 ff.)

best he will show that the arguments of the Puzzle Approach are *sufficient* for proving the consistency of P, not that the arguments of the Historical Approach are *insufficient*. (An account of the Trinity should not be judged worse by the puzzler for the fact that it was actually held by someone instrumental in the development of his favorite creed!)

And again, I take it that, by anyone's account, whatever the (orthodox) doctrine of the Trinity is, and whatever the "version of" relation is, Gregory of Nyssa's account of the Trinity either is identical to the (orthodox) doctrine of the Trinity, or else is a "version of" the (orthodox) doctrine of the Trinity. Thus, if Gregory's account of the Trinity can be shown to be logically consistent, then it would seem to follow, on both the Historical Approach and the Puzzle Approach alike, that the doctrine of the Trinity is consistent.

But if any solution to the Logical Problem of the Trinity to come out of a successful application of the Historical Approach methodology will also count as a successful solution by the lights of the Puzzle Approach, and achieving the goal of the Historical Approach will also achieve the goal of the Mysterian Approach, then we have nothing to lose, and much to gain, in seeking a solution to the Logical Problem of the Trinity through the Historical Approach. And I have given my reasons for preferring to focus on St. Gregory of Nyssa's account of the Trinity in particular.

So then, *what was St. Gregory of Nyssa's account of the Trinity?*

Part III

History

Chapter 4

St. Gregory of Nyssa's Account of the Trinity

> We have frequently said, however, that *the operations of the Trinity are inseparable*; but the Persons needed to be set forth one by one, that . . . we may have a right understanding both of Their Unity and Trinity.
>
> –St. Augustine, *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, Tractate 95.1

We ended the last section with the question, "What is Gregory of Nyssa's account of the Trinity?"

In that section, we saw that there are deep questions as to whether the Puzzle Approach could yield a valid argument concluding in a formally adequate answer to the LPT, and that the Mysterian Approach does not even attempt to answer the LPT in the first place. But we saw that the Historical Approach can provide at least a valid argument concluding with a formally adequate answer to the LPT, and that it is capable of satisfying the concerns of the Puzzle Approach and the Mysterian Approach anyway.

We chose to focus on the views of St. Gregory of Nyssa as one version of the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity.[1]

---

1. I would be prepared to argue that *almost* all of the features of Gregory's account of the Trinity *that are actually essential to his solution to the LPT* were common throughout the entire pro-Nicene consensus. One glaring exception is the question whether "is God" predicates the divine nature (*ousia*), or whether instead it predicates engagement in a certain type of activity (*energeia*). Here there was indeed something of a divide (though not complete or consistent) between East and West. As a rough generalization (that has a number of exceptions), "Western" fathers tended to say only that "God" *either* signifies the divine nature *or* an *energeia* (Lat. *operatio*), whereas "Eastern" fathers tended to come down decisively on the side of "God" signifying an *energeia* and *not* the divine nature or *ousia* – as we will see St. Gregory does (4.2.3, p. 134 ff. below). St. Augustine is the only church father of the time period I know of who says *decisively* of the word "God" that it *is* predicated according to the category of substance. As we will see, St. Gregory not only doubted it, but vehemently denied it, and for very good reasons. See p. 134 below.

The conclusion of our discussion on methodology was that, since Gregory's Trinitarian theology clearly counts as being a version of the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity on anyone's view, then if Gregory's Trinitarian account is consistent, the Doctrine of the Trinity itself (or at least P) is consistent. Since nobody seriously denies that Gregory's Trinitarian theology at least counts as a "version" of the Doctrine of the Trinity or a "form of" orthodox Trinitarianism, all that remains to be seen is whether the answer to the LPT provided by Gregory's account of the Trinity is a solution or non-solution to the LPT. That is, whether Gregory's account of the Trinity is consistent. Let's turn, then, to his view.

4.1 *Ad Ablabium*: Its Structure and Purpose

Of course we neither need to, nor would have the time to, explore every aspect of Gregory's Trinitarian theology. We will focus only on those aspects of his view that are relevant to the LPT. The *locus classicus* for this is his letter *To Ablabius – On Not Thinking to Say "Three Gods,"* (hereafter *Ad Ablabium*) which deals specifically with the issue of whether his account of the Trinity commits him to saying that, *at least in some sense*, there are "three gods." We will therefore focus on this short work, bringing in other writings for additional background information when needed.

4.1.1 One Question, Three Answers

In *Ad Ablabium*, Gregory has been asked to respond to the question why it would be *forbidden* to say there are "three gods," given that there are three hypostases (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) with the same nature or *ousia*, and given that, in the (apparently) parallel case of Peter, James and John, it is *not forbidden* to call them "three men."[2] He writes the following in response:

τὸ δὲ λεγόμενον παρὰ σοῦ τοιοῦτόν ἐστιν·

Πέτρος καὶ Ἰάκωβος καὶ Ἰωάννης, ἐν μιᾷ ὄντες τῇ ἀνθρωπότητι, τρεῖς ἄνθρωποι λέγονται· καὶ οὐδὲν ἄτοπον τοὺς συνημμένους κατὰ τὴν φύσιν, εἰ

The argument which you state is something like this:

Peter, James and John, being in one human nature, are called three men; and there is no absurdity in describing those who are united in

---

2. This of course raises a problem for Social Trinitarians, insofar as Social Trinitarian accounts fall into the Equivocation Family of solutions to the LPT. All accounts of the Trinity within the Equivocation Family face the problem that, even if *there is some sense* in which it is true to say that "there is *one* God," it will still be the case that *there is some sense* in which it is true to say that "there are *three* Gods." And this doesn't seem to be enough for Christians. As Ablabius points out in his question, we not only want it to be *allowed* to say that "there is one God," we want it to be *forbidden* to say "there are three Gods." But as the subtitle of the epistle to Ablabius suggests, Christians *shouldn't even think about* saying "there are three Gods." And as we will see, Gregory's response explains not only why *it is in some sense the case* that there is one God, but why *it is not in any sense the case* that there are three Gods. But Equivocation Family accounts obviously will have difficulties in this regard.

πλείους εἶεν, ἐκ τοῦ τῆς φύσεως ὀνόματος πληθυντικῶς ἀριθμεῖσθαι.

εἰ οὖν ἐκεῖ τοῦτο δίδωσιν ἡ συνήθεια καὶ ὁ ἀπαγορεύων οὐκ ἔστι δύο λέγειν τοὺς δύο καὶ τρεῖς τοὺς ὑπὲρ δύο, πῶς, ἐπὶ τῶν μυστικῶν δογμάτων τὰς τρεῖς ὑποστάσεις ὁμολογοῦντες καὶ οὐδεμίαν ἐπ᾽ αὐτῶν τὴν κατὰ φύσιν διαφορὰν ἐννοοῦντες, μαχόμεθα τρόπον τινὰ τῇ ὁμολογίᾳ, μίαν μὲν τὴν θεότητα τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος λέγοντες, τρεῖς δὲ θεοὺς λέγειν ἀπαγορεύοντες;[3]

nature, if they are more than one, by the plural number of the name derived from their nature.

If, then, in the above case, custom admits this, and no one forbids us to speak of those who are two as two, or those who are more than two as three, how is it that in the case of our statements of the mysteries of the Faith, though confessing the Three Persons, and acknowledging no difference of nature between them, we are in some sense at variance with our confession, when we say that the Godhead of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost is one, and yet forbid men to say "there are three Gods"?[4]

What may strike the reader of *Ad Ablabium* as strange, is that Gregory gives, on my reading, three different answers to the question, the first of which (what I will call the "Simple-Minded Argument," or "the SMA") he himself immediately and explicitly *rejects* as inadequate, and the other two of which (what I will call the "Unity of Nature Argument," or "the UNA," and the "Unity of Action Argument," or the "UAA") each employ premises that are obviously inconsistent with those of the other. It may be tempting to accuse Gregory of sophistry for putting forward an argument he himself rejects, and of inconsistency or confusion for putting forward two arguments that could not both have true premises. As we will see, both of these criticisms would be misguided.

In one of the more recent explorations of the structure of *Ad Ablabium*, Lewis Ayres counts two arguments, which he simply labels "A" and "B," where his "A" is what I am calling the UNA and his "B" is what I am calling the UAA (he essentially ignores the SMA).[5]

Ayres is correct in distinguishing the two arguments as "fundamentally distinct."[6] Also in thinking that Gregory assigns more weight to the second (Ayres' B, my UAA), which he says (rightly), "we should treat as fundamental in his Trinitarian theology."[7] I think he is unclear, though, on precisely what the role of the UNA is for Gregory, seeing the two arguments as more closely related than they actually are. That, or simply not understanding the logic of Gregory's arguments. We will see that, in a different way, Richard Cross also seems to

---

3. (St. Gregory of Nyssa 1958), p. 38.
4. (St. Gregory of Nyssa 1893), p. 331.
5. I will be referring to the version that appears as (Ayres 2003) in (Coakley 2003). The same essay originally appeared as (Ayres 2002), and essentially the same material appears as Chapter 14 of (Ayres 2004).
6. (Ayres 2003), p. 23.
7. (Ayres 2003) p. 23.

want to see the two arguments as one, or at least as more closely related than they in fact are. Indeed, this seems to be a common confusion.

In Ayres, I think the confusion may stem from (as I understand Ayres), a failure to distinguish between what I will call *energeia* types and *energeia* tokens below. (See 4.4.2, p. 178 ff., and 4.4.4, p. 184 ff. on this distinction.) In Cross, a desire to see the UNA and UAA as forming a single, more or less cohesive argument or viewpoint. (Perhaps also as seeing St. Gregory and St. Augustine as having more in common than, perhaps, they actually do.)[8]

In Ayres' case, this leads to an attempt to tie the UAA into Gregory's discussion of *the individuation of natures* in a confused way. For example, on pp. 22-23, he says that Gregory *in B / the UAA* is arguing that "Natures. . . are known by the operations of those powers, and the divine operation is always observed to be one. Therefore the divine power and nature is indivisibly one." As we will see below, this way of trying to understand Gregory confuses *energeia* types and tokens as well as confusing the two different arguments themselves.

Oddly, Ayres later makes a perfectly good statement of the identity of the divine *energeia* tokens: p. 31 "his account. . . present[s] the three not as possessing distinct actions towards a common goal, but as together constituting just one distinct action. . ." but then he goes on to seem not to understand the role that this view of Gregory's plays in his argument, due, again, to wanting to conflate *energeia* types and tokens, a distinction I'll explain in more detail below (p. 178 ff.)

I think clarity on Gregory's views can be achieved when we take into account Gregory's purpose and audience(s). But before we can get clear on the UNA and the UAA, we need to ask ourselves what the point of the SMA is, and this, as we shall see, provides the clue to unlock the structure of Gregory's thought here. I will argue throughout the remainder of the chapter that the distinction I mentioned between *energeia* types and tokens is the under-appreciated key to understanding Gregory's solution to the LPT. But to understand that distinction and how it is operating in the context of Gregory's two arguments here, and thus to understand why I think the UNA and the UAA are even more distinct than Ayres and others have supposed, we'll need to go through the *Ad Ablabium* in some detail, bringing in further detail from other related texts when necessary.

Let us start, as Gregory does, with the Simple-Minded Argument (SMA).

4.1.2 The "Simple-Minded" Argument (SMA)

Gregory's first response, the SMA is brief enough to quote in full:

Ἔστι μὲν οὖν κατὰ τὸ πρόχειρον τοῦτο τοῖς ἁπλουστέροις εἰπόντα δόξαι τι λέγειν, ὅτι φεύγων ὁ λό-

Perhaps one might seem to touch the point if he were to say (speaking offhand to straight-forward [or

8. Although contrast Augustine's Unity of Nature Argument in the earlier *De Trinitate* with the quote at the beginning of this chapter, from the later *Commentary on the Gospel of John*.

118

γος τῆς Ἑλληνικῆς πολυθεΐας τὴν ὁμοιότητα θεοὺς ἐν πλήθει ἀριθμεῖν παρῃτήσατο, ὡς ἂν μή τις καὶ τῶν δογμάτων νομισθείη κοινότης, εἰ μὴ μοναδικῶς ἀλλὰ πληθυντικῶς καὶ παρ' ἡμῶν ἀριθμοῖτο τὸ θεῖον καθ' ὁμοιότητα τῆς παρ' αὐτοῖς συνηθείας.

"simple-minded"] people), that the definition refused to reckon Gods in any number to avoid any resemblance to the polytheism of the heathen, lest, if we too were to enumerate the Deity, not in the singular, but in the plural, as they are accustomed to do, there might be supposed to be also some community of doctrine.

τοῦτο δὲ τοῖς μὲν ἀκεραιοτέροις λεγόμενον ἴσως ἄν τι δόξειε λέγεσθαι, ἐπὶ δέ γε τῶν τὸ ἕτερον αὐτοῖς τῆς προτάσεως στῆναι ζητούντων ἢ μὴ ὁμολογεῖν ἐπὶ τῶν τριῶν τὴν θεότητα ἢ τρεῖς πάντως ὀνομάζειν τοὺς τῆς αὐτῆς κοινωνοῦντας θεότητος, οὔπω τοιοῦτόν ἐστι τὸ εἰρημένον, οἷον ἐμποιῆσαι λύσιν τινὰ τοῦ ζητήματος.

This answer, I say, if made to people of a more guileless spirit, might seem to be of some weight: but in the case of the others who require that one of the alternatives they propose should be established (either that we should not acknowledge the Godhead in Three Persons, or that, if we do, we should speak of those who share in the same Godhead as three), this answer is not such as to furnish any solution of the difficulty.

οὐκοῦν ἐπάναγκες διὰ πλειόνων ποιήσασθαι τὴν ἀπόκρισιν, ὅπως ἂν οἷόν τε ᾖ, τὸ ἀληθὲς ἀνιχνεύοντας· οὐ γὰρ περὶ τῶν τυχόντων ὁ λόγος.[9]

And hence we must needs make our reply at greater length, tracing out the truth as best we may; for the question is no ordinary one.[10]

Gregory frankly admits that this response merely "seems" to be adequate, but acknowledges that it is, in reality, not an adequate response at all. More precisely, he admits that it would only even seem to be adequate to "simple-minded people," but that to others it "is not such as to furnish any solution of the difficulty."

But this raises an interpretive question that is by no means insignificant. Why bother telling someone who has given a solid enough formulation of the Logical Problem of the Trinity, or something close to it, and who has asked for the solution to it, in essence, "Here's something one might say that doesn't really answer the question"? And why go on to point out to an apparently intelligent enough man that, in essence, "It's something that might satisfy you – *if you aren't very intelligent*"?

One might suppose this is "just rhetoric." That the point is for Gregory to show that he's no dummy, that he gets that it's a problem. Or perhaps the point is to build up the opposing argument before knocking it down – all the more impressive. Or perhaps it is a bit of flattery to Ablabius, "The simple folk

---

9. (St. Gregory of Nyssa 1958), pp. 39-40.
10. (St. Gregory of Nyssa 1893), p. 331.

might be content with this sophistry, but astute men of learning like us – we're above all that." Dale Tuggy describes it simply as a "flippant" answer.[11]

But none of these explanations for Gregory's brief discussion of the SMA are satisfactory. I doubt Gregory was trying to show off. He usually presents himself as simply explicating things that St. Basil has already said, and doesn't like to draw attention to his own unique insights (even when he certainly had them) nor to point out that he in some ways alters or corrects St. Basil. One gets the impression from reading St. Gregory that, so far from bragging or seeking praise, he would have more likely been uncomfortable with it. And anyway, even if he did like showing off, spotting the fact that the SMA is flawed is not that impressive of a feat. Gregory surely could have picked something better, if that had been his aim.

Further, the quote above does not really do anything to build up the apparent force of the LPT. The LPT is already an apparently strong arguments. And Gregory's comments here aren't even directly *about* the LPT. they're only about *a particularly bad answer to* the LPT.

As for flattery, Gregory does not put the distinction in terms of "us and them" (we get that this doesn't make sense – but those idiots won't) or even of "you and them" (of course you're smarter than this – but you can fool those idiots with it). Rather, he puts it in terms of a part of "them" and a different part of "them" (some people will accept this argument, but other people won't).

Finally, it's unlikely that Gregory was simply being "flippant," if for no other reason than the fact that the means of writing was more expensive and scarce in that world than in ours.

But I think there is a deeper, or at least better, explanation for what is going on with the SMA that also gives us a clue as to how to interpret the rest of the letter.

I spoke in the chapter on methodology (Chapter 3.3.2, p. 106 ff.) about the distinction between true and false vs. misleading and non-misleading. We saw one example in which this distinction is important – specifically, in constructing a summary (the creed) that must be suitable for a very wide audience. I gave the example of the Atkins diet, and how it would be true but misleading to say one can eat as much fried chicken as one wants and still lose weight, while it would be false but non-misleading to describe the Paleo diet as being a diet in which one eats only those foods that would have been eaten in the paleolithic era. And we saw that a statement can be misleading or non-misleading depending both on who one's *audience* is, and what one's *purpose* is.

Gregory gives his own examples of this distinction in his *Contra Eunomium* when responding to the fact that Eunomius calls Gregory's older brother, St. Basil, "a liar" because "he called me a Galatian, though I am a Cappadocian." After drawing attention to the pettiness of the statement, Gregory makes a few interesting further points:

---

11. In the supplementary document to (TUGGY 2013) on "History of Trinitarian Doctrines" at http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/trinity/trinity-history.html Section 3.3.1, last retrieved 02-15-2014.

οὐ γὰρ ὁμοίως ἁμαρτάνει Παῦλος ψευδόμενος καὶ Ἰουδαϊκῶς ἁγνιζόμενος ἐπὶ καιροῦ τῶν χρησίμως ἀπατωμένων, καὶ Ἰούδας ἐν τῷ τῆς προδοσίας καιρῷ φίλον καὶ προσήγορον σχῆμα ὑποδυόμενος.

ἐψεύσατο καὶ Ἰωσὴφ ἐν φιλανθρωπίᾳ τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς διαπαίζων, καὶ ταῦτα τὴν ὑγείαν τοῦ Φαραὼ ἐπομνύμενος· ἀλλ' ἐψεύσαντο καὶ οἱ ἀδελφοὶ κατ' αὐτοῦ πρότερον μὲν θάνατον, μετὰ ταῦτα δὲ δουλείαν διὰ τὸν φθόνον βουλεύσαντες,

καὶ πολλὰ τοιαῦτα ἔστιν εἰπεῖν· ψεύδεται Σάρρα ἐπερυθριῶσα τῷ γέλωτι· ψεύδεται καὶ ὁ ὄφις εἰς θείαν μεταβαίνειν φύσιν τὸν ἄνθρωπον ἐκ τῆς παρακοῆς εἰσηγούμενος.

πολλὴ ῾μὲν οὖν᾽ τοῦ ψεύδους ἡ πρὸς τὰς ὑποθέσεις διαφορά,

καὶ οὐδὲ ἔστιν εἰπεῖν ὅση, εἴτε ἐκ τῶν ἀρχαίων διηγημάτων εἴτε ἐκ τοῦ νῦν βίου δοκιμάζοις τὸν λόγον. οὐκοῦν καὶ ἡμεῖς δεξώμεθα, ὅτι κατὰ τὴν κοινὴν περὶ τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἀπόφασιν, ἣν διὰ τοῦ προφήτου τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον ἀπεφήνατο ὅτι Πᾶς ἄνθρωπος ψεύστης.

καὶ ὁ τοῦ θεοῦ ἄνθρωπος συνηνέχθη τῷ ψεύδει, τὴν ὅμορόν τινι χώραν ἀγνοίᾳ ἢ ὑπεροψίᾳ τῆς τοῦ τόπου προσηγορίας κατὰ τὸ συμβὰν ἐπιφημίσας.

ἀλλ' ἐψεύσατο καὶ Εὐνόμιος, καὶ τί τὸ ψεῦδος;
αὐτῆς τῆς ἀληθείας παραγραφή.

τὸν ἀεὶ ὄντα ποτὲ μὴ εἶναι λέγει
. . .
ἆρα μικρὰ τοῦ ψεύδους ἡ διαφορὰ καὶ τοσαύτη, ὡς ἀντ' οὐδενὸς οἴεσθαί τινα τὸ οὕτως ἢ ἑτέρως ἐψεῦσθαι δοκεῖν;[12]

Paul telling a falsehood and purifying himself after the manner of the Jews to meet the needs of those whom he usefully deceived did not sin the same as Judas for the requirement of his treachery putting on a kind and affable look.

By a falsehood Joseph in love to his brethren deceived them; and that too while swearing "by the life of Pharaoh;" but his brethren had really lied to him, in their envy plotting his death and then his enslavement.

There are many such cases: Sarah lied, because she was ashamed of laughing: the serpent lied, tempting man to disobey and change to a divine existence.

Falsehoods differ widely according to their motives.

Accordingly, we accept that general statement about man which the Holy Spirit uttered by the Prophet, "Every man is a liar."

And this man of God [St. Basil], too, has not kept clear of falsehood, having chanced to give a place the name of a neighbouring district, through oversight or ignorance of its real name.

But Eunomius also has told a falsehood, and what is it?

Nothing less than a misstatement of Truth itself.

He asserts that One who always is once was not...

Is the difference between falsehoods so very trifling, that one can think it matters nothing whether the falsehood is palpable in this way or in that?[13]

121

We all say false things from time to time. But there is a difference between saying something false with an intent to harm someone through deception (like Judas, Joseph's brothers, or the serpent itself), and saying something false with an intent to benefit someone through the deception (like St. Paul or Joseph), or at least with no intent to harm anyone (like Sarah), or perhaps with no intent to deceive at all (like St. Basil).

What I want to suggest is that in *Ad Ablabium* the distinction between true v. false and misleading v. non-misleading may also come into play, and that we need to ask ourselves the questions, "What is Gregory's *purpose*?" and "Who is Gregory's *audience*?"

As to the first question, I suggest that Gregory, as a *pastor*, does not have the same purpose as we, as philosophers. Although he is in some sense always concerned with the truth, he is primarily concerned with people's *salvation*. Recall van Inwagen:

> God's concern with us – just at present, at any rate – is not the concern of a tutor who fears that we shall fail to grasp some nice point: God fears that we shall lose the end for which we were made. His concern with us is entirely practical.[14]

I suggest that Gregory's concern here is the same. And this is why he does not confine himself to what is strictly true or accurate, but to what is the *least misleading* response he can give to a particular audience. And that brings us to the question who his audience is – or who his audiences are.

And as for the second question, I suggest that Gregory gives three different arguments because he has in mind three importantly different audiences:

1. The illiterate, uneducated or philosophically unsophisticated (the "simple-minded")

2. Educated pagans (and certain heretics)

3. Educated (orthodox) Christians

And the three arguments he gives – the SMA, UNA and UAA – are *the least misleading responses* he can give to each of these three groups, respectively, given that his concern is primarily for their salvation.

One can see a similar distinction between audiences, and an attempt to direct communication to multiple audiences, in some of St. Basil's sermons. For example, in Basil's 9th homily, "That God is Not the Cause of Evils." Here Basil wants to give a philosophically sophisticated and rigorous response to the problem of evil, but he clearly wants the illiterate, uneducated masses to be able to understand it as well. The sermon has a structure in which nearly every other sentence is stated in a philosophically precise way, and nearly every other sentence is a restatement of the preceding sentence in layman's terms.

---

12. (St. Gregory of Nyssa 1960), Book I, Chapter 10, sections 108-110.
13. Translation from (St. Gregory of Nyssa 1893), p. 46.
14. (van Inwagen 1988), pp. 243-244.

For example, Basil explores the sense in which evil "exists" and points out that this cannot be visible, *hypostatic* existence (or "subsistence"). He follows by saying "For evil is not subsistent (ὑφεστὼς), as though it were an animal."[15] The uneducated masses may not understand the more philosophically precise denial of evil's hypostatic existence. But they can surely understand that there isn't literally a little animal named "evil" that runs around the world making mischief.

It seems to me that Gregory, as so often, follows in his brother's footsteps here. But this time he not only makes a distinction between the educated and uneducated. He makes a distinction between educated (orthodox) Christians (with whom he will have more common ground, who will be more willing to accept his basic premises) and educated pagans and heretics (who have no reason to grant Gregory certain controversial assumptions). His initial response, directed at the uneducated, is not flippant. It is simply the best answer that an illiterate audience without any background in logic, metaphysics, and so on, would be able to understand. "We refuse to say there are 'three Gods', because we don't want people to confuse our doctrine with pagan doctrine." It's true, after all, at least on Gregory's view, that Trinitarianism is not like pagan polytheism. This response doesn't adequately explain *why* that is, but on Gregory's view it's probably the best you can do for anyone without the relevant education. (It should be clear by the end of the chapter why. See esp. 3.3.2, p. 106 ff.)

We'll see also that the response he gives for educated pagans, and some heretics, is not one that he actually accepts, but it's also the best Gregory thinks he can do for people who don't accept certain key assumptions of his – assumptions that are only presented in the UAA, for the benefit of other orthodox Christians who share Gregory's basic presuppositions.

Let us look, then, at the responses he gives for the educated.

4.2   The Unity of Nature Argument (UNA)

Next Gregory gives the "Unity of Nature Argument" (UNA). The UNA is the *only* argument presented in Gregory's only other work directly about the LPT, namely "*To the Greeks, From Common Concepts*," (hereafter, *Ad Graecos*) where it is presented in much more detail (and where Gregory – critically – only has a single audience in mind: *educated pagans*, or "the Greeks" as he calls them).[16] But here in the *Ad Ablabium*, Gregory gives only an extremely abbreviated version. He begins:

---

15. PG 31, p. 341. Translation mine.

16. By this time, Ἕλληνες has acquired the meaning "pagan." See, e.g., (KAHLOS 2007), p. 20, "Another term, the Greek *Hellenes*, became commonly used as the synonym for non-Christians. Christian apologists applied the term in the sense of *pagan* ... *Hellenes* became the standard overall term for pagans — it replaced the word *ethne* by the beginning of the fourth century..." and ff. Gregory would have thought of himself and other Christians as "Romans" (Ῥωμαῖοι).

Φαμὲν τοίνυν πρῶτον μὲν κατά-
χρησίν τινα συνηθείας εἶναι τὸ τοὺς
μὴ διῃρημένους τῇ φύσει κατ’ αὐτὸ
τὸ τῆς φύσεως ὄνομα πληθυντικῶς
ὀνομάζειν καὶ λέγειν ὅτι πολλοὶ ἄν-
θρωποι, ὅπερ ὅμοιόν ἐστι τῷ λέγειν
ὅτι πολλαὶ φύσεις ἀνθρώπιναι.’[17]

Now, we first claim that it is
a certain misuse of convention to
name men, who are not distin-
guished by nature, in the plural ac-
cording to the very name of the na-
ture, and to say that there are many
men, which is like saying that there
are many human natures.”[18]

This is the crux of the UNA, the claim that, strictly speaking, we should
only say that Peter, James and John are "one man."

He argues:

καὶ ὅτι ταῦτα οὕτως ἔχει, δῆλον ἂν
ἡμῖν ἐντεῦθεν γένοιτο· προσκαλού-
μενοι γάρ τινα, οὐκ ἐκ τῆς φύσεως
αὐτὸν ὀνομάζομεν, ὡς ἂν μή τινα
πλάνην ἡ κοινότης τοῦ ὀνόματος ἐμ-
ποιήσειεν, ἑκάστου τῶν ἀκουόντων
ἑαυτὸν εἶναι τὸν προσκληθέντα νομί-
ζοντος, ὅτι μὴ τῇ ἰδιαζούσῃ προση-
γορίᾳ ἀλλ’ ἐκ τοῦ κοινοῦ τῆς φύσεως
ὀνόματος ἡ κλῆσις γίνεται·

That this is so may become clear
to us from the following: when we
summon someone, we do not name
him from the nature in order that
the community of the name not pro-
duce any error, each listener think-
ing that the person being called is
himself, because it is not by the
[peculiarizing] appellation (προση-
γορίᾳ), but from the common name
of the nature that the calling occurs.

ἀλλὰ τὴν ἰδίως ἐπικειμένην αὐτῷ
(τὴν σημαντικὴν λέγω τοῦ ὑποκειμέ-
νου) φωνὴν εἰπόντες, οὕτως αὐτὸν
τῶν πολλῶν ἀποκρίνομεν,’[19]

But when we utter the sound
[word, φωνὴν] that is [peculiarly]
laid down for him (I mean the sound
that signifies the subject (ὑποκειμέ-
νου)), we thus distinguish him from
the many,[20]

This may seem obvious. We call people by their proper names (Bob, Frank),
rather than by one of their common names (man, animal). We use a word
peculiar to the particular subject we are addressing.

Up to this point, we have not seen much technical vocabulary. We have the
term "nature" in Ablabius' original question, and no additional technical terms
are added by Gregory in the SMA (for obvious reasons). Now in the UNA we've
seen "commonality" (κοινότης), "individualizing" (ἰδιαζούσῃ), and "appella-
tion" (προσηγορίᾳ).

Next, Gregory suddenly gives us an onslaught of technical philosophical ver-
biage from the time period, including: "participation" (μετεσχηκότας), "the sin-
gular" (καθ’ ἕκαστον), "the common" (τοῦ κοινοῦ), "definition" (λόγος), "hy-

---

17. (St. Gregory of Nyssa 1958), p. 40.
18. Translation from (St. Gregory of Nyssa 2008a), p. 3.
19. (St. Gregory of Nyssa 1958), p. 40.
20. Translation from (St. Gregory of Nyssa 2008a), p. 3, *adapted.*

postasis" (ὑποστάσεων), "particularization" (διαμερισμὸν), "peculiarity" (ἰδιότη-τας), "synthesis" (σύνθεσιν), "in number" (ἐν ἀριθμῷ), "itself to itself" (αὐτὴ πρὸς ἑαυτὴν), "strictly indivisible monad" (ἀδιάτμητος ἀκριβῶς μονάς), "not increased through addition, not decreased through subtraction" (οὐκ αὐξανομένη διὰ προσθήκης, οὐ μειουμένη δι' ὑφαιρέσεως), "indivisible" (ἄσχιστος), "continuous" (συνεχὴς), "whole" (ὁλόκληρος), "not divided together with those particulars participating in it" (τοῖς μετέχουσιν αὐτῆς τοῖς καθ' ἕκαστον οὐ συνδιαιρουμένη) and talk of being "in" a nature (ἐν τῇ φύσει) and a nature being "in" its instances when he says "the man in all is one" (ἕνα δὲ ἐν πᾶσι τὸν ἄνθρωπον).

Clearly, there is far too much technical terminology here to go into detail on every term. But we can at least take a look at the passage and try to get a basic idea of what is going on. Gregory gives his argument thus:

ὥστε πολλοὺς μὲν εἶναι τοὺς μετεσχηκότας τῆς φύσεως, φέρε εἰπεῖν μαθητὰς ἢ ἀποστόλους ἢ μάρτυρας, ἕνα δὲ ἐν πᾶσι τὸν ἄνθρωπον, εἴπερ, καθὼς εἴρηται, οὐχὶ τοῦ καθ' ἕκαστον, ἀλλὰ τοῦ κοινοῦ τῆς φύσεώς ἐστιν ὁ ἄνθρωπος·

Thus it is that the many, having participated in (μετεσχηκότας) the nature, come to be called "disciples," or "apostles," or "martyrs," but the man in all is one; since, as was said, "man" is not [predicated] of the singular, but of the common nature;

ἄνθρωπος γὰρ ὁ Λουκᾶς ἢ ὁ Στέφανος, οὐ μήν, εἴ τις ἄνθρωπος, πάντως καὶ Λουκᾶς ἐστιν ἢ Στέφανος.

For Luke is a man, or Stephen is, but it is not the case that if someone is a man, he is also wholly Luke or Stephen.

Ἀλλ' ὁ μὲν τῶν ὑποστάσεων λόγος διὰ τὰς ἐνθεωρουμένας ἰδιότητας ἑκάστῳ τὸν διαμερισμὸν ἐπιδέχεται καὶ κατὰ σύνθεσιν ἐν ἀριθμῷ θεωρεῖται·

But the *logos* of the hypostases admits the particularization through the peculiarities seen in them and is considered according to the synthesis in number;

ἡ δὲ φύσις μία ἐστίν, αὐτὴ πρὸς ἑαυτὴν ἡνωμένη καὶ ἀδιάτμητος ἀκριβῶς μονάς, οὐκ αὐξανομένη διὰ προσθήκης, οὐ μειουμένη δι' ὑφαιρέσεως, ἀλλ' ὅπερ ἐστὶν ἓν οὖσα καὶ ἓν διαμένουσα κἂν ἐν πλήθει φαίνηται, ἄσχιστος καὶ συνεχὴς καὶ ὁλόκληρος καὶ τοῖς μετέχουσιν αὐτῆς τοῖς καθ' ἕκαστον οὐ συνδιαιρουμένη.

yet the nature is one, having been united itself to itself, and a strictly indivisible monad, not increased through addition, not decreased through subtraction, but essentially being one and remaining one, even when it manifests in a plurality, indivisible and continuous and whole and not divided together with those particulars participating in it.

καὶ ὥσπερ λέγεται λαὸς καὶ δῆμος καὶ στράτευμα καὶ ἐκκλησία μοναχῶς πάντα, ἕκαστον δὲ τούτων ἐν πλήθει νοεῖται· οὕτω κατὰ τὸν ἀκριβέστερον λόγον καὶ ἄνθρωπος

And in just the way that "a people," or "a deme," or "an army," or "a church" is said in the singular in every case, yet each of these is conceived to be in plurality, so accord-

125

εἷς κυρίως ἂν ῥηθείη, κἂν οἱ ἐν τῇ φύσει τῇ αὐτῇ δεικνύμενοι πλῆθος ὦσιν, ὡς πολὺ μᾶλλον καλῶς ἔχειν τὴν ἐσφαλμένην ἐφ’ ἡμῶν ἐπανορθοῦσθαι συνήθειαν εἰς τὸ μηκέτι τὸ τῆς φύσεως ὄνομα πρὸς πλῆθος ἐκτείνειν ἢ ταύτῃ δουλεύοντας τὴν ὧδε πλάνην καὶ ἐπὶ τὸ θεῖον δόγμα μεταβιβάζειν.[21]

ing to the more precise account (λόγος), "man" would be said strictly [speaking] to be one, despite those displayed in the same nature being a plurality. Thus it would be much better to correct our erroneous habit, so as no longer to extend to a plurality the name of the nature, than by our bondage to habit to transfer to our statements concerning God the error which exists in the above case.[22]

This argument has received a fair bit of criticism for its conclusion – Richard Cartwright, for example, describes Gregory as "desperately suggesting" that there is only one man;[23] Christopher Stead says Gregory's argument, "resembles an accomplished conjuring trick more nearly than a valid theological demonstration"[24] – but criticism is not usually based on a serious examination of its premises.[25]

Perhaps this is partly because the argument is so highly condensed in *Ad Ablabium*, and makes use of so much technical terminology. But despite the counter-intuitive conclusion, it is not obvious to me that Gregory's actual *argument* is as problematic as its critics have assumed. It seems to me that Gregory is simply trying to draw out the logical consequences of a number of related semantic and metaphysical theses widely presupposed in the philosophical milieu of his time.

Again, the argument is too dense to explore fully, and as we will see, I hold that Gregory himself doesn't actually accept it as fully adequate anyway. But it will be helpful as background to the UAA, and we can certainly get, I think, a good enough grasp to make some sense out of it.

4.2.1   *Ousiai* and Hypostases

In "Gregory of Nyssa on Universals,"[26] Richard Cross argues, persuasively in my view, that St. Gregory and St. Basil both use the term *ousia* synonymously

21. (St. Gregory of Nyssa 1958), pp. 40-41.

22. Translation mine.

23. (Cartwright 1987), p. 171, "It seems to have been left to Gregory of Nyssa, Basil's younger brother, to notice that, thus understood, consubstantiality of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit appears to license saying that there are three Gods. Gregory himself rather desperately suggested that strictly speaking there is only one man."

24. (C. Stead 1990), p. 149.

25. Cartwright, for example, ((Cartwright 1987)) doesn't examine the argument at all. Stead, of course, does, but in my estimation not well. It will become clear why I think so in the course of this chapter. Stead himself admits that "It is tantalizingly difficult to determine what Gregory has in mind." ((C. Stead 1990), p. 152.) Hopefully my comments in this chapter will shed some light.

26. (Cross 2002).

with *physis* (nature), and they conceive of this as a universal. But Basil makes a critical shift in his thinking on universals, which Gregory follows, a shift that allows him to move from hom-*oi*-ousianism (the view that the three hypostases of the Trinity are merely *exactly similar* in *ousia*) to hom-*o*-ousianism (the view that the three hypostases of the Trinity are *the same* in *ousia*). Basil starts off assuming a then-popular Neo-Platonic account of *in re* "universals"[27] as simply collections, or mereological sums, of particulars, and therefore, quite literally, *divisible into* the *part*-iculars that compose them (hence the etymology of "particular"), as opposed to the monadic – but extrinsic or *ante rem* – Platonic Forms. But he eventually shifts to a realist view (possibly original) of *in re* universals as themselves simple, indivisible and wholly present in their instances.[28,]

The reason that this shift allowed Basil to move from homoiousianism to homoousianism, is that on the earlier view of *ousiai* as collections (but not the later view of *ousiai* as monads) the *homoousion* (the proposition that the hypostases are *homoousios*) would entail that God is *divisible into parts* – a proposition which Basil *consistently* denies throughout his career.[29,30]

Note that in the passage above Gregory borrows a number of technical terms applied by Neo-Platonists *to the Platonic Forms* ("strictly indivisible monad," "not increased through addition or decreased through subtraction," and so forth) and applies the same terms *to in re universals*, which looks like a very deliberate and forceful rejection of their nominalism about *in re* universals.

But Cross also mentions Gregory's sudden shift in the passage above from talking about these simple, wholly present, and indivisible universals *back* to talk about *mere collections* – a shift that leads Zachhuber to postulate two *different* theories of universals going on in parallel in Gregory's thought – *ousia* being Gregory's term for a monadic universal, and *physis* for, essentially, the Neo-Platonic collective "universals." But Cross notes an important distinction:

> As I noted above, there is a passage in *Ad Ablabium* where Gregory apparently likens a nature to a collection of particulars. And on the face of it this is a problem for my reading. It is precisely because of the apparent equivocation here that Zachhuber believes the *Ad Ablabium* account to be philosophically inferior to the earlier accounts. But this is a misreading of Gregory. The collections Gregory mentions are notable for their dissimilarity from the Neoplatonists'

---

27. To the extent that one can speak of a "universal," on an essentially nominalistic theory such as theirs.

28. (Cross 2002), pp. 381-386

29. See esp. (Cross 2002), pp. 383-385. As an example, consider Basil's remarks in Epistle 236 ((St. Basil the Great 1930) pp. 381-383), "Does he mean that we know His substance in part, just as we know parts of His substance? But that is absurd, for God is indivisible into parts." Incidentally, this seems to pose a difficulty for using Basil or Gregory to support Social Trinitarianism as well. See 47, p. 132.

30. Cross also argues for dating the *Ad Petrum* around 370, roughly the same time as Basil's Epistles 214 and 236. If the work is Basil's, Gregory comes to accept the view. But if Gregory's, either it marks his acceptance of Basil's new view or perhaps represents Gregory's own input which Basil shortly thereafter comes to accept.

collections: every man is a man, but no citizen a community, or soldier an army. Boethius, for example (probably repeating Porphyry), uses 'flock, people, [and] army' as examples of discontinuous wholes that are not universals (in his collective sense). In other words, if Gregory is using these examples to support a collective theory of universals, he is being even more careless than commentators suppose, since the examples are not even appropriate or germane. The use of these analogies is much simpler. Gregory's collective wholes here are indivisible into parts of the same kind as their whole, and the analogies are intended to show how it can be that the existence of something indivisible (into parts of the same sort) is consistent with its being in numerically many hypostases.[31]

I follow Cross here again, and want to add to his points in the next section (4.2.2) with some semantic considerations.

But first, I note that Magee takes Boethius to have a confused classification of wholes,[32] first as:

1. continuous (Boethius gives the examples of "body, line, or anything of that sort.")

2. discontinuous (examples: "flock," "population," or "army.")

3. universal (examples: "man," "horse.")

4. composed of faculties (examples: the soul – which has the *potentiae* of understanding, sensing, and growth as "parts.")

then later to subsume universal and "potential" under the heading of "discontinuous." Thus:

1. continuous

2. discontinuous

   (a) universal

   (b) potential

I'm not convinced that's actually what Boethius does. He may of course be dichotomizing between (1) continuous and (2) discontinuous wholes. And it is certainly true that he takes universals to be a species of discontinuous whole. But I think he clearly still thinks there is a species of *merely* discontinuous whole that is neither a universal nor "composed of faculties." He says later, "Those wholes that are not continuous *and* those that are universal are to be divided *in one and the same way*..."[33] It would be hard to make sense out of phrasing this as a conjunctive claim if the former is just a genus and the latter one of its species, rather than taking the former to be, implicitly, "*merely*" discontinuous. It sounds as though Cross interprets Boethius in the way I do as well.

---

31. (Cross 2002) pp. 402-403.

32. (Boethius 1998), p. 144.

33. (Boethius 1998), p. 144. Emphasis mine.

128

4.2.2 Gregory's Semantics of Collective Nouns

Cross has explained the metaphysics involved in the UNA, but to understand how the UNA actually functions as a solution to the LPT, we also need to consider Gregory's semantics.[34] Gregory talks about collective nouns like, "a people," that "*are said singularly . . . yet . . . are understood in plurality*" (λέγεται . . . μοναχῶς . . . ἐν πλήθει νοεῖται), and here he echoes what in his time were the two greatest grammarians, Apollonius Dyscolus and Dionysius Thrax.

In the *Syntax* of Apollonius Dyscolus, Apollonius mentions the phenomenon of collective nouns several times briefly here and there, such as:

ἀλλ᾽ ἐπειδὴ καί τινα ἔστι δι᾽ ἑνικοῦ χαρακτῆρος πλῆθος ἐμφαίνοντα . . .[35]

"There are some words that imply quantity, even though they are singular in form. . ."[36]

But perhaps most striking is the explanation in a passage in which he explains why Philip greeted "the senate and the people of the Athenians." In this passage, he describes collective nouns in nearly the same words as Gregory later will. Also just as Gregory later will, Apollonius uses the example of "a people" (deme) as a "collective noun."

«βασιλεὺς Μακεδόνων Φίλιππος Ἀθηναίων τῇ βουλῇ καὶ τῷ δήμῳ χαίρειν.»
ἔστι γὰρ τὸ συμφραζόμενον τοιοῦτον, Ἀθηναίοις χαίρειν. κἀπειδὴ οὐχ ἅπασι ταὐτὸ παρείπετο (ἦσαν γὰρ οἱ μὲν δημόται, οἱ δὲ βουλευταί), ἐδέετο δὲ τοῦ διαστέλλοντος ἐπιθέτου ἡ ἐπισταλτικὴ σύνταξις, ἀπεμέρισε τοὺς μὲν βουλευτὰς διὰ τοῦ βουλῇ, τοὺς δὲ δημότας διὰ τοῦ δήμῳ, ὥστε πᾶν τὸ συμφραζόμενον εἶναι τοῖς βουλευταῖς καὶ τοῖς δημόταις. (καὶ σαφὲς ὅτι τὴν τοιαύτην ἄθροισιν ἀπηνέγκατο τὰ ἀθροιστικὰ ὀνόματα, ἅπερ ἑνικῶς μὲν λέγεται, πληθυντικῶς δὲ νοεῖται.)[37]

"Philip, King of the Macedonians, to the senate and the people of the Athenians, greetings."
To paraphrase the reference, this is equivalent to "Greetings to the Athenians." And since the same attributes didn't apply to all equally (for some of the Athenians were "citizens" and the rest were "senators"), and this epistolary construction requires a distinguishing adjective, Philip divided into the senators, for whom he used the word *boule* "senate" and the citizens, for whom he used the word *demos* "people," so that the whole expression ("the senate and the people of the Athenians") is equivalent to "the senators and the citizens". (And it is clear that collective nouns have this collective function — nouns, that is, *which are said singularly but under-*

---

34. See Chapter 5, p. 198 ff. for more on my approach here.

35. (Apollonius Dyscolus 1910), Part 2, Volume 2, p. 31.

36. (Householder 1981), p. 29.

stood plurally (ἑνικῶς ... λέγεται, πληθυντικῶς ... νοεῖται).)[38]

The same concept is also apparent in Dionysius Thrax's *Τέχνη Γραμματική* (The Art of Grammar), which also uses "deme" (people) as an example of collective noun:

ἀριθμοὶ τρεῖς· ἑνικός, δυϊκός, πληθυντικός· ... εἰσὶ δέ τινες ἑνικοὶ χαρακτῆρες καὶ κατὰ πολλῶν λεγόμενοι, οἷον δῆμος χορός ὄχλος· καὶ πληθυντικοὶ κατὰ ἑνικῶν τε καὶ δυϊκῶν, ἑνικῶν μὲν ὡς Ἀθῆναι Θῆβαι, δυϊκῶν δὲ ὡς ἀμφότεροι.[39]

There are three numbers – singular, dual, plural... And there are some singular characters also said of plural [subjects], such as "deme," "chorus," "crowd;" and [there are some] plural [characters said] of singular and dual [subjects]. Of singular, such as "Athens," "Thebes." Of dual such as "both" (*amphoteroi*).[40]

Just a bit later on, Dionysius mentions collective nouns again, using the same examples:

περιληπτικὸν δέ ἐστι τὸ τῶι ἑνικῶι ἀριθμῶι πλῆθος σημαῖνον, οἷον δῆμος χορός ὄχλος.[41]

And a collective [noun] is one which, in the singular number, signifies a plurality, such as "deme," "chorus," "crowd."[42]

Now clearly Gregory wants to say that "God" (and for that matter "man," and really any common noun that express a nature)[43] is just the sort of noun Dionysius and Apollonius point out. A noun that would be syntactically singular but semantically plural, as we might say.

But the question is why Gregory would think that "God" (or "man" or "horse") would have to be collective nouns like "a people" or "an army," so that "strictly speaking" we should always put "God," "man," or "horse" in the singular? After all, it seems like collective nouns are the exception rather than the rule, and anyway common usage clearly is that we put "men" in the plural (the point of Ablabius' argument). So when Gregory says "in just the same way that" collective nouns are "said singularly... yet ... conceived to be in plurality," what exactly is "the same way" in his mind? The grammarians themselves only note the *existence* of the phenomenon of collective nouns. They don't tell us *the conditions* in which a noun signifying a plurality should be used in the singular,

---

37. (Apollonius Dyscolus 1910), Part 2 Volume 2, p. 58.
38. (Householder 1981), p. 46.
39. (Dionysius Thrax 1883), pp. 30-31.
40. Translation mine.
41. (Dionysius Thrax 1883), p. 40-41.
42. Translation mine.
43. Although, as I will argue below, Gregory accepts the use of "God" to express the divine nature *only hypothetically*, since he takes it to be "the common view."

rather than the plural. So we have to ask, what might Gregory be thinking the conditions are under which a noun is "said singularly, but understood plurally?"

I suggest the answer lies precisely in Cross's analysis above. Recall:

> The collections Gregory mentions are notable for their dissimilarity from the Neoplatonists' collections: every man is a man, but no citizen a community, or soldier an army. Boethius, for example (probably repeating Porphyry), uses 'flock, people, [and] army' as examples of discontinuous wholes that are not universals (in his collective sense)... Gregory's collective wholes here are indivisible into parts of the same kind as their whole...[44]

A clue here lies in the examples Gregory mentions. All of them are at the same time *collective nouns* of the sort discussed by the grammarians and nouns that signify *discontinuous wholes that do not constitute universals*, as Cross discusses. So it seems reasonable to conjecture that Gregory is simply drawing the obvious connection between the metaphysics of discontinuous, non-universal wholes, and the semantics of collective nouns.

Thus, what I want to suggest is that the semantic picture which Gregory may have had in mind here (and which may have been, or he may have assumed to have been, a commonly accepted view at the time) is that common nouns are properly used in the plural just in case there are proper parts of the *significandum* that can be called by the same noun as each other and as the *significandum* itself.[45] They are properly used in the singular just in case there are no proper parts of their *significandum* that can be called by the same noun as each other and as the *significandum* itself. This seems to fit well with the overall discussion, and I think makes the most sense out of Gregory.

If this is right, then we can describe what Gregory takes to be the commonly accepted viewpoint of the day as something roughly like the following:

1. Common nouns "signify" natures, which are universals.

2. These universals are merely collections of particulars, which compose them, and which they have as literal parts.

3. Common nouns are to be used in the singular just in case *there are no proper parts* of their *significandum* that can be called by the same noun as each other and as the *significandum* itself; they are to be used in the plural just in case *there are* proper parts of the *significandum* that can be called by the same noun as each other and as the *significandum* itself.

For example (according to this view),[46] if the only three men there are, are Cicero, Cato and Vergil, then each can be called "man," and together they compose the universal nature, man, which is a collection or sum of the three,

---

44. (Cross 2002), pp. 402-403.

45. I am assuming here, as I think Gregory does, that the *significandum* is the universal.

46. I do not want to commit to this view myself!

and which can also be called "man." In this sort of scenario, Cicero, Cato and Vergil can (together) be called "three men," because they are three, as we might say, man-ish parts of the one, universal man.[47]

On the other hand, if the only man who existed was Cato, then the collective man, the sum of all the men, would have no *proper* parts called by the same name,[48] and so we would say there is "one man" (or that "man is one") because there are no man-ish (proper) parts of the one, universal man.

Finally, if Cicero, Cato and Vergil form an army, then that is also a collection, but while each of Cicero, Cato and Vergil can be called "man," they cannot each be called "army." So while they are three men, they are only one army, precisely because the army *cannot be divided* into the relevant sorts of parts.

But now suppose it turns out, as Gregory argues, that a nature is not a collection after all, but an indivisible monad. It follows automatically that any and all nouns that signify natures must only be used in the singular, because a monad will never have proper parts that can be called by the same noun as itself, because a monad will simply never have proper parts at all.

In other words, what it seems to me that Gregory is doing is leaving points 1 and 3 of this perhaps then-common picture in place, and merely rejecting 2 – the collective theory of universals – and replacing it, as Cross has argued, with a theory of an *in re* universal that is monadic (not divisible into "parts") and which is "wholly present" in each of its particulars. Then he simply draws the obvious conclusion that all nouns signifying natures (including "man") are always to be used in the singular (just as "army" would be in the example above).

Read in this light, Gregory's argument seems to make much more sense. In the first sentence below, he finishes making his *metaphysical* point about whether universals are indivisible monads or divisible collections. In the second sentence, he goes on to point out the *linguistic* fact that there are collective nouns such that, semantically they indicate a collection of individuals, but their correct syntactic form is nevertheless singular. (Note that he uses the Neo-Platonists' technical vocabulary against them when making the initial, metaphysical point, but then switches over to language reminiscent of Apollonius Dyscolus when making his second, linguistic point):

ἡ δὲ φύσις μία ἐστίν, αὐτὴ   yet the nature is one, having

---

47. Compare this to the part-whole Social Trinitarianism of, e.g., Moreland and Craig in (Moreland and Craig 2003). As Cross notes, it seems to be precisely this sort of "collective" view of the Trinity that Basil wanted to avoid. See also Mike Rea's criticism of Craig along these lines in (Rea 2009b), esp. pp. 708-710 and pp. 718-721. Gregory wants to *avoid* saying "God" is a collective. He is here saying precisely that "the one God" is *not* a collection of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, but something *simple and indivisible*. Thus, not only does Gregory not count as patristic support for Social Trinitarianism, he seems to count as patristic *opposition* to it. Also note that this anomaly with singular nouns that express a plurality only occurs when the same noun *cannot* be applied both to the parts and to the whole they compose, whereas Social Trinitarians, and anyone whose account falls into the Equivocation Family, want to do just that – apply the same noun both to the parts (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) and to the whole (God) that they compose. So, this would not even seem to be a useful resource for Social Trinitarians.

48. The only proper parts would be hands, feet, and so on.

πρὸς ἑαυτὴν ἡνωμένη καὶ ἀδιάτμη-
τος ἀκριβῶς μονάς, οὐκ αὐξανομένη
διὰ προσθήκης, οὐ μειουμένη δι’
ὑφαιρέσεως, ἀλλ’ ὅπερ ἐστὶν ἓν οὖσα
καὶ ἓν διαμένουσα κἂν ἐν πλήθει
φαίνηται, ἄσχιστος καὶ συνεχὴς καὶ
ὁλόκληρος καὶ τοῖς μετέχουσιν αὐτῆς
τοῖς καθ’ ἕκαστον οὐ συνδιαιρουμένη.

been united itself to itself, and a
strictly indivisible monad, not in-
creased through addition, not de-
creased through subtraction, but es-
sentially being one and remaining
one, even when it manifests in a
plurality, indivisible and continuous
and whole and not divided together
with those particulars participating
in it.

καὶ ὥσπερ λέγεται λαὸς καὶ δῆμος
καὶ στράτευμα καὶ ἐκκλησία μοναχῶς
πάντα, ἕκαστον δὲ τούτων ἐν πλήθει
νοεῖται· οὕτω κατὰ τὸν ἀκριβέστερον
λόγον καὶ ἄνθρωπος εἷς κυρίως ἂν
ῥηθείη, κἂν οἱ ἐν τῇ φύσει τῇ αὐτῇ
δεικνύμενοι πλῆθος ὦσιν.[49]

And in just the way that "a peo-
ple," or "a deme," or "an army," or
"a church" is said in the singular in
every case, yet each of these is un-
derstood in plurality, so according
to the more precise account (λόγος),
"man" would be said strictly [speak-
ing], to be one, despite those dis-
played in the same nature being a
plurality.[50]

Thus, on my reading, what Cartwright describes as Gregory "desperately
suggesting" that strictly speaking there is only one man turns out not to be
nearly so dramatic. It turns out to be Gregory simply drawing out the obvious
logical consequences of accepting what he takes to be a superior metaphysical
theory of universal natures, while leaving the typical semantic assumptions of
his interlocutors unchanged.

That, in my view, is how the UNA works. It has been seen as sophistry
(Stead), or as Gregory simply biting the bullet (Cartwright) and shamefully
accepting the ridiculous view that there is only one man, since he is unwilling
to deny the analogy between Peter, James and John, on the one hand and the
Father, Son and Holy Spirit on the other, given the rest of his views. But in
fact, on my reading, Gregory is essentially just showing good form in offering
a defeater-defeater. He gives a response primarily on his opponents' own terms
(from "Common Concepts" as *Ad Graecos* is subtitled).[51] That is, he has re-
sponded by leaving intact the common semantic picture for the time period,

---

49. (St. Gregory of Nyssa 1958), p. 41.
50. Translation mine.
51. Compare also his statement concerning the UNA in the *Ad Graecos* ((St. Gregory of Nyssa 1958), p. 29; translation from (St. Gregory of Nyssa 1994), unpublished):

ἀλλὰ ταῦτα μέν, ὡς εἴπομεν, ἐκεῖνοι λέ-
γουσιν· ἡμεῖς δὲ δείξομεν σόφισμα τὸ πᾶν
εἶναι καὶ οὐδὲν ἕτερον τὸ λελεγμένον, οὐ-
δαμῶς ἄλλως περιγινόμενοι ἀλλ’ ἢ αὐτοῖς
τοῖς εἰρημένοις κεχρημένοι καὶ δεικνύντες
μὴ δεῖν τὸν τοιόνδε θεὸν καὶ τοιόνδε θεὸν
ἢ τοιόνδε ἄνθρωπον καὶ τοιόνδε λέγειν·

This, as we have said, *is what our part-
ners in the discussion argue*; but we will
show that all of what they are saying is
sophistry and nothing else, and we will pre-
vail *by no other means than by using the
statements made themselves* and showing
that one ought *not* speak of "such-and-such

and only insisting on his own metaphysics (a bit of metaphysics that is, after all, probably essential to making any sense at all out of his theology in the first place).

4.2.3 Did Gregory Really Believe in the UNA?

We can now see how the UNA is supposed to work. But although it has utility for Gregory as a defeater for the anti-Trinitarian argument presented by Ablabius (and others), I don't think he actually *accepts* the picture he presents. And here is where I have to part ways with Cross.

For Cross continues:

> Gregory's teaching, then, is that substance-sortals, such as 'God' and 'man', properly refer to natures: it is the unity of nature that entails that there is just one God, and just one man.[52]

Does "Is God" Really Predicate the Divine Nature?

I take issue with Cross here, because, while Gregory of course does not take "God" to signify a particular hypostasis, critically Gregory *does not* take "God" to signify a nature, or *ousia*, either. Thus, *unlike* "man," the word "God" is *not* a substance-sortal at all.

While Gregory may *seem* to make that connection, both in *Ad Graecos* and in *Ad Petrum*, and again in this argument in *Ad Ablabium* (the UNA), this is definitely a case in which appearances are deceiving.

Consider that, in *Ad Eustathium*, Gregory goes to some pains to argue that "God" is not any sort of special predicate expressing the divine nature itself, but only another predicate among many expressing another attribute among many that we apply to the hypostases – not in principle different from "good" or "mighty" or "righteous" or any other predicates that are applicable even to non-divine beings. (Indeed, some of these other predicates are actually *more* appropriate to God than "God!")

Τεκμήριον δὲ ὅτι τούτῳ μὲν τῷ ὀνόματι πολλὰ καὶ τῶν καταδεεστέρων ἐπονομάζεται, μᾶλλον δὲ οὐ φείδεται ἡ θεία Γραφὴ τῆς ὁμωνυμίας ταύτης οὐδὲ ἐπὶ τῶν ἀπεμφαινόντων πραγμάτων, ὅταν τὰ εἴδωλα τῇ τοῦ Θεοῦ προσηγορίᾳ κατονομάζῃ.	And a proof of this [that "God" does not signify the divine nature] is that many even of the inferior existences are called by this very name ["God"]. Further, the Divine Scripture is not sparing in this use of the name even in the case of things incongruous, as when it names idols by the appellation of "God."

a God" and "such-and-such a God" or even "such-and-such a human being" at all ...

---

52. (Cross 2002), p. 404.

134

«Θεοὶ γάρ, φησίν, οἳ οὐκ ἐποίησαν τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν ἀρθήτωσαν καὶ ὑποκάτω τῆς γῆς βληθήτωσαν».

Καὶ «Πάντες, φησίν, οἱ θεοὶ τῶν ἐθνῶν δαιμόνια».

Καὶ ἡ ἐγγαστρίμυθος ἐν ταῖς μαγγανείαις αὐτῆς ψυχαγωγοῦσα τῷ Σαοὺλ τὰς ἐπιζητουμένας ψυχὰς θεοὺς ἑωρακέναι φησίν.

Ἀλλὰ καὶ ὁ Βαλαὰμ οἰωνιστής τις ὢν καὶ μάντις καὶ διὰ χειρὸς τὰ μαντεῖα φέρων, καθώς φησιν ἡ Γραφή, καὶ τὴν ἐκ δαιμόνων διδασκαλίαν διὰ τῆς οἰωνιστικῆς περιεργίας ἑαυτῷ κατορθώσας παρὰ θεοῦ συμβουλεύεσθαι ὑπὸ τῆς Γραφῆς ἱστορεῖται.

Καὶ πολλὰ τοιαῦτά ἐστι συλλεξάμενον ἐκ τῶν θείων παραθέσθαι Γραφῶν, ὅτι τὸ ὄνομα τοῦτο οὐδὲν ὑπὲρ τὰς λοιπὰς τὰς θεοπρεπεῖς προσηγορίας πρωτεύει, ὅτε, καθὼς εἴρηται, καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν ἀπεμφαινόντων ὁμωνύμως λεγόμενον εὑρίσκομεν.

Τὸ δὲ τοῦ ἁγίου ὄνομα καὶ τοῦ ἀφθάρτου καὶ τοῦ εὐθέος καὶ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ οὐδαμοῦ κοινοποιούμενον πρὸς τὰ μὴ δέοντα παρὰ τῆς Γραφῆς ἐδιδάχθημεν.

Οὐκοῦν εἰ ἐν τοῖς ἐξαιρέτως ἐπὶ μόνης τῆς θείας φύσεως εὐσεβῶς λεγομένοις ὀνόμασι κοινωνεῖν τὸ Ἅγιον Πνεῦμα πρὸς τὸν Υἱὸν καὶ τὸν Πατέρα οὐκ ἀντιλέγουσι, τίς ὁ λόγος μόνῳ τούτῳ κατασκευάζειν ἀκοινώνητον εἶναι οὗ μετέχειν ἐδείχθη, κατὰ τινὰ ὁμώνυμον χρῆσιν, καὶ τὰ δαιμόνια καὶ τὰ εἴδωλα;[53]

For it says, "Let the gods that have not made the heavens and the earth perish, and be cast down beneath the earth" ;

and, "all the gods of the heathen are devils" ;

and the witch in her incantations, when she brings up for Saul the spirits that he sought for, says that she saw gods. (1 Samuel 28:13)

And again Balaam, being an augur and a seer, and engaging in divination, and having obtained for himself the instruction of devils and magical augury, is said in Scripture to receive counsel from God. (Numbers 22)

One may show by collecting many instances of the same kind from the Divine Scripture, that this attribute has no supremacy over the other attributes which are proper to God, seeing that, as has been said, we find it predicated, in an equivocal sense, even of things incongruous;

but we are nowhere taught in Scripture that the names of the Holy, the Incorruptible, the Righteous, the Good, are made common to things unworthy.

If, then, they do not deny that the Holy Spirit has community with the Father and the Son in those attributes which, in their sense of special excellence, are piously predicated only of the Divine nature, what reason is there to pretend that He is excluded from community in this only, wherein it was shown that, by an equivocal use, even devils and idols share?[54]

Thus, Gregory makes it quite clear here that, in his view, "God" is in no way a special term for predicating the divine *ousia*, since it can be applied to obviously

---

53. (St. Gregory of Nyssa 1958), pp. 9-10.
54. (St. Gregory of Nyssa 1893), p. 328.

non-divine beings. Rather, this is a claim he attributes *to his opponents*. He goes on:

Ἀλλὰ λέγουσι φύσεως ἐνδεικτικὴν εἶναι τὴν προσηγορίαν ταύτην, ἀκοινώνητον δὲ εἶναι πρὸς Πατέρα καὶ Υἱὸν τὴν τοῦ Πνεύματος φύσιν, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο μηδὲ τῆς κατὰ τὸ ὄνομα τοῦτο κοινωνίας μετέχειν.[55]

But *they* [his opponents] say that this appellation (προσηγορία) ["God"] is indicative of nature (φύσις), and that, as the nature (φύσις) of the Spirit is not common to the Father and the Son, for this reason neither does he partake [participate, μετέχειν] in the community of this attribute [name, (ὄνομα) – i.e., "God"].[56]

Critically, Gregory does not go on to *admit* that "God" signifies the nature (φύσις) here. Rather, he simply brings in at this point an argument that natures, or *ousiai*, are individuated by *energeiai* and that the Spirit shares all the same *energeiai* as the Father and Son, so that He must have the same nature anyway (more on which below, 4.4.4, p. 186). Thus, *even if "God" did* signify the divine nature (which it doesn't), it would *still* follow that "God" can be predicated of the Holy Spirit (the main question under discussion in *Ad Eustathium*).

...κἂν φύσιν σημαίνῃ τὸ τῆς θεότητος ὄνομα, κυρίως καὶ τῷ Ἁγίῳ Πνεύματι τὴν προσηγορίαν ἐφαρμόζεσθαι ταύτην ἡ τῆς οὐσίας κοινότης συντίθεται.[57]

...*even if* the name of Godhead does indicate nature, the community of substance [essence, οὐσία] shows that this appellation [προσηγορία] is properly applied also to the Holy Spirit.[58]

We'll explore this claim about the individuation of *ousiai* below (p. 184 ff.), as well as what I will call "the Cappadocian Assertion" – that the hypostases share all the same *energeiai* (p. 187 ff.). The point for now is that Gregory does not accept the semantic claim that "God" signifies the nature. In fact, he goes on to argue vehemently *against* the claim that "God" signifies the divine nature, but only considers what would follow, hypothetically, on his opponents' assumption. In Gregory's own view, it signifies a certain kind of *activity* (*energeia*). And Gregory, at least, seems to believe that this has been his consistent teaching:

Ἀλλ’ οὐκ οἶδα πῶς ἐπὶ τὴν τῆς φύσεως ἔνδειξιν τὴν προσηγορίαν τῆς θεότητος φέρουσιν οἱ πάντα κατασκευάζοντες, ὥσπερ οὐκ

But I know not how these makers-up of all sorts of arguments bring the appellation of Godhead to be an indication of nature, as though

---

55. (St. Gregory of Nyssa 1958), p. 10.
56. (St. Gregory of Nyssa 1893), p. 328.
57. (St. Gregory of Nyssa 1958), p. 13.
58. (St. Gregory of Nyssa 1893), p. 329.

ἀκηκοότες παρὰ τῆς θείας γραφῆς ὅτι χειροτονητὴ φύσις οὐ γίνεται·

Μωυσῆς δὲ τῶν Αἰγυπτίων ἐχειροτονήθη θεός, οὕτω πρὸς αὐτὸν εἰπόντος τοῦ χρηματίζοντος ὅτι Θεόν σε δέδωκα τῷ Φαραώ.

οὐκοῦν ἐξουσίας τινὸς εἴτε ἐποπτικῆς εἴτε ἐνεργητικῆς ἔνδειξιν ἡ προσηγορία φέρει,

ἡ δὲ θεία φύσις ἐν πᾶσι τοῖς ἐπινοουμένοις ὀνόμασι, καθό ἐστι, μένει ἀσήμαντος, ὡς ὁ ἡμέτερος λόγος.

εὐεργέτην γὰρ καὶ κριτήν, ἀγαθόν τε καὶ δίκαιον καὶ ὅσα ἄλλα τοιαῦτα μαθόντες ἐνεργειῶν διαφορὰς ἐδιδάχθημεν,

τοῦ δὲ ἐνεργοῦντος τὴν φύσιν οὐδὲν μᾶλλον διὰ τῆς τῶν ἐνεργειῶν κατανοήσεως ἐπιγνῶναι δυνάμεθα.

ὅταν γὰρ ἀποδιδῷ τις λόγον ἑκάστου τε τούτων τῶν ὀνομάτων καὶ αὐτῆς τῆς φύσεως περὶ ἣν τὰ ὀνόματα, οὐ τὸν αὐτὸν ἀμφοτέρων ἀποδίδωσι λόγον·

ὧν δὲ ὁ λόγος ἕτερος, τούτων καὶ ἡ φύσις διάφορος.

οὐκοῦν ἄλλο μέν τί ἐστιν ἡ οὐσία ἧς οὔπω λόγος μηνυτὴς ἐξευρέθη, ἑτέρα δὲ τῶν περὶ αὐτὴν ὀνομάτων ἡ σημασία ἐξ ἐνεργείας τινὸς ἢ ἀξίας ὀνομαζομένων.[59]

they had not heard from the Scripture that it is a matter of appointment, in which way nature does not arise.

For Moses was appointed as a god of the Egyptians, since He Who gave him the oracles, etc., spoke thus to him, "I have given you as a god to Pharaoh." (Exodus 7:1)

Thus the force of the appellation [this προσηγορία, i.e., "God"] is the indication of some power, either of oversight or of operation [*energeia*].

But the Divine nature itself, as it is, remains unexpressed by all the names that are conceived for it, as our doctrine declares.

For in learning that He is beneficent, and a judge, good, and just, and all else of the same kind, we learn diversities of His operations [*energeiai*].

but we are none the more able to learn by our knowledge of His operations [*energeiai*] *the nature* of Him Who works ["energizes"].

For when one gives a definition of any one of these attributes, and of the nature to which the names are applied, he will not give the same definition of both:

and of things of which the definition is different, the nature also is distinct.

Indeed the substance [οὐσία] is one thing which no definition has been found to express, and the significance of the names employed concerning it varies, as the names are given from some operation [*energeia*, ἐνέργεια] or accident.[60]

---

59. (St. Gregory of Nyssa 1958), pp. 13-14.
60. (St. Gregory of Nyssa 1893), p. 329.

Thus, not only does "God" not signify *the divine* nature in particular, as Gregory argued above (because it is applicable even to things of a non-divine nature, like demons), here Gregory argues that "God" cannot signify *any nature at all* (because natures can't be had accidentally or "by institution and appointment," and Moses was exactly that – a god accidentally, by being made a god over Pharaoh.)

Gregory makes quite clear that his own view as to why the Holy Spirit counts as "God" is that "God" signifies a certain types of *energeia*:

Οὐκοῦν ἐξουσίας τινὸς εἴτε ἐποπτικῆς εἴτε ἐνεργητικῆς ἔνδειξιν ἡ προσηγορία φέρει.[61]	Thus the force of the appellation [this προσηγορία, i.e., "God"] is the indication of some power, either of oversight or of operation [*energeia*, ἐνέργεια] .[62]

He only gives the argument about the individuation of natures for the sake of having a "back-up" argument, since, he believes, *most people believe* the semantic claim that "God" signifies the divine nature:

εἴτε οὖν ἐνεργείας ὄνομα ἡ θεότης, ὡς μίαν ἐνέργειαν πατρὸς καὶ υἱοῦ καὶ ἁγίου πνεύματος, οὕτω μίαν φαμὲν εἶναι τὴν θεότητα·	If, then, "Godhead" is a name derived from operation [*energeia*, ἐνέργεια] , as we say that the operation [*energeia*, ἐνέργεια] of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit is one, so we say that the Godhead is one:
εἴτε κατὰ τὰς τῶν πολλῶν δόξας φύσεως ἐνδεικτικόν ἐστι τὸ τῆς θεότητος ὄνομα, διὰ τὸ μηδεμίαν εὑρίσκειν ἐν τῇ φύσει παραλλαγὴν ἐκ τῆς τῶν ἐνεργειῶν ταυτότητος οὐκ ἀπεικότως μιᾶς θεότητος τὴν ἁγίαν τριάδα διοριζόμεθα.[63]	or if, *according to the view of the majority*, "Godhead" is indicative of nature, since we cannot find any diversity in their nature, we not unreasonably define the Holy Trinity to be of one Godhead.[64]

He then goes on to mention yet another commonly held semantic view, one which he again rejects, but provides a counter-argument for anyway:

εἰ δέ τις ἀξίας ἐνδεικτικὴν εἶναι τὴν προσηγορίαν ταύτην ὁρίζοιτο, οὐκ οἶδα μὲν τίνι λόγῳ πρὸς τὴν τοιαύτην σημασίαν ἕλκει τὸ ὄνομα·	But if any one were to call this appellation [προσηγορία] indicative of dignity, I cannot tell by what reasoning he drags the word to this significance.

61. (St. Gregory of Nyssa 1958), p. 14.
62. (St. Gregory of Nyssa 1893), p. 329.
63. (St. Gregory of Nyssa 1958), p. 15.
64. (St. Gregory of Nyssa 1893), p. 329.

138

πλὴν ἐπειδὴ πολλῶν ἐστι τὸ τοιοῦ- τον λεγόντων ἀκούειν, ὡς ἂν μηδαμό- θεν χώραν κατὰ τῆς ἀληθείας ἡ τῶν ἀντικειμένων εὑρίσκοι σπουδή, καὶ πρὸς τὴν τοιαύτην ὑπόληψιν συμπε- ριενεχθέντες τοῖς οὕτω δοξάζουσι φαμὲν ὅτι, κἂν ἀξίαν σημαίνη τὸ ὄνομα, καὶ κατὰ τοῦτο κυρίως τῷ ἁγίῳ πνεύματι ἡ προσηγορία ἐφαρ- μοσθήσεται.[65]

Since however one may hear many saying things of this kind, in order that the zeal of its opponents may not find a ground for attack- ing the truth, we go out of our way with those who take this view, to consider such an opinion, and say that, even if the name does denote dignity, in this case too the appel- lation will properly befit the Holy Spirit.[66]

Similar statements can be found in his anti-Eunomian writings as well.[67]

It should be clear, then, that while Gregory spends time to consider the view that "God" signifies the divine nature (a view which he takes to be the majority opinion), he does not endorse the claim himself. For Gregory himself, "God" does not have the divine nature as its semantic value. He only considers it so as to respond to his interlocutors on their own terms.

The Real Role of the UNA in Gregory's Response

The confusion about Gregory's real view about the semantics of the word "God" naturally arises when we don't see that Gregory is offering distinct arguments (SMA, UNA, UAA) directed at distinct audiences (the uneducated, educated pagans and certain heretics, educated orthodox Christians), for a purpose other than philosophical accuracy and logical perspicuity (namely, *salvation*). Not making that distinction, although we can easily separate out the SMA, we nat- urally want to run the UNA and the UAA together and try to reconcile them in some way (even though, as we'll see, Gregory *explicitly disavows* the UNA in the *Ad Ablabium*, immediately after giving it).

---

65. (St. Gregory of Nyssa 1958), p. 15.

66. (St. Gregory of Nyssa 1893), p. 329.

67. E.g., his *Refutatio Confessionis Eunomii* (pp. 518-519 in (St. Gregory of Nyssa 1893)):

> He is named, by those who call upon Him, not what He is essentially (for the nature of Him Who alone is unspeakable), but He receives His appellations from what are believed to be His operations [*energeiai*] in regard to our life. To take an instance ready to our hand; when we speak of Him as God, we so call Him from regarding Him as *overlooking and surveying all things, and seeing through the things that are hidden. . .*

> And that this is so, we are clearly taught by Holy Scripture, by the mouth of great David, when, as by certain peculiar and appropriate names, derived from his contemplation of the works of God, he thus speaks of the Divine nature: "The Lord is full of compassion and mercy, long-suffering, and of great goodness." Now what do these words tell us? Do they indicate His operations [*energeiai*], or His nature? *No one will say that they indicate aught but His operations [energeiai].*

Cross himself – quite correctly – notes, "Gregory in effect claims that the abstract noun 'deity' names the unified divine activity..."[68] which is indeed precisely what Gregory says in the latter part of *Ad Ablabium*, as well as in *Ad Eustathium*. (Both of which, of course, are directed to fellow orthodox Christians.) But Cross then immediately returns, incorrectly in my view, to the claim that "God" signifies the *ousia*:

> The point, however, is that, just as in the case of created natures, what underlies our use of the singular concrete noun ('God', 'man', etc.) is the unity of substance/nature in each case... [69]

We will see below (4.4, pp. 174 ff.) why I take it that what underlies the use of "God" in the singular for Gregory is not the unity of nature at all, but the unity of activity, and why these two kinds of unity turn out to be importantly different for the purposes of defending the doctrine of the Trinity today. For now, though, we've seen that for Gregory "God" is *not* a kind term, but *an agent noun*. Thus, although Gregory can and does enter into debates that assume "God" is a kind term like "man," his actual view is that it is more like "rhetorician" or "shoemaker" (on Gregory's view, as we will see, p. 175, it probably means something like the "beholder" of hidden things). Cross continues, "the (additional) unity of activity in the case of God means that it is never legitimate to refer to many Gods."[70]

Where Cross speaks of being "legitimate" or illegitimate here, I am claiming what we have is being *misleading* or *non-misleading* (see above, p. 106 ff.). And as we will see below (p. 191), for Gregory it is indeed the unity of *activity* (not of nature) that makes it importantly *misleading* (and in fact, on his view, *false*) to speak of "three Gods," in a way such that it would at least not be misleading to speak of "three men" or three "three shoemakers," and indeed possibly even *true* to say there are "three shoemakers" in the relevant cases. This is also what allows Gregory, *in fact*, to admit that the metaphysics of the Trinity is *not* strictly analogous to the metaphysics of humans and other creatures after all – contrary to how he has typically been read. That is, as we will see, while men do have the same kind of unity of *nature* as the Trinity, it would simply be impossible for there to be three men who have the sort of unity of *activity* the Trinity has, though if *per impossibile* such a state of affairs came about, it would be, on Gregory's view, false, and as I will argue also certainly *misleading*, to speak of the three men as three shoemakers instead of one shoemaker. (See p. 191 below). As Gregory states:

ἀλλ' ἐπειδὴ ἀμήχανος τῆς συνηθείας ἡ ἐπανόρθωσις (πῶς γὰρ ἄν τις πεισθείη μὴ πολλοὺς λέγειν ἀνθρώπους τοὺς ἐν τῇ φύσει τῇ αὐτῇ	But since the correction of the habit is impracticable (for how could you persuade any one not to speak of those who are exhibited in the same

68. (Cross 2002), p. 404, footnote 99.
69. (Cross 2002)
70. (Cross 2002)

140

δεικνυμένους· δυσμετάθετον γὰρ ἐπὶ παντὸς ἡ συνήθεια), ἐπὶ μὲν τῆς κάτω φύσεως τῇ κρατούσῃ συνηθείᾳ μὴ ἀντιβαίνοντες οὐδὲν ἂν τοσοῦτον ἁμάρτοιμεν, μηδεμιᾶς οὔσης ζημίας ἐκ τῆς ἡμαρτημένης τῶν ὀνομάτων χρήσεως·[71]

nature as "many men"? – indeed, in every case habit is a thing hard to change), we are not so far wrong in not going contrary to the prevailing habit in the case of the lower nature, since *no harm results* from the mistaken use of the name:[72]

In other words, in the case of humans (or really any created things), Gregory is arguing that it is strictly speaking false (given the semantic picture sketched above, p. 129), *but not misleading*, to talk about "many men" (or many of whatever species of created thing).

ἐπὶ δὲ τοῦ θείου δόγματος οὐκέτι ὁμοίως ἀκίνδυνος ἡ ἀδιάφορος χρῆσις τῶν ὀνομάτων· οὐ γὰρ μικρὸν ἐνταῦθα τὸ παρὰ μικρόν.[73]

but in the case of the statement concerning the Divine nature the various use of terms is no longer so free from danger: for that which is of small account is in these subjects no longer a small matter.[74]

So when it comes to God, Gregory holds that it is not only false, but *no longer non-misleading*, to speak of "many gods."

But Cross seems to want to run the UNA and UAA together into a single, coherent argument – incorrectly on my reading.

He says:

> But Gregory is prepared to concede that we can, improperly, refer to men, whereas we cannot, even improperly, refer to Gods in the context of the Trinity. The reason for the impossibility of referring to three Gods, as the main bulk of *Ad Ablabium* makes clear, is that the divine persons share in unified activity in a way that different men do not. For Gregory, then, the *homoousion* does not in itself show how the case of the Trinity is relevantly different from the case of human beings.[75]

He goes on:

> analogies to three human beings are perfectly serious: the type of universal is the same in the case of both divine and human hypostases. (It is worth noting too that the reason why 'God' properly names activity is that the essence is unknowable and therefore unnameable; unity of activity is a further point over and above this.)[76]

71. (St. Gregory of Nyssa 1958), pp. 41-42.
72. (St. Gregory of Nyssa 1893), p. 332, emphasis mine.
73. (St. Gregory of Nyssa 1958), p. 42.
74. (St. Gregory of Nyssa 1893), p. 332.
75. (Cross 2002), p. 404.
76. (Cross 2002), p. 405.

I don't think this is quite right. Although of course I agree with all of the metaphysical points: The analogy to three human being is "perfectly serious," and the type of universal is the same, and thus "the *homoousion* does not in itself show how the case of the Trinity is relevantly different from the case of human beings" (that is, for Gregory, human beings are *homoousios* in just the same way that the divine hypostases are). But it sounds as though Cross wants to see Gregory as actually *endorsing* the semantic view that "God" signifies the divine nature, and that the unity of activity is only a sort of additional point *within the same argument*, that somehow shows why it would be illegitimate to speak of "gods," even loosely. As should be obvious, my reading is not that the unity of activity is an additional point within the same argument, but that it is a separate argument altogether – and the only one that Gregory actually endorses.

One thing that does confuse matters is the sheer amount of time Gregory takes up talking about the UNA. It takes up the entirety of *Ad Graecos* (directed entirely towards a pagan audience), and the first part of *Ad Ablabium* (which I am arguing is again for the benefit of educated pagans, and some heretics). That naturally leads one to think it is in some sense more significant. And, in some sense, it is. Namely, in the sense that it is the argument directed at what Gregory clearly takes to be a wider audience than the one that would accept his semantic claims. Nevertheless, he makes it quite clear that he only gives this response for the sake of those who accept this common, but in Gregory's view false, semantic assumption (i.e., most pagans and some heretics).

Still, the issue of Gregory's treatment of the name "God" in *Ad Graecos* might seem to pose a problem for my interpretation. For in this work, Gregory really does look very much as though he accepts the view that "God" signifies the nature.

Cross points this out:

> The opening of *Ad Graecos* likewise makes clear that 'God' is a name of an *ousia*, and not of a person, and that it is for this reason that we worship one God. 'God' thus names not the collection of divine persons, but the immanent universal exemplified by each person: viz. the divine substance. Equally, although each divine person is (a) God, there is only one God since there is only one substance. Three Gods would entail three substances. The crucial indivisibility claim is again made explicitly:
>
>> The substance is not divided (διαιρουμένης) into each of the persons, such that there are three substances for the respective persons. It is evident that the term 'God' is not so divided, since it signifies the substance; such a distinction would result in three Gods.
>
> 'God' signifies the divine substance; the divine substance is not divisible; there is thus only one God. Note again that the substance is not divided into persons–and this is precisely the opposite of the

142

Neoplatonic claim that a universal whole is divided in particulars. As I noted above, on those occasions where *Ad Ablabium* uses the term *ousia*, it is clearly synonymous with *phusis*. I take it that *ousia* in *Ad Graecos* is likewise synonymous with the *phusis* of *Ad Ablabium*,and that neither should be given a collective account.[77]

The passage Cross refers to from *Ad Graecos* is:

Εἰ τὸ θεὸς ὄνομα προσώπου δηλωτικὸν ὑπῆρχεν, τρία πρόσωπα λέγοντες ἐξ ἀνάγκης τρεῖς ἂν ἐλέγομεν θεούς·

εἰ δὲ τὸ θεὸς ὄνομα οὐσίας σημαντικόν ἐστιν, μίαν οὐσίαν ὁμολογοῦντες τῆς ἁγίας τριάδος ἕνα θεὸν εἰκότως δογματίζομεν, ἐπειδὴ μιᾶς οὐσίας ἓν ὄνομα τὸ θεός ἐστιν.

διὸ καὶ ἀκολούθως τῇ τε οὐσίᾳ καὶ τῷ ὀνόματι εἷς ἐστι θεὸς καὶ οὐ τρεῖς.[78]

If the word "God" refers to a person, when we say "three persons" we necessarily would be saying "three Gods";

but if the word "God" signifies an *ousia*, then in confessing one *ousia* of the holy Trinity we can properly be understood as teaching one God, since there is one name for that one *ousia*: God.

So it follows that in *ousia* and in name God is one and not three.[79]

It must be admitted that, all throughout *Ad Graecos*, Gregory makes statements to the effect that "God" signifies the divine nature or *ousia*. One might wonder, then, even if Gregory is fairly clear in *Ad Eustathium* and *Ad Ablabium* (as well as his anti-Eunomian works) that he doesn't endorse this claim, but only considers it by way of responding to an objection, why Gregory sounds, in the *Ad Graecos*, as though he *does* accept it after all.

There are a couple of ways to respond to this. First, probably the easiest way, and I suppose the way "of the many," would be to simply say that Gregory's views developed over time. Second, one can respond based on my proposal that Gregory gives different arguments for different audiences.

Let's consider first the easy way out.

It's notoriously difficult to pin down very firm dates for Gregory's writings. It's clear that *Ad Ablabium* was written very late, in Gregory's old age, but in that work, he's also quite clear about the semantics of "God." As for the other triadological works we would want to take into consideration, we're left with *Ad Eustathium*, *Ad Petrum* and *Ad Graecos*, as well as his anti-Eunomian writings.

The uncertainty of the dates of these works, and the fact that by all accounts they were likely written in at least roughly the same time period, makes it at least easier than usual to challenge the usually suggested dates. One could argue that, if Gregory ends up saying that "God" signifies an *energeia* in *Ad Ablabium*,

---

77. (Cross 2002), p. 405.
78. (St. Gregory of Nyssa 1958), p. 19.
79. (St. Gregory of Nyssa 1994). I have simply substituted "*ousia*" for Daley's "substance."

but in the *Ad Graecos* says "God" signifies the *ousia*, then that's reason to put *Ad Graecos* earlier. If *Ad Petrum* seems to say the same thing, one can argue it should be dated earlier as well (Cross dates it in the late 370's anyway). So, if we date *Ad Eustathium* to some time after that (later in the 370's or early 380's, say) along with *Contra Eunomium*, then we can easily tell a story about development. In *Ad Petrum*, Gregory (or Basil) is just working out this new theory of universals, allowing him to accept the *homoousion* without having to admit that God is "divisible" or a "collection." In *Ad Graecos*, Gregory connects "God" with *ousia* so as to use it in a response to what amounts to the Logical Problem of the Trinity, but perhaps has a few misgivings, based on his view of the mysteriousness of the divine nature. Later, in *Contra Eunomium* and *Ad Eustathium*, Gregory thoroughly disavows the use of "God" to signify the *ousia*. Then in *Ad Ablabium*, he mentions the view again only because it is a majority opinion.

So, at least, is the story that one might tell. And if there was no other way to explain the statements in *Ad Graecos*, that would be the story I in fact would tell.

But I'm not actually convinced that such a story has to be told, or should be.

First of all, if we can date any of these works first, it would likely be the *Ad Petrum*. And it certainly looks initially as though *Ad Petrum* would support the reading of Gregory as using "God" to signify the *ousia*. After all, he barely talks about *energeia* in *Ad Petrum* (he uses the term, or inflections of it, only 5 times, never in any very technical use, and never to say it is the signification of "God.")

But it's interesting to note that, *even in Ad Petrum*, although Gregory discusses the *metaphysical* distinction between *ousia* and hypostasis, and his theology of three divine hypostases and one divine *ousia*, *he never once asserts the semantic claim that the word "God" signifies the divine* ousia. The example he gives for a noun that signifies an *ousia* is not "God," but "man."

Πάντων τῶν ὀνομάτων τὰ μὲν ἐπὶ πλειόνων καὶ τῷ ἀριθμῷ διαφερόντων λεγόμενα πραγμάτων καθολικωτέραν τινὰ τὴν σημασίαν ἔχει, οἷον ἄνθρωπος.[80]	Of all nouns, the sense of some, which are predicated of subjects plural and numerically various, is more general; as for instance "man."[81]

So, in fact, although *Ad Petrum* makes it quite clear what Gregory thinks the *metaphysics* of *ousia* and hypostasis is, the evidence from *Ad Petrum* is simply inconclusive as to what Gregory thinks the *semantics* of "God" is.

Obviously the suggestion I want to make is that Gregory is simply fitting his argument to different audiences. And not in a disingenuous way. He is simply taking into account the presuppositions of his interlocutors. It's true that, given

---

80. (St. Basil the Great 1957-1966), vol. 1, epistle 38, section 2.
81. (St. Basil the Great 1895), p. 137.

my interpretation, even in *Ad Graecos* one might expect him to keep talk about "God" signifying the nature always in the hypothetical, and yet that we don't find him doing that. (He seems to simply say that "God" does in fact signify the nature). But for one thing, it may simply be that Gregory doesn't mind affirming a non-misleading falsehood here. Or that putting a large number of the sentences of this work into a subjunctive mood would simply read too awkwardly for Gregory's inner rhetorician to feel good about. More importantly, though, consider this passage from the *Ad Graecos* itself:

εἰ δὲ κατὰ τὴν οὐσίαν μονὰς τῆς ἁγίας τριάδος, δῆλον ὅτι καὶ κατὰ τὸ θεὸς ὄνομα.

δηλωτικὸν γὰρ τοῦτο τῆς οὐσίας οὐ τὸ τί αὐτῆς παριστῶν (δῆλον ὅτι ἐπείπερ ἀπερινόητον καὶ ἀκατάληπτον τὸ τῆς θείας οὐσίας), ἀλλ' ἀπό τινος ἰδιώματος προσόντος αὐτῇ λαμβανόμενον παραδηλοῖ αὐτήν, καθάπερ τὸ χρεμετιστικὸν καὶ τὸ γελαστικὸν ἰδιώματα ὄντα φύσεων λεγόμενα σημαίνει τὰς φύσεις, ὧνπέρ ἐστιν ἰδιώματα.

ἔστι τοίνυν ἰδίωμα τῆς ἀϊδίου οὐσίας, ἥς ἐστι πατὴρ καὶ υἱὸς καὶ ἅγιον πνεῦμα, τὸ πάντα ἐποπτεύειν καὶ θεωρεῖν καὶ γινώσκειν, οὐ μόνον τὰ ἔργῳ γινόμενα, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰ ἐν νῷ λαμβανόμενα, ὅπερ μόνης ἐστὶν ἐκείνης τῆς οὐσίας, ἅτε δὴ καὶ αἰτίας πάντων ὑπαρχούσης τῆς τὰ πάντα ποιησάσης καὶ πάντων ὡς ἰδίων ποιημάτων δεσποζούσης, τὰ ʾδὲʾ κατ' ἀνθρώπους ἅπαντα συμφέροντί τινι καὶ ἀρρήτῳ λόγῳ πρυτανευούσης.

ἐντεῦθεν εἰλημμένον τὸ θεὸς ὄνομα κυρίως λεγόμενον σημαίνει τὴν οὐσίαν ἐκείνην, ἥτις ἀληθῶς δεσπόζει τῶν ἁπάντων ὡς πάντων δημιουργός.

μιᾶς τοιγαροῦν ὑπαρχούσης τῆς οὐσίας, ἥς ἐστι πατὴρ καὶ υἱὸς καὶ ἅγιον πνεῦμα, καὶ ἑνὸς τοῦ

And if the Holy Trinity comprise a monad with respect to *ousia*, it is clear that this is also true with respect to the name "God".

For this [the name "God"] signifies the *ousia*, not in that it represents what the *ousia* *is* (that is obvious, since the "what" of the divine *ousia* is beyond our understanding and mental grasp), but in that it hints at the appropriate *idioma* by which we can lay hold of it - just as being able to neigh or to laugh, being what we all "natural *idiomata*," signify the natures of which they are *idiomata*.

Now it is an *idioma* of the eternal *ousia* to which Father and Son and Holy Spirit belong to survey and understand and know all things: not just what takes place in action (*ta ergo ginomena*), but even what is grasped in the mind. This [activity] is proper to that *ousia* alone, since it is the cause of all things, has made all things, and reigns over all things as its own productions, presiding over all human affairs by some appropriate but ineffable word of command.

Understood on this basis, the noun "God" signifies, properly speaking, that *ousia* which truly rules all things as creator of all.

Since, therefore, the *ousia* to which Father, Son and Holy Spirit belong is one, and since the name

145

παραδηλοῦντος αὐτὴν ὀνόματος (φημὶ δή, τοῦ θεός) εἷς θεὸς ἔσται κυρίως καὶ ἀκολούθως τῷ λόγῳ τῆς οὐσίας, μηδενὸς λόγου καταναγκάζοντος ἡμᾶς τρεῖς λέγειν θεούς, ὥσπερ οὖν οὐδὲ τρεῖς οὐσίας.[82]

that expresses it is one (i.e., the name "God"), God will be one in the proper sense, according to the structure of his *ousia*; no rationale will force us to speak of "three Gods," just as there are not three *ousiai*.[83]

Note that what Gregory calls "the natural *idiomata*" – being able to neigh or laugh – are *energeiai* (or *dynameis*). And that, in the case of the divine nature, the relevant *idioma* of the nature is the *energeia* of "beholding" or "knowing all things." (More on this *energeia* just below; more on *idiomata* below, section 4.4.1, p. 175 ff.).

So, even here, although he goes along with the idea that "God" signifies the *ousia*, he allows that it does so only by way of signifying that *ousia*'s "natural *idioma*" – the *energeia* of "beholding" – and in turn the *energeia* itself "signifies" the *ousia*. Now, whatever the nature of this "signification" going on between an *energeia* and an *ousia* (presumably something like the way in which smoke – naturally – "means" fire), it seems clear that, even in *Ad Graecos*, Gregory takes it that the *primary* signification of "God" is actually the *energeia* of "beholding."

And this is really what we ought to antecedently expect anyway, as it turns out to be a very clear trend in the tradition leading up to Gregory. The following are just a few examples from the ante-Nicene fathers, to illustrate that these views are taken from an earlier tradition.

St. Justin Martyr (c. 150 AD), *Apologia Secunda*:

Ὄνομα δὲ τῷ πάντων πατρὶ θετόν, ἀγεννήτῳ ὄντι, οὐκ ἔστιν· ᾧ γὰρ ἂν καὶ ὄνομά τι προσαγορεύηται, πρεσβύτερον ἔχει τὸν θέμενον τὸ ὄνομα.

But to the Father of all, being unbegotten, there is no name given. For by whatever name He be called, He has as His elder the one who gives Him the name.

τὸ δὲ πατὴρ καὶ θεὸς καὶ κτίστης καὶ κύριος καὶ δεσπότης οὐκ ὀνόματά ἐστιν, ἀλλ᾽ ἐκ τῶν εὐποιϊῶν καὶ τῶν ἔργων προσρήσεις.[84]

But "Father," and "God," and "Creator," and "Lord," and "master," are not names (ὀνόματα), but *attributions* (προσρήσεις)[85] *derived from His well-doing and works* (ἔργα)."[86]

Theophilus of Antioch (c. 180 AD), *Ad Autolycum*:

θεὸς δὲ λέγεται διὰ τὸ τεθεικέναι τὰ πάντα ἐπὶ τῇ ἑαυτοῦ ἀσφαλείᾳ,

And he is called God (θεός) on account of His having placed

---

82. (St. Gregory of Nyssa 1958), pp. 21-22.

83. (St. Gregory of Nyssa 1994). I have substituted "*ousia*" for Daley's "substance" and "*idioma*" for Daley's "characteristic."

84. (St. Justin Martyr 1915), pp. 78-89

85. Or "modes of attribution," cf. Aristotle, *Prior Analytics*, Book I, Ch.2.

86. (St. Justin Martyr et al. 1885), p. 190. Emphasis mine.

καὶ διὰ τὸ θέειν· τὸ δὲ θέειν ἐστὶν τὸ τρέχειν καὶ κινεῖν καὶ ἐνεργεῖν καὶ τρέφειν καὶ προνοεῖν καὶ κυβερνᾶν καὶ ζωοποιεῖν τὰ πάντα.[87]

(τεθεικέναι, from τίθημι) all things on security afforded by Himself;

and on account of θέειν (from θέω). For θέειν is *running*, and *moving*, and *energizing*, and *nourishing*, and *foreseeing*, and *governing*, and *making all things alive*.[88]

Origen (c. 215 AD), *De Principiis*

Quaecunque ergo diximus de sapientia Dei, haec convenienter aptabuntur et intelligentur etiam pro eo quod Filius Dei vita est, et pro eo quod verbum est, et pro eo quod veritas est, et pro eo quod resurrectio est:

Quia hae omnes appellationes ex operibus eius ac virtutibus nominatae sunt ... [89]

Whatever, therefore, we have predicated of the wisdom of God, will be appropriately applied and understood of the Son of God, in virtue of His being the Life, and the Word, and the Truth and the Resurrection:

For *all these titles are derived from His power and operations* [Lat. *operibus, = energeia*] ... [90]

Other examples can be given from within the pro-Nicene consensus itself. I will give just a couple of examples from St. Ambrose's *De Fide (Ad Gratianum)* here.

Ambrose, *De Fide Ad Gratianum Augustum Libri Quinque*:

Deus enim et Dominus nomen magnificentiae, nomen est potestatis, sicut ipse dicit: Dominus nomen est mihi. Et sicut alibi Propheta asserit: Dominus omnipotens nomen est ei [Esai. xlii, 8]. Dominus ergo et Deus vel quod dominetur omnibus, vel quod spectet omnia, et timeatur a cunctis. . . [91]

For 'God' and 'Lord' is a name of majesty, a name of power, even as God Himself saith: 'The Lord is My name,' and as in another place the prophet declareth: 'The Lord *Almighty* is His name.' [Isaiah 42:8] God is He, therefore, and Lord, either because His rule is over all, *or because He beholdeth all things*, and is feared by all, without difference. . . [92]

Et hic ergo cum dicitur: Pluit Dominus a Domino, unitatem divinitatis agnosce. Operationis enim unitas non facit pluralem divini-

So again, when you read, 'The Lord rained from the Lord,' acknowledge the unity of Godhead, for *unity in operation* [*operatio, =*

---

87. (Theophilus of Antioch 1970).
88. (Theophilus of Antioch et al. 1905), p. 90.
89. (Origen 1836), p. 110.
90. (Tertullian et al. 1885), p. 247.

tatem, sicut ipse Dominus ostendit, dicens: Credite mihi, quia ego in Patre, et Pater in me: alioquin vel propter opera ipsa credite [Ioan. x, 38]. Et hic advertimus quod unitatem divinitatis per unitatem operum designaverit.[93]

energeia] doth not allow of more than one individual God, even as the Lord Himself has shown, saying: 'Believe Me, that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me: or believe Me for the very works' sake.' [John 10:38] Here, too, we see that *unity of Godhead is signified by unity in operation* [*operatio, = energeia*].[94]

Thus, we really should come to read Gregory expecting to find him holding the view that "God" signifies, not the divine nature, but some kind of divine activity, i.e., *energeia* (Lat. *operatio*). And that if he has any specific view on what that *energeia* is, it will probably be "beholding." So, I wouldn't actually subscribe to a developmental story on this particular question. I find it more likely that Gregory's view on this semantic issue probably really *was* consistent over time, just as he claims in *Ad Eustathium*.

Thus, although *Ad Graecos* may be a bit of a rough patch in my interpretation, I think that, on the whole, it looks more like Gregory had a consistent view that "God" signifies an *energeia*. Only that he also adapts his arguments to a particular audience's presuppositions (to the extent that he can), rather than resting his argument on more controversial premises than he needs to (which seems like just good common sense – and in a certain sense, just good manners).

And in either case, whether we accept the view that Gregory is simply accommodating the presuppositions of different audiences, or we tell some kind of developmental story, in either case, certainly within the *Ad Ablabium* (almost certainly the latest of his triadological writings), it seems clear enough that Gregory does not actually accept the presupposition of the UNA, that "God" signifies the *ousia*, but he rather holds that "God" signifies an *energeia* (specifically, "beholding.")

Thus (happily) when Gregory claims that it would be strictly speaking false, even if not misleading, to claim that there are "many men," due to their monadic nature, it turns out that deciding the question of whether this claim of Gregory's is correct or not is unnecessary for our purposes. That is, although he does seem to think that, strictly speaking, there is only one man, because there is only one human nature, this (nowadays controversial) view turns out to be inessential to the response to Ablabius' argument that Gregory himself actually accepts.

If one needs any further evidence of this, let us return to the *Ad Ablabium* and consider Gregory's conclusion to the section on the UNA, which may seem perplexing on a first reading:

Οὐκοῦν εἷς ἡμῖν ὁμολογητέος

Therefore we must confess one

---

91. PL 16, p. 530.

92. (St. Ambrose of Milan 1896), p. 202.

93. PL 16, p. 534.

94. (St. Ambrose of Milan 1896), p. 205.

θεὸς κατὰ τὴν γραφικὴν μαρτυρίαν Ἄκουε, Ἰσραήλ· κύριος ὁ θεός σου κύριος εἷς ἐστι, κἂν ἡ φωνὴ τῆς θεότητος διήκῃ διὰ τῆς ἁγίας τριάδος.

ταῦτα δὲ λέγω κατὰ τὸν ἀποδοθέντα ἡμῖν ἐπὶ τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης φύσεως λόγον, ἐν ᾧ μεμαθήκαμεν μὴ δεῖν πληθυντικῷ χαρακτῆρι τὴν προσηγορίαν πλατύνειν τῆς φύσεως.

ἀκριβέστερον δὲ ἡμῖν αὐτὸ τὸ ὄνομα τῆς θεότητος ἐξεταστέον, ὅπως ἂν διὰ τῆς ἐγκειμένης τῇ φωνῇ σημασίας γένοιτό τις συνεργία πρὸς τὴν τοῦ προκειμένου σαφήνειαν.[95]

God, according to the testimony of Scripture, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God is one Lord," even though the name of Godhead extends through the Holy Trinity.

This I say according to the account we have given in the case of human nature, in which we have learnt that it is improper to extend the name of the nature by the mark of plurality.

We must, however, more carefully examine the name of "Godhead," in order to obtain, by means of the significance involved in the word, some help towards clearing up the question before us.[96]

If Gregory actually accepted the UNA, he ought to have ended with the first sentence above. He has given a response to the LPT: pluralizing the "name" (noun) derived from a nature on the basis of there being a plurality of individuals with that nature is merely a common abuse of language, even in the case of created things such as men. Now, whether or not one agrees with Gregory that this is true, surely Gregory thinks it is. And if Gregory thinks it is true, we must ask why Gregory does not think his task is finished. Why would Gregory think there was still a need for obtaining any "help towards clearing up the question" if he thought the UNA, which he has just presented, is already an adequate answer to that question? Clearly, the fact is that Gregory does *not* in fact think the UNA is an adequate answer to the LPT.

And as expected in light of our discussion to this point, in examining "the name of 'Godhead'..." and "the significance involved in the word," Gregory points out that the UNA presupposes that "God" is the name of the divine nature, in just the same way as "man" is the name of the human nature, and he points out his denial of that view, again pointing out that he focuses on it only because he takes it to be the common viewpoint (not his own). Notice that, much as he did in *Ad Eustathium* (above, pp. 136–139.), he couches the UNA within the following two crucial "even if" clauses.

First, Gregory argues, *even if* "God" *did not* signify an *energeia* (beholding), it *still* could not denote the divine essence (as his opponents claim), because the divine essence is "above all names," and "God" is a name. He says:

μάχεσθαι δὲ πρὸς τοὺς ἀντιλέγοντας μὴ δεῖν ἐνέργειαν νοεῖν τὴν θεότητα οὐ πάνυ τι τῶν ἀναγκαίων

It does not seem to me absolutely necessary, with a view to the present proof of our argument, to

---

95. (St. Gregory of Nyssa 1958), p. 42.
96. (St. Gregory of Nyssa 1893), p. 332.

μοι δοκεῖ, ὡς πρὸς τὴν παροῦσαν τοῦ λόγου κατασκευήν.

ἡμεῖς μὲν γὰρ ἀόριστον καὶ ἀπερίληπτον τὴν θείαν φύσιν εἶναι πιστεύοντες οὐδεμίαν αὐτῆς ἐπινοοῦμεν περίληψιν, ἀλλὰ κατὰ πάντα τρόπον ἐν ἀπειρίᾳ νοεῖσθαι τὴν φύσιν διοριζόμεθα. τὸ δὲ καθόλου ἄπειρον οὐ τινὶ μὲν ὁρίζεται, τινὶ δὲ οὐχί ἀλλὰ κατὰ πάντα λόγον ἐκφεύγει τὸν ὅρον ἡ ἀπειρία. οὐκοῦν τὸ ἐκτὸς ὅρου οὐδὲ ὀνόματι πάντως ὁρίζεται.

ὡς ἂν οὖν διαμένοι ἐπὶ τῆς θείας φύσεως τοῦ ἀορίστου ἡ ἔννοια, ὑπὲρ πᾶν ὄνομά φαμεν εἶναι τὸ θεῖον, ἡ δὲ θεότης ἓν τῶν ὀνομάτων ἐστίν. οὐκοῦν οὐ δύναται τὸ αὐτὸ καὶ ὄνομα εἶναι καὶ ὑπὲρ πᾶν ὄνομα εἶναι νομίζεσθαι.... [97]

contend against *those who oppose us* with the assertion that we are *not* to conceive "Godhead" as an operation [*energeia*].

For we, believing the Divine nature to be unlimited and incomprehensible, conceive no comprehension of it, but declare that the nature is to be conceived in all respects as infinite: and that which is absolutely infinite is not limited in one respect while it is left unlimited in another, but infinity is free from limitation altogether. That therefore which is without limit is surely not limited even by name.

In order then to mark the constancy of our conception of infinity in the case of the Divine nature, we say that the Deity, is above every name: and "Godhead" is a name. Now it cannot be that the same thing should at once be a name and be accounted as above every name.... [98]

Thus, Gregory argues that, if he is wrong about "God" signifying an *energeia*, it does not automatically follow that "God" signifies the divine nature. In fact, it must signify neither an *energeia, nor* the divine nature, but something else entirely.

The second "even if" clause is that, *even if* he is wrong about the first "even if" clause, and "God" *did* signify the divine nature after all, there would *still* only be one God on his view, because there is only one divine nature. That is, because the UNA would be there as a "back-up" argument. He says:

Πλὴν εἰ τοῦτο τοῖς ἐναντίοις ἀρέσκοι, τὸ μὴ ἐνεργείας ἀλλὰ φύσεως εἶναι τὴν σημασίαν, ἐπαναδραμούμεθα πρὸς τὸν ἐξ ἀρχῆς λόγον... [99]

But if it pleases *our adversaries* to say that the significance of the term ["Godhead"] is not [*energeia*], but [is] nature, we shall fall back upon our original argument [the UNA].[100]

---

97. (St. Gregory of Nyssa 1958), p. 52.
98. (St. Gregory of Nyssa 1893), p. 335.
99. (St. Gregory of Nyssa 1958), p. 53.
100. (St. Gregory of Nyssa 1893), p. 335.

This was exactly the same move Gregory made in *Ad Eustathium* (See above, pp. 136–139). Thus, although UNA is the first substantive response given by Gregory in "To Albabius," he cannot actually accept it as a sound argument, as he denies one of its premises.

So we see that it is not the UNA, but the UAA, that is the only response Gregory actually regards as adequate. That is, SMA does not even give us the resources to determine any answer Ablabius' question at all, and UNA gives us a solution, but one that Gregory himself regards as relying on false semantic premises. He only gives the UNA for the sake of those who accept this common, but in Gregory's view false, semantic assumption (i.e., most pagans and some heretics). Just as the SMA is the least misleading response it is possible for the uneducated to comprehend, UNA is the least misleading response one could give to the educated who labor under this false, but apparently widespread, semantic presupposition.

We've seen that Gregory himself does not regard the UNA as adequate. And the semantics of collective nouns it relies on seems implausible today. So the UNA has little to recommend it. But if this is so, the question is, *what is the solution to the LPT provided by the UAA?*

4.3   *Idiomata*

Now we've already seen what the concepts of *ousia* and hypostasis amount to above, or at least what they amount to on my reading, following Cross. Namely, that *ousia* and hypostasis are, respectively, a kind of universal or common quality (specifically, a nature, conceived of as a monadic *in re* universal, wholly present in its instances) and a particular or individual (*minus* the connotations of being a literal "part" of something, or the result of a process of "division"). But before I can explain exactly what I think is going on in the UAA, we need to understand one final concept – that of the *idioma*,[101] which will turn out to be important for understanding an under appreciated feature of Gregory's thinking about *energeiai*.

I will argue that Gregory takes the *idiomata* to be what individuates the hypostases, although there is some ambiguity in Gregory's account of *idiomata*, so that we will have to consider both a "strong" and a "weak" version of the identity conditions for hypostases. We will later see that the *idiomata* are in a certain sense inessential for our own purposes in formulating a formal account of Gregory's views. However, the fact that Gregory attributes *idiomata* not only to hypostases, but later to *energeiai* (as well as the fact that *energeiai* are said to be the "*idiomata* of *ousiai*") turns out to have a critical implication about Gregory's understanding of the metaphysics of *energeiai* that is useful in *understanding* his solution to the LPT (even if not critical to *stating* it later, after we understand what it is).

---

101. Although, in the passage I will point to in *Ad Ablabium*, the term used is "*idiotropon*," but the meaning is the same.

First, I want to look at some of the background to Gregory's theory of universals that Cross mentions. Specifically, a passage from Basil's Epistle 214 and another from his Epistle 236, since Basil's thinking on this matter is clearly influential on Gregory (or at least reflective of Gregory's views, if the influence went the other way around). Then we'll look at Gregory's *Ad Petrum* for a fuller discussion.

4.3.1 Basil's Epistles 214 and 236

In Epistle 214, Basil says:

. . . ὃν ἔχει λόγον τὸ κοινὸν πρὸς τὸ ἴδιον, τοῦτον ἔχει ἡ οὐσία πρὸς τὴν ὑπόστασιν. Ἕκαστος γὰρ ἡμῶν καὶ τῷ κοινῷ τῆς οὐσίας λόγῳ τοῦ εἶναι μετέχει καὶ τοῖς περὶ αὐτὸν ἰδιώμασιν ὁ δεῖνά ἐστι καὶ ὁ δεῖνα. Οὕτω κἀκεῖ ὁ μὲν τῆς οὐσίας λόγος κοινός, οἷον ἡ ἀγαθότης, ἡ θεότης, ἢ εἴ τι ἄλλο νοοῖτο· ἡ δὲ ὑπόστασις ἐν τῷ ἰδιώματι τῆς πατρότητος ἢ τῆς υἱότητος ἢ τῆς ἁγιαστικῆς δυνάμεως θεωρεῖται.[102]	. . . *[O]usia* has the same relation to hypostasis as the common has to the peculiar (*idion*). For each of us both participates in existence by the common *logos* of the *ousia*, and, by the *idiomata* around him, is so-and-so and so-and-so. In the same way, in this case [the case of the Trinity], the *logos* of the *ousia* is common, such as goodness, or Godhood, or if something else were understood; but the hypostasis is contemplated in the *idioma* of fatherhood, or of sonship, or of the power of sanctifying.[103]

Cross notes that τὸ κοινὸν, which I've translated "common," is the normal word for a universal in these texts.[104] So, Basil here claims that *ousia* is a universal and hypostasis a particular.[105]

But note also the role of *idiomata* here. We are told that each of us individuals "participates in existence by the common *logos* of the *ousia*," i.e., we exist only in virtue of instantiating our essence or nature. Thus, on Basil's view, and Gregory would certainly follow him here, there cannot be any hypostasis that does not have an *ousia* or nature. But of course, while the instantiation of a nature is sufficient for the existence of some-or-another hypostasis (that manhood is instantiated entails that there exists some man), for the existence of a certain, definite hypostasis, this is only a *necessary*, but not *sufficient* condition (the existence of Mark Twain entails that man-hood is instantiated, but that

---

102. (St. Basil the Great 1957-1966), vol. 2, epistle 214, section 4.
103. Translation mine.
104. (Cross 2002), p. 386, "the preferred term for universal is 'common' (κοινὸν) though 'universal' (καθόλου) crops up occasionally. (Note, however, that there is no *philosophical* precedent for distinguishing the senses of 'common' and 'universal', so in the lack of any counterevidence we can reasonably accept their synonymity in the theological context too.)"
105. Or as I've rendered it here, somewhat better, even if more awkward, "peculiar," that is τὸ ἴδιον. *Not* particular in the sense of μερικὴ οὐσία.

man-hood is instantiated does not entail the existence of Mark Twain in particular). He goes on to discuss the particularity of each individual as involving what he calls an *idioma*. "[each of us . . .] by the *idiomata* around him is so-and-so and so-and-so. . . the hypostasis is contemplated in the *idioma*. . ." Thus, it is a "peculiar quality" or qualities (*idioma* or *idiomata*) in virtue of which we count as this or that particular individual, and it is the instantiation of those *idiomata* (or co-instantiation of them with a nature) in virtue of which a given definite individual exists. Thus, just as a hypostasis could not exist without an *ousia* or nature, it could also not exist without an *idioma*.

In Epistle 236, Basil makes the same points:

Οὐσία δὲ καὶ ὑπόστασις ταύτην ἔχει τὴν διαφορὰν ἣν ἔχει τὸ κοινὸν πρὸς τὸ καθ' ἕκαστον, οἷον ὡς ἔχει τὸ ζῷον πρὸς τὸν δεῖνα ἄνθρωπον.

Διὰ τοῦτο οὐσίαν μὲν μίαν ἐπὶ τῆς θεότητος ὁμολογοῦμεν, ὥστε τὸν τοῦ εἶναι λόγον μὴ διαφόρως ἀποδιδόναι· ὑπόστασιν δὲ ἰδιάζουσαν, ἵν' ἀσύγχυτος ἡμῖν καὶ τετρανωμένη ἡ περὶ Πατρὸς καὶ Υἱοῦ καὶ Ἁγίου Πνεύματος ἔννοια ἐνυπάρχῃ.
Μὴ γὰρ νοούντων ἡμῶν τοὺς ἀφωρισμένους περὶ ἕκαστον χαρακτῆρας, οἷον πατρότητα καὶ υἱότητα καὶ ἁγιασμόν, ἀλλ' ἐκ τῆς κοινῆς ἐννοίας τοῦ εἶναι ὁμολογούντων Θεόν, ἀμήχανον ὑγιῶς τὸν λόγον τῆς πίστεως ἀποδίδοσθαι.

Χρὴ οὖν τῷ κοινῷ τὸ ἰδιάζον προστιθέντας, οὕτω τὴν πίστιν ὁμολογεῖν·
κοινὸν ἡ θεότης, ἴδιον ἡ πατρότης·

συνάπτοντας λέγειν· πιστεύω εἰς Θεὸν Πατέρα.

Καὶ πάλιν ἐν τῇ τοῦ Υἱοῦ ὁμολογίᾳ τὸ παραπλήσιον ποιεῖν, τῷ κοινῷ συνάπτειν τὸ ἴδιον καὶ λέγειν· εἰς Θεὸν Υἱόν. Ὁμοίως καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ Πνεύματος τοῦ Ἁγίου κατὰ τὸ ἀκόλουθον τῆς ἐκφωνήσεως τὴν προ-

Οὐσία and ὑπόστασις have the same difference which the common has to the particular (*kath hekaston*); such as animal has to a certain man.

Wherefore, in the case of the Godhead, we confess one *ousia* so as not to give a variant *logos* of existence, but we confess a particular hypostasis, in order that our conception of Father, Son and Holy Spirit may be without confusion and clear.
If we have no distinct perception of the separate characters (*charaktera*, χαρακτῆρα), namely, fatherhood, sonship, and sanctification, but form our conception of God from the general idea of existence, we cannot possibly give a sound account of our faith.
We must, therefore, confess the faith by adding the particular to the common.
Godhood is common; fatherhood particular (*idion*, ἴδιον).
We must therefore combine the two and say, "I believe in God the Father."
The like course must be pursued in the confession of the Son; we must combine the particular with the common and say, "I believe in God the Son," so in the case of the Holy Spirit we must make our utter-

φορὰν σχηματίζοντας λέγειν· πιστεύω καὶ εἰς τὸ θεῖον Πνεῦμα τὸ Ἅγιον,

ὥστε δι' ὅλου καὶ τὴν ἑνότητα σώζεσθαι ἐν τῇ τῆς μιᾶς θεότητος ὁμολογίᾳ, καὶ τὸ τῶν προσώπων ἰδιάζον ὁμολογεῖσθαι ἐν τῷ ἀφορισμῷ τῶν περὶ ἕκαστον νοουμένων ἰδιωμάτων.[106]

ance conform to the appellation and say "in God the Holy Spirit."

Hence it results that there is a satisfactory preservation of the unity by the confession of the one Godhead, while in the distinction of the individual properties (τῶν ἰδιωμάτων) regarded in each there is the confession of the peculiarity (τὸ ἰδιάζον) of the Persons.[107]

Here he uses the phrase καθ' ἕκαστον instead of τὸ ἴδιον to describe the hypostases as what we would call particulars or individuals (minus the nominalist connotations of those terms in his time), and initially uses χαρακτήρ instead of ἰδιώμα to speak of fatherhood, sonship and sanctification ("the power of sanctifying" in Epistle 214), but clearly the use is synonymous, or closely related. That is, he uses "character" (*charaktera*, χαρακτήρ) to describe "fatherhood, sonship and sanctification," which are also the *idiomata*. Thus, either the concepts of χαρακτήρ and ἰδιώμα are simply identical, or closely enough related as to be used interchangeably in this context. (I'll discuss a possible objection from DelCogliano on this point below, p. 169.)

4.3.2   *Ad Petrum*

For the *locus classicus* of Gregory's view on the distinction between hypostasis and *ousia* – also the *locus classicus* for this distinction in the entire Trinitarian controversy – we turn to his *Ad Petrum*. This is essentially the same work as what has come down to us traditionally as St. Basil's Epistle 38, addressed to St. Gregory of Nyssa, but it appears also among Gregory of Nyssa's works as an epistle to his brother Peter of Sebaste. Although there is still some scholarly debate as to which is the correct attribution, the majority opinion is now that this was in fact written by Gregory of Nyssa to Peter of Sebaste. Thus, given the current general consensus of Gregorian authorship, it has come to be known as the "*Ad Petrum*," on the assumption that it is actually to Peter of Sebaste. I will also assume Gregorian authorship here, but even if written by St. Basil, there is no doubt that Gregory *accepts the ideas* expressed in it, regardless of whether it was he or Basil that authored it.

In the *Ad Petrum*, we will see that hypostases are semantically connected to proper nouns, and *ousiai* are semantically connected to common nouns.[108] This is important, since the entire discussion is reminiscent of Stoic discussions of proper and common nouns, and the Stoics defined proper nouns in terms of

---

106. (St. Basil the Great 1957-1966), vol. 3, epistle 236, section 6.

107. Translation adapted from (St. Basil the Great 1895), p. 278.

108. It will become clear why I hesitate to say more than "semantically connected" in the course of the discussion.

idiomata. The views of the Stoics were taken up later by the ancient grammarians, some of whom (like Dionysius Thrax) rejected the Stoic view, but some of whom (like Apollonius Dyscolus) accepted it. If the Stoics, either directly or mediated through the grammarians, are the source for Gregory's discussion here, then we could reasonably expect his theory of *idiomata* to reflect theirs as well. On the other hand, we will see that there are parallels to Neo-Platonism in Gregory's discussion of *idiomata* as well. And this will make a difference as to how we understand Gregory, since there is a case to be made that the Stoic theory of *idiomata* is in a certain sense much stronger than the Neo-Platonist. But first, Gregory.

After an introduction on the theological importance of the distinction between hypostasis and *ousia*, Gregory says:

Ἔστι τοίνυν, ὡς ἐν ὀλίγῳ παραστῆσαι, τοιαύτη τῶν λεγομένων ἡ ἔννοια.

Πάντων τῶν ὀνομάτων τὰ μὲν ἐπὶ πλειόνων καὶ τῷ ἀριθμῷ διαφερόντων λεγόμενα πραγμάτων καθολικωτέραν τινὰ τὴν σημασίαν ἔχει, οἷον ἄνθρωπος.

Ὁ γὰρ τοῦτο εἰπών, τὴν κοινὴν φύσιν διὰ τοῦ ὀνόματος δείξας, οὐ περιέγραψε τῇ φωνῇ τὸν τινὰ ἄνθρωπον, τὸν ἰδίως ὑπὸ (5) τοῦ ὀνόματος γνωριζόμενον.

Οὐ γὰρ μᾶλλον Πέτρος ἄνθρωπός ἐστιν ἢ καὶ Ἀνδρέας καὶ Ἰωάννης καὶ Ἰάκωβος.

Ἡ οὖν κοινότης τοῦ σημαινομένου, ὁμοίως ἐπὶ πάντας τοὺς ὑπὸ τὸ αὐτὸ ὄνομα τεταγμένους χωροῦσα, χρείαν ἔχει τῆς ὑποδιαστολῆς δι' ἧς οὐ τὸν καθόλου ἄνθρωπον, ἀλλὰ τὸν Πέτρον ἢ τὸν Ἰωάννην ἐπιγνωσόμεθα.

Τὰ δὲ τῶν ὀνομάτων ἰδικωτέραν ἔχει τὴν ἔνδειξιν δι' ἧς οὐχ ἡ κοινότης τῆς φύσεως ἐνθεωρεῖται τῷ σημαινομένῳ, ἀλλὰ πράγματός τινος περιγραφὴ μηδεμίαν ἔχουσα πρὸς τὸ ὁμογενές, κατὰ τὸ ἰδιάζον, τὴν κοινωνίαν, οἷον ὁ Παῦλος ἢ ὁ Τιμόθεος.

Οὐκέτι γὰρ ἡ τοιαύτη φωνὴ ἐπὶ

The meaning of the words, to put it shortly, is as follows:

Of all nouns, some, which are predicated of subjects plural and numerically distinct, have a certain more general signification; such as "man."

When we so say, we indicate the common nature through the noun, and do not determine by the word a certain man, who is peculiarly known by that name.

Peter, for instance is no more man than Andrew, John, or James.

The signification therefore being common, and extending to all the individuals ranked under the same name, has need of a distinction through which we may understand, not the universal man, but Peter or John.

Other nouns, on the other hand, have a more peculiar denotation, through the signification of which is contemplated not the commonality of the nature, but the outline of a certain thing, having no commonality, according to that which peculiarizes, with what is of the same kind, such as "Paul" or "Timothy."

For, in a word of this kind there

155

τὸ κοινὸν τῆς φύσεως φέρεται, ἀλλὰ χωρίσασα τῆς περιληπτικῆς σημασίας περιγεγραμμένων τινῶν πραγμάτων ἔμφασιν διὰ τῶν ὀνομάτων παρίστησιν.

Ὅταν οὖν δύο ἢ καὶ πλειόνων κατὰ τὸ αὐτὸ ὄντων, οἷον Παύλου καὶ Σιλουανοῦ καὶ Τιμοθέου, περὶ τῆς οὐσίας τῶν ἀνθρώπων ζητεῖται λόγος, οὐκ ἄλλον τις ἀποδώσει τῆς οὐσίας ἐπὶ τοῦ Παύλου λόγον, ἕτερον δὲ ἐπὶ τοῦ Σιλουανοῦ καὶ ἄλλον ἐπὶ τοῦ Τιμοθέου, ἀλλὰ δι' ὧν ἂν λόγων ἡ οὐσία τοῦ Παύλου δειχθῇ οὗτοι καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις ἐφαρμόσουσι, καί εἰσιν ἀλλήλοις ὁμοούσιοι οἱ τῷ αὐτῷ λόγῳ τῆς οὐσίας ὑπογραφόμενοι.

Ἐπειδὰν δέ τις τὸ κοινὸν μαθὼν ἐπὶ τὰ ἰδιάζοντα τρέψῃ τὴν θεωρίαν δι' ὧν χωρίζεται τοῦ ἑτέρου τὸ ἕτερον, οὐκέτι ὁ ἑκάστου γνωριστικὸς λόγος τῷ περὶ τοῦ ἄλλου διὰ πάντων συνενεχθήσεται, κἂν ἔν τισιν εὑρεθῇ τὸ κοινὸν ἔχων.

Τοῦτο τοίνυν φαμέν· τὸ ἰδίως λεγόμενον τῷ τῆς ὑποστάσεως δηλοῦσθαι ῥήματι.

Ὁ γὰρ ἄνθρωπον εἰπὼν, ἐσκεδασμένην τινὰ διάνοιαν τῷ ἀορίστῳ τῆς σημασίας τῇ ἀκοῇ ἐνεποίησεν, ὥστε τὴν μὲν φύσιν ἐκ τοῦ ὀνόματος δηλωθῆναι, τὸ δὲ ὑφεστὸς καὶ δηλούμενον ἰδίως ὑπὸ τοῦ ὀνόματος πρᾶγμα μὴ σημανθῆναι.

Ὁ δὲ Παῦλον εἰπὼν, ἔδειξεν ἐν τῷ δηλουμένῳ ὑπὸ τοῦ ὀνόματος πράγματι ὑφεστῶσαν τὴν φύσιν.

Τοῦτο οὖν ἐστιν ἡ ὑπόστασις, οὐχ ἡ ἀόριστος τῆς οὐσίας ἔννοια μηδεμίαν ἐκ τῆς κοινότητος τοῦ ση-

is no extension to what is common in the nature; there is a separation of certain outlined conceptions from the general idea, and expression of them by means of their names.

Suppose then that two or more are set together, as, for instance, Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, and that an enquiry is made into the *ousia* of the men; no one will give one *logos* of the *ousia* in the case of Paul, a different one in that of Silvanus, and another in the case of Timothy; but the words through which the *ousia* of Paul was made known, these same also will fit the others, and they are *homoousios* with one another, those described by the same *logos* of the *ousia*.

And when the enquirer has learned what is common, and turns his attention to the peculiarizing properties through which one is separated from another, the definition by which each is known will no longer tally in all particulars with the definition of another, even though in some points it be found to agree.

My statement, then, is this. That which is spoken of peculiarly is indicated (δηλοῦσθαι) by the name of the hypostasis.

Suppose we say "man." The indefinite meaning of the word strikes a certain vague sense upon the ears. The nature is indicated, but what subsists and is specially and peculiarly indicated by the name is not made plain.

But suppose we say "Paul." We set forth, by what is indicated by the name, the nature *subsisting*.

This then is the hypostasis, or "standing under;" not the indefinite conception of the *ousia*, which, be-

156

μαινομένου στάσιν εὑρίσκουσα, ἀλλ᾽ ἢ τὸ κοινόν τε καὶ ἀπερίγραπτον ἐν τῷ τινὶ πράγματι διὰ τῶν ἐπιφαινομένων ἰδιωμάτων παριστῶσα καὶ περιγράφουσα, ὡς καὶ τῇ Γραφῇ σύνηθες τὸ τοιοῦτο ποιεῖν ἐν ἄλλοις τε πολλοῖς καὶ ἐν τῇ κατὰ τὸν Ἰὼβ ἱστορίᾳ.

Ἐπειδὴ γὰρ ἔμελλε τὰ περὶ αὐτοῦ διηγεῖσθαι, πρότερον τοῦ κοινοῦ μνημονεύσασα καὶ εἰποῦσα ἄνθρωπος εὐθὺς ἀποτέμνει τῷ ἰδιάζοντι ἐν τῇ προσθήκῃ τοῦ τίς.

Ἀλλὰ τῆς μὲν οὐσίας τὴν ὑπογραφὴν ὡς οὐδὲν φέρουσαν κέρδος πρὸς τὸν προκείμενον τοῦ λόγου σκοπὸν ἐσιώπησε, τὸν δὲ τινὰ διὰ τῶν οἰκείων γνωρισμάτων χαρακτηρίζει καὶ τόπον λέγουσα καὶ τὰ τοῦ ἤθους γνωρίσματα καὶ ὅσα τῶν ἔξωθεν συμπαραληφθέντα χωρίζειν αὐτὸν καὶ ἀφιστᾶν ἤμελλε τῆς κοινῆς σημασίας, ὥστε διὰ πάντων ἐναργῆ τοῦ ἱστορουμένου γενέσθαι τὴν ὑπογραφὴν ἐκ τοῦ ὀνόματος, ἐκ τοῦ τόπου, ἐκ τῶν τῆς ψυχῆς ἰδιωμάτων, ἐκ τῶν ἔξωθεν περὶ αὐτὸν θεωρουμένων…

Ἐπεὶ δὲ χρὴ διὰ τῶν ἰδιαζόντων σημείων ἀσύγχυτον ἐπὶ τῆς Τριάδος τὴν διάκρισιν ἔχειν, τὸ μὲν κοινῶς ἐπιθεωρούμενον, οἷον τὸ ἄκτιστον λέγω, ἢ τὸ ὑπὲρ πᾶσαν κατάληψιν ἢ εἴ τι τοιοῦτο οὐ συμπαραληψόμεθα εἰς τὴν τοῦ ἰδιάζοντος κρίσιν, ἐπιζητήσομεν δὲ μόνον δι᾽ ὧν ἡ περὶ ἑκάστου ἔννοια τηλαυγῶς καὶ ἀμίκτως τῆς συν-

cause what is signified is general, finds no "standing," but the conception which by means of the expressed *idiomata* gives standing and circumscription to the common and uncircumscribed. It is customary in Scripture to make a distinction of this kind, as well in many other passages as in the History of Job.

When purposing to narrate the events of his life, Job first mentions the common, and says "a man;" then he straightway particularizes by adding "a certain."

For when it was about to narrate the affairs about him, after first mentioning the common property and having said "man", it immediately distinguishes it by the specific property in the addition of "a certain." It silenced the description of the *ousia*, because this brings no benefit to the present aim of the definition. Rather, it characterizes the "certain" person through the *gnorismata*, since it states both location and the *gnorismata* of the character and all the external contingencies that would distinguish and set him apart from the common signification. As a result, the description of that which is narrated becomes clear in all ways : from the name, from the location, from the *idiomata* of the soul, from the external contingencies theoretically observed about him…

And since it is necessary, by means of the peculiarizing signs, in the case of the Trinity, to keep the distinction unconfounded, we shall not take into consideration, in order to estimate that which differentiates, what is contemplated in common, I mean for example "uncreated," or "beyond all comprehen-

θεωρουμένης ἀφορισθήσεται.[109]

sion," or any quality of this kind; we shall only direct our attention to the enquiry by what means each particular conception will be lucidly and distinctly separated from that which is conceived of in common.[110]

A few things are obvious here. First, Gregory makes a distinction between common and proper nouns and connects common nouns (or at least some of them) to *ousiai*, while he connects proper nouns to hypostases.

Second, *ousiai* either are, or have, a *logos* or definition, which will be the same for various individuals of the same *ousia* (those who are *homoousios*).

But third, individuals themselves have a *logos* or definition as well. Gregory later says a hypostasis is "a bundle of *idiomata* about each thing" – ἡ συνδρομή τῶν περὶ ἕκαστον ἰδιωμάτων.

Finally, where individuals differ in their individual definitions, Gregory speaks of their differing with respect to *idiomata*, which seem to be either qualities or bundles of qualities that individuate an individual (more on this ambiguity below).

Now we said that the Stoics defined proper nouns by way of *idiomata*. For the Stoics, a common noun "signifies" a common quality, and a proper noun "indicates," not, as we might expect, *an individual*, but *a peculiar quality* (ἰδία ποιότης). In Diogenes Laertius' *Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers* (7.57-58), he discusses the Stoic view, possibly even quoting a Stoic without attribution:

Ἔστι δὲ προσηγορία μὲν κατὰ τὸν Διογένην μέρος λόγου σημαῖνον κοινὴν ποιότητα, οἷον Ἄνθρωπος, Ἵππος·

And an appellation (προσηγορία) is, according to Diogenes, a part of speech signifying (σημαῖνον) a common quality (κοινή ποιότης), such as "Man," "Horse."

ὄνομα δέ ἐστι μέρος λόγου δηλοῦν ἰδίαν ποιότητα, οἷον Διογένης, Σωκράτης·[111]

But a [proper] noun (ὄνομα) is a part of speech indicating (δηλοῦν) a unique quality (ἰδία ποιότης), such as "Diogenes," "Socrates."[112]

The ancient Greek grammarians took over Stoic philosophy of language, modifying it here and there. Some rejected the Stoic definition of the proper noun, but others retained it. Of the two greatest grammarians in antiquity, Dionysius Thrax seems to have rejected the view, replacing the definitions as follows:

---

109. (St. Basil the Great 1957-1966), vol. 1, epistle 38, sections 2-3.
110. This translation is an adaption of both (St. Basil the Great 1895), pp. 137-138 and (St. Gregory of Nyssa 2008b), pp. 1-3, along with my own modifications.
111. (Diogenes Laertius, 1964 (repr. 1966)), 7.57-58.
112. Translation mine.

κύριον μὲν οὖν ἐστι τὸ τὴν ἰδίαν οὐσίαν σημαῖνον, οἷον Ὅμηρος Σωκράτης.

And so, on the one hand there is the proper [noun] (κύριον) signifying (σημαῖνον) a peculiar *ousia* (ἰδίαν οὐσίαν), such as "Homer," "Socrates."

προσηγορικὸν δέ ἐστι τὸ τὴν κοινὴν οὐσίαν σημαῖνον, οἷον ἄνθρωπος ἵππος.[113]

And on the other hand, there is the appellative [noun] (προσηγορικὸν) signifying (σημαῖνον) a common *ousia* (κοινὴν οὐσίαν), such as "man," "horse."[114]

Notice that in the discussion of the Stoic theory above, there was a distinction made (common among the Stoics) between "signifying" (σημαῖνον) (the preferred term for the semantic relation between common nouns and common qualities), and "indicating" (δηλοῦν) (the preferred term for the semantic relation between proper nouns and peculiar qualities). But Dionysius here switches to using the same term (σημαῖνον) for both cases. Apollonius Dyscolus, on the other hand, uses both terms, but uses them interchangeably (as does Gregory). But Apollonius also goes back to the Stoic theory of *idiomata* in his definition of proper nouns. There are several examples of this. We will give just a few:

Ἡ τῶν ὀνομάτων θέσις ἐπενοήθη εἰς ποιότητας κοινὰς ἢ ἰδίας, ὡς ἄνθρωπος, Πλάτων . . .[115]

Nouns (names) were devised for the indication of certain qualities, general or particular, as anthropos ("man" – indicates the quality of being a man), Platon ("Plato" – indicates the quality of being Plato).[116]

καὶ γὰρ δυνάμει κύριον ὄνομα νοεῖται διὰ τῆς ἀντωνυμίας, οὔ φημι τὸ τῆς φωνῆς ὄνομα, τὸ δὲ ἐξ αὐτῆς δεικνύμενον, τουτέστιν ἡ ἰδία ποιότης τοῦ ὑποκειμένου.[117]

The pronoun conveys the force of a proper name – I don't mean the name considered as a phonological shape, but its meaning, that is the unique character (ἡ ἰδία ποιότης) of the referent (τοῦ ὑποκειμένου)."[118]

οὗτος δ' Αἴας ἐστὶ πελώριος, . . . ἕνεκα γὰρ τοῦ ὁρᾶσθαι τὸν Αἴαντα ἡ δεῖξις παρείληπται, ἕνεκα δὲ τῆς ἰδίας ποιότητος, ὑπὲρ ἧς καὶ ἠρώτησεν, τὸ Αἴας.[119]

'And that man is Ajax the gigantic' . . . the deixis is required because of Ajax's being seen, but the name Ajax is required because of the individual quality (ἡ ἴδια ποιότης) about which [Priam] had asked.[120]

τὸ δὲ Αἴας μετὰ ἰδίας ποιότητος παρυφιστάμενον ἔχει τὸ εἷς.[121]

Aias [Ajax] conveys the notion of singularity in addition to its own in-

---

113. (Dionysius Thrax 1883), part 1, volume 1, pp. 33-34.
114. Translation mine.

dividual quality (ἴδια ποιότης).[122]

The "peculiar quality" (*idioma*) is a feature of Stoic metaphysics that does quite a bit of work for them – metaphysical, epistemological, and even ethical (insofar as Stoic ethics postulates at least the possibility of a Stoic sage, who needs to have infallible knowledge so as never to mistakenly perform the wrong actions). What is important for our purposes is that *idiomata* are part of the Stoic criterion of individuation for particulars. There is some scholarly debate as to whether the Stoic *idiomata* are simple, non-shareable qualities (like Socrateity), or whether they are only unique combinations of in-principle shareable qualities (like the combination of whiteness, snub-nosedness, and so forth, that is only exhibited by Socrates, even though any of these qualities taken by itself might be exhibited by other individuals). (Sorabji, for example, maintains the stronger view, that for the Stoics *each* distinguishing mark is unique to the individual.)[123] I will not enter into the details of that debate here. I only want to note that there is a case to be made that the Stoics take this stronger view of *idiomata*. And to the extent that Gregory's discussion seems influenced by the Stoics, or by the grammarians (particularly Apollonius, in my opinion), we might reasonably conjecture that he would hold this stronger view.

On the other hand, his description of hypostases as "bundles" of qualities is reminiscent of the bundle theory we find in the Neo-Platonism of the time, perhaps most well known from a passage in Porphyry's Isagoge:

ἄτομα οὖν λέγεται τὰ τοιαῦτα, ὅτι ἐξ ἰδιοτήτων συνέστηκεν ἕκαστον, ὧν τὸ ἄθροισμα οὐκ ἂν ἐπ' ἄλλου ποτὲ τὸ αὐτὸ γένοιτο· αἱ γὰρ Σωκράτους ἰδιότητες οὐκ ἂν ἐπ' ἄλλου τινὸς τῶν κατὰ μέρος γένοιντο ἂν αἱ αὐταί, αἱ μέντοι τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, λέγω δὴ τοῦ κοινοῦ, ἰδιότητες γένοιντ' ἂν αἱ αὐταὶ ἐπὶ πλειόνων, μᾶλλον δὲ ἐπὶ πάντων τῶν κατὰ μέρος ἀνθρώπων, καθὸ ἄνθρωποι.[124]

Such things are therefore called "individuals," because each consists (συνέστηκεν) of peculiarities (ἰδιοτήτων) of which the combination (τὸ ἄθροισμα) can never be the same in any other, for the peculiarities of Socrates can never be the same in any other particular person; the peculiarities of man indeed (I mean of the universal) may be the same in many, or rather in all particular men, so far as they are men.[125]

115. (APOLLONIUS DYSCOLUS 1910), part 2, volume 2, p. 142.
116. Translation from (HOUSEHOLDER 1981), II.VII.22., p. 93.
117. (APOLLONIUS DYSCOLUS 1910), part 2, volume 2, p. 155.
118. Translation from (HOUSEHOLDER 1981), II.IX.41., p. 99.
119. (APOLLONIUS DYSCOLUS 1910), part 2, volume 2, p. 159.
120. Translation from (HOUSEHOLDER 1981), II.X.45., p. 101.
121. (APOLLONIUS DYSCOLUS 1910), part 2, volume 2, p. 352.
122. Translation from (HOUSEHOLDER 1981), III.XXIII.96, p. 189.
123. (SORABJI 2005), pp. 164-203, but particularly pp. 169-173.
124. (PORPHYRY 1887), (volume 4.1), p. 7.
125. Translation from (PORPHYRY 1975), p. 41, adapted.

We've already seen that Gregory uses quite a bit of Neo-Platonic technical terminology, and Cross argues that Gregory is specifically responding to Porphyry in certain cases. Thus, it's easy to suppose that this might have been Gregory's source for his bundle theory (or Basil's, if Gregory is just following Basil here).

What's more, DelCogliano notes that Porphyry's usage of "*idioma*" is inconsistent in just a certain way in which Gregory's is as well:

> Though Porphyry adopts both the Platonic term 'assemblage' and the Carneadean term 'concurrence', and uses them with the term 'distinctive feature' (ἰδιότης), his terminology is inconsistent. In the shorter commentary, he implies that the "concurrence of qualities" *is* the "distinctive feature" whereby individuals in the same species are differentiated. In the *Isagoge*, it is the "assemblage" of the "distinctive features" that constitute each individual which accounts for the individual's uniqueness. The term 'distinctive feature' is used for both the resultant concurrence of properties and the properties that constitute the assemblage.[126]

We will see that Gregory's usage is also inconsistent in about the same way, which further corroborates Porphyry as a source.

On the other hand, DelCogliano argues that Basil's proximate source for his philosophy of language is a uniquely *homoiousian* philosophy of language already largely developed, but which St. Basil soaks up during his *homoiousian* phase, and refines and further develops for application to his newfound *homoousianism*.[127] This leaves us with a big question as to how to understand Gregory's talk about *idiomata*. . .

4.3.3 How "Peculiar" is an *Idioma*?

Does Gregory have a theory of *idiomata* as simple, unshareable properties, as unique bundles of in-principle shareable qualities, or as the shareable qualities that constitute unique bundles?

I want to take a bit of space to explore this issue for two reasons. First, the precise role of the *idiomata* here has significant implications for the *filioque* controversy. It seems to me that at the bottom of much of St. Photios' argument against the *filioque*, is the assumption that the *idiomata* are absolutely unshareable.[128] Second, although much less consequential, the issue also has some implications for precisely how we will formulate Gregory's views formally

---

126. (DELCOGLIANO 2010), p. 199.
127. (DELCOGLIANO 2010), pp. 176-187.
128. See for example, (PHOTIUS 1983), p. 73, "If the Spirit, Who proceeds from the Father, proceeds also from the Son . . . the *idioma* which characterizes Him [the Father] would now be common [with the Son], and the two hypostases [*sic*, the Greek is "δύο . . . θεαρχικῶν ὑποστάσεων," "two of the divine hypostases"] of the God-head would coalesce into one person. And thus Sabellios, or rather some other semi-Sabellian monster, would again sprout up among us."

in the next chapter (5.1.4, p. 208). So we will look into it a bit further, if only to note that, and why, all we can do in the end is give two competing formulations and not come to a definitive conclusion for or against either of them.

As we saw above, this question comes up within Gregory's discussion of the semantics of proper and common nouns. DelCogliano notes that Basil's usage of technical terms like ὄνομα ("noun" or "name") and προσηγορία ("appellation") doesn't correspond either to Stoic or grammarian usage.[129] For considerations of space, I won't go into detail, but the same holds true for Gregory as well. In *Ad Ablabium*, he uses προσηγορία 6 times, 5 times for common names, as one would expect from either the Stoics or the grammarians, but once clearly for a proper name. *Onoma* and related terms (e.g. *onomazein*) are used 31 times in *Ad Ablabium*, either for common or proper nouns, indiscriminately. (Stoics tended to use *onoma* only for proper nouns and *prosegoria* for common nouns, with no generic term for nouns. Some grammarians used *onoma* as a generic term for noun, specifying the proper noun as the *kyrion onoma*. So Gregory's usage of *onoma* doesn't correspond to either tradition.) Thus, since his usage doesn't seem to correspond closely either to the Stoics' or the grammarians', it's hard to make any assumptions as to how closely his theory of *idiomata* follows the Stoics just on the basis of his discussing common and proper nouns, despite some obvious similarities in what he says to Stoic and grammarian discussions of the same issues.

On the other hand, in *Ad Petrum*, Gregory says quite explicitly that the *idiomata* of the Trinity are neither shareable nor even compossible (i.e., not co-instantiable), so that the relation between hypostases and *idiomata* is neither one-to-many nor many-to-one, but one-to-one. This seems similar to Stoicism. For the Stoics, for an *idioma* to be shared by two material substrata would simply be for numerically one qualified individual to subsist in two different material substrata at the same time, i.e., to be bi-located – which they regarded as absurd. Conversely, for two distinct *idiomata* to be instantiated in the same material substratum would just be for two distinct qualified individuals to be co-located – also an absurdity in the Stoics' view.[130] This might be taken as good evidence that Gregory has in mind the stronger view of *idiomata* after all. The problem is that he makes this explicit claim about *idiomata* immediately after giving a number of *examples* that are hard to reconcile with the explicit statement. He states:

Ἐπειδὴ τοίνυν τὸ Ἅγιον Πνεῦμα, ἀφ᾽ οὗ πᾶσα ἐπὶ τὴν κτίσιν ἡ τῶν ἀγαθῶν χορηγία πηγάζει, τοῦ Υἱοῦ μὲν ἤρτηται ᾧ ἀδιαστάτως συγκαταλαμβάνεται, τῆς δὲ τοῦ Πατρὸς (25) αἰτίας ἐξημμένον ἔχει τὸ εἶναι, ὅθεν καὶ ἐκπορεύεται, τοῦτο γνωριστικὸν	Since, then, the Holy Spirit, from Whom all the supply of good things for creation has its source, is attached to the Son, and with Him is inseparably apprehended, and has His being attached to the Father, as cause, from Whom also He proceeds;

129. (DelCogliano 2010), pp. 204-211, but esp. p. 206 and p. 210.
130. (E. Lewis 1995), p. 91.

τῆς κατὰ τὴν ὑπόστασιν ἰδιότητος σημεῖον ἔχει, τὸ μετὰ τὸν Υἱὸν καὶ σὺν αὐτῷ γνωρίζεσθαι καὶ τὸ ἐκ τοῦ Πατρὸς ὑφεστάναι.

He has this note of His peculiarity according to hypostasis, that He is known after the Son and together with the Son, and that He has His subsistence of the Father.

Ὁ δὲ Υἱὸς ὁ τὸ ἐκ τοῦ Πατρὸς ἐκπορευόμενον Πνεῦμα δι᾽ ἑαυτοῦ καὶ μεθ᾽ ἑαυτοῦ γνωρίζων, μόνος μονογενῶς ἐκ τοῦ ἀγεννήτου φωτὸς ἐκλάμψας, οὐδεμίαν κατὰ τὸ ἰδιάζον τῶν γνωρισμάτων τὴν κοινωνίαν ἔχει πρὸς τὸν Πατέρα ἢ πρὸς τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ Ἅγιον, ἀλλὰ τοῖς εἰρημένοις σημείοις μόνος γνωρίζεται.

The Son, who through Himself and with Himself reveals the Spirit proceeding from the Father, who alone shines forth only-begottenly from the unbegotten light, has no commonality according to the individuating *gnorismata* either to the Father or to the Holy Spirit, but alone is known by these mentioned signs.

Ὁ δὲ ἐπὶ πάντων Θεὸς ἐξαίρετόν τι γνώρισμα τῆς ἑαυτοῦ ὑποστάσεως τὸ Πατὴρ εἶναι καὶ ἐκ μηδεμιᾶς αἰτίας ὑποστῆναι μόνος ἔχει, καὶ διὰ τούτου πάλιν τοῦ σημείου καὶ αὐτὸς ἰδιαζόντως ἐπιγινώσκεται.

And the God over all [the Father] alone has a certain singular *gnorisma* of His own hypostasis, to be the Father, and to hypostasize from no cause, and by this sign again He is also individually recognized.

Τούτου ἕνεκεν ἐν τῇ τῆς οὐσίας κοινότητι ἀσύμβατά φαμεν εἶναι καὶ ἀκοινώνητα τὰ ἐπιθεωρούμενα τῇ Τριάδι γνωρίσματα δι᾽ ὧν ἡ ἰδιότης παρίσταται τῶν ἐν τῇ πίστει παραδεδομένων προσώπων, ἑκάστου τοῖς ἰδίοις γνωρίσμασι διακεκριμένως καταλαμβανομένου, ὥστε διὰ τῶν εἰρημένων σημείων τὸ κεχωρισμένον τῶν ὑποστάσεων ἐξευρεθῆναι·[131]

For this reason within the commonality of the *ousia* we say that the *gnorismata* observed in the Triad, through which is conveyed in the creed the peculiarity of the persons that have been taught, are both non-compossible (ἀσύμβατα) and unshareable (ἀκοινώνητα), since each [person] is grasped separately by the individual *gnorismata*, so that through the signs mentioned what has been divided among the hypostases is discovered.[132]

Gregory here first speaks *in the singular* of what one would think to be two distinct features of the Holy Spirit, saying He has "this recognizable sign" (τοῦτο γνωριστικὸν σημεῖον) of His "peculiarity according to hypostasis," (τῆς κατὰ τὴν ὑπόστασιν ἰδιότητος) and "this" sign gets described as:

(1) that He is known after the Son and together with the Son, and

(2) that He hypostasizes from the Father.

which certainly sounds like, not one, but two very different features.

---

131. (St. Basil the Great 1957-1966), epistle 38, section 4.
132. Adapted from (St. Basil the Great 1895), pp. 138-139.

Then he immediately turns around and speaks *in the plural* of the signs (σημεία) by which the Son is known. And these are:

(1) His revealing the Holy Spirit through Himself and with Himself, and

(2) "shining forth" only-begottenly from the unbegotten light (i.e., the Father).

These again sound like two quite distinct features, and Gregory speaks of them in the plural. So it sounds like we have two co-instantiated (and thus compossible) *idiomata* after all. Gregory here explicitly states that the Son "has nothing in common" with the other two hypostases as far as the *idiomata* go. Of course, failing to share *idiomata* with the other two does not conflict with apparently having two distinct co-instantiated *idiomata* in one hypostasis. The problem comes later.

Finally, he turns around and once again speaks *in the singular*, of the Father having "a certain singular *gnorisma*," which he elaborates as:

(1) being the Father, and

(2) hypostasizing from no cause,

which again sound like quite distinct features (one relation and one lack of relation). And yet Gregory uses the singular here, as though these were a single *idioma*.

Last of all, Gregory makes it quite explicit that, with respect to the *idiomata*, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit *share nothing at all in common*, and indeed that their *idiomata* are both unshareable (ἀκοινώνητα) and non-compossible (ἀσύμβατα). And while nothing in his discussion of the *idiomata* here counts against his saying that they are *unshareable*, it's hard to see how the Father and the Holy Spirit each have only a *single idioma*, rather than two each (in which case, within each pair of *idiomata*, the one must be compossible with the other). And even if the Father and Holy Spirit do somehow have only a single *idioma* each, the non-compossibility claim is still hard to reconcile with the Son's explicitly having, apparently, a plurality of (i.e., two) *idiomata*.

One point of interest here is Gregory's usage of terms like "participation" and "communion." Now when we think of the Platonic notion of "participation" today, we often have in mind primarily the fact that it is supposed to be the metaphysical correlate of the linguistic predication relation. And Gregory frequently adverts to this relation for just this purpose, either using its Platonic name "μέθεξις" (usually translated "participation") or the more churchy-sounding "κοινωνία" (sometimes translated as "communion" or "fellowship,").

However, both the Platonic concept of participation (μέθεξις) and the Christian concept of communion (κοινωνία) imply a sense of "sharing" on the part of those involved.[133] Μέθεξις has some roots in Greek theater (and ritual) in which multiple agents are "participating" in a larger theatrical (or ritualistic)

---

133. In my own translations, I am often simply rendering κοινωνία as "sharing."

164

event (from which we derive the term "methectics" in theater). And κοινωνία has the connotations in a Christian context of multiple persons having some kind of fellowship or a sharing of something. For example, the early Christians selling all of their property and holding everything in common.[134],[135] Or sharing a meal distributed from a single cup of wine and a single loaf of bread.[136] More relevant, of course, for our concerns, is the connotation in a philosophical context of qualities or features that are had "in common." Whatever the specifics, there is some implication of a "one" somehow related to a "many." Thus, by definition, participation, or communion, is a "many-to-one" relation.

Interestingly, not only does Gregory explicitly state in the *Ad Petrum* that the *idiomata* are unshareable (ἀκοινώνητα), but while he describes the hypostases as "participating in" and "sharing" the divine *ousia*, he never describes any of the hypostases as "participating in" or "sharing" any of the *idiomata*.[137]

4.3.4   Two Views of the Individuation of Hypostases

So Gregory explicitly states that the *idiomata* are unshareable. And he eschews speaking of the hypostases as "participating" or having "communion" in the *idiomata*. So it might seem we could easily rule out the view that *idiomata* are shareable (even if it's hard to understand how they are non-compossible). But

---

134. E.g., Acts 2:44.

πάντες δὲ οἱ πιστεύοντες ἦσαν ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ καὶ εἶχον ἅπαντα κοινά. ((Nestle et al. 2006))	And all those believing were at the same place, and had all things common (κοινά). (Translation mine.)

135. E.g., Acts 4:32.

Τοῦ δὲ πλήθους τῶν πιστευσάντων ἦν καρδία καὶ ψυχὴ μία, καὶ οὐδὲ εἷς τι τῶν ὑπαρχόντων αὐτῷ ἔλεγεν ἴδιον εἶναι, ἀλλ' ἦν αὐτοῖς ἅπαντα κοινά. ((Nestle et al. 2006))	And of the plurality of those who believed, the heart and the soul was single. And not one was saying that anything of the things existing for him was his own (ἴδιον), but to them all things were in common (κοινά). (Translation mine.)

136. E.g., 1 Corinthians 10:16-17, where Paul uses both "communion" and then "participation," making apparent reference to issue of "the One and the Many" here:

τὸ ποτήριον τῆς εὐλογίας ὃ εὐλογοῦμεν, οὐχὶ κοινωνία ἐστὶν τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ; τὸν ἄρτον ὃν κλῶμεν, οὐχὶ κοινωνία τοῦ σώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐστιν; ὅτι εἷς ἄρτος, ἓν σῶμα οἱ πολλοί ἐσμεν, οἱ γὰρ πάντες ἐκ τοῦ ἑνὸς ἄρτου μετέχομεν. ((Nestle et al. 2006))	The cup of blessing which we bless – is it not the communion (κοινωνία) of the blood of Christ? The loaf which we break – is it not the communion (κοινωνία) of the body of Christ? Because it is one loaf, we, the many, are one body, because we all participate in (μετέχομεν) a single loaf. (Translation mine.)

137. I have verified this "manually" in all of the minor triadological works I discuss in the dissertation. For his anti-Eunomian works, I performed TLG searches for various forms and cognates of μέθεξις and κοινωνία within a few lines of proximity to Gregory's terms for the *idiomata*.

in fact these considerations aren't quite enough to decide whether for Gregory *idiomata* are shareable or not, or whether hypostases are individuated by simple, unshareable qualities, or by unique combinations of in-principle shareable qualities, because his usage doesn't seem consistent, and that makes it hard to say even whether his theory is consistent. Consider how Gregory speaks elsewhere in the *Ad Petrum*:

Εἰ γὰρ ὑπόστασιν ἀποδεδώκαμεν εἶναι τὴν συνδρομὴν τῶν περὶ ἕκαστον ἰδιωμάτων, ὁμολογεῖται δὲ ὥσπερ ἐπὶ τοῦ Πατρὸς εἶναί τι τὸ ἰδιαζόντως ἐπιθεωρούμενον δι' οὗ μόνος ἐπιγινώσκεται, κατὰ τὸν αὐτὸν δὲ τρόπον καὶ περὶ τοῦ Μονογενοῦς τὸ ἴσον πιστεύεται, πῶς ἐνταῦθα τὸ τῆς ὑποστάσεως ὄνομα τῷ Πατρὶ μόνῳ προσμαρτυρεῖ ἡ Γραφή, τὸν δὲ Υἱὸν μορφὴν λέγει τῆς ὑποστάσεως, οὐκ ἐν ἰδίοις, ἀλλ' ἐν τοῖς τοῦ Πατρὸς γνωρίσμασι χαρακτηριζόμενον;

For if we have taught hypostasis to be the bundle (συνδρομή) of the *idiomata* around each; and if it is confessed that, as in the case of the Father something is contemplated as proper and peculiar, whereby He alone is known, so in the same way is it believed about the Only-begotten; how then does Scripture in this place ascribe the name of the hypostasis to the Father alone, and describes the Son as "the form of" the hypostasis, characterized not by His own *gnorismata* but by those of the Father?

Εἰ γὰρ ἡ ὑπόστασις τὸ ἰδιάζον τῆς ἑκάστου ὑπάρξεως σημεῖόν ἐστι, τοῦ δὲ Πατρὸς ἴδιον τὸ ἀγεννήτως εἶναι ὁμολογεῖται, μεμόρφωται δὲ ὁ Υἱὸς τοῖς τοῦ Πατρὸς ἰδιώμασιν, ἄρα οὐκέτι διαμένει τῷ Πατρὶ κατ' ἐξαίρετον ἐπ' αὐτοῦ μόνου τὸ ἀγέννητον λέγεσθαι, εἴπερ τῷ ἰδιάζοντι τοῦ Πατρὸς καὶ ἡ τοῦ Μονογενοῦς χαρακτηρίζεται ὕπαρξις.[138]

For if the hypostasis is the peculiarizing sign (τὸ ἰδιάζον σημεῖόν) of each reality, and being unbegotten is confessed to be the peculiar feature (ἴδιον) of the Father, and the Son is fashioned according to the Father's *idiomata*, then the term "unbegotten" can no longer be predicated exclusively of the Father, the existence of the Only-begotten being characterized by the peculiarizing feature (τῷ ἰδιάζοντι) of the Father.[139]

Here he first describes a hypostasis as a bundle (συνδρομή). But it is a bundle *of idiomata*. So it sounds like an *idioma* is only one (presumably shareable) item within an unshareable bundle called a "hypostasis." So it looks as though what is doing the individuating is the bundle, but rather than calling the bundle an *idioma*, he is calling the *parts* of the bundle the *idiomata*.

Then in the very next paragraph he defines hypostasis as "the peculiarizing (individuating) sign of each reality" and goes on to give the Father's individuating sign as an apparently simple property, "being unbegotten." So here it doesn't sound like the hypostasis is being identified with an individuating bundle

---

138. (St. Basil the Great 1957-1966), epistle 38, section 6.
139. Adapted from (St. Basil the Great 1895), p. 140.

of shareable qualities, but with a simple, individuating (and thus unshareable) property.

So it sounds as though he is either saying inconsistent things, or using *idioma* in an inconsistent way.

We saw that Porphyry has a consistent theory – that individuals are just bundles of (and therefore individuated by) in-principle shareable qualities – but that he sometimes uses *idioma* to mean the bundle and sometimes to mean the shareable qualities. So while the first of Gregory's statements we looked at seem more reminiscent of the Stoics, these passages seem to count as evidence that Gregory is influenced by Porphyry. Of course, it's also possible he was influenced by all of the above, and either didn't see that their theories were incompatible, or didn't care. He may not have cared, in this context, since if the hypostases of the Trinity only have a single *idioma* each, then the distinction between a simple property and a bundle doesn't come into play. If the "bundle" is, in this case, a "bundle" of one, then if the bundle is unshareable, the simple property that constitutes it must be too.

Gregory's statements, then, are difficult to reconcile, and raise a couple of questions, namely:

1. Is an *idioma* an *element of* a bundle, so that the bundle really is a bundle *of idiomata*, or is an *idioma* itself a bundle of qualities?

2. Is a hypostasis literally individuated by an *idioma*, or is it only individuated by *a bundle* of idiomata?[140]

The answers to these questions yield different theories, none of which does a very good job of explaining all of Gregory's statements about hypostases and *idiomata*. Specifically:

1. An *idioma* is *an element of* a bundle, and *each idioma* in the bundle is, by itself, sufficient to individuate a hypostasis.

2. An *idioma* is *an element of* a bundle, but *only the bundle as a whole* is sufficient to individuate a hypostasis. (*Idiomata* themselves, individually, are actually in-principle shareable qualities.)

3. An *idioma just is* a bundle, and *each idioma* (= bundle) is, by itself, sufficient to individuate a hypostasis.

4. An *idioma just is* a bundle, but *only the bundle as a whole* is sufficient to individuate a hypostasis. (*Idiomata* themselves, individually, are actually in-principle shareable qualities.)

Since (4) is obviously contradictory, to interpret Gregory at all charitably we need only concern ourselves with the first three theories. But note that (2)

---

140. Obviously if we take literally the claim that a hypostasis *is* a bundle of *idiomata*, then a hypostasis will at least be *individuated by* a bundle of *idiomata* – the bundle of *idiomata* that it *is*.

and (3) are essentially the same view, only labelled differently, and correspond to Porphyry's equivocal way of expressing his theory. That is, in both (2) and (3), what we have is a hypostasis being individuated by a unique bundle of in-principle shareable qualities. Only in (2) we are using "*idioma*" to refer to an in-principle shareable quality within the bundle, and in (3) we are using "*idioma*" to refer to the bundle itself. Only (1) is importantly different, with a "strong" view about *idiomata* that would be closer to that of the Stoics (on one interpretation of the Stoics).

Thus, we are left with (1) a "strong" view of the individuation of hypostases, on which a hypostasis may have more than one *idioma*, but no two hypostases could share any *idiomata* at all, and (2) a "weak" view of the individuation of hypostases, on which two hypostases can share *idiomata* (if we use that term for the shareable qualities), but cannot share *all* of their *idiomata*.

(1) does fine with the view that a hypostasis is, or is at least individuated by, "a bundle of *idiomata*," but it's difficult to reconcile with the examples Gregory gives in the case of Job, and also with his claim that the *idiomata* of the Trinity are (not just unshareable, but) *non-compossible*. Gregory says that the Bible picks out Job by way of "name, place, *idiomata* of the soul, and outside circumstances," all of which seem *accidental*, other than perhaps *idiomata* of the soul, so that this is problematic for the view that each particular *idioma* is sufficient to individuate a hypostasis. It could be, of course, that Gregory makes a distinction between *idiomata*, which would play a metaphysical role and be strongly individuating as in the Stoics, versus *gnorismata*, which would only be playing an epistemological role and a role in determining the reference of names, in some such way that *gnorismata* would only need to pick out a unique referent in the actual world and could be accidental, shareable and so forth. But this view still has problems with the fact that Gregory describes the *idiomata* as non-compossible.

(2) also does well with the view that a hypostasis is, or is at least individuated by, "a bundle of *idiomata*," as well as with the examples of Job's *gnorismata*, but on this view *idiomata* don't literally individuate hypostases, and it seems difficult to reconcile with Gregory's explicit claim that the *idiomata* are "unshareable" (ἀκοινώνητα).[141]

Finally, (3) makes better sense than (2) out of why Gregory would think an *idioma* to be unshareable, and possibly even why he might think *idiomata* to be non-compossible, but it doesn't sit very well with the description of a hypostasis as "a bundle of *idiomata*," since in fact there are no bundles of *idiomata*, the *idiomata* are themselves the bundles.[142]

---

141. Of course, since some of Job's *gnorismata* are clearly accidental, any theory will either have a problem making sense of those example *gnorismata* or else have a problem with the claim that the *idiomata* are unshareable. Unless, that is, one either equivocates on *idioma* in the way Porphyry does, or one thinks there is a distinction in Gregory's mind between *idiomata*, which individuate a thing and are therefore unshareable, and *gnorismata*, which are only "that by which a thing can be known," and only need to be accidental qualities by which one can pick an item out from among others in the actual world.

142. Unless one supposes that a hypostasis is a bundle *of bundles* of qualities, so that we start with shareable qualities, bundle them into *idiomata*, then bundle the *idiomata* into a

All of these interpretations of Gregory have their problems, and for this reason, in the next chapter, I will consider both a "strong" and "weak" formulation of the identity conditions of hypostases, corresponding to (1) and (2)/(3), respectively. (And for the "weak" version, it will be more convenient to follow the usage of (2).)

4.3.5   Do *Idiomata* Really Individuate?

DelCogliano seems to think that, at least for St. Basil, the *idiomata* serve a *merely identifying* and *not constitutive* role. That is, insofar as a property corresponds to a description, the *idiomata* correspond to what happen to be (but perhaps only accidentally) unique descriptions of things, so that they are the sorts of things Basil can put to use in his description theory of proper names, but a thing is not literally *constituted by* these properties. In this case, the *idiomata* play a role in securing the reference of proper names, and can play an epistemological role in our being able to recognize and have knowledge about individuals, but they needn't be the sorts of things that would identify those individuals across time or possible worlds. DelCogliano also casts doubt on Basil taking either the Stoics or the ancient grammarians directly as sources for his theory of proper names.

> Therefore, the Platonist and Stoic traditions viewed individuals as assemblages of distinctive features, though there were significant differences among them. These distinctive features were sometimes thought to be constitutive of the individual, sometimes identificatory, sometimes both. Basil is indebted to the tradition of viewing the bundled distinctive characteristics of individuals as identificatory, not constitutive... Accordingly, I suggest that he has more in common with the Platonists than with the Stoics, and at the same time more in common with the Platonist tradition of viewing individuals as bundles of distinctive characteristics that are solely identificatory and not in any way constitutive.

> Basil is clear that a bundle of distinguishing marks does not constitute an individual but only serves an identificatory purpose. None of the distinguishing marks that he lists for Peter and Paul define what they are essentially or who they are as individual persons, but allow one to distinguish them from each other and from other human beings, and recognize them for who they are as individuals.[143]

Given Basil's massive influence on Gregory, this might seem to count against my interpretation that Gregory takes the *idiomata* even to be playing a role in the individuation of hypostases at all.

But first, consider the fact that, on DelCogliano's own account, Basil is taking his views about philosophy of language over from the *homoiousians*. But the

---

hypostasis. But that seems too much of a stretch.

143. (DELCOGLIANO 2010), p. 201.

homoiousians don't really have the *need* to rely on the distinguishing features of the hypostases to individuate them in the way that *homoousians* do, given that, on the *homoiousian* view, the persons of the Trinity have distinct natures anyway, and so there is no mystery about how they might be individuated. Thus, there is no reason to expect a discussion of the reference of proper names to include any talk about the individuation of the hypostases, if the material for that discussion is coming primarily from the *homoiousians*. But in the context of the *homoousian* view, which says there is only one *ousia*, and which wants to maintain at least *some* kind of doctrine of divine simplicity (even if not an extreme one), and especially in the context of Basil's denial that the *ousia* is something that can be "divided" into particulars, a need will eventually arise to explain how or in what sense the hypostases can even be distinct in the first place. So, although it might not occur immediately, it would seem like a fairly natural and obvious development, to put the *idiomata* into service for that purpose. So, if DelCogliano's thesis about the proximate sources of Basil's theory of proper names is correct (and I don't doubt that), what we should expect to find is that discussions of the *idiomata* in earlier works (like Basil's *Contra Eunomium* – probably not later than 364) or in passages primarily about reference (e.g., again, the passages in *Contra Eunomium* DelCogliano focuses on) will tend to focus on the sorts of semantic issues DelCogliano discusses, but that the *idiomata* will start to be put to metaphysical use in later works by Basil (e.g., Epistle 214 above – probably about 375), or in Gregory's later works where he is defending or explicating Basil's views (e.g., *Ad Petrum* – usually dated 370, though Cross argues for 375;[144] and *Ad Ablabium* – usually dated around 387), and in contexts in which issues of individuation are the primary focus (e.g., parts of *Ad Petrum*, and, as we will see, certainly parts of *Ad Ablabium*).[145]

Second, we seem to see just what I've described. Despite Basil's emphasis on semantic and epistemological issues in his early arguments against Eunomius (which is the topic under discussion in the passages DelCogliano focuses on), in the later Epistle 214 Basil himself certainly *sounds* as if he employs the *idiomata* in a metaphysical way. They are not merely that by which we are *known* or *recognized* as the individuals we are, nor merely that by which *reference* to us is secured – they are that *by which we are* so-and-so and so-and-so, i.e., it is in virtue of the *idiomata* that we *are* the particular individuals that we are.

Third, these points about the emphasis and focus of Basil don't seem to me to be similarly true of Gregory (whose relevant works are later as well). DelCogliano himself shies away from attributing his claims about Basil here to Gregory. What's more, in a footnote, he says:

> G. Christopher Stead ... makes the comment that Basil (and Gregory of Nyssa) failed to distinguish between "how individuals are recognized and what being an individual involves." Though this may be the case for Gregory, who is taken to be representative of the

<hr>

144. (Cross 2002), p. 387.
145. See below 4.4.2, p. 178 ff. on the individuation of token energeiai.

"Cappadocian" view on the issue, I see Basil's remarks concerned solely with the identification, not the definition, of individuals.[146]

I think DelCogliano makes this qualification for good reason. Gregory seems perfectly comfortable talking about the *idiomata* as "individuating" the hypostases, a claim seen frequently in the *Ad Petrum*. What's more, as we will soon see (4.4.2, p. 180), he deploys the *idiomata* again in the *Ad Ablabium* in reference to the *energeiai* precisely for the purpose of giving them a separate criterion of individuation from the hypostases that perform them, which is critical to articulating his solution to the LPT.

I conclude that it's not unlikely that Basil himself comes, eventually, to use the *idiomata* for the role of individuating the hypostases, and that even if he didn't, it still seems that Gregory does, and that this is a fairly natural result of the trajectory along which the views of Basil had been developing anyway.

4.3.6   Do *Idiomata* Really Exist?

Finally, I will say something about a possible objection stemming from Richard Cross's views on the ontological status of the *idiomata* in Gregory.

Cross holds that Gregory is essentially a nominalist about the *idiomata*.[147] To put his case briefly, in *Contra Eunomium*, Gregory says that the *idiomata* are *epinoiai*, and Cross argues that for Gregory *epinoiai* are mere concepts. Thus, Gregory is a nominalist (conceptualist) about the divine *idiomata*. (Although, as we've seen, Cross holds Gregory is a realist about the divine *ousia*).

Cross describes a nominalist view about relations in general by reference to Leftow:

> Leftow goes on to make the point that the Latin view involves accepting that the only real constituent of a divine person is the divine essence, though he does so in a way that does not bring out the distinctive claim, made by the Western theologians, that what underlies this is the fact that relations, which somehow explain the distinctions between the persons, are not themselves things with some kind of extramental existence. The point is made explicitly, later, by Aquinas, but something like it can be found in Augustine too – if not so clearly – if we link together various relevant texts.[148]

After a quote from Augustine on the point, he says:

> And it turns out that these relations are merely ways in which we can talk about the three persons – and not, I take it, items somehow distinct from the divine essence:[149]

146. (DelCogliano 2010), p. 201, fn. 4. The paper he cites is (G. C. Stead 1981), p. 172.
147. (Cross 2012).
148. (Cross 2012), p. 55. Emphasis mine.
149. (Cross 2012), p. 55.

Cross goes on to claim that Gregory holds essentially the same view:

> I take it that all of this provides us with a strong account of divine simplicity in the context of the Trinity. I shall argue that Gregory explicitly takes exactly this line, at least in *Contra Eunomium* 2, which I take to be a clear exposition of Trinitarian doctrine espoused by Gregory at least in his most refined anti-Eunomian argument (whatever he may be committed to elsewhere).[150]

He goes on to contrast his thesis with Radde-Gallwitz's view that Gregory wants a sort of via media between a nominalist and "hyper-realist" view of relations:

> Basically, it seems to me that Gregory explicitly defends what Radde-Gallwitz labels the nominalist account of the *epinoiai*, and hence of divine *propria*. And it should be clear enough from what I have already said that this nominalist account would be a close cousin – perhaps even a sibling or twin – of Augustine's account of the divine attributes. [151]

This might seem problematic, since, in the next chapter, I will put the *idiomata* into Gregory's ontology (his domain of discourse) as things that can be quantified over, be the subjects of predication, and be put into various relations with other items in Gregory's ontology. But I will give three considerations as to why this is appropriate.

First, I simply note that the debate about *epinoiai* between Eunomius and Basil, and later between Eunomius and Gregory, is notoriously difficult, and Cross' view here is by no means uncontroversial. Now, I am extremely optimistic about the project of finding common ground between the so-called "Eastern" and "Western" fathers. However, I'm quite skeptical in particular about a few key issues, and the semantics of various predications concerning God in different of the church fathers is one of them. However, I do not want to take the time to enter into that debate here, as it takes us too far afield from the LPT itself.

The second, and more important consideration, is that even if it turns out that Cross's interpretation here is correct, I would argue that it's still appropriate to translate Gregory's view into predicate logic in the way that I do.

Consider as an analogy how the Stoics make an essentially Meinongian distinction between things that "exist" (only physical bodies, or "corporeals," for the Stoics) and just "somethings." That is, there are things such that they "are something," but don't exist (or "subsist," if one prefers to use that term instead). In particular, the "incorporeals" of place, time, void, and *lekta* ("things said"), *lekta* being more or less equivalent to propositions. (They are the meanings of sentences – what are "said," or asserted, by sentences. Although, on the Stoic view, their truth-values can change over time.)

---

150. (CROSS 2012), p. 56.
151. (CROSS 2012), p. 57.

But consider the Stoic treatment of *lekta*. The Stoics claim that "there are" *lekta*. And that there are *multiple lekta*. And that it is true that *lekta* are incorporeals. And that they can be possible or impossible, necessary or non-necessary. And that they can be true or false, in virtue of their relations to things that *do* exist. And that they can bear or fail to bear various logical relations to one another. It seems, then, that *lekta* are the sort of thing that can be quantified over, that can be individuated, that can have various predicates be true of them, and that can enter into relations with one another and even with things that actually "exist" (or "subsist").

Thus, it sounds very much as though the Stoic realm of the "something" is just the domain of quantification for the Stoics. And that corporeals and incorporeals simply form two proper subsets of the domain of quantification. Only the corporeal subset is said to "exist" (or "subsist.")

So, it seems perfectly appropriate, if one were to reconstruct Stoicism in predicate logic, to include *lekta* and other non-existent somethings in the domain of discourse over which one would quantify, and to treat them in the same way as any other item in one's ontology.

After all, the Stoics had not read Quine.[152] They did not take the rules of the game to be that, "to be is to be the value of a bound variable," or, to translate it into Stoic terms, "to exist (subsist) just is to be 'a something'." Indeed, *that is precisely what they deny*.

Now, whether making this kind of distinction is a sensible thing to do or not is a separate question entirely. Likely, the difficulty in deciding how to recast this kind of view in predicate logic is just a symptom of a deeper problem with trying to deal with any Meinongian view within standard predicate logic. And in my view, that is just a symptom of a deeper problem with trying to deal with any Meinongian view period.

My point is simply that, even if someone wants *in some sense* to be a nominalist about X, or to deny the existence of X, even though they seem to make reference to X in their theory, it isn't *automatically* clear that it will be illegitimate to put X into their domain of discourse when reconstructing their theory in a formal language. But I am not so much arguing that Quine was wrong, as that it is possible for people to be confused.

Third and finally, although I think the *idiomata* are very much an important contextual element in *coming to understand* Gregory's view of the metaphysics of the Trinity, they will turn out in the end to be dispensable, at least for our rather limited, formal purposes.[153] That is, while we need to get a certain amount of clarity on how the *idiomata* work so as to understand other aspects of Gregory's solution to the LPT,[154] his solution to the strictly formal issue we have in mind can be stated without reference to them.[155]

---

152. (Quine 1961).
153. See "GNT$_{\text{Lite}}$" 5.5.1, p. 258 ff. for more.
154. Specifically, as will become clear below, it sheds some light on the distinction he will make between the way in which the Trinity share *energeiai* and the way in which creatures could "share" *energeiai*.
155. See "GNT$_{\text{Lite}}$" 5.5.1, p. 258 ff. for more.

4.4 The Unity of Action Argument (UAA)

Finally, then, let's look at the argument Gregory himself actually endorses – the "Unity of Action Argument" (UAA).

4.4.1 Gregory's Semantics for "is God"

In this response, St. Gregory follows a very long tradition (as we saw above) holding that "God" does not signify the divine essence, and that, in fact, there simply isn't any word for the divine essence. Rather, he argues, all our words for God (including the word "God") signify, not the divine essence, but some action or activity (*energeia*) engaged in by God (or perhaps the power or *dynamis* to engage in one of those *energeiai*). So, Gregory actually thinks that, whereas "man" can be defined in terms of human nature, "God" is defined not in terms of the divine nature, but as a doer of a certain kind of *energeia*. In other words, "God," like "shoemaker" or "rhetorician," is an agent noun.

He states:

ταῦτα δὲ λέγω κατὰ τὸν ἀποδο-
θέντα ἡμῖν ἐπὶ τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης φύσε-
ως λόγον, ἐν ᾧ μεμαθήκαμεν μὴ δεῖν
πληθυντικῷ χαρακτῆρι τὴν προση-
γορίαν πλατύνειν τῆς φύσεως.

ἀκριβέστερον δὲ ἡμῖν αὐτὸ τὸ
ὄνομα τῆς θεότητος ἐξεταστέον,
ὅπως ἂν διὰ τῆς ἐγκειμένης τῇ φωνῇ
σημασίας γένοιτό τις συνεργία πρὸς
τὴν τοῦ προκειμένου σαφήνειαν.

Δοκεῖ μὲν οὖν τοῖς πολλοῖς ἰδι-
αζόντως κατὰ τῆς φύσεως ἡ φωνὴ
τῆς θεότητος κεῖσθαι καὶ ὥσπερ ὁ
οὐρανὸς ἢ ὁ ἥλιος ἢ ἄλλο τι τῶν
τοῦ κόσμου στοιχείων ἰδίαις φωναῖς
διασημαίνεται ταῖς τῶν ὑποκειμένων
σημαντικαῖς, οὕτω φασὶ καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς
ἀνωτάτω καὶ θείας φύσεως ὥσπερ τι
κύριον ὄνομα προσφυῶς ἐφηρμόσθαι
τῷ δηλουμένῳ τὴν φωνὴν τῆς θεότη-
τος.

ἡμεῖς δὲ ταῖς τῆς γραφῆς ὑπο-
θήκαις ἑπόμενοι ἀκατονόμαστόν τε
καὶ ἄφραστον αὐτὴν μεμαθήκαμεν·

καὶ πᾶν ὄνομα, εἴτε παρὰ τῆς ἀν-

This [The UNA] I say according to the account we have given in the case of human nature, in which we have learnt that it is improper to extend the name of the nature by the mark of plurality.

We must, however, more carefully examine the name of "Godhead," in order to obtain, by means of the significance involved in the word, some help towards clearing up the question before us.

The word "Godhead" seems to the many to be given peculiarly according to nature: and just as the heaven, or the sun, or some other of the elements of the cosmos are marked by peculiar words significant of the subjects, so they say also in the case of the supreme and divine nature the word "Godhead" is fitly adapted to that which it represents, as if it were some proper name.

We, on the other hand, following the suggestions of Scripture, have learnt that that nature is unnameable and unspeakable,

and we say that every term ei-

174

θρωπίνης συνηθείας ἐξηύρηται εἴτε παρὰ τῶν γραφῶν παραδέδοται, τῶν περὶ τὴν θείαν φύσιν νοουμένων ἑρμηνευτικὸν εἶναι λέγομεν, οὐκ αὐτῆς τῆς φύσεως περιέχειν τὴν σημασίαν.[156]

ther invented by the custom of men, or handed down to us by the Scriptures, is indeed explanatory of our conceptions of the divine nature, but does not include the signification of that nature itself.[157]

Gregory argues in detail for the point that "God" cannot name the divine nature. But naturally this raises the question, what *does* "God" signify. His answer, a certain kind of *energeia*. Namely, our good friend "beholding":

Ἐπεὶ τοίνυν τὰς ποικίλας τῆς ὑπερκειμένης δυνάμεως ἐνεργείας κατανοοῦντες ἀφ᾽ ἑκάστης τῶν ἡμῖν γνωρίμων ἐνεργειῶν τὰς προσηγορίας ἁρμόζομεν, μίαν δὲ καὶ ταύτην εἶναι λέγομεν τοῦ θεοῦ τὴν ἐνέργειαν, τὴν ἐποπτικὴν καὶ ὁρατικὴν καὶ ὡς ἄν τις εἴποι θεατικήν, καθ᾽ ἣν τὰ πάντα ἐφορᾷ καὶ πάντα ἐπισκοπεῖ, τὰς ἐνθυμήσεις βλέπων καὶ ἐπὶ τὰ ἀθέατα τῇ θεωρητικῇ δυνάμει διαδυόμενος, ὑπειλήφαμεν ἐκ τῆς θέας τὴν θεότητα παρωνομάσθαι καὶ τὸν θεωρὸν ἡμῶν θεὸν ὑπό τε τῆς συνηθείας καὶ τῆς τῶν γραφῶν διδασκαλίας προσαγορεύεσθαι.

Since, then, as we perceive the varied *energeiai* of the power above us, we fashion our appellations from the several *energeiai* that are known to us, and as we recognize as one of these that *energeia* of surveying and inspection, or, as one might call it, beholding, whereby He surveys all things and overlooks them all, discerning our thoughts, and even entering by His power of contemplation into those things which are not visible, we suppose that Godhead (θεότης) is so called from θέα, or beholding, and that He who is our θεατής or beholder, by customary use and by the instruction of the Scriptures, is called θεός, or God.

Εἰ δὲ συγχωρεῖ τις ταὐτὸν εἶναι τὸ θεᾶσθαι τῷ βλέπειν καὶ τὸν ἐφορῶντα πάντα θεὸν ἔφορον τοῦ παντὸς καὶ εἶναι καὶ λέγεσθαι, λογισάσθω τὴν ἐνέργειαν ταύτην, πότερον ἑνὶ πρόσεστι τῶν ἐν τῇ ἁγίᾳ τριάδι πεπιστευμένων προσώπων ἢ διὰ τῶν τριῶν διήκει ἡ δύναμις.

Now if any one admits that to behold and to discern are the same thing, and that the God Who superintends all things, both is and is called the superintender of the universe, let him consider this *energeia*, and judge whether it belongs to one of the Persons whom we believe in the Holy Trinity, or whether the power extends throughout the Three Persons.

εἰ γὰρ ἀληθὴς ἡ τῆς θεότητος ἑρμηνεία καὶ τὰ ὁρώμενα θεατὰ καὶ τὸ θεώμενον θεὸς λέγεται, οὐκέτι ἂν εὐλόγως ἀποκριθείη τι τῶν ἐν τῇ

For if our interpretation of the term Godhead (θεότης) is a true one, and the things which are seen are said to be beheld (θεατά), and

---

156. (St. Gregory of Nyssa 1958), pp. 42-43.
157. (St. Gregory of Nyssa 1893), p. 332.

τριάδι προσώπων τῆς τοιαύτης προση-
γορίας διὰ τὴν ἐγκειμένην τῇ φωνῇ
σημασίαν.

τὸ γὰρ βλέπειν ἐπίσης μαρτυρεῖ
ἡ γραφὴ καὶ πατρὶ καὶ υἱῷ καὶ ἁγίῳ
πνεύματι.

Ὑπερασπιστὰ ἡμῶν, ἴδε, ὁ θεός,
φησὶν ὁ Δαβίδ·

ἐκ δὲ τούτου μανθάνομεν ἰδίαν
θεοῦ, καθὸ θεὸς νοεῖται, ἐνέργειαν τὸ
ὁρᾶν, ἐκ τοῦ εἰπεῖν Ἴδε, ὁ θεός.

ἀλλὰ καὶ ὁ Ἰησοῦς ὁρᾷ τὰς ἐν-
θυμήσεις τῶν καταγινωσκόντων, δι-
ότι συγχωρεῖ τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἐξ αὐθεν-
τίας [τῶν ἀνθρώπων].

Ἰδὼν γάρ, φησίν, ὁ Ἰησοῦς τὰς ἐν-
θυμήσεις αὐτῶν.

καὶ περὶ τοῦ πνεύματος λέγει
πρὸς τὸν Ἀνανίαν ὁ Πέτρος Ἵνα τί
ἐπλήρωσεν ὁ σατανᾶς τὴν καρδίαν
σου ψεύσασθαί σε τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ
ἅγιον; δεικνὺς ὅτι τῶν ἐν κρυπτῷ
τολμωμένων παρὰ τοῦ Ἀνανίου μάρ-
τυς ἦν ἀψευδὴς καὶ ἐπιΐστωρ τὸ
πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον, δι’ οὗ καὶ τῷ Πέτρῳ
τῶν λανθανόντων ἡ φανέρωσις ἦν.

ὁ μὲν γὰρ ἐγένετο κλέπτης αὐτὸς
ἑαυτοῦ λανθάνων, ὡς ᾤετο, πάντας
καὶ τὴν ἁμαρτίαν ἐπικρυπτόμενος·

τὸ δὲ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον ὁμοῦ
τε ἐν Πέτρῳ ἦν καὶ τὴν ἐκείνου
διάνοιαν πρὸς τὴν φιλοχρηματίαν
κατασυρεῖσαν ἐφώρασε καὶ δι’ ἑαυ-
τοῦ δίδωσι τῷ Πέτρῳ διιδεῖν τὰ λαν-
θάνοντα·

οὐκ ἂν δηλονότι τοῦτο ποιοῦν,
εἴπερ ἦν τῶν κρυφίων ἀθέατον.[158]

that which beholds them is called
θεός or God, no one of the Persons
in the Trinity could reasonably be
excluded from such an appellation
on the ground of the sense involved
in the word.

For Scripture attributes the act
of seeing equally to Father, Son, and
Holy Spirit.

David says, "*Behold*, O God our
defender":

and from this we learn that sight
is a proper *energeia* of the idea of
God, so far as God is conceived,
since he says, "*Behold*, O God."

But Jesus also beholds the
thoughts of those who condemn
Him, and questions why by His own
power He pardons the sins of men?

for it says, "Jesus, *beholding their
thoughts*."

And of the Holy Spirit also, Pe-
ter says to Ananias, "Why hath Sa-
tan filled thine heart, to lie to the
Holy Spirit?" showing that the Holy
Spirit was a true witness, aware of
what Ananias had dared to do in se-
cret, and by Whom the manifesta-
tion of the secret was made to Peter.

For Ananias became a thief of his
own goods, secretly, as he thought,
from all men, and concealing his sin:

but the Holy Spirit at the same
moment was in Peter, and detected
his intent, dragged down as it was
to avarice, and gave to Peter from
Himself the power of seeing the se-
cret,

while it is clear that He could not
have done this had He not been able
to behold hidden things.[159]

Thus, on Gregory's actual view, "God" is not a kind-term like "man" or

---

158. (St. Gregory of Nyssa 1958), pp. 44-46.
159. (St. Gregory of Nyssa 1893), p. 333, adapted.

"horse," but an agent noun like "philosopher" or "rhetorician." (Specifically, in Gregory's view, to be a god is to have the power to "behold" hidden things.) But now the question is whether a response to the anti-Trinitarian argument here along the same lines as the UNA would still work, given Gregory's actual view about the semantics of "is God." Gregory admits that *it would not.* He writes:

Ἀλλ᾽ οὔπω τις ἐρεῖ πρὸς τὸ ζη- τούμενον βλέπειν τὴν κατασκευὴν τοῦ λόγου.

οὐδὲ γὰρ εἰ δοθείη κοινὴ τῆς φύσεως ἡ κλῆσις τῆς θεότητος εἶ- ναι, ἤδη τὸ μὴ δεῖν λέγειν θεοὺς διὰ τούτου κατεσκευάσθη.

τοὐναντίον μὲν οὖν ἐκ τούτων ἀναγκαζόμεθα μᾶλλον λέγειν θεούς.

εὑρίσκομεν γὰρ ἐπὶ τῆς ἀνθρ- ωπίνης συνηθείας οὐ μόνον τοὺς τῆς αὐτῆς φύσεως κοινωνοὺς ἀλλά, κἄν τινες τοῦ αὐτοῦ ὦσιν ἐπιτηδεύ- ματος, οὐχ ἑνικῶς τοὺς πολλοὺς μνημονευομένους καθό φαμεν ῥή- τοράς τε πολλοὺς καὶ γεωμέτρας γεωργούς τε καὶ σκυτοτόμους καὶ τὰ ἄλλα πάντα ὡσαύτως.

καὶ εἰ μὲν φύσεως ἦν ἡ τῆς θεότη- τος προσηγορία, μᾶλλον ἂν εἶχε καιρὸν κατὰ τὸν προαποδοθέντα λό- γον ἑνικῶς τὰς τρεῖς ὑποστάσεις περ- ιλαμβάνειν καὶ ἕνα θεὸν λέγειν διὰ τὸ τῆς φύσεως ἄτμητόν τε καὶ ἀδιαίρε- τον·

ἐπεὶ δὲ κατεσκευάσθη διὰ τῶν εἰρημένων ἐνέργειαν σημαίνειν καὶ οὐχὶ φύσιν τὸ τῆς θεότητος ὄνομα, περιτρέπεταί πως πρὸς τοὐναντίον ἐκ τῶν κατασκευαζομένων ὁ λόγος, ὡς δεῖν ταύτη μᾶλλον λέγειν τρεῖς θεοὺς τοὺς ἐν τῇ αὐτῇ ἐνεργείᾳ θεωρουμέ- νους·

ὥς φασι τρεῖς λέγεσθαι φιλοσό-

But some one will say that the proof of our argument does not yet regard the question.

For if the name of "Godhead" *were* granted to be common of the nature, it would be established that we should not speak of "Gods":

but by these arguments [these now being given, in the UAA], on the contrary, we are *compelled* to speak of "Gods":[160]

for we find in the custom of mankind that not only those who are partakers *in the same nature*, but even any who may be *of the same business*, are not, when they are many, spoken of in the singular; as we speak of "many orators," or "surveyors," or "farmers," or "shoe- makers," and so in all other cases.

If, indeed, Godhead *were* an ap- pellation of nature, it would be more proper, according to the argument laid down [i.e., the UNA], to include the Three Persons in the singular number, and to speak of "One God," by reason of the inseparability and indivisibility of the nature [the point of the UNA]:

but since it has been established by what has been said, that the term "Godhead" is significant of *energeia*, and *not* of nature, the argument from what has been advanced seems to turn to the *contrary* conclusion, that we ought therefore *all the more* to call those "three Gods" who are contemplated in the same *energeia*;

as they say that one would speak

φους ἢ ῥήτορας ἢ εἴ τί ἐστιν ἕτερον ἐξ ἐπιτηδεύματος ὄνομα, ὅταν πλείους ὦσιν οἱ τοῦ αὐτοῦ συμμετέχοντες.

ταῦτα φιλοπονώτερον ἐξειργασά-μην, τὸν τῶν ὑπεναντίων ἀνθυποφέρ-ων λόγον, ὡς ἂν βεβαιότερον ἡμῖν παγείη τὸ δόγμα ταῖς εὐτονωτέραις τῶν ἀντιθέσεων κρατυνόμενον.

οὐκοῦν ἐπαναληπτέος πάλιν ὁ λό-γος.[161]

of "three philosophers" or "orators," or *any other name derived from a business* [i.e., any *agent noun*] when those who take part in the same business are more than one.

I have taken some pains, in setting forth this view, to bring forward the reasoning on behalf of the adversaries, that our decision may be the more firmly fixed, being strengthened by the more elaborate contradictions.

Let us now resume our argument.[162]

Gregory is here rehearsing what an opponent would say. Namely, that it would have been better for him to stop at the UNA, since there he had an answer to why we put "God" in the singular. But now that he has claimed "God" is *not* really a kind-term at all, but an agent noun, it follows that the points made in the UNA regarding collective nouns no longer apply, since they presupposed that "God" *was* a kind-term. And once more, common usage is to put agent nouns in the plural when there is more than one hypostasis engaged in the same kind of activity.

4.4.2   Gregory's Metaphysics of *Energeiai*

Gregory now explicitly admits that the semantic points about collective nouns made in the UNA (4.2.2, p. 129 ff.) no longer apply, given his actual view about the semantics of "is God," precisely because the *metaphysical* point about natures being indivisible monads above, does *not* have any parallel in the case of *energeiai*. That is, there is no simple, monadic universal uniting particular *energeiai* "of the same name." Rather, it would appear that, for Gregory, *energeiai* just form something like the Neo-Platonic collective universals he has denied in the case of hypostases and *ousiai* after all. He re-introduces the technical term "divided" here, saying that the *energeiai* of men *are* in fact "divided" (διακεκριμένη) into particular *energeiai* after all. Thus it follows that, although it is not strictly speaking true to say there are "many men," he admits that it *is* strictly speaking true that there are "many philosophers," or "many rhetoricians," etc.:

---

160. In contrast to the UNA, in which he's argued that, strictly speaking, there would be only one God.

161. (St. Gregory of Nyssa 1958), pp. 46-47.

162. (St. Gregory of Nyssa 1893), p. 333.

Ἐπειδὴ μετρίως ἡμῖν ἐκ τῆς κατασκευῆς ἀπεδείχθη οὐ φύσεως ἀλλ' ἐνεργείας εἶναι τὴν φωνὴν τῆς θεότητος, τάχα ταύτην ἄν τις αἰτίαν εὐλόγως εἴποι τοῦ πληθυντικῶς μὲν ἐπ' ἀνθρώπων τοὺς τῶν αὐτῶν ἐπιτηδευμάτων κοινωνοῦντας ἀλλήλοις ἀριθμεῖσθαι καὶ ὀνομάζεσθαι, μοναδικῶς δὲ τὸ θεῖον ὡς ἕνα θεὸν καὶ μίαν θεότητα λέγεσθαι, κἂν αἱ τρεῖς ὑποστάσεις τῆς ἐμφαινομένης τῇ θεότητι σημασίας μὴ ἀποκρίνοιντο, ὅτι ἄνθρωποι μέν, κἂν μιᾶς ὦσιν ἐνεργείας οἱ πλείονες, καθ' ἑαυτὸν ἕκαστος ἀποτεταγμένως ἐνεργεῖ τὸ προκείμενον, οὐδὲν ἐπικοινωνῶν ἐν τῇ καθ' ἑαυτὸν ἐνεργείᾳ πρὸς τοὺς τὸ ἴσον ἐπιτηδεύοντας·

εἰ γὰρ καὶ πλείονες εἶεν οἱ ῥήτορες, τὸ μὲν ἐπιτήδευμα ἓν ὂν τὸ αὐτὸ ἐν τοῖς πλείοσιν ὄνομα ἔχει, οἱ δὲ μετιόντες καθ' ἑαυτὸν ἕκαστον ἐνεργοῦσιν ἰδίως ῥητορεύων ὁ δεῖνα καὶ ἰδίως ὁ ἕτερος·

οὐκοῦν ἐν μὲν τοῖς ἀνθρώποις, ἐπειδὴ διακεχριμένη ἐστὶν ἡ ἐν τοῖς αὐτοῖς ἐπιτηδεύμασιν ἑκάστου ἐνέργεια, κυρίως πολλοὶ ὀνομάζονται, ἑκάστου αὐτῶν εἰς ἰδίαν περιγραφὴν κατὰ τὸ ἰδιότροπον τῆς ἐνεργείας ἀποτεμνομένου τῶν ἄλλων·[163]

Since we demonstrated in due measure from the logical proof that the word of "God-hood" is not of a nature but of an *energeia*, one perhaps would reasonably say that this is a reason that, in the case of men, those who share the same occupations with each other are numbered and named in the plural, but that the divine is stated in the singular as one God and one God-hood, even if the three hypostases should not be distinguished by the significance manifest in the divinity, because men, even if several are of one *energeia*, each by himself exclusively energizes what lies before him, since he shares nothing in the particular *energeia* with those pursuing an equivalent [energeia].

Indeed, if the orators should be several, while the pursuit, being one, *has the same name among the several*, those who pursue it each by himself *energize individually*, since the one speaks powerfully and the other simply.

So, among men, since the *energeia* of each in the same occupations is divided (διακεχριμένη), they are legitimately named many, since each of them is separated from the others into his own circumscribed domain *according to the idiotropon of the energeia*.[164]

Thus, Gregory draws a distinction between *particular, individual energeiai*, and "*the one energeia*" which they constitute as a Neo-Platonic collective universal. Gregory himself doesn't seem to have any very good vocabulary to make this distinction succinctly, or if he does he doesn't use it, and isn't always explicit as to when he is talking about the one or the other. So I will introduce the words "type" and "token," to mark this distinction, with the caveat that I mean to use these terms only as a convenient way to mark the distinction Gregory wants to make here, and not to import any connotations extraneous to

---

163. (St. Gregory of Nyssa 1958), p. 47.
164. Adapted from (St. Gregory of Nyssa 2008a), pp. 8-9.

his thought. With that said, a few things should be fairly clear.

First, the token (χαθ' ἑαυτὸν) *energeiai* of different rhetoricians are distinct and *not shared* by the different rhetoricians.

Second, the rhetoricians are still said to be "of one *energeia*" (despite having *multiple* token *energeiai*) because the token *energeiai* are all "equivalent" (ἴσος). That is, since the "one *energeia*" (or *energeia* type as I am calling it) is "divisible" into the token *energeiai*, it seems to be simply a collection of token *energeiai* that form some sort of equivalence class, i.e., a Neo-Platonic collective universal.

But third, and most crucially, the token *energeiai* of distinct rhetoricians seem to be individuated, *not* by their relations to the individual rhetoricians that perform them, but *by their own idiomata* (here ἰδιότροπον). – *This in fact is the critical aspect of Gregory's solution to the LPT.* – What individuates the token *energeiai* in Gregory's example is *not* simply that they belong to distinct hypostases. Rather, he constructs his example so that what individuate the token acts of orating are *qualities intrinsic to the particular acts themselves* (namely, that they exhibit *different rhetorical styles*).[165],[166]

The picture that emerges, then, looks roughly like a Davidsonian view of events (actions) and their individuation.[167] These *energeiai* are particular, individual events, with their own criterion or criteria for individuation. The rhetoricians have their own *idiomata*, and the acts of orating have *their* own *idiomata*. But of course, in the case of the three rhetoricians, despite the hypostases and their (token) *energeiai* being individuated by different factors, *they will all ultimately be individuated*.

This is why the semantics of collective nouns no longer applies, and the previous problem comes back again. If, unlike natures, *energeiai* (types) are "divided" into their particulars (token *energeiai*), and the *energeia* "has the same name among the several" (the token *energeiai* have the same name as each other and as the collective, or *energeia* type, they compose) then not only is it the case that the token *energeiai* in fact form precisely the kind of discontinuous whole that *is* a Neo-Platonic universal – they also form precisely the kind of collection that, given the semantic view sketched above,[168] is *not* named with a (singular) collective noun, but *is named in the plural after all*. We can see, then, that this is not some sort of additional point added onto the UNA, as though it were still strictly speaking false to say there are "many rhetoricians," but somehow a legitimate misuse of language. Rather, this is an entirely separate argument from the UNA (and incompatible with it), on which it now *is strictly speaking true* after all that there are three rhetoricians.

---

165. The so-called "powerful" versus "simple," rhetorical styles – see (St. Gregory of Nyssa 2008a), p. 9, footnotes 35 and 36, in which he references Demetrius' *De Elocutione* 240, on the "powerful" style.

166. This is not to say that token *energeiai* can *only* be individuated by intrinsic qualities, instead of relations (like spatio-temporal relations). Only that they *can* be individuated by intrinsic features, and *are not* individuated merely by being performed by distinct hypostases.

167. For Davidson's views on the individuation of actions and events, see (Davidson 1963), (Davidson 1966), (Davidson 1969b), and (Davidson 1970) all reprinted in (Davidson 2001), as well as (Davidson 1969a).

168. 4.2.2, p. 129 ff.

So, if this is the case, if it *is* strictly speaking true that there are three rhetoricians in Gregory's analogy, why is it *not* strictly speaking true to say that there are three gods?

4.4.3   Gregory's Theology of *Synergy*

Gregory's answer is that, unlike the case with men, the *energeiai* of the Trinity are not divided. This does not mean that, somehow, necessary metaphysical truths simply work differently for the Trinity, so that when we are talking about God we will have a theory of *energeiai* types (universals) as indivisible monads, but when talking about men we will switch over to a collective theory of *energeia* types. Nor does it mean that theological language is somehow different, so that when we speak about God our words follow a different set of rules. It is rather that in the case of men there are factors which actually do individuate the token actions, but in the case of the Trinity, while the hypostases are individuated by the *idiomata* of paternity, filiation and spiration, there simply *are no idiomata* that could individuate their token *energeiai*.

ἐπὶ δὲ τῆς θείας φύσεως οὐχ οὕτως ἐμάθομεν ὅτι ὁ πατὴρ ποιεῖ τι καθ᾽ ἑαυτόν, οὗ μὴ συνεφάπτεται ὁ υἱός, ἢ πάλιν ὁ υἱὸς ἰδιαζόντως ἐνεργεῖ τι χωρὶς τοῦ πνεύματος, ἀλλὰ πᾶσα ἐνέργεια ἡ θεόθεν ἐπὶ τὴν κτίσιν διήκουσα καὶ κατὰ τὰς πολυτρόπους ἐννοίας ὀνομαζομένη ἐκ πατρὸς ἀφορμᾶται καὶ διὰ τοῦ υἱοῦ πρόεισι καὶ ἐν τῷ πνεύματι τῷ ἁγίῳ τελειοῦται.

But in the case of the divine nature we did not learn thus that the Father does something by himself, that the Son does not engage in with him, or again that the Son energizes something separate from the Spirit, but every *energeia* that has extended from God to the creation and is named according to various conceptions, emerges from Father, proceeds through the Son and is perfected by the Holy Spirit.

διὰ τοῦτο εἰς τὸ πλῆθος τῶν ἐνεργούντων τὸ ὄνομα τῆς ἐνεργείας οὐ διασχίζεται, ὅτι οὐκ ἀποτεταγμένη ἑκάστου καὶ ἰδιάζουσά ἐστιν ἡ περί τι σπουδή·

Because of this, the noun for the *energeia* is not divided into the plurality of *energizers*, because the effort concerning anything is not separated by each one and individuated.

ἀλλ᾽ ὅπερ ἂν γίνηται τῶν εἴτε εἰς τὴν ἡμετέραν πρόνοιαν φθανόντων εἴτε πρὸς τὴν τοῦ παντὸς οἰκονομίαν καὶ σύστασιν, διὰ τῶν τριῶν μὲν γίνεται, οὐ μὴν τρία ἐστὶ τὰ γινόμενα.[169]

But whatever comes to be, whether of the things that first occur in forethought for us or for the management and support of the totality, comes to be through the three, but surely it is not three [things] that come to be.[170]

Gregory gives the example of the life that has been given to each of us by the

---

169. (St. Gregory of Nyssa 1958), pp. 47-48.
170. Adapted from (St. Gregory of Nyssa 2008a), p. 9.

Trinity. I have been given life by the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. But I have not been given three numerically distinct lives. (Nor, presumably, would Gregory want to say that only a "part" of my life has been given by the Father, a part by the Son and a part by the Holy Spirit.) Gregory takes this to show that there is, then, only one token act of life-giving, and it is *the same token act of life-giving* that is performed by all three hypostases simultaneously. (If there had been three distinct token acts of life-giving, all of which were completed, and if these were not merely the givings of *parts* of a life, then it would seem to follow that I should end up with three whole, distinct, token lives, which is unfortunately not the case. Thus, on Gregory's view, we can only make sense of attributing a token act or activity of life-giving to all three hypostases by saying it is *the same token life-giving* that is performed by all three hypostases.)

I will call the phenomenon of multiple distinct hypostases performing numerically one token *energeia* "synergy" and say that when two distinct hypostases x and y perform a single token *energeia* e, they "synergize on" the token *energeia* e, and when e is of type e*, that x and y "synergize on" *energeia* type e*. Later on, Gregory gives another example, the *energeia* of salvation, to stave off objections to the possibility of synergy:

Καὶ ὥσπερ εἷς ὁ πατὴρ σωτὴρ πάντων ἀνθρώπων μάλιστα πιστῶν ὑπὸ τοῦ ἀποστόλου ὠνόμασται καὶ οὐδεὶς ἐκ τῆς φωνῆς ταύτης ἢ τὸν υἱὸν λέγει μὴ σῴζειν τοὺς πιστεύοντας ἢ δίχα τοῦ πνεύματος τὴν σωτηρίαν τοῖς μετέχουσι γίνεσθαι, ἀλλὰ γίνεται πάντων σωτὴρ ὁ ἐπὶ πάντων θεὸς ἐνεργοῦντος τοῦ υἱοῦ τὴν σωτηρίαν ἐν τῇ τοῦ πνεύματος χάριτι καὶ οὐδὲν μᾶλλον διὰ τοῦτο τρεῖς σωτῆρες ὑπὸ τῆς γραφῆς ὀνομάζονται, εἰ καὶ ὁμολογεῖται παρὰ τῆς ἁγίας τριάδος ἡ σωτηρία . . . [171]

Just as the one Father has been named "Savior of all men, and especially of those who believe" by the apostle [1 Tim. 4:10], and no one says, based on this statement, either that the Son does not save the faithful or that salvation belongs to the participants apart from the Spirit, but the God over all [=the Father] becomes the savior of all because the Son energizes salvation, in the grace of the Spirit, and no more does the Scripture therefore name three saviors if salvation is also confessed [to be] from the Holy Triad . . . [172]

Here Gregory is giving a biblical argument to stave off objections to his metaphysics of synergy (i.e., the possibility of synergy). For although it does not logically follow from Gregory's metaphysics of action individuation that token *energeiai* must be individuated by, or along with, the hypostases that perform them, someone might simply want to assume that they would, as an independently plausible metaphysical principle. But since Gregory's audience, at this point, is other orthodox Christian, he points out that such an exclusionary principle would rule out synergistic attributions that are apparently committed

---

171. (St. Gregory of Nyssa 1958), p. 52.
172. Adapted from (St. Gregory of Nyssa 2008a), p. 12.

to by the Bible.[173]

For example, that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit all engage in the *energeia* of salvation. The assumption that:

> for any hypostases, x and y, if x $\neq$ y, and if x does token *energeia* e of type e*, then y does not do e

would entail that, if the Father saves me, either the Son and the Holy Spirit do not save me *at all*, or that, if either of them do, then I am being saved multiple times in multiple token acts of salvation – neither of which seems consistent with what the Bible says or how the Bible says it.

Finally, Gregory generalizes from the example of life-giving, and claims that the hypostases of the Trinity synergize on *every* token *energeia* they perform. (I will call this "The Universal Synergy Claim" or "US.")

Ἐπειδὴ τοίνυν καθ' ὁμοιότητα τοῦ εἰρημένου πᾶσαν ἐνέργειαν οὐ διηρημένως ἐνεργεῖ κατὰ τὸν τῶν ὑποστάσεων ἀριθμὸν ἡ ἁγία τριάς, ἀλλὰ μία τις γίνεται τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ θελήματος κίνησίς τε καὶ διάδοσις, ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς διὰ τοῦ υἱοῦ πρὸς τὸ πνεῦμα διεξαγομένη, ὡς οὐ λέγομεν τρεῖς ζωοποιοὺς τοὺς τὴν μίαν ἐνεργοῦντας ζωὴν οὐδὲ τρεῖς ἀγαθοὺς τοὺς ἐν τῇ αὐτῇ ἀγαθότητι θεωρουμένους οὐδὲ τὰ ἄλλα πάντα πληθυντικῶς ἐξαγγέλλομεν, οὕτως οὐδὲ τρεῖς ὀνομάζειν δυνάμεθα τοὺς τὴν θεϊκὴν ταύτην ἤτοι ἐποπτικὴν δύναμίν τε καὶ ἐνέργειαν συνημμένως καὶ ἀδιακρίτως δι' ἀλλήλων ἐφ' ἡμῶν τε καὶ πάσης τῆς κτίσεως ἐνεργοῦντας. . .[174]

Since then the Holy Trinity fulfills *every energeia* in a manner similar to that of which I have spoken, not energizing dividedly, according to the number of the hypostases, but a single motion and disposition of the good will comes to be, communicated from the Father, through the Son, to the Spirit, for as we do not call "three givers of life" those who energize a single life, neither do we call "three good ones" those contemplated in the same goodness, nor do we express any of the others plurally, so neither can we call "three" those conjointly and inseparably energizing the same divine and superintending power and *energeia* to us and to all of creation. . .[175]

And again just a bit later:

λέγει γὰρ Εἰ δὲ ἐγὼ ἐν πνεύματι θεοῦ ἐκβάλλω τὰ δαιμόνια· ἀπὸ μέρους πᾶν εἶδος εὐεργεσίας περιλαμβάνων διὰ τῆς κατὰ τὴν ἐνέργειαν ἑνότητος· οἷς γὰρ δι' ἀλλήλων ἐν-

For He says, "If I by the Spirit of God cast out devils"; where He includes every form of doing good in a partial description, by reason of the unity of *energeia*: for the name de-

---

173. See 6.4, p. 298 ff. below for other cases in which *synergy* may be useful for understanding similar claims made in the Bible.

174. (St. Gregory of Nyssa 1958), pp. 48-49.

175. (St. Gregory of Nyssa 1893), p. 334, adapted.

ἐργεῖται τὸ ἕν, εἰς πολλοὺς καταμε- μερίσθαι τὸ ὄνομα τῆς ἐνεργείας οὐ δύναται.[176]

rived from the *energeia* cannot be divided among many where [only] one thing is energized mutually.[177]

Gregory concludes this part of *Ad Ablabium* with a longer argument and additional considerations to the effect that the hypostases synergize on every token *energeia* they perform. This is the heart of the UAA, and is the only response to the LPT that Gregory indicates he actually accepts. There is one God because there is only one token power and there is only one token action (*energeia*) shared among the Triad.

What emerges, then, from a close reading of the *Ad Ablabium*, is that Gregory takes the metaphysical position that it is possible for one and the same token *energeia* to be performed or engaged in by more than one hypostasis. This is what I have called his "metaphysics of synergy," and is the under-appreciated key to his solution to the LPT. It might be thought a peculiar metaphysics, but it is neither unintelligible, nor obviously false, nor – certainly – is it simply *formally* contradictory.[178]

4.4.4 The Individuation of *Ousiai*

I think the above evidence from within the *Ad Ablabium* makes it clear enough that Gregory does in fact distinguish between *energeia* types and tokens. But we can also see *the need* for Gregory to make such a distinction between *energeia* types and *energeia* tokens when we note Gregory's view that *ousiai* are individuated by *energeiai*.

This claim should hardly be controversial to anyone familiar with the Cappadocians. The closely related point that *ousiai* are individuated by *dynameis* (powers) has been examined in great detail by Michel Rene Barnes,[179] noting the origins of the thesis in pre-Socratic medical authors, the influence of those writings on Plato, and the trajectory of the view up into the pro-Nicene consensus and its use by Gregory of Nyssa in his debates with the Eunomians. And insofar as there would seem to be a one-to-one correspondence between *dynameis* and *energeiai*, it should be obvious enough that Gregory would also accept the thesis that *ousiai* are individuated by *energeiai*. However, I'll quote a few important texts in which we can see Gregory himself present the view that *energeiai* individuate *ousiai*, as well as the further premise I will call "The Cappadocian Assertion," (or "CA") which says that the hypostases of the Trinity engage in all the same *energeiai*. Together, these claims constitute probably Gregory's most powerful argument for the *homoousion*, and so are central to his triadology. As we will see, the Cappadocian Assertion cannot be understood as saying the same thing as the Universal Synergy Claim. And this is further evidence that Gregory distinguishes between two different concepts of "*energeia*"

---

176. (St. Gregory of Nyssa 1958), p. 50.
177. (St. Gregory of Nyssa 1893), p. 334, adapted.
178. I explore the plausibility just a bit more in Chapter 6.3, p. 287, and 6.4, p. 298.
179. (Barnes 2001).

(although he does not always mark when he is speaking of one or the other). But first, what Gregory says about the individuation of *ousiai*. We'll start with *Ad Xenodorum*, then look at *Ad Eustathium* again.

The Individuation of *Ousiai* in *Ad Xenodorum*

Only a small fragment remains from Gregory's epistle to Xenodorus, a fragment preserved by St. Maximus the Confessor in a florilegium from Gregory about the concept of *energeiai*.[180] But the fragment Maximus preserves will give us a sense for the meaning of *energeia*, and, more importantly, its role in the individuation of *ousiai*:

Ἐνέργειαν γὰρ ἡμεῖς εἶναί φαμεν τὴν φυσικὴν ἑκάστης οὐσίας δύναμίν τε καὶ κίνησιν, ἧς χωρὶς οὔτε ἐστὶν οὔτε γινώσκεται φύσις.

For we say that *energeia* is the natural (φυσικός) power (*dynamis*) and movement of each *ousia* without which a nature (φύσις) neither exists nor is known.

νοερῶν γάρ ἐστι νόησις, αἰσθητικῶν αἴσθησις (καθ’ ἣν αὐταί τε τῶν ἐκτὸς ἐφάπτονται φυσικῶς καὶ τοῖς ἐκτὸς ὑποπίπτουσι), πτηνῶν πτῆσις, νηκτῶν νῆξις, ἑρπηστικῶν ἕρψις, βαδιστικῶν βάδισις, βλαστῶν βλάστησις.

For intelligence is [the *energeia*] of intellectual beings, sensation of sensate beings—by which the same lay hold of things outside them and are subject to things outside them—flight of that which flies, swimming of that which swims, crawling of that which crawls, walking of that which walks, sprouting of that which sprouts.

καὶ περιληπτικῶς εἰπεῖν, τὸ σημαντικὸν ἑκάστης ἰδίωμα φύσεως ἐνέργειαν λέγομεν φυσικήν· ἧς μόνον ἐστέρηται τὸ μὴ ὄν.

To speak comprehensively, the *idioma* significant (σημαντικὸν) of each nature we call its natural *energeia*; of which only that which does not exist is deprived.

τὸ γὰρ οὐσίας τινὸς μετέχον καὶ τῆς δηλούσης αὐτὴν φυσικῶς μεθέξει πάντως δυνάμεως. ὅρους γὰρ τῶν οὐσιῶν τὰς φυσικὰς αὐτῶν ἐνεργείας ὁ ἀληθὴς ἐπίσταται λόγος.[181]

For that which participates in a certain *ousia* will also participate naturally and completely in the power (*dynamis*) manifesting it. For the true Logos presides over the natural limits of *ousiai*.[182]

First, we can already see here that Gregory takes *energeia* to individuate *ousiai* (although that will be even more clear in *Ad Eustathium*). He says, "that which shares in any *ousia*, will also share ... in the power that manifests it.

We can also see that *energeiai* are that by which an *ousia* "is known," but that Gregory then goes on to describe the natural *energeia* as *the idioma of the*

---

180. See (St. Gregory of Nyssa 2007), pp. 245-246.

181. (St. Gregory of Nyssa, 1938, reprinted 1962), pp. 14-15.

182. Translation from (St. Gregory of Nyssa 2007), pp. 246-247. Adapted.

nature. And I have argued that *idioma* for Gregory means something which individuates. Thus, there is a certain parallel here to Sydney Shoemaker's "Causal Theory of Properties," moving from the epistemological and semantic claims that *dynameis* (powers) and *energeiai* (activities) are that by which a nature "*is known*" to the metaphysical claim that they are that by which a nature is *individuated.*[183]

Finally, we also see here the view that no *ousia* can exist without some natural *energeia. energeia* is something "without which a nature neither exists nor is known," and "only that which does not exist is deprived" of natural *energeiai.*

The Individuation of *Ousiai* in *Ad Eustathium*

Ad Eustathium contains further elaboration on the role of *energeiai* as individuating *ousiai.* Gregory writes:

Ἀλλὰ λέγουσι φύσεως ἐνδεικτικὴν εἶναι τὴν προσηγορίαν ταύτην, ἀκοινώνητον δὲ εἶναι πρὸς Πατέρα καὶ Υἱὸν τὴν τοῦ Πνεύματος φύσιν, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο μηδὲ τῆς κατὰ τὸ ὄνομα τοῦτο κοινωνίας μετέχειν.

Οὐκοῦν δειξάτωσαν διὰ τίνων τὸ τῆς φύσεως παρηλλαγμένον ἐπέγνωσαν.

Εἰ μὲν γὰρ ἦν δυνατὸν αὐτὴν ἐφ' ἑαυτῆς τὴν θείαν φύσιν θεωρηθῆναι καὶ τό τε οἰκείως ἔχον καὶ τὸ ἀλλοτρίως διὰ τῶν φαινομένων εὑρεῖν, οὐκ ἂν πάντως ἐδεήθημεν λόγων ἢ τεκμηρίων ἑτέρων πρὸς τὴν τοῦ ζητουμένου κατάληψιν.

Ἐπεὶ δὲ ἡ μὲν ὑψηλοτέρα τῆς τῶν ζητουμένων ἐστὶ κατανοήσεως, ἐκ δὲ τεκμηρίων τινῶν περὶ τῶν διαφευγόντων τὴν γνῶσιν ἡμῶν λογιζόμεθα, ἀνάγκη πᾶσα διὰ τῶν ἐνεργειῶν ἡμᾶς χειραγωγεῖσθαι πρὸς τὴν τῆς θείας

But they say that this appellation (προσηγορία) ["God"] is indicative of nature, and that, as the nature of the Spirit is not common to the Father and the Son, for this reason neither does he partake in the community of this attribute (ὄνομα) [name].

Let them show, then, whereby they discern this diversity of nature.

For if it were possible that the Divine nature should be contemplated in its absolute essence, and that we should find by appearances what is and what is not proper to it, we should surely have no need of other arguments or evidence for the comprehension of the question.

But since it is exalted above the understanding of the questioners, and we have to argue from some particular evidence about those things which evade our knowledge, it is absolutely necessary for us to be

---

183. Although of course not just any property counts as an *ousia.* Still, Shoemaker's view (or something like it) would seem to entail Gregory's view here (or something like it). For details of Shoemaker's view, see esp. (Shoemaker 1980a), and also (Shoemaker 1979), (Shoemaker 1980b), (Shoemaker 1984), (Shoemaker 1998), (Shoemaker 2003), and (Shoemaker 2011).

φύσεως ἔρευναν.

Οὐκοῦν, ἐὰν ἴδωμεν διαφερούσας ἀλλήλων τὰς ἐνεργείας τὰς παρὰ τοῦ Πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ Υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ Ἁγίου Πνεύματος ἐνεργουμένας, διαφόρους εἶναι καὶ τὰς ἐνεργούσας φύσεις ἐκ τῆς ἑτερότητος τῶν ἐνεργειῶν στοχαζόμεθα.

Οὐδὲ γὰρ ἐνδέχεται τὰ διεστῶτα κατὰ τὸν τῆς φύσεως λόγον πρὸς τὸ τῶν ἐνεργειῶν εἶδος ἀλλήλοις συνενεχθῆναι· οὔτε ψύχει τὸ πῦρ οὔτε θερμαίνει ὁ κρύσταλλος, ἀλλὰ τῇ τῶν φύσεων διαφορᾷ συνδιαχωρίζονται ἀπ' ἀλλήλων καὶ αἱ παρὰ τούτων ἐνέργειαι.

Ἐὰν δὲ μίαν νοήσωμεν τὴν ἐνέργειαν Πατρός τε καὶ Υἱοῦ καὶ Πνεύματος Ἁγίου, ἐν μηδενὶ διαφέρουσάν τι ἢ παραλλάσσουσαν, ἀνάγκη τῇ ταὐτότητι τῆς ἐνεργείας τὸ ἡνωμένον τῆς φύσεως συλλογίζεσθαι.[184]

guided to the investigation of the Divine nature by its *energeiai*.

If, then, we see that the *energeiai* which are wrought by the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit differ one from the other, we shall conjecture from the different character of the *energeiai* that the natures which *energize* are also different.

For it cannot be that things which differ in their very nature should agree in the form (εἶδος) of their *energeiai*: fire does not chill, nor ice give warmth, but their *energeiai* are distinguished together with the difference between their natures.

If, on the other hand, we understand that the *energeia* of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit is one, differing or varying in nothing, the oneness of their nature must needs be inferred from the identity of their *energeia*.[185]

Here Gregory makes it quite clear that natures are individuated by *energeiai*. In the next quote from *Ad Eustathium*, Gregory makes the claim that the hypostases all engage in the same *energeiai*, i.e., what I call "the Cappadocian Assertion." From the Cappadocian Assertion and the criteria of individuation for natures, it follows, Gregory argues, that the persons of the Trinity have a single *ousia*.

ἁγιάζει καὶ ζωοποιεῖ καὶ παρακαλεῖ καὶ πάντα τὰ τοιαῦτα ὁμοίως ὁ πατὴρ καὶ ὁ υἱὸς καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον

καὶ μηδεὶς κατ' ἐξαίρετον ἀπονεμέτω τῇ ἐνεργείᾳ τοῦ πνεύματος τὴν ἁγιαστικὴν ἐξουσίαν ἀκούσας τοῦ σωτῆρος ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ περὶ τῶν μαθητῶν πρὸς τὸν πατέρα λέγοντος· Πάτερ, ἁγίασον αὐτοὺς ἐν τῷ ὀνόματί σου.

The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit alike give sanctification, and life, and light, and comfort, and all similar graces.

And let no one attribute the *energeia* of sanctification in a special sense to the Spirit, when he hears the Saviour in the Gospel saying to the Father concerning His disciples, Father, sanctify them in Your name.

---

184. (St. Gregory of Nyssa 1958), pp. 10-11.
185. (St. Gregory of Nyssa 1893), p. 328, adapted.

ὡσαύτως δὲ καὶ τὰ ἄλλα πάντα κατὰ τὸ ἴσον ἐνεργεῖται τοῖς ἀξίοις παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος,

. . .

οὐκοῦν ἡ τῆς ἐνεργείας ταυτότης ἐπὶ πατρός τε καὶ υἱοῦ καὶ ἁγίου πνεύματος δείκνυσι σαφῶς τὸ τῆς φύσεως ἀπαράλλακτον·

ὥστε, κἂν φύσιν σημαίνῃ τὸ τῆς θεότητος ὄνομα, κυρίως καὶ τῷ ἁγίῳ πνεύματι τὴν προσηγορίαν ἐφαρμόζεσθαι ταύτην ἡ τῆς οὐσίας κοινότης συνθήσεται.[186]

So too all the other gifts are *energized* in those who are worthy alike by the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit:

. . .

Thus the identity of *energeia* in Father, Son, and Holy Spirit shows plainly the undistinguishable character of their nature.

So that *even if* the name of Godhead does indicate nature, the community of *ousia* shows that this appellation is properly applied also to the Holy Spirit.[187]

I will let this quote suffice to show that Gregory holds the view that the hypostases have all the same *energeiai*. It is well known, and not controversial, that he did. We see here the same point as before, that Gregory does not accept the view that "God" expresses a nature. But now we can see *how* he argues that, *even if it did*, the Holy Spirit *would still* properly be called "God" anyway, since the identity of *energeia* between the Father, Son and Spirit entails the identity of their nature. (Although as we've seen, Gregory's own view is that the Holy Spirit is properly called "God" because He participates in the appropriate *energeia*.)

Now I've said that the Cappadocian Assertion and the Universal Synergy Claim must be understood as two distinct claims. Of course, Gregory takes it to be the case that the hypostases of the Trinity not only engage in the same *types* of *energeiai*, but all the same *tokens* as well. Now *if we grant that*, then it won't make any difference to Gregory's argument *in the case of the Trinity* whether he takes *ousiai* to be individuated by token *energeia* or *energeiai* types. However, since as we saw above, Gregory claims that all the token *energeiai* of men *are distinct*, if Gregory took *ousiai* to be individuated by *energeia* tokens, it would lead to the conclusion that human beings *don't* (indeed *couldn't*) have the same *ousia* after all – whereas Gregory clearly thinks they *do*.[188]

The obvious solution here, of course, is that when Gregory speak of natures being individuated by *energeiai*, he means that it is the *energeia type*, or as he sometimes puts it, the "form" (εἶδος) of *energeiai* that individuates *ousiai*.[189]

---

186. (St. Gregory of Nyssa 1958), pp. 11-14.

187. (St. Gregory of Nyssa 1893), pp. 328-329, adapted.

188. Of course, it would be hard to overstate the absurdity of the idea that natures would somehow be individuated by *token* actions, or even to catalogue *all* the ways in which it would lead to absurdity.

189. Radde-Gallwitz touches on the same distinction I am making in (Radde-Gallwitz 2009), p. 133, in noting the distinction between "peculiar features that distinguish individual members of a common species individuate" and "features peculiar to a common nature that distinguish that nature or shared substance from others." What I am pointing out is that the latter, at least in *Ad Xenodorum just are energeiai* (types), but that the former are had, not only by hypostases, but by *energeiai* (tokens).

Οὐδὲ γὰρ ἐνδέχεται τὰ διεστῶτα κατὰ τὸν τῆς φύσεως λόγον πρὸς τὸ τῶν ἐνεργειῶν εἶδος ἀλλήλοις συνενεχθῆναι·[190]	For it cannot be that things which differ in their very nature should agree in the *form* (εἶδος) of their *energeiai*;[191]

Given that we have to understand his claim about the individuation of *ousiai* in terms of *energeia types*, instead of tokens, it's best to understand the Cappadocian Assertion as the weaker claim that the hypostases of the Trinity merely engage in (some or another tokens of) all the same *energeia types*, rather than the stronger claim that they engage in all the same *energeia tokens* (i.e., the Universal Synergy Claim). The weaker claim (CA, as I read it), together with his view on the individuation of *ousiai*, is sufficient to get him the *homoousion*. US of course *entails* CA, but US would be a much more controversial assumption than CA. On the other hand, while CA does not entail US, what *would* entail US would be the conjunction of CA, plus Gregory's views about the individuation of *energeia tokens*, plus the assumption that no *idiomata* individuate the token *energeiai* of the hypostases of the Trinity.

4.4.5   Conclusion

To round out our discussion of *Ad Ablabium*, Gregory concludes by considering two possible objections – first to the UAA, then to the UNA. First, he considers an objection to the controversial *semantic* presupposition of the UAA – that "God" signifies an *energeia*. We already discussed this above and saw that he ultimately will fall back on the UNA as a back-up argument. Second, he considers an objection to the controversial *metaphysical* presupposition of the UNA – that universals are indivisible monads. The objection here is that, if true, it would seem to entail that all the hypostases of a given nature would be identical. Gregory reiterates that hypostases are individuated by their *idiomata*.

Interestingly, as I see it, Gregory's actual view (the UAA) is much more plausible than his supposedly more defensible argument constructed for the benefit of interlocutors who deny his semantics of "is God" (the UNA). Although I think that when we place Gregory in the framework of the common philosophical viewpoints of the time, we can see that his argument that there is "strictly speaking only one man" is not nearly so bizarre as it might initially strike us today.

Nevertheless, it is one thing to say that Gregory's response was plausible *for the time*; it is another thing to say that it is useful for us *today*. Most of us would not accept the semantics of counting in which we number the X's by the number of parts of the whole they compose, when the whole and all of the parts have a common predicate. One might have thought the UNA would be amenable to Social Trinitarianism, but I think that would be a mistake on multiple levels. First, at the level of semantics, the peculiar semantic / syntactic disconnect of collective nouns only comes into play, it would seem, when we

---

190. (St. Gregory of Nyssa 1958), p. 11.
191. (St. Gregory of Nyssa 1893), p. 328.

have a whole that is *not* called by the same name as its parts, whereas any account within the Equivocation Family will work by saying just the opposite. Second, at the level of metaphysics, Gregory, like Basil before him, wants to say that God is *not* just *the collection* of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, which is at least roughly what Social Trinitarian accounts do in fact say. And so it would seem that, on closer examination, there are few or no resources in the UNA, or indeed in Gregory's Trinitarian theology generally, for Social Trinitarians to take advantage of. Indeed, there is probably not much to be salvaged from the UNA for *anyone* today, relying as it does on a semantics for counting that nobody today would accept.

On the other hand, a nice feature of the UAA is precisely the fact that, on this response, there *is* a significant metaphysical difference between the hypostases of the Trinity and three rhetoricians. And this opens up the possibility of incorporating the metaphysics and theology of the UAA into some kind of semantics of counting that might be more acceptable as well.

That is, although Gregory still couches his discussion in terms of a semantics that seems to center on counting parts of a whole, it would be easy enough to transpose his Trinitarian account into a semantics for counting that is more amenable to us today. Gregory's fundamental idea here seems to be just that E-ers are to be numbered by counting *token actions* of the same (E-ish) form, performed by some individual(s), as opposed to counting *individuals* performing token actions of the same (E-ish) form. Thus, in the case of, say, Peter, James and John orating, they would be counted as three rhetoricians – *not because* they are three individuals, each such that he performs some token act of the orating type, but rather because there are three numerically distinct *token acts of orating*, each being performed by some individual.

We will go into more detail on how to represent the view formally in Chapter 5, and we will explore possible criticisms of this idea more in Chapter 6. But for now, here are a few considerations.

First, here is an argument in favor of Gregory's view. Let's switch from orating to an *energeia* that has a tangible result – shoemaking. Now suppose we say that three shoemakers all do that which only a shoemaker can do. Suppose all three shoemakers *perfect*, or bring to a completion, their doing of their act. We would expect there to be three shoes as a result. On Gregory's view (the view that "three shoemakers" means *three token acts of shoemaking* being done) this is, necessarily, the case, while on the competing view (that "three shoemakers" means only three individuals doing some or another act of shoemaking), it is not. (This ties into the fact, discussed just below, that speaking of "three gods" would be misleading, even if technically true.)

On the other hand, here is an argument against Gregory's view: Suppose I am typing up one book with my left hand and typing up another book with my right hand. Given Gregory's view, it would seem that, not only am I an author – I am *two* authors. (Which seems false.)

But here is a response Gregory could give to the above that would salvage his response to the LPT without, I think, doing any violence to the spirit of his triadology: Perhaps we count E-ers *both* by the number of token E-ings *and* by

the number of hypostases E-ing. That is, if one hypostasis does one E-ing, we count one E-er, and if one hypostasis does two E-ings, we also count one E-er (so I am only one author in the above example); *only if* two hypostases do two E-ings do we count two E-ers (and any time there are two *created* hypostases doing any E-ings, there will automatically be at least *two* E-ings, because the same spatio-temporal relations that individuate the hypostases will also happen to individuate *all* of their actions). That is, as we normally speak, both the hypostases and their E-ings must be individuated for us to move the count up another number. But it is only in the case of the Trinity that we find more than one hypostasis doing a single E-ing, and in such a case, we ought to count only one E-er, since it is not the case that *both* the hypostases *and* the *energeiai* are distinct.

Finally, if any and all considerations *in favor* of Gregory's counting principle seem ultimately unpersuasive, so long as there are no decisive considerations *against* it, one could simply argue that, since our ordinary linguistic practices are suited to mundane scenarios, that is, to counting creatures and creaturely phenomena, and since (one can argue) in the case of created hypostases and their actions, the actions and the hypostases are always individuated together (since both the hypostases and their token *energeiai* will always be individuated by the same spatio-temporal relations), there's no reason to suspect that our ordinary linguistic practices would determine an answer as to whether we should describe the Trinity as one creator or three creators, one Lord or three Lords, and so on for any other agent noun we use – including, on Gregory's view, "God." That is, there may simply be no fact of the matter as to whether the Trinity count as one God or three. Not in the sense that there are no extra-mental facts as to what things exist and how they are individuated and so forth, but in the sense that our ordinary counting practices simply don't determine any particular answer to certain questions. (As an analogy, there is no answer to the question what some number divided by zero is – not because of some *metaphysical* fact that reality itself is somehow indeterminate in certain scenarios, but because of the *semantic* fact that we have only a partial definition for the division function.)

Now suppose even that consideration is found wanting. Suppose that we even find conclusive reasons to reject Gregory's semantics here and to accept some semantics on which there are strictly speaking three Gods. I think Gregory could admit (though of course he doesn't, and wouldn't want to, but he could admit) that it is strictly speaking true to say there are "three Gods" but could still very easily argue that, *even if so* the truth in this case would be *more misleading* than the alleged falsehood of saying there is "one God." Consider the following analogy.

Gregory would likely not accept the view that distinct men could be co-located. They would have to be spatially separated, and thus their actions would have to be spatially separated as well. But suppose *per impossibile* that three men *were* co-located. Suppose further, though, that there is nothing to individuate their (also co-located) actions, so that they and their actions would indeed be perfectly analogous to the Trinity and the Trinity's actions on Gregory's view. Let's suppose these men are painters, that I am a general

contractor whom they work for, and that you are in need of "three painters." You want to hire a team of three painters, because you have three different areas in your house that need painted, each one of which will take about 8 man-hours of work (all day), and you will have to remove a lot of furniture in order to have them painted, then move the furniture back after the painting is done. You don't want to be inconvenienced three days in a row, and anyway you only have (two day) weekends during which to move furniture in and out of the rooms. You explain the situation to me and say you therefore want to move all of the furniture out the night before, have "three painters" come in the next morning, and get all of the painting done in a single day, so that you can move the furniture back in that night and be done with the project in a day. I tell you – quite truthfully, mind you – that I have exactly "three painters" I can send out, and that we charge $50 per man-hour of work, a man-hour being, of course, determined by the number of men (which is to say, the number of painters) painting and the number of hours each painter (viz. man) works. You calculate that, since the job should require about 24 man-hours of work, you will be charged about $1,200 – just about what you have budgeted. So you agree to the deal, whereupon, instead of sending an ordinary team of three painters, I send out my Trinitarian team of "three" (co-located) painters.

Of course, your plans are now ruined. The whole point of hiring "three painters" was to be able to squeeze 24 man-hours of work into an 8-hour day. And this can only be accomplished when the "three" painters are engaged, at any given time, in three *distinct* token acts of painting (individuated by the fact that they are going on in different, spatially separated areas of the house simultaneously). My Trinitarian painting crew, however, being co-located, can only be engaged in *a single* token act of painting at any given time. Thus, instead of being done with the project in a single 8-hour day, they have to return over the course of three days after all – precisely the scenario you had specifically explained you wanted to avoid.

But what's worse, after coming to terms with being inconvenienced in this way, you receive your bill. I have charged you, not $1,200, but $3,600 – three times what you had budgeted for! Irate, you call to complain about the bill, whereupon I calmly explain to you that you agreed to pay $50 per man-hour of work. I then go through the math with you, explaining that there were, after all, three men, and thus three painters, *each one of which* really did engage in a total of 24 hours of work. And 3 men (3 painters), times 24 hours, times $50 = $3,600. I say that, of course, I realize the situation is highly unusual, but I really did do my best to represent to you only that which is true in the most strict and literal sense possible, and that, on my view of things, there were, strictly speaking, three painters, and they did all work for 24 hours, and you are, after all, a man of your word, aren't you?

Now suppose we grant, for the sake of argument, that in the above scenario it really is, strictly and literally, true that there were three painters. Even if *true*, is it not nevertheless *misleading* (if not downright *deceptive*) for me to describe them to you as such? One normally assumes that distinct E-ers can engage in distinct acts of E-ing. But Trinitarian-ly distinct E-ers *cannot*. And

for certain purposes, that fact matters very much. So, unless one can explain the metaphysics of synergy to one's audience, it seems entirely misleading to refer to three hypostases that synergize on an act of E-ing as "three E-ers."

Now if one has a Trinitarian painting crew, and one is asked "how many painters" one can send, and if one does not have the time to explain the metaphysics of synergy first, or if one is speaking to someone who is not well-educated enough, or simply not smart enough, to understand the metaphysics of synergy at all (the "simple-minded"), then one's options are simply to say "one painter" or "three painters." Gregory clearly thinks that, strictly speaking, it really *is* the case that there is only one painter here. But even if he is wrong about that, it clearly is *more misleading* to say that there are three painters and *less misleading* to say there is only one painter.

And surely Gregory would claim that it would be just as misleading – if not far more so! – to say that there were three Gods. This would imply, for example, at least the conceivability of their disagreeing or using their powers (plural) in conflicting ways, something that is inconceivable on Gregory's view.[192]

So, although Gregory couches his discussion in terms of a semantics that seems to center on counting parts of a whole, it's easy enough to see what Gregory's metaphysical and theological commitments entail when we substitute a semantics of counting that is more amenable to us, but that retains the fundamental idea that E-ers are to be numbered according to token E-ings being engaged in by some hypostasis, rather than according to hypostases engaged in some token E-ing (or that E-ers are to be numbered according to the number of *distinct pairs* of hypostasis-plus-token-*energeia*). And this is precisely what we will do in the next chapter.

With the gist of Gregory's Trinitarian theory in place, we can now construct a Nyssen Trinitarian account, and a corresponding solution to the LPT, in a more formal and organized way, allowing us to answer the questions . . . *Is Gregory of Nyssa's account of the Trinity consistent or inconsistent? Does it provide us with a solution to the LPT, or a non-solution to the LPT?*

---

192. Swinburne's account of the Trinity, therefore, is very close here (See (SWINBURNE 1994), pp. 170-191), but he fails to appreciate that the hypostases are not only *cooperating* – performing the same *types* of actions for the same purposes and so on – but *synergizing* – literally performing the same *token* actions. Even though on Swinburne's view it is not *possible* for the hypostases to fail to co-operate, there is still on Swinburne's account a certain kind of *sense* to be made out of the *idea* of them not co-operating that isn't there on Gregory's view.

Part IV

Logic

Chapter 5

Formalizing Gregory's Account

> "... and to those who say that the church fathers did not define all
> things clearly, but that they left the greater part mysterious, unclear,
> and untaught ... ANATHEMA."
>
> – *The Synodicon On the Holy Spirit*

We ended the previous chapter with the question, "Is Gregory of Nyssa's account
of the Trinity consistent or inconsistent? Does it provide us with a solution
to the LPT, or a non-solution to the LPT?" Now, having gotten the idea of
the content of the relevant elements of Gregory's account of the Trinity in the
previous chapter, we are now in a position to organize and state those elements
more precisely in order to answer that question.

To reiterate, and to orient our discussion, what we have is a set of proposi-
tions (P) expressed by a set of natural language sentences (S), where the logical
forms of these propositions are under dispute, different parties attributing dif-
ferent logical forms to the propositions. But the logical form of a proposition
supervenes on its content.[1] Thus, the way we are approaching the question of
what logical form Gregory (implicitly) attributes to P is as follows: First, we
specify the relevant content of Gregory's view as clearly as possible (the project
of the preceding chapter, though here we will arrange things more systemat-
ically). Second, we make explicit the semantic principles by which Gregory
maps this content onto the natural language sentences with which he is con-
cerned (and which we can use to map that content onto the translations from

---

1. Of course, as Keller notes, there are different kinds of content one might want to preserve
when re-stating a given claim: propositional content, cognitive content, factual content, sci-
entific content, inferential roles, truth conditions, assertability conditions, and so forth. (See
(Keller 2010), p. 7, footnote 13 and passim. for discussion.) I take it that the current dis-
cussion centers around a set of related metaphysical issues such as number, counting, identity,
etc. and that the relevant kind of content here is the *truth conditions* of the propositions
involved.

his Greek sentences to our English sentences, S). Third, we give explicit semantic principles that allow us to map this content onto the expressions of a formal language in order to show the logical forms of these propositions precisely and unambiguously.

This means that, assuming that the logical form Gregory implicitly attributes to P is consistent, an anti-Trinitarian opponent might respond to Gregory's defense of the doctrine of the Trinity either by criticizing (1) the actual content of his view (or its presuppositions or entailments or other propositions it in some way commits one to), or (2) the semantic mapping of that content onto a language. In my view, though, an objection would not count as a "logical problem" unless the content itself is not just false but formally contradictory. We will return later (Chapter 6) to a more precise discussion of what would be required to refute Gregory's position. But on the other hand, one might object, not (necessarily) to Gregory's position itself, but to my reconstruction of his position. That is, one might say, at the end of it all, that they have no idea whether Gregory's view is consistent or not, because I've misrepresented it (although I don't think I have, or will). Thus, I'll introduce the name "GNT_F" here to denote my formal reconstruction of (certain salient parts of) Gregory of Nyssa's Trinitarian theory. We can use "GNT" to denote the *actual* views of Gregory's that correspond to GNT_F.[2] If I have done my history correctly, then GNT_F = GNT. If not, not.

With that said, let me explain the above outline of the current chapter's project in slightly more detail before carrying it out.

Metaphysics, Theology, and Semantics

In what follows concerning the content of Gregory's view, I want to make a distinction between two senses of the terms "ontology" and "metaphysics" – or two different things people might call "ontology" or might call "metaphysics." The distinction is not particularly critical to the logic of my argument, but will serve as a useful way to organize the elements of Gregory's account, as well as the possible objections to his account we will explore in Chapter 6.

First, there is what I would call "pure" or "abstract" ontology or metaphysics, or what I would call ontology or metaphysics "in the strict sense" or "in the narrow sense," and which I would prefer to reserve the unqualified term "metaphysics" for. This concerns, among other things, such questions as (1) what *types* of objects one postulates *can* (or must) exist,[3] (2) what (types of) relations can (or must) hold between token objects of these types, (3) which types of objects are such that their tokens can (or must) enter into which of these (types of) relations with tokens of which other types of objects, and (4) the principles

---

2. Thus, GNT is not the entirety of the body of Gregory's beliefs that relate to the Trinity, but a certain salient subset. One might consider, for example, that Gregory's beliefs about *epinoiai* or *dynameis* to fall within what should be called "Gregory of Nyssa's Trinitarian theory." But they are not part of GNT, because they are not part of GNT_F. See footnote 7 below for more.

3. I use the term "object" here as a most general count noun.

(if any) by which token objects of the postulated types would be individuated (if any actually exist).[4]

Second, there is what might be called a "substantive ontology," or what I would prefer to call a "substantive theory." In this context, I will call it Gregory's "theology" (his substantive theory about God) or by its more traditional name, "triadology" (a substantive theory about "the Triad" or Trinity). Substantive theories concern, among other things, such questions as (1) what *token* objects one postulates *actually do* exist, (2) what relations one postulates actually hold between the token objects one postulates, and (3) whether, and in virtue of what, the postulated token objects actually are individuated from one another.[5]

Finally, what I am calling "semantics" here concerns the systematic mapping of tokens and types of objects and relations to the expressions of a language. In the context of our discussion, we are dealing with two different languages – a natural language and a formal language – since we want to do the following two things.[6] First, we want to explicate both the metaphysics and the substantive theory as clearly and precisely as we can. Together with this, we want to map that content onto the natural language sentences in S to show how the more clearly and precisely expressed content is indeed being expressed by the natural language sentences in question. We can call this mapping of content onto natural language sentences the "N-semantics." Second, we are giving a more precise representation of the logical form of that content in the language of predicate logic. Here we need semantic principles that map the relevant content onto the expressions of a *formal* language in order to be able to evaluate it with the logical tools available to us in the context of that formal language. We can call this mapping of content onto formal language sentences the "F-semantics."

So, to specify GNT (the relevant content of Gregory's Trinitarian theory) precisely, we will first specify (the relevant aspects of) his "pure" ontology or metaphysics, and second (the relevant aspects of) his substantive theory or theology.[7] Third, to evaluate his theory as an answer to the LPT (that is, to deter-

---

4. I say "the principles *(if any)*," because of course one might (indeed at some point, on pain of infinite regress, must) hold that certain objects need nothing to individuate them. They simply "come from the factory" that way – individually wrapped, as it were, for your ontological convenience.

5. Two points. First, of course, for tokens of a type of object that need no individuation, there will be nothing "in virtue of which" they are distinct from one another. Or, as one might say, they are distinct in virtue of nothing. Second, for token objects to which some criterion of individuation does apply, whether they are distinct from other token objects will be *a logical consequence*, not merely of assumptions about what all token objects exist and what relations they bear to one another, but also of the principles of individuation involved. Thus, one's metaphysics can constrain parts of one's substantive theory (in this case, theology, though the same applies to physics or any other substantive theory). On the other hand one's substantive theory may force one to accept or reject certain metaphysical principles to accommodate the theory. However, one man's *modus ponens* is another man's *modus tollens*, and there is no reason in principle why one must start with metaphysics or start with substantive theory.

6. Technically two *types* of language – natural and formal – but three different *token* languages – Greek, English (both natural languages) and Predicate Logic (formal). For simplicity's sake, we will ignore the distinction between Greek and English, and *pretend* that translation between Greek and English is unproblematic.

7. I say "relevant" and "relevant aspects of," because, of course, there is more to Gregory's

mine whether it yields a solution or a non-solution to the LPT) we will specify his semantics. Of course, expressing the content of Gregory's view in a formal language will help us in making it precise. So, we will be explicating the content all along in predicate logic, and thus the F-semantics will be given alongside his metaphysics and theology throughout. We will give the N-semantics separately, after stating the content (metaphysics and theology) precisely. All of these taken together – Gregory's metaphysics, theology and semantics – we will see yield a solution to the LPT. Since this is so, and since, if anybody's Trinitarian theory counts as "a(n orthodox) version of" the doctrine of the Trinity, Gregory's does, it follows that there is a(n orthodox) solution to the LPT. Since this is so, I will argue there is no strictly logical problem with the doctrine of the Trinity.[8] Any legitimate objection to the doctrine of the Trinity will have to take the form of an objection to (1) its metaphysical content (in the strict or abstract sense of "metaphysics"), (2) its theological content (the "substantive" ontology), or (3) its semantics. Again, we will discuss those options in more detail in Chapter 6. First, we will proceed to carry out the project just proposed.

5.1   Gregory's Metaphysics

A Note on Strict Identity

In my view, Gregory gives no indication that he would *take issue* with what we would call "classical" or "strict" identity. In addition, he freely makes use of Greek expressions like τὸ αὐτὸ and ταὐτὸν that at least *apparently* express strict identity in Greek, if anything does. And he makes no attempt to explain or alter their meanings. So I think it is safe to assume that he accepts classical identity and that his views can be formulated in standard predicate logic with identity (and again, we have adopted a "prejudice" in favor of standard predicate logic with identity, such that if we can use it, we will).

I should note, however, that Richard Cross suggests that essentially nobody from Aristotle up through the medieval period has a concept of identity as we understand it today, or at least that it isn't clear that they do. If he is right about that, then of course that could pose a problem for formalizing Gregory's views in terms of strict identity.

I'm a bit skeptical of the thesis that Gregory lacked the concept of strict identity. To be convinced of it, I would want to see relative identity interpretations of phrases of Gregory's like τὸ αὐτὸ ὄνομα ("the same name")[9] and κατὰ τὸ αὐτὸ ὄντων ("being in the same place")[10] and various uses of "himself," "itself,"

---

overall metaphysics and triadology. For one, perhaps glaring, example, we could add "*dynamis*" as an additional object type and put in at least one *dynamis* per *energeia* in his substantive theory (see footnote 11 below). But since we can elucidate Gregory's solution to the LPT without discussing *dynameis*, we will avoid the unnecessary complication (see footnote 11 below).

8. At least not of the sort or for the reasons the anti-Trinitarian typically claims. See Chapter 1.2, p. 17 above.

9. See 4.3.2, p. 155.

10. See 4.3.2, p. 156.

and so forth, and be assured that no violence is done to the validity of his arguments when these phrases are understood according to some relative identity interpretation, rather than strict identity. That's not to say I have any proof that such a project *couldn't* be done. But I would want to *see* it done (at least partially, sketched out well enough so one could see how to extend the general strategy throughout Gregory's corpus). And anyway, it seems more natural to me to take Gregory as employing the concept of strict identity in such places.

But however that discussion would go, I don't think we need to settle it here and now. And that is because we have already seen, in van Inwagen's response to the LPT, how a solution to the LPT can be provided within a framework that rejects strict identity. In other words, granting the existence of classical identity, and accepting PLI as the language within which a response to the LPT must be formulated, is really *a concession to the anti-Trinitarian*. If Gregory has no concept of strict identity, or simply rejects the concept, then it is obvious that he would have a solution to the LPT, and roughly what it would be like. If that is so, then my further discussion here could all be read as within the scope of a hypothetical: "*even if* Gregory *did* admit, or was forced to admit, that there was such a thing as strict identity, he would *still* have a solution to the LPT as follows..." However, again, I do think Gregory has a concept of strict identity (the hypostases are *not* strictly identical, their token *energeiai are*), but settling that issue must be done at another time and another place. And with that said, we can turn to the project of putting Gregory's account of the Trinity into PLI.

5.1.1 Possible Object Types

The results of the previous chapter indicate that the following possible object types are relevant to Gregory's response(s) to the LPT: hypostases, *idiomata*, *ousiai*, *energeia* types, and *energeia* tokens.[11] We will abbreviate predications of token objects as falling into these object types with the following one-place predicates in PLI.[12]

"is a hypostasis"	:	"H"
"is an *idioma*"	:	"I"
"is an *ousia*"	:	"O"
"is an *energeia* type"	:	"E*"
"is an *energeiai* token"	:	"E"

---

11. Besides the concept of an *energeia*, the concept of a *dynamis* – the causal power or ability to engage in a certain *energeia* – is clearly central to Gregory's thought. A reader might have been surprised to see that I make no mention of *dynamis* throughout my presentation of Gregory's thought. This is by no means because the concept is unimportant to Gregory or patristic theology generally – far from it! Rather, it is that there would seem to be a straightforward one-to-one correspondence between *dynameis* and *energeiai*. That is, there is exactly one *dynamis* for every *energeia*, namely, the *dynamis* (ability) to engage in that *energeia*. Thus, in a discussion centered around questions of individuation, including explicit discussions of these objects would introduce additional length and complexity with no apparent payoff.

12. See 5.1.2, pp. 202 ff. on the choice to represent universals with lower-case letters as well.

5.1.2 Possible Relations Between Tokens of the Object Types

"Metaphysical Predication" or "Having"

The most important relation, or rather group of relations, that possibly holds between the tokens of these object types is any kind of metaphysical correlate to predication, which for present purposes I will simply lump together as one and call "metaphysical predication," or more simply yet, "having."

In many cases, the metaphysical correlate of predication in Gregory's thought is "participation," the familiar relation from Platonic (and Neo-Platonic) metaphysics. But we saw in the previous chapter (4.3.3, p. 164) that, while Gregory frequently makes use of this relation, either under its Platonic name "μέθεξις" or the biblical term "κοινωνία," it doesn't seem that Gregory *always* takes this to be the metaphysical correlate to the predication relation, since he never speaks of hypostases "sharing" or "participating in" their *idiomata* (however precisely he understands the relation between hypostases and *idiomata*). Therefore, I will simply speak of "metaphysical predication" or "having," and let that subsume both participation / communion and whatever the relation between hypostases and their idioma(ta) is (if it is a different relation).

Now we face a choice as to how to represent "metaphysical predication" or "having." This is because, typically in predicate logic, lower-case letters are correlated with individuals (they are "logical names" for individuals) and upper-case letters are correlated with sets of individuals (the set of all individuals that satisfy that predicate). And of course, there is an obvious sort of correlation between universals and the sets of individuals that exhibit those universals.

Thus, to say the Father "participates in" the divine nature, we might be tempted to give the Father the name "f" and predicate the divine nature of the Father with the upper-case letter "D," thus: "Df," where "D" is read "is divine" and the semantic value of "D" is the set of all things that are divine. (This is Tuggy's way of formulating his rough analogue of P in (TUGGY 2003), p. 181.) Given a certain way of thinking about second-order logic (namely, taking "D" as referring to a universal – called "divinity" – rather than to a set of divine things, and generally taking upper-case letters to refer to universals rather than sets),[13] we could even say of the divine nature that it is an *ousia* as follows: "OD." (Using "O" with a line under it as a second-order predicate meaning "is an *ousia*.") In this way, we would very closely link participation with predication. We could, if we wanted, even *read* "Df" as "the Father *participates in* divinity" and "OD" as "divinity *participates in* being an *ousia*."[14] We could then represent the *homoousion* as "ıX(Xf & OX) = ıX(Xs & OX) = ıX(Xh & OX)," i.e., "the X such that X is the *ousia* of the Father, is identical to the X such that X is the *ousia* of the Son, is identical to the X such that X is the *ousia* of the Holy

---

13. If, indeed, sets are not simply a kind of universal – a debate into which I opt not to enter here.

14. And if the relation between hypostases and *idiomata* is not participation, substitute "has."

Spirit."[15] And we could similarly give a second-order treatment of *idiomata*.

On the other hand, we could instead stay within the confines of first-order logic by representing universals (and *idiomata*, if *idiomata* are not shareable) as lower-case letters, and participation claims (or any claims involving x bearing a "metaphysical predication" relation to y, i.e. x "having" y) with a two-place predicate like "P." For instance, we could name the Father "f" and the divine *ousia* "o" and represent the claim that the Father "participates in" the divine *ousia* (or, more generally, that the Father bears some metaphysical predication relation to the divine *ousia*) as "Pfo."

We will take the latter course, and represent participation and other kinds of "having" with a two-place predicate. So long as there is no *need* for second-order logic (and, strictly speaking, there is never a *need* for second-order logic if one allows sets or set-like objects into one's ontology), we may as well stay within the confines of a more well-behaved system.

Furthermore, in Gregory's theology, there is some kind of significant relation that undergirds certain predications, such that this relation holds, not just between individuals (e.g., hypostases) and universals (e.g., the divine *ousia*), but between individuals and *other individuals* – specifically between hypostases and *token energeiai*. And this cannot be represented in standard logic using merely two names for individuals (lower-case letters) back-to-back (like "fe," or "ef," which would be ungrammatical in the language of predicate logic). We could, of course, simply introduce a separate relation of "doing" to hold between hypostases and *token energeiai*. But it seems most convenient to me to stay within the confines of first-order logic and represent all of the objects in Gregory's theology, whether universals or particulars, with lower-case letters, and to simply lump together all metaphysical predication relations with a two-place predicate, "P." Thus, we will abbreviate claims of the form *x bears some metaphysical predication relation to y* with expressions of the form *Pxy*. We can also shorten the cumbersome English phrase "x bears some metaphysical predication relation to y" to "x has y." Thus, whether x "participates in" y, or y is an *idioma* of x, or y is a token *energeia* performed by x or x is a token of type y (or x bears any other sort of metaphysical predication relation to y, if there are any other such relations), x "has" y and "Pxy" is true.

The "Natural To" Relation

Next, we saw that Gregory speaks of the "natural" *energeiai* of an *ousia* (4.4.4, p. 185). These are *energeia types* that are in some sense attached to the *ousia* or nature, and that individuate it. This relation seems to be definable in terms of metaphysical predication, but it will be useful to have a separate predicate to use as shorthand.

---

15. As always, immense complications are introduced by the Incarnation and the supposition that a single hypostasis – the Son – could instantiate two distinct *ousiai*. In this case, one could not refer to "the *ousia*" of the Son, since there is no unique *ousia* for the Son. We could say, though, "the *ousia* that is had by the Son 'prior to creation'." See 5.2, p. 211.

First, though, I note that I will be marking each of Gregory's basic, substantive assumptions with a "+" and marking propositions he affirms, but which are either stipulative definitions, or assignments of names to arbitrarily selected individuals, or the logical consequences of his basic, substantive assumptions, with a "0," and in the case of logical consequences, a footnote stating which other assumptions or previously noted consequences it follows from.

This notation is not meant to indicate that Gregory actually *saw* all of these logical entailments, or believed the entailed propositions only based on his belief in the basic assumptions that entail them. In some cases it is clear that he did, but in other cases he may or may not have. But the issue of how much of Gregory's account counts as assumption and how much simply follows from his assumptions seems important not so much for historical reasons, but for philosophical and theological reasons.

For one thing, when one sees just how much of Gregory's account is just the logical consequence of just how little substantive assumption, one can see that it's much more difficult to fault Gregory's account of the Trinity than it might seem. (More on this in Chapter 6.). It may also be of interest to theologians once one sees how it relates to the *filioque* controversy, as the weaker view of the individuation of hypostases requires Gregory to make more assumptions in the realm of substantive theology, while the stronger view requires fewer assumptions.

Now we will abbreviate claims of the form *some* energeia *(type) x is natural to some* ousia *y* with expressions of the form *Nxy*, and define N as follows:

0^{16} N_{Def}: $(\forall x)(\forall y)\{Nxy \leftrightarrow \Box(\forall z)[Pzy \rightarrow (\exists w)(Ew \ \& \ Pwx \ \& \ Pzw)]\}$

i.e., for any x (an *energeia* type) and any y (an *ousia*), x (the *energeia* type) is "natural to" y (the *ousia*) iff, necessarily, for any z (a hypostasis) that has y (the *ousia*), z has some *energeia* token w of (*energeia* type) x.

(The parentheticals in this explanation are for clarity's sake alone. For the sake of simplicity in constructing proofs, I am not building these restrictions into the very definition of the "N" relation, except for w's being an *energeia* token. And this one restriction is for no other reason than to make the construction of certain proofs more convenient. It could be dispensed with, only at the cost of simplicity and convenience.)

To state it in a more understandable way, to say that an *energeia* type x is "natural to" an *ousia* y, is to say that any hypostasis z of that *ousia* y must always exhibit some token w of that *energeia* type y. This does not entail that there is any *particular* token *energeia* w such that hypostasis x must have *that* token *energeia* (w). Nor does it entail that there are any necessarily existent hypostases or necessarily existent token *energeiai*. It does not, as we've stated it here, even entail that the *ousia* had by the hypostasis is essential to that hypostasis (regardless of whether Gregory would endorse that claim – see footnote 21 below.) All it says is that if x is a natural *energeia* of y, then there couldn't be a hypostasis z of y that wasn't doing some token (w) of x.

---

16. Stipulative definition.

To use a patristic example, the *energeiai* (types) of "heating" and "illuminating" are natural to fire. This means that any particular fiery thing, say this particular flame, must necessarily be engaged in some particular (token) act(s) of emitting light and heat. To put it the other way around, if some particular thing (hypostasis) *isn't* emitting any light or isn't emitting any heat, it doesn't really have the nature of fire.[17]

One important corollary (really, just a restatement) of this definition, which Gregory makes use of in his dispute with Eunomius is the following:

0^{18} $N_{\text{Corol-Eun}}$: $(\forall x)\ (\forall y)\{\neg Nxy \leftrightarrow \Diamond(\exists z)[Pzy\ \&\ \neg(\exists w)(Ew\ \&\ Pwx\ \&\ Pzw)]\}$

i.e., a given *energeia* type is *not* natural to an *ousia*, if and only if it is possible for there to be some hypostasis of that *ousia* that does not have any tokens of the *energeia* type. Together with his criterion for the individuation of *ousiai*, this forms the basis of Gregory's challenge to Eunomius: If the Father and Son are of different natures, then, given that natures are individuated by natural *energeiai*, it would be possible that the Son fails to do something that the Father does by nature, or vice-versa. The challenge he presents, then, is: point out something that the Father does that the Son does not do, or vice-versa. (In other words, prove the Cappadocian Assertion wrong.) (See 5.2.3, p. 233 ff.)

With these relations in place, we will now say what they can (and sometimes must) hold between, in Gregory's metaphysics.

5.1.3   Relations Possible *for* the Objects

Relations Possible for Hypostases

First, hypostases can have *idiomata*.[19] Thus, it is possible for a proposition of the form *Pxy* to be true where x is a hypostasis and y is an *idioma*.

Furthermore, a hypostasis *must* have some (at least one) *idioma*.[20] Thus:

+ NHI: $\Box(\forall x)[Hx \rightarrow (\exists y)(Iy\ \&\ Pxy)]^{21}$

---

17. In the case of a natural *dynamis*, of course it might be that a hypostasis is not always *engaged in* the *exercise* of that *dynamis*, but it will necessarily always *have* the *dynamis*. But again, we will leave *dynameis* out of our discussion to avoid needless complication.

18. From N_{Def}. Proof is trivial.

19. See Chapter 4.3.1, p. 152.

20. See again Chapter 4.3.1, p. 152.

21. Note that I am choosing to formulate this, and all of Gregory's basic assumptions about what relations *must* obtain between certain types of objects simply with a box operator taking primary scope. Of course, Gregory seems to take these to be truths of metaphysics, and so it would be odd for him to say any of them were *contingent*. Thus, the box operator out front should be uncontroversial.

But one might wonder whether Gregory wouldn't endorse a stronger claim, like: $\Box(\forall x)[Hx \rightarrow (\exists y)(Iy\ \&\ \Box Pxy)]$. This would say, not only that in order for something x to be a hypostasis, it must have some *idioma* (as our original formulation says. But rather, that in order for something x to be a hypostasis, there must be *some particular idioma* y, such that *that particular idioma* y is *essential* to x. And similar questions can be asked about the other relation requirements. Does Gregory merely think that a hypostasis must have *some*

Second, hypostases can have *ousiai*.[22] Thus, it is possible for a proposition of the form *Pxy* to be true where x is a hypostasis and y is an *ousia*.

Furthermore, a hypostasis *must* have an *ousia*.[23] Thus:

+ NHO: $\Box(\forall x)[Hx \rightarrow (\exists y)(Oy \ \& \ Pxy)]$

Third, hypostases can have token *energeiai*.[24] Thus, it is possible for a proposition of the form *Pxy* to be true where x is a hypostasis and y is a token *energeia*.

Although we will not make use of the principle, it also follows from N_{Def} that a hypostasis *must* have some token of every *energeia* type that is natural to any *ousia* which the hypostasis has, thus:

0^{25} NHE: $\Box(\forall x)(\forall y)(\forall z)[(Pxy \ \& \ Nzy) \rightarrow (\exists w)(Pwz \ \& \ Pxw)]$

I.e., if x (a hypostasis) has y (an *ousia*), and z (an *energeia* type) is natural to y (the *ousia*), then there exists a w (a token *energeia*) of type z had by hypostasis x.

Relations Possible for *Idiomata*

First, as we said just above, *idiomata* can be had by hypostases. Thus, it is possible for a proposition of the form *Pxy* to be true where x is a hypostasis and y is an *idioma*.

---

ousia, or does he think that the *particular ousia* that a hypostasis has is essential to it? Must an *ousia* only have *some* natural *energeia(i)*, or must it have the *same* natural *energeia(i)* that it has in this world in every world in which it exists? Further, one might wonder whether Gregory would assume the principle that if x is a hypostasis then x is *essentially* a hypostasis, and likewise for all of our object types.

Except in the case of N_{Def} (where it turns out to make quite a bit of difference to Gregory's argument for the *homoousion* how we formulate things) I am choosing to simply avoid these questions. This is not because I think they are unimportant (particularly with reference to the Incarnation and to the *filioque* controversy). Rather, these are deep issues that would require much further investigation and discussion. And any of these stronger theses would entail any of the weaker formulations I rely on in what follows. Thus, if Gregory asserts any stronger claims, he will at least be *committed to* the claims we will be dealing with, and thus to all of the logical consequences I will point out. Thus, GNT_F will at least not be unorthodox.

Of course, eliding over this further detail in Gregory's view could again be an occasion for the anti-Trinitarian to try to find some flaw buried more deeply in Gregory's metaphysics. Perhaps it could be argued that Gregory really does endorse some stronger set of claims, and that those stronger claims entail some sort of contradiction. But as noted in 1.2, p. 17 ff., no such problems have so far been noted by anti-Trinitarians, and it isn't clear that, if such a problem should exist, it would be worthy of the same name as the LPT anyway, since it takes us away from the strictly formal issue of the logical form of P, into what I call the MPT ("Metaphysical Problem of the Trinity"), 1.1, p. 11 ff. Finally, I will argue in 6.3 that very little of the metaphysics here turns out actually to be *essential* to Gregory's *solution to the LPT*. See pp. 287 ff.

22. See again, Chapter 4.3.1, p. 152.
23. See again, Chapter 4.3.1, p. 152.
24. See Chapter 4.4.2, p. 180.
25. From N_{Def}. Since we do not make use of the principle, we will give no proof for it.

Second, *idiomata* can be had by *energeia* tokens.[26] Thus, it is possible for a proposition of the form *Pxy* to be true where x is an *energeia* token and y is an *idioma*.

Relations Possible for *Ousiai*

First, as we said above, *ousiai* can be had by hypostases. Thus, it is possible for a proposition of the form *Pxy* to be true where x is a hypostasis and y is an *ousia*.

Second, *ousiai* can have *energeia* types be "natural to" them.[27] Thus, it is possible for a proposition of the form *Nxy* to be true where x is an *energeia* type and y is an *ousia*.

Furthermore, Gregory rejects the idea that there could be an *ousia* with no natural *energeiai*.[28] That is, every *ousia must* have some natural *energeia* type or types. Thus:

+ NOE*: $\Box(\forall x)[Ox \rightarrow (\exists y)(E^*y \ \& \ Nyx)]$

Relations Possible for *Energeia* Types

First, as we said above, *energeia* types can be natural to *ousiai*. Thus, it is possible for a proposition of the form *Nxy* to be true where x is an *energeia* type and y is an *ousia*.

Second, *energeia* types can be had by *energeia* tokens.[29] Thus, it is possible for a proposition of the form *Pxy* to be true where x is an *energeia* token and y is an *energeia* type.

Relations Possible for *Energeia* Tokens

First, as we said above, *energeia* tokens can have *energeia* types. Thus, it is possible for a proposition of the form *Pxy* to be true where x is an *energeia* token and y is an *energeia* type.

Second, as we said above, *energeia* tokens can have *idiomata*. Thus, it is possible for a proposition of the form *Pxy* to be true where x is an *energeia* token and y is an *idioma*.

Third, as we said above, *energeia* tokens can be had by hypostases. Thus, it is possible for a proposition of the form *Pxy* to be true where x is a hypostasis and y is an *energeia* token.

5.1.4   Identity Conditions for the Types of Objects

We have seen in the previous chapter the conditions for identity or individuation of the various types of objects, and we list them here more precisely in predicate

---

26. See again, Chapter 4.4.2, p. 180.
27. See Chapter 4.4.4, p, 185.
28. See again, Chapter 4.4.4, p, 185.
29. See again Chapter 4.4.2, p. 180.

logic.

Identity Conditions for Hypostases

Hypostases, as I understand Gregory,[30] are individuated by their *idiomata*. And we have seen in the previous chapter (Chapter 4.3.4, p. 165 ff.) that there are two ways to interpret Gregory with respect to what exactly *idiomata* are and how they individuate hypostases. First is the strong view, namely that *idiomata* are simple, non-shareable properties. Second is the weak view, namely that hypostases are individuated by unique combinations of in-principle shareable qualities. On the latter view, we might use "*idioma*" to refer to the unique bundle, or to one of the in-principle shareable qualities that constitute it. For convenience, I will eschew using *idioma* to talk about an unshareable bundle of qualities, and use the term either for a simple, unshareable quality (as in the strong theory), or for a shareable constituent of an unshareable bundle (as in the weak theory).

Thus, we can formulate the strong version of the identity conditions for hypostases as:

+ IDH$_{\text{Strong}}$: $\Box(\forall x)(\forall y)\{[Hx \ \& \ Hy] \rightarrow [x=y \leftrightarrow (\exists z)(Iz \ \& \ [Pxz \ \& \ Pyz])]\}$

i.e., necessarily, for any hypostases, x and y, x and y are identical if and only if x and y (both) bear a metaphysical predication relation to *any* (single) *idioma*.

On the other hand, we might formulate the weak version of the identity conditions for hypostases as:

+ IDH$_{\text{Weak}}$: $\Box(\forall x)(\forall y)\{[Hx \ \& \ Hy] \rightarrow [x=y \leftrightarrow (\forall z)(Iz \rightarrow [Pxz \leftrightarrow Pyz])]\}$

i.e., necessarily, for any hypostases, x and y, x and y are identical if and only if x and y bear metaphysical predication relations to *all and only the same idiomata*.[31]

Identity Conditions for *Idiomata*

Whether *idiomata* are simple, unshareable properties, or in-principle shareable qualities that constitute unique bundles, they are presumably the sorts of things that are simply distinct by hypothesis, not individuated by further objects. So we give no identity conditions for them.

---

30. See 4.3.5, p. 169 ff.

31. Besides their *idiomata*, are hypostases also individuated by *ousiai*? Saying that they are would raise a number of complications, or at least a high degree of complexity, when dealing with the Incarnation. But since, prior to creation (see below, 5.2, p. 211, for an explanation of the phrase "prior to creation"), there are only three hypostases of one *ousia*, it will be irrelevant whether hypostases can, in principle, be individuated merely by having distinct *ousiai*. We therefore do not include any reference to *ousiai* in our principle of individuation for hypostases, for simplicity's sake.

Identity Conditions for *Ousiai*

As we saw, *ousiai* are individuated by the *energeia* types natural to them.[32] Thus:

+ IDO: □(∀x)(∀x)[(Ox & Oy) → (x=y ↔ (∀z)[E*z → (Nzx ↔ Nzy)])]

i.e., necessarily, for any *ousiai*, x and y, x and y are identical if and only if x and y have all and only the same natural *energeiai* types.

Identity Conditions for *Energeia* Types

Energeia types would seem to be intrinsically distinct for Gregory as well, thus we give no identity conditions for them.[33]

Identity Conditions for *Energeia* Tokens

Energeia tokens are individuated by their own *idiomata* (and probably by *energeia* types as well).[34] But what is actually most important to note here for our purposes is not so much what individuates *energeia* tokens as what does *not* individuate them – namely, the hypostases that perform them.

---

32. See 4.4.4, p. 185 ff. and 4.4.4, p. 186 ff.

33. In fact, I know of no real evidence for this, except for the very fact that I know of no evidence for it. That is, the fact that, as far as I know, Gregory does not discuss the matter. This leads me to believe that he simply assumes it is obvious that *energeia* types are inherently distinct and does not discuss their identity conditions because there is nothing there to discuss.

But nothing much seems to ride on the question for the purpose of resolving our question about the LPT. The main issue it would raise would be the following: Suppose *energeia* types are somehow individuated by (and only by) their relations to other objects of whatever type. Now suppose that, prior to creation (see below, 5.2, p. 211, for an explanation of the phrase "prior to creation"), the only other objects that exist are the *ousia*, the three hypostases, *energeia* tokens, and the *idiomata*, all of which *idiomata* are intra-trinitarian relations. Suppose also that neither the intra-trinitarian relations nor the *ousia* nor the hypostases nor the token *energeiai* individuate any *energeia* types. In that case, there could be only a single divine *energeia* type. Whether that would be theologically problematic or not may be debatable, but I think it's more plausible to suppose (and that Gregory likely supposed) that *energeia* types are intrinsically distinct. But even if not, it's hard to see how it would make much of a difference to the LPT. Thus, to simplify the presentation, in what follows we will simply assume that *energeia* types are supposed to be intrinsically distinct.

34. I have said that Gregory takes *energeia* tokens to be individuated by *idiomata* and that he *probably* takes them to be individuated by *energeia* types as well. But in order to give a precise formulation, we will have to make a decision here as to whether to include *energeia* types as things that individuate *energeia* tokens. I am choosing to formulate Gregory's view as having *energeia* tokens individuated *both* by their *idiomata and* by the *energeia* types they have. This is not because Gregory explicitly says so. (We saw above that he makes it explicit that an *energeia* token is individuated by its own *idioma* – the "ἰδιότροπον τῆς ἐνεργείας," i.e., "the peculiar property of the *energeia*" – but not that it would be individuated by its *energeia* types or types). Rather, I take this approach because not doing so would have logical consequences I believe Gregory would most likely not want to embrace. See the section on the individuation of *energeia* tokens below (5.2.3, p. 231 ff., and esp. p. 236 ff.) for a fuller discussion.

This bit of metaphysics is the critical aspect of Gregory's response to the LPT, and is what I think has not been fully appreciated to this point.

That is, given hypostases x and y, even if x and y are themselves distinct, x's e-ing and y's e-ing are distinct *only if* x's e-ing and y's e-ing are either of different types,[35] or they have different *idiomata*. If x's e-ing and y's e-ing are of the same type, and they have the same *idiomata* (they occur, for example, at the same location in space at the same time, etc.), then x's e-ing is strictly (classically) numerically identical to y's e-ing – *even if x and y are themselves (strictly, classically) numerically distinct.*

I will refer to this phenomenon as "synergy."[36] I will say that distinct hypostases x and y "synergize on" *energeia* token z, if and only if x and y are distinct, and both x and y have z. That is:

0^{37} Σ_{Def}: $(\forall x)(\forall y)(\forall z)\{\Sigma xyz \leftrightarrow$
[Hx & Hy & Ez & x $\neq$ y & Pxz & Pyz]\}

And I will say that distinct hypostases x and y "synergize on" *energeia* type z, if and only if x and y are distinct, and there exists a token *energeia* w of type z such that x and y both have w (thus, synergize on w). That is:

0^{38} Σ^*_{Def}: $(\forall x)(\forall y)(\forall z)\{\Sigma^* xyz \leftrightarrow$
[Hx & Hy & E*z & x $\neq$ y & ($\exists$w)(Ew & Pwz & Pxw & Pyw)]\}

That is, x and y synergize on *energeia* type e* if and only if x and y synergize on some *energeia* token e of type e*. As we will see, the phenomenon of synergy is the key that allows Gregory to solve the LPT, but it has not been sufficiently appreciated or articulated in the literature. We will of course return to it later. For now, we can formulate Gregory's view on the individuation of *energeia* tokens as follows:

+ IDE: $\Box(\forall x)(\forall y)\{[Ex \& Ey] \rightarrow [x=y \leftrightarrow (\forall z)([Iz \text{ v } E^*z] \rightarrow [Pxz \leftrightarrow Pyz])]\}$

i.e., for any token *energeiai*, x and y, x and y are identical if and only if x and y have all and only the same *idiomata* and *energeiai* types.[39]

---

35. If *energeia* types individuate *energeia* tokens. See footnote 34 just above, and 5.2.3, p. 236 below for more.

36. Gregory, in *Ad Ablabium* uses the verb "συνεφάπτομαι," "to lay hold of jointly," or "engage in with," to describe what I am calling "synergy." He says, "ἐπὶ δὲ τῆς θείας φύσεως οὐχ οὕτως ἐμάθομεν ὅτι ὁ πατὴρ ποιεῖ τι καθ᾽ ἑαυτόν, οὗ μὴ συνεφάπτεται ὁ υἱός." "But in the case of the divine nature we did not learn thus that the Father does something by himself, that the Son does not engage in with him."

37. Stipulative definition.

38. Stipulative definition.

39. This of course is a "weak" version of the individuation of *energeia* tokens. Probably the best way to formulate a "strong" version of the individuation of *energeia* tokens would be:

+ IDE$_{\text{Strong}}$: $(\forall x)(\forall y)\{[Ex \& Ey] \rightarrow [x=y \leftrightarrow (\exists z)(Iz \& [Pxz \& Pyz])]\}$

5.2   Gregory's Theology

What I am calling Gregory's "theology" or "triadology" involves, again, the token objects postulated and the relations that actually hold between the postulated token objects. In what follows, I will be using the phrase "prior to creation" quite a bit. This might seem like a phrase that should raise deep questions about the nature of time and the relation of God to creation. But in fact, I mean nothing very fancy by it. Simply, given our very limited concerns about the individuation of certain uncreated objects, and the details of Gregory's views about how those objects are in fact individuated (or not individuated), created objects will not be relevant to our concerns. If one is uncomfortable with my use of the phrase "prior to creation," one could substitute "abstracting away from all created objects," or "bracketing off created objects," or "ignoring the complications of created objects for simplicity's sake" or some similar phrase. I will stick to the shorter phrase, "prior to creation."[40] With that said, we can give the substantive theological propositions that are relevant to Gregory's answer to the LPT as follows.

5.2.1   Postulated Token Objects

Hypostases

There are on Gregory's view exactly three divine (uncreated) hypostases: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Although, of course, modalists denied that there were three *distinct* hypostases, they did not deny the *existence* (nor the divinity) of the Father or of the Son or of the Holy Spirit, only their distinction. Nor, obviously did any variety of Arian deny their existence.[41] So this is all uncontroversial in Gregory's context. To these hypostases, we will give the logical names:

   "f,"

----

but there is little consequence to which criterion we use in this case, so to cut down on length and complexity, I will only deal explicitly with the weak criterion.

40. Of course, anyone who holds that the Son and Holy Spirit are themselves created would hold that this bracketing off of creation *ipso facto* brackets off the Son and Holy Spirit, bringing in a potential disagreement as to precisely what all to bracket off. Naturally, since I am here concerned with explaining Gregory's view, I mean to exclude from my discussion those objects that *he holds* to be created (angels, humans, animals and so forth), and to include in my discussion those objects that *he holds* to be uncreated (in particular, as I interpret Gregory, at least the three hypostases, their *idiomata*, their shared essence, and their *energeiai*, both types and tokens). Thus, I am not employing the phrase in such a way as to beg any questions. If one prefers, one can substitute the phrase "abstracting away from all of those things, which, *on Gregory's view*, would be created."

41. And although, of course, the Trinitarian controversy was largely about the status of these hypostases in terms of simplicity and uncreatedness, even Eunomians would allow the application of the *predicate* "is divine" to all three hypostases as well – they would simply adopt a different semantics for "is divine," arguing that the predicate "is divine" is equivocal and made true by distinct *ousiai*, some of which are created and hylomorphically non-simple and so forth. We will examine below how Gregory argues that the divine hypostases all have a single *ousia* (5.2.3, p. 233).

"s," and
"h."[42]

They are hypostases, thus:

+   H(i):   Hf
+   H(ii):   Hs
+   H(iii): Hh

Perhaps not all of H(i)–H(iii) need to be counted as substantive theological assumptions. This is because, as we will see below, given a certain understanding of the relational properties that serve as *idiomata* for the Trinity, and a certain view about how reference to the Father is secured, the existence of, at least, the Son (and perhaps the Spirit) logically follows from the existence of the Father.[43] However, to avoid certain complications we will discuss below,[44] we will simply count these all as substantive assumptions.

Idiomata

As we saw in the previous chapter (4.3.3, p. 161), there are, at least three (if not four or more) *idiomata* that individuate the divine hypostases, and these are the intra-trinitarian relations. We might be tempted, on a modern view of relations to represent the intra-trinitarian relations as something like "B" for "begets" and "S" for "spirates." And since the Father is the only one who begets,

---

42. Of course, one might object to using mere logical names ("f," "s," and "h") to replace the natural language terms "Father," "Son," and "Holy Spirit" as the natural language terms are not without significant semantic content, and some important arguments in the Trinitarian controversy turn on questions involving the existence of a "Father" necessitating the existence of a "Son," whether the relation of begetting that holds between Father and Son could hold between things of different natures, and so forth.

For these reasons, one might reasonably point out that representing the Father as something like $\imath x[(\exists y)(Bxy)]$ (the x that begets some y), and representing the Son as something like $\imath x[(\exists y)(Byx)]$ (the x that is begotten by some y), would more perspicuously show the logical relationship between the existence of the Father (qua Father) and the existence of the Son (qua Son).

While these ways of representing things might add a certain amount of clarity in the overall context of the fourth century Trinitarian controversy, or in the context of the *filioque* controversy, I believe they would introduce needless complexity for our limited purposes of showing Gregory's theology to be consistent. So we will simply represent the names for the persons, as well as their *idiomata* below, with simple logical names. To be sure, an anti-Trinitarian could claim that, perhaps, buried within that additional logical complexity, are the makings of some contradiction or absurdity. However, as mentioned in Chapter 1 (1.2, p. 17), it seems unlikely that any such hidden contradiction (if there be any) would be worthy of being included as part of the "Logical Problem of the Trinity," which is supposed to hinge merely on the fact that the same predicate ("is God") is being applied to three things (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) which are non-identical, and yet it is being claimed that there is only one God.

43. See note 42 above, p. 212 and the discussion just below on representing the *idiomata*.

44. See the discussion below on having to pick between "begetting the Son" and just "begetting something," etc., p. 214 ff.

and the Son is the only one who is begotten, rather than representing them as "f" and "s," we might represent them respectively as:

$\iota x[(\exists y)(Bxy)]$

and

$\iota y[(\exists x)(Bxy)]$

that is, "the x such that x begets some y" and "the y such that y is begotten by some x." This more clearly shows why "the Father" (*qua* Father) could not exist without a "Son." If there is no Son – no y such that y is begotten by some x – then there can be no Father – no x such that x begets some y. And vice-versa. Thus, it would be clear that it is logically necessary that some father exists if and only if some son exists. And that is as it should be.

Likewise, we could represent the Holy Spirit as:

$\iota z[(\exists x)(Sxz)]$

that is, "the z such that z is spirated by some x." Of course, we now face the issue of how to represent the Father as spirating the Spirit, whether to represent the Son in the same way (if one accepts the *filioque*) and how those descriptions relate to one another. But we face more pressing problems.

First, while we now have a more perspicuous way to refer to the persons, we face the question of how many relations there are. Given the formalism above, we might be tempted to count two relations, or "polyadic" properties – begetting and spirating. Yet, ancients and medievals seem to count the relations as either three or four.

So, it would not be as perspicuous to represent the relations with sentences of the form *Bxy* and *Sxy*, which makes it look as though there are just two relations. Nor would it be most perspicuously represented as something like *P*xyb*, where P* is some kind of three-place metaphysical predication relation, showing the Father and Son both entering into the begetting relation at the appropriate argument places (which again makes it look as though begetting is a single "polyadic property," into which two distinct relata "enter" at different "places," rather than that begetting is a single, monadic property that in some sense makes reference to a begotten, while being begotten is a distinct monadic property that in some sense makes reference to a begetter).

The reason for this discrepancy is that, from Aristotle through the medieval period, there was a widespread view that there was no such thing as a polyadic property.[45] Medievals sometimes used an analogy between a dyadic relation and a road between two cities, and routinely rejected the idea that any such thing existed in reality. Rather, relational predicates were analyzed in various ways such that they were, ultimately, monadic properties of individuals (or

---

45. See all of (BROWER 2014), but esp. section 3.1.

supervenient on the monadic properties of individuals), but monadic properties that in some way point towards or make reference to other individuals. In fact, a classic example from Aristotle onwards is the relation of being a father, which would be seen as a feature of the father, but one that implies the existence of a son, and likewise being a son is a feature of the son, but one that implies the existence of a father.[46]

So one might think that, to better reflect this kind of thinking, we could represent the Father's "begetting the Son" as a one-place (monadic) property that makes reference to the Son. To that end, we could borrow notation from Bealer,[47] and introduce an operation to form terms from predicates so that the property of "being an x such that x begets some y" could be represented as a singular term, thus:

$$[(\exists y)(Bxy)]_x.$$

And we could then represent the Father's *idioma* in just that way, so that, the Father's having that property would be expressed as:

$$P \, \imath x[(\exists y)(Bxy)] \, [(\exists y)(Bxy)]_x$$

(i.e., "the x such that x begets something" has "being an x such that x begets something").

This would certainly make it more clear why, assuming that the hypostases and their *idiomata* exist in the first place, the Father would have "begetting" as His *idioma* and the Son would have "being begotten" as His *idioma*, and likewise why the very existence of the Father (qua father) entails the existence of a Son (qua son) and vice-versa. (Less would be gained in clarifying the relation of the Holy Spirit to the other two hypostases, or whether, how, or in what sense, the properties of begetting the Son, spirating the Spirit, and being "anarchos" or "unoriginate" count as a single *idioma* – if they do.)

I have been saying "we could" represent things in the ways above (using Bealer's notation). However, I will be choosing not to represent them so.

As mentioned above (footnote 42, p. 212), it might be nice, in the wider context of fourth-century theological debates, and perhaps also in the context of the later *filioque* controversy, to have a greater degree of logical detail here. But we face a few problems. First is the fact that it would needlessly complicate our discussion and proofs, as these particular details are not directly relevant to the discussion of the LPT. But second, and more importantly, the greater precision of Bealer's notation would require us to resolve certain ambiguities that it is not clear how to resolve. Specifically, it may be that the Father's *idioma* is simply the property of "begetting" (something):

---

46. This is all on the assumption that a given thinker even believes in *relations* at all, rather than simply *relatives* – the father and son themselves.

47. (Bealer 1982), pp. 43 ff.

$[(\exists y)(Bxy)]_x$

But perhaps it is specifically, "begetting the Son," which would be:

$[Bxs]_x$

Or, if we represent the Son as "$\imath y[(\exists x)(Bxy)]$":

$[B\ x\ \imath y\{(\exists w)(Bwy)\}]_x$

("being an x such that x begets the y such that y is begotten by some w")

Or again, perhaps the Father's *idioma* is "begetting the Only-Begotten," which would be:

$[B\ x\ \imath y((\exists w)[Bwy]\ \&\ (\forall z)[(\exists w)(Bwz) \rightarrow z{=}y])]_x$

("being an x such that x begets the y such that y is begotten by some w and is the only thing that is begotten by anything.")

One can see how there will be similar ambiguities for the *idiomata* of the Son and the Holy Spirit. ("Being begotten," "being begotten by the Father," or "being the only-begotten of the Father?" And if the latter, in the sense of "being the only thing that is begotten (at all), and being begotten of the Father" or in the sense of "being the only thing that is begotten by the Father?" Likewise, for the Holy Spirit, is the *idioma*"being spirated" or "being spirated by the Father"? And for those who affirm the *filioque*, "being spirated by the Son" as a *distinct* relational property (raising again the question whether *idiomata* are really non-compossible after all)? Or is there a *single* property of "being spirated by the-Father-and-the-Son"? And so on.) One can also see how adding this level of detail causes the formalism to become (needlessly, it would seem) cumbersome.

Furthermore, it is not at all clear to me from my reading of Gregory (or Basil, or anyone else for that matter) how exactly to resolve these ambiguities about the *idiomata*, or indeed whether Gregory or any of his peers even considered these ambiguities at all.

But it is also not clear to me that it makes much difference. At least not in the context of the LPT, and probably not even in the wider context of the fourth century Trinitarian controversy (though I am more open to the possibility it may make a difference in the *filioque* debate). So, we will choose instead to suppress whatever the deeper logical structure of the *idiomata* might be, and represent the Father's *idioma* of begetting (or begetting the Son, or begetting the Only-Begotten or whatever it is) simply as:

b,

And we will represent the Son's *idioma* of being begotten (or being begotten by the Father, or whatever it is) simply as:

b*,

Likewise, we will represent the Father's *idioma* of spirating (or spirating the Holy Spirit, or whatever it is) as:

p,[48]

And we will represent the Holy Spirit's *idioma* of proceeding (or proceeding from the Father, or whatever it is) as:

p*.

Finally, since b, b*, p and p* are all supposed to be *idiomata*, we can say:

+   I(i):   Ib
+   I(ii):   Ip
+   I(iii):   Ib*

and

+   I(iv):   Ip*

As with H(i)–H(iii), perhaps not all of I(i)-I(iv) need to be counted as substantive theological assumptions. Just as we said about using "f," "s," and "h" to represent the hypostases (footnote 42 above, p. 212), "begetting," "proceeding" and their converses have significant semantic content, and given the discussion just above, at the very least, the existence of begetting logically follows from the existence of being begotten and vice-versa (and likewise the fact that something instantiates one logically follows from the fact that something instantiates the other). Similarly for spirating and being spirated (i.e. proceeding).

We could almost certainly get away with making only the following small set of assumptions. (1) that there exists a Son (which is, by definition, something begotten), from which we derive the existence of the Father (along with His instantiation of begetting). Then (2) that there exists "another comforter (John 14:16)... who proceeds from the Father (John 15:26)" (i.e., (2a) that there exists something that is distinct from – "another" than – the Son and such that (2b) it proceeds from the Father). And to individuate the Father and the "Other Comforter" (i.e., the Holy Spirit), we would either assume the metaphysical principle (3) that the proceeding relation is irreflexive, or simply the theological assumption (3ʹ) that the Father does not, in fact, proceed (perhaps because He

---

48. This may seem confusing, but since we are already using a lower-case "s" for the Son, we are switching to "p" for "proceeding," although it will really be "p*" that means "proceeding." Still, this seems easier to remember than any alternative.

216

is "anarchos" or for whatever reason). Thus (depending on how one individuates assumptions) we would really have only 3 or 4 theological assumptions – or 2 or 3 theological assumptions and a metaphysical assumption – rather than 7 distinct theological assumptions.

Of course, if begetting the Son and spirating the Spirit and being "anarchos" (i.e., unbegotten and unspirated) really are somehow identical, then we only need a single assumption – the existence of the Father *qua* Father, i.e., the existence of an x that instantiates this single, but in some sense multi-faceted, property. I would point out that *there are* such relational properties – or at least *prima facie* it would seem so. For example, the property of being a judge cannot be exemplified unless there are two other beings (presumably distinct both from each other and from the judge), one of which is a plaintiff and the other of which is a defendant, each one of whom bears a relation to the judge that is very similar to – yet importantly different from – that which the other bears to the judge. Thus, the very existence of a judge, *qua* judge, would seem to entail the existence of a total of three distinct beings, and the instantiation of all of their various defining relations. Further, if there is such a property as being a "supreme" judge (a judge such that there does not exist any "higher" judge – that is, a judge x such that there does not exist any judge y such that y is distinct from x and y could be a judge of x), then, if being a supreme judge is a simple property, it would seem to give us a scenario quite analogous to what the Father's *idioma* would be on the view that begetting the Son and spirating the Spirit and being "anarchos" (neither begotten nor spirated) is all somehow one simple property.

But again, although building the further logical details of the *idiomata* and the descriptions of the hypostases into our representations of them would be more logically perspicuous and might allow us to show how Gregory relies on even *fewer* assumptions, we will simply refer to all 7 of these objects with the simple logical names we've specified, and treat these as 7 distinct theological assumptions.

Ousiai

Next, since every hypostasis must have an *ousia*, the existence of the three divine (uncreated) hypostases necessitates the existence of *at least* one divine *ousia*. What is a "divine *ousia*"? That is a difficult question to answer without prejudice to the *heteroousian* (who believes the *ousiai* of the three hypostases are different) or even the *homoiousian* (who believes the *ousiai* of the three hypostases are as similar as possible, but still non-identical).

One could define a divine *ousia* as any *ousia* participated in by *all* of the three divine hypostases (Father, Son and Holy Spirit), but this would have the result that *heteroousianism* would be inconsistent with there being *any* divine *ousia* at all (since there is, on that view, no single *ousia* participated in by all three of the hypostases). Whereas in reality *heteroousians* and *homoiousians* want to say that there are *three* divine *ousiai*, not *zero*. The same problem would arise if we defined a divine *ousia* as any *ousia* had by the Father (or as

any *ousia* had by the Son, or as any *ousia* had by the Holy Spirit), since this would again have the result that there is only a single divine *ousia*.

On the other hand, one could define a divine *ousia* as any *ousia* participated in by *any* of the three hypostases (Father, Son or Holy Spirit). But this would entail that the human nature is divine on the assumption that the second hypostasis (the Son) participates in humanity.

It would likely be closer to the meaning of "divine *ousia*" to define it in terms of being *uncreated*, or necessary, or even hylomorphically *simple*. But a thorough discussion of any of these suggestions would introduce needless complexity for our current, limited purposes. So, since we will later argue that the three divine hypostases all share the same *ousia* anyway (whatever precisely its character), we will not try to give any precise definition as to what a divine *ousia* is, and we will simply try not to worry too much about this question. We will represent the *ousia(i)* of the three hypostases with the logical names "o," "n" and "m." More precisely, from the metaphysical assumption:

+   NHO: $\Box(\forall x)[Hx \rightarrow (\exists y)(Oy \ \& \ Pxy)]$

it follows that:

0^{49} $(\forall x)[Hx \rightarrow (\exists y)(Oy \ \& \ Pxy)]$

and from this and the theological assumptions:

+   H(i):   Hf
+   H(ii):   Hs
+   H(iii):   Hh

above, and

0^{50} $(\exists y)(Oy \ \& \ Pfy)$
0^{51} $(\exists y)(Oy \ \& \ Psy)$

and

0^{52} $(\exists y)(Oy \ \& \ Phy).$

---

49. From NHO, by the T axiom.
  Note that, throughout, I treat the T axiom, AKA "M," as though it were an inference rule. Strictly speaking, the T axiom just says any instance of $\Box\phi \rightarrow \phi$ is true. So that, in this case, by the T axiom, we have that $\Box(\forall x)[Hx \rightarrow (\exists y)(Oy \ \& \ Pxy)] \rightarrow (\forall x)[Hx \rightarrow (\exists y)(Oy \ \& \ Pxy)]$. Then, from this and NHO ($\Box(\forall x)[Hx \rightarrow (\exists y)(Oy \ \& \ Pxy)]$), by Modus Ponens, it follows that $(\forall x)[Hx \rightarrow (\exists y)(Oy \ \& \ Pxy)]$. However, since this type of inference will always be valid, that is, since any time we have a formula of the form $\Box\phi$, we can always use the T axiom followed by Modus Ponens to derive ϕ, for the sake of convenience, I treat the T axiom throughout as though it were a rule of inference that says, "From $\Box\phi$, infer ϕ."
  50. From $(\forall x)[Hx \rightarrow (\exists y)(Oy \ \& \ Pxy)]$ and H(i), by Universal Modus Ponens (hereafter, $\forall$MP).
  51. From $(\forall x)[Hx \rightarrow (\exists y)(Oy \ \& \ Pxy)]$ and H(ii), by $\forall$MP.
  52. From $(\forall x)[Hx \rightarrow (\exists y)(Oy \ \& \ Pxy)]$ and H(iii), by $\forall$MP.

And by ∃ Elimination, we simply replace the "y"s with names, thus:

0^{53} Oo & Pfo
0^{54} On & Psn

and

0^{55} Om & Phm

which we decompose into

0^{56} O(i):   Oo
0^{57} RH(i):   Pfo
0^{58} O(ii):   On
0^{59} RH(ii): Psn
0^{60} O(iii): Om

and

0^{61} RH(iii): Phm

Of course, it does not follow immediately from NHO and H(i) through H(iii) alone that the hypostases share just one *ousia*, that is that o=n=m.[62] We will return (5.2.3, p. 233) to the question of whether the three hypostases have a single *ousia* (whether they are *homoousios*), and thus whether:

0^{63} O$_{homoousion}$: o=n=m

Energeia Types

There are whatever *energeia* types are natural to the divine *ousia(i)* and individuate it (or them). We will call these "divine *energeia* types," of which there must be at least one. This is a consequence of Gregory's metaphysical view that there are no *ousiai* without natural *energeiai*, plus the existence of (at least one) divine *ousia*. That is:

0^{64} O(i):   Oo

---

53. From (∃y) (Oy & Pfy), by ∃ Elimination o/y.
54. From (∃y) (Oy & Psy), by ∃ Elimination n/y.
55. From (∃y) (Oy & Phy), by ∃ Elimination m/y.
56. From Oo & Pfo, by & Elimination.
57. From Oo & Pfo, by & Elimination.
58. From On & Psn, by & Elimination.
59. From On & Psn, by & Elimination.
60. From Om & Phm, by & Elimination.
61. From Om & Phm, by & Elimination.
62. By which, of course, I mean: (o=n) & (o=m) & (n=m).
63. From O(i)–O(iii), IDO and CA. See 5.2.3, p. 234 below, as well as Appendix A.1, p. 315.
64. See footnote 56. From Oo & Pfo, by & Elimination.

and

+   NOE*: $\Box(\forall x)[Ox \rightarrow (\exists y)(E^*y \,\&\, Nyx)]$

entail:

0^{65} $(\exists y)(E^*y \,\&\, Nyo)$

i.e., that there exists at least one divine *energeia* type.[66]

    We cannot say what the precise number and nature of the divine *energeia* types are, because no upper limit is given by Gregory and no particular limit is entailed by his other metaphysical or theological assumptions. But since there is at least one divine *energeia* type, and since Gregory believes that the predicate "is (a) God" predicates engagement in some *energeia* (specifically, in some token *energeia* of a particular divine *energeia* type), we can arbitrarily select one divine *energeia* (type) to call "god-ding," or, in predicate logic, "g*."[67]

    More precisely, from:

0^{68} $(\exists y)(E^*y \,\&\, Nyo)$

above, it follows, by $\exists$ Elimination, that:

0^{69} $E^*g^* \,\&\, Ng^*o$

(We simply name the energeia-type "g*.") And by & Elimination, we have:

0^{70} $E^*(i)$: E^*g^*

and

0^{71} $RE^*(i)$: Ng^*o

---

65. Despite it being redundant, I note this follows from NOE* and O(i), by the T Axiom (See footnote 49 for my use of this axiom as an inference rule), followed by $\forall$MP.

66. Of course, we could say the same for n and m, but since we will later prove that n = o and m = o, we will only show our work for o.

67. Whatever the nature of this activity actually is – "beholding" or whatever it might be (See Chapter 4.4.1, p. 175 for more on that). The precise nature of this *energeia* is not relevant for our purposes, so we will simply call it "god-ding" and not worry about what exactly it amounts to.

68. See footnote 65. From NOE* and O(i), by the T Axiom (See footnote 49 for my use of this axiom as an inference rule), followed by $\forall$MP.

69. From $(\exists y)(E^*y \,\&\, Nyo)$, by $\exists$ Elimination g*/y.

70. From $E^*g^* \,\&\, Ng^*o$, by & Elimination.

71. Again, from $E^*g^* \,\&\, Ng^*o$, by & Elimination.

Energeia Tokens

There is also at least one divine *energeia* token (I will call "token divine *energeiai*" or "divine *energeia* tokens" all those token *energeiai* that "have" or are "of" some divine *energeia* type.)

It follows from the definition of "natural to" that for any *energeia* type x that is natural to some *ousia* y, if some hypostasis z has *ousia* y, then there must be some token *energeia* w such that w has *energeia* type x, and such that w is had by hypostasis z.

I.e., from:

0^{72} N_{Def}: $(\forall x)(\forall y)\{Nxy \leftrightarrow \Box(\forall z)[Pzy \rightarrow (\exists w)(Ew \ \& \ Pwx \ \& \ Pzw)]\}$

It follows that:

0^{73} NE*E: $(\forall x)(\forall y)\{(E^*x \& Oy \& Nxy) \rightarrow$
    $(\forall z)[(Hz \& Pzy) \rightarrow (\exists w)(Ew \& Pwx \& Pzw)]\}$

And so, assuming (as we have already derived) that the divine *ousia* (1) is an *ousia*, and (2) is had by some hypostasis, it follows that any *energeia* type natural to the divine *ousia* will be had by at least one token *energeia*. That is, from:

0^{74} NE*E: $(\forall x)(\forall y)\{(E^*x \& Oy \& Nxy) \rightarrow$
    $(\forall z)[(Hz \& Pzy) \rightarrow (\exists w)(Ew \& Pwx \& Pzw)]\}$
0^{75} O(i):   Oo
$+$ H(i):   Hf

and

0^{76} RH(i): Pfo

it follows that:

0^{77} E^*_{Lemma}: $(\forall x)[(E^*x \ \& \ Nxo) \rightarrow (\exists y)(Ey \ \& \ Pyx)]$

And since, by hypothesis, god-ding (g*) is a divine *energeia* type (an *energeia* type natural to the divine *ousia*), there must be at least one token of that type. That is, from E^*_{Lemma} and:

---

72. Stipulative definition.
73. Proof in Appendix A.2, p. 316. Note that I omit any modal operators from NE*E to avoid certain unnecessary complications, and because, for our purposes, we will only need a non-modal version of it.
74. See footnote 73. Proof in Appendix A.2, p. 316. Note that I omit any modal operators from NE*E to avoid certain unnecessary complications, and because, for our purposes, we will only need a non-modal version of it.
75. See footnote 56. From Oo & Pfo, by & Elimination.
76. See footnote 57. From Oo & Pfo, by & Elimination.
77. From NE*E, O(i), H(i) and RH(i). Proof in Appendix A.3, p. 317.

0^{78} E*g* & Ng*o

above, it follows that:

0^{79} (∃y)(Ey & Pyg*)

We will discuss the precise number of divine *energeia* tokens below. But at this point, we do not know the precise number of them. So, just as we did with the divine *energeia* type god-ding, we will simply arbitrarily select some token *energeia* that has *energeia* type g* and name it: "g." In other words, from:

0^{80} (∃y)(Ey & Pyg*)

it follows that:

0^{81} Eg & Pgg*
0^{82} E(i):   Eg

   and:

0^{83} RE(i):   Pgg*

We will see later that, not only must there be at least one divine *energeia* type and at least one divine *energeia* token that has that type, but that, depending on whether an *energeia* token can belong to multiple *energeia* types, the number of divine *energeia* tokens that exist prior to creation is either exactly equal to the number of divine *energeia* types or is equal to some whole number from one up to the cardinality of the power set of the divine *energeia* types minus one. I think, however, it is almost certain that Gregory would take the view that there is exactly one divine *energeia* token of each divine *energeia* type, for reasons we will discuss later (5.2.3, p. 235 ff.).

Assuming, then, that there are no other hypostases, *ousiai*, or *idiomata* prior to creation, and ignoring whatever additional *energeia* types and tokens besides g* and g there might be, the ten objects (or nine, or even six, depending on one's view about the *idiomata*)[84] discussed above (o, f, s, h, b, b*, p, p*, g*, and

---

78. See footnote 69. From (∃y)(E*y & Nyo), by ∃ Elimination g*/y.

79. From: E*_Lemma and E*g* & Ng*o, by ∀MP.

80. See footnote 79. From: E*_Lemma and E*g* & Ng*o, by ∀MP.

81. From (∃y)(Ey & Pyg*) above, by ∃ Elimination (g/y).

82. From Eg & Pgg*, by & Elimination.

83. Again, from Eg & Pgg*, by & Elimination.

84. That is, depending on whether we take Gregory to hold that there are just three *idiomata*, so that the Father really does have only a single *idioma*, in which case, b=p, so there would really be only 9 distinct objects "prior to creation." Further, if we take quite literally the claim that a hypostasis *just is* a bundle of *idiomata* (or just is the "individuating sign"), then f=b=p; s=b*; and h=p*. In that case, there would really be only 6 distinct objects "prior to creation." I include this remark for the sake of thoroughness, and as it may be of interest to metaphysicians, but it does not seem to me that much hangs on it for the purposes of establishing the logical consistency of the doctrine.

g)[85] are the only objects Gregory postulates to exist "prior to creation," and are all we will need to concern ourselves with.[86] Although we have mentioned in passing some of the relations between some of these objects, in the next section we will look at all such relations that are relevant to our purposes.

5.2.2 Relations Posited Between the Token Objects

Relations Had by the Hypostases

First, the three hypostases have the intra-trinitarian relations as their *idiomata*, as follows.

The Father has "begetting the Son" (or simply, "begetting.")

$+/0$[87]   RH(vi): Pfb

The Father has "spirating the Spirit" (or simply, "spirating.")

$+/0$[88]   RH(vii): Pfp

Since the Father is "anarchos," He does not have "being begotten by the Father" (or being begotten by anything at all).

$+$ RH(viii): ¬Pfb*

Since the Father is "anarchos," He does not have "being spirated by the Father" (or being spirated by anything at all).

$+$ RH(ix): ¬Pfp*

---

85. Since we will later show that the *ousiai* of the three hypostases are all identical (see 5.2.3, p. 234), I am already counting m, n and o as a single object.

86. Strictly speaking, the only objects Gregory *postulates* are the hypostases and the *idiomata* (and perhaps only one or two of the hypostases and only one or two of the *idiomata*). The existence of all the others follow from those, their metaphysical predication relations, and his metaphysics. But the existence of these ten uncreated objects are what Gregory is *committed to*.

87. Of course, due to the way we've represented the relation between hypostases and *idiomata*, this does not follow as a strictly logical consequence of RH(xii) (Psb*). However, it is certainly part of the understanding of relatives or relative properties that Gregory was working with, that the existence of a relative necessitates the existence of the correlative. Aristotle does note some exceptions, but these seem to deal with issues of modality. (For example, the existence of the perceptible does not necessitate the existence of a perceiver.) However, "father" and "son" are paradigm cases of correlatives either of whose existence would necessitate that of the other.

88. See footnote 87 above. Due to the way we've represented the relation between hypostases and *idiomata*, this does not follow as a strictly logical consequence of RH(xvii) (Php*). However, it is certainly part of the understanding of relatives or relative properties that Gregory was working with, that the existence of a relative necessitates the existence of the correlative. It's less clear, of course, that the Holy Spirit's simply proceeding would entail that the Father, in particular, spirates. On the other hand, if p* is proceeding *from the Father*, then it's obvious why this would entail that the Father spirates the Spirit (which is what Pfp would say if we interpret p as spirating *the Spirit*.

The Son does not have "begetting the Son" (or begetting anything at all).

$+/0^{89}$ RH(x):   ¬Psb

Whether or not the Son has "spirating the Spirit" (or simply "spirating") is at the heart of the *filioque* controversy, and is obviously a matter of great contention. We won't attempt to settle the issue here, though we can note that, on IDH$_{\text{Weak}}$, Psp is compatible with f≠s (given RH(viii) and RH(xii) – that the Father is unbegotten while the Son is begotten), but simply an additional, logically contingent, assumption.[90] On the other hand, on IDH$_{\text{Strong}}$, Psp is incompatible with RH(vii) (that the Father spirates) and f≠s (thus, incompatible with RH(vii), RH(viii) and RH(xii)). See 5.2.3, p. 233 ff. for more.

$+/0^{91}$ RH(xi): Psp? / ¬Psp?

The Son has "being begotten of the Father" (or simply, "being begotten.")

$+$ RH(xii): Psb*

The Son does not have "being spirated by the Father" (or being spirated by anything at all).

$+/0^{92}$ RH(xiii):   ¬Psp*

The Spirit does not have "begetting the Son" (or begetting anything at all).

$+/0^{93}$ RH(xiv): ¬Phb

---

89. On IDH$_{\text{Weak}}$, this would be an additional theological assumption or follow from an additional metaphysical assumption that the begetting relation is irreflexive. (Assuming the *idioma* here is specifically begetting *the Son*. If the *idioma* is simply begetting *something*, then it would probably be best simply to add the fact that the Son is the Only-Begotten, i.e., Psb* & (∀x)(Pxb* → x=s).

  On IDH$_{\text{Strong}}$, RH(x) simply follows from RH(viii), RH(xii) and RH(vi). That is, the fact that the Father is unbegotten while the Son is begotten individuates them, and on IDH$_{\text{Strong}}$ they cannot share any other *idiomata*, so the fact that the Father begets and the Father and Son are distinct, on IDH$_{\text{Strong}}$, entails that the Son does not beget.

  90. Of course, I don't mean contingent in the "broadly" logical sense – that there are possible worlds where the Spirit proceeds from the Son and possible worlds where He doesn't. I mean, in the "narrowly" logical sense, that neither Psp nor ¬Psp is logically entailed by any combination of the other propositions in GNT$_{\text{F}}$, if GNT$_{\text{F}}$ includes only IDH$_{\text{Weak}}$ and not IDH$_{\text{Strong}}$.

  91. On IDH$_{\text{Weak}}$, Psp is possible, but an additional assumption. On IDH$_{\text{Strong}}$, ¬Psp follows from RH(vii) and f≠s (thus, from RH(vii), RH(viii) and RH(xii)). See 5.2.3, p. 233 ff. for more.

  92. On IDH$_{\text{Weak}}$, both this and its negation would be consistent with our other assumptions about the *idiomata*, and either one would have to be counted as an additional theological assumption. On IDH$_{\text{Strong}}$, this follows from RH(xii) (Psb*), RH(xvi) (¬Phb*) (which together entail s≠h) and RH(xvii) (Php*).

  93. On IDH$_{\text{Weak}}$, this is an additional theological assumption. On IDH$_{\text{Strong}}$, it follows from RH(ix) (¬Pfp*), RH(xvii) (Php*) (which together entail f≠h) and RH(vi) (Pfb).

The Spirit does not have "spirating the Spirit" (or spirating anything at all).

+/0[94]   RH(xv):   ¬Php

The Spirit does not have being begotten by the Father (or being begotten by anything at all).

+[95]   RH(xvi):   ¬Phb*

The Spirit has "being spirated by the Father" (or simply, "being spirated.")

+   RH(xvii):   Php*

We said above that the three hypostases each have an *ousia*, which we've represented as:

---

94. On IDH_{Weak}, this is an additional theological assumption (or follows from an additional metaphysical assumption that the spirating relation is irreflexive, if p is spirating *the Spirit* in particular. If p is simply *spirating*, then it must be an additional assumption.) On $\text{IDH}_{\text{Strong}}$, it follows from RH(ix) (¬Pfp*), RH(xvii) (Php*) (which together entail f≠h) and RH(vii) (Pfp).

95. I count this as an additional theological assumption necessary to individuate the Son and Spirit. Of course, one traditional argument in favor of the *filioque* is that *it* is necessary in order to individuate the Son and Spirit (along with, either the additional theological assumption that the Spirit does not spirate, or if we take p to mean spirate *the Spirit*, the additional metaphysical assumption that spiration is irreflexive). But, ironically, the *filioque* in fact entails the opposite on $\text{IDH}_{\text{Strong}}$ and is simply irrelevant on IDH_{Weak}.

Of course, on $\text{IDH}_{\text{Strong}}$, the *filioque* entails that the Father and Son are identical, and since the Father and Spirit are distinct, it follows that the Son and the Spirit are distinct (since the Son is the Father). But it also entails that the Son and Spirit are identical, since the fact that the Father is unbegotten (RH(viii)) and the Son is begotten (RH(x)) and that they are identical is a contradiction. Thus, on IDHStrong, Psp simply yields a contradiction, which entails everything – including that the Son and Spirit are identical (despite also being distinct). But such is the way with contradictions.

More importantly, consider the case of IDH_{Weak} (the only scenario in which the filioque is really interesting, since the only scenario in which it is really possible). First, suppose we simply *assume* (take it as a premise), as I suggest we do, that the Spirit is not begotten. Then, since the Son is begotten, they two are individuated anyway, so whether the Son spirates the Spirit or not is irrelevant to the question whether they are distinct.

Second, suppose that the Son and Spirit are individuated in any other way at all (whether because they differ with respect to spiration, or anything else at all). So h≠s. But the Son is the *Only*-Begotten. I.e., Psb* & (∀x)(Pxb* → x=s). But those two propositions directly entail (by Universal Modus Tollens) ¬Phb*. So any other strategy for individuating the Son and Holy Spirit will entail that the Spirit is not begotten anyway, making any other strategy for individuating the Son and the Spirit (whether the *filioque* or anything else) superfluous.

Of course, all of this assumes that the relations of begetting and proceeding are distinct relations, which is also controversial in the context of the *filioque* dispute. But it shouldn't be. Again, any strategy for individuating the Son and Spirit will entail that the Spirit is not begotten (since the Son is the Only-Begotten). But anyone will admit that the Spirit *does* proceed. So, since by anyone's admission, the Spirit proceeds (Psp*) but is not begotten (¬Psb*), proceeding and being begotten cannot be the same relation (p*≠b*).

Thus, as I said, the *filioque* is, ironically, irrelevant to the individuation of the Son and the Holy Spirit, and we may as well simply count ¬Phb* as a theological assumption which individuates the Son and Spirit.

0^{96} RH(i):   Pfo
0^{97} RH(ii):   Psn
0^{98} RH(iii):   Phm

Of course, the Cappadocians' argument with the Eunomians centered around whether these were a single *ousia* or multiple *ousiai*, and we saw that the UNA centers on these being a single *ousia*. That is:

0^{99} $O_{homoousion}$: o=n=m

As we saw in the previous chapter, Gregory argues for the *homoousion* ($O_{homoousion}$) on the basis of what I have called "the Cappadocian Assertion" (CA).[100] We will discuss this argument and give a proof of $O_{homoousion}$ from O(i)–O(iii), IDO and CA below (See 5.2.3, p. 233, as well as Appendix A.1, p. 315.). For the moment, it is sufficient to note that from:

0^{101} RH(ii):   Psn
0^{102} RH(iii):   Phm

and

0^{103} $O_{homoousion}$: o=n=m

it follows, respectively, that:

0^{104} RH(iv):   Pso

and

0^{105} RH(v):   Pho

Discussions of Gregory's theology, and the theology of the Cappadocians more generally, often focus on the *homoousion* and the Cappadocian Assertion. But although debate about the *homoousion* took center stage in the 4th-century controversy, the key to Gregory's solution to the LPT lies not in the three divine hypostases' sharing all their natural *energeia types* (which is how I've interpreted the Cappadocian Assertion, 4.4.4, p. 187), but in their actually sharing *token*

---

96. See footnote 57. From Oo & Pfo, by & Elimination.
97. See footnote 59. From On & Psn, by & Elimination.
98. See footnote 61. From Om & Phm, by & Elimination.
99. From O(i)–O(iii), IDO and CA. See 5.2.3, p. 234 below, as well as Appendix A.1, p. 315.
100. We saw this especially in *Ad Eustathium*. See Chapter 4.4.4, p. 187.
101. See footnote 59. From On & Psn, by & Elimination.
102. See footnote 61. From Om & Phm, by & Elimination.
103. From O(i)–O(iii), IDO and CA. See 5.2.3, p. 234 below, as well as Appendix A.1, p. 315.
104. From RH(ii) and $O_{homoousion}$, by substitutivity of identity (hereafter, "by =") n/o.
105. From RH(iii) and $O_{homoousion}$, by = m/o.

divine *energeiai*. We will discuss the individuation of the token divine *energeiai*
below (5.2.3, p. 235 ff.). For now, we note that from:

0 N_{Def}: $(\forall x)(\forall y)\{Nxy \leftrightarrow \Box(\forall z)[Pzy \rightarrow (\exists w)(Ew \ \& \ Pwx \ \& \ Pzw)]\}$

   making the substitutions g*/x and o/y in N_{Def} yields:

0^{106} $Ng^*o \leftrightarrow \Box(\forall z)[Pzo \rightarrow (\exists w)(Ew \ \& \ Pwg^* \ \& \ Pzw)]$

   which together with:

0^{107} RE*(i): Ng^*o

   entails:

0^{108} $\Box(\forall z)[Pzo \rightarrow (\exists w)(Ew \ \& \ Pwg^* \ \& \ Pzw)]$, and thus:
0^{109} $(\forall z)[Pzo \rightarrow (\exists w)(Ew \ \& \ Pwg^* \ \& \ Pzw)]$

   and making the substitutions, f/z, and s/z, and h/z, respectively, yield:

0^{110} $Pfo \rightarrow (\exists w)(Ew \ \& \ Pwg^* \ \& \ Pfw)$
0^{111} $Pso \rightarrow (\exists w)(Ew \ \& \ Pwg^* \ \& \ Psw)$
0^{112} $Pho \rightarrow (\exists w)(Ew \ \& \ Pwg^* \ \& \ Phw)$

   which together with

0^{113} RH(i):   Pfo
0^{114} RH(iv): Pso

   and

0^{115} RH(v): Pho

   entail, respectively:

0^{116} $P1_{GNT\text{-}F}$. $(\exists w)(Ew \ \& \ Pwg^* \ \& \ Pfw)$

---

106. From N_{Def}, by $\forall$ Elimination, g*/x, o/y.
107. See footnote 71. From E^*g^* & Ng^*o, by & Elimination.
108. From $Ng^*o \leftrightarrow \Box(\forall z)[Pzo \rightarrow (\exists w)(Pwg^* \ \& \ Pzw)]$, and RE*(i): Ng^*o, above, by $\leftrightarrow$ Elimination.
109. From $\Box(\forall z)[Pzo \rightarrow (\exists w)(Pwg^* \ \& \ Pzw)]$, above, by the T Axiom (See footnote 49 for my use of this axiom as an inference rule).
110. From $(\forall z)[Pzo \rightarrow (\exists w)(Pwg^* \ \& \ Pzw)]$, above, by $\forall$ Elimination, f/z.
111. From $(\forall z)[Pzo \rightarrow (\exists w)(Pwg^* \ \& \ Pzw)]$, above, by $\forall$ Elimination, s/z.
112. From $(\forall z)[Pzo \rightarrow (\exists w)(Pwg^* \ \& \ Pzw)]$, above, by $\forall$ Elimination, h/z.
113. See footnote 57. From Oo & Pfo, by & Elimination.
114. See footnote 104. From RH(ii) and $O_{homoousion}$, by = o/n.
115. See footnote 105. From RH(iii) and $O_{homoousion}$, by = o/m.
116. From RH(i) (Pfo), and Pfo $\rightarrow (\exists w)(Ew\&Pwg^*\&Pfw)$, above, MP.

0^{117} P2$_{\text{GNT-F}}$. ($\exists$w)(Ew & Pwg* & Psw)
0^{118} P3$_{\text{GNT-F}}$. ($\exists$w)(Ew & Pwg* & Phw)

which, by three applications of $\exists$ Elimination (g$\prime$/w, g$\prime\prime$/w, then g$\prime\prime\prime$/w), yield, respectively:

0^{119} Eg$\prime$ & Pg$\prime$g* & Pfg$\prime$
0^{120} Eg$\prime\prime$ & Pg$\prime\prime$g* & Psg$\prime\prime$
0^{121} Eg$\prime\prime\prime$ & Pg$\prime\prime\prime$g* & Phg$\prime\prime\prime$

and thus:

0^{122} g$\prime_{\text{Lemma}}$:   Eg$\prime$ & Pg$\prime$g*
0^{123} g$\prime\prime_{\text{Lemma}}$:   Eg$\prime\prime$ & Pg$\prime\prime$g*
0^{124} g$\prime\prime\prime_{\text{Lemma}}$:   Eg$\prime\prime\prime$ & Pg$\prime\prime\prime$g*

and

0^{125} RH(xviii): Pfg$\prime$
0^{126} RH(xix):   Psg$\prime\prime$
0^{127} RH(xx):   Phg$\prime\prime\prime$

And in 5.2.3, pp. 235–243, below, we will show that:

0^{128} $\Sigma_{\text{g}*}$:   g = g$\prime$ = g$\prime\prime$ = g$\prime\prime\prime$

which, together with RH(xviii)–RH(xx), will entail:

0^{129} RH(xxi):   Pfg
0^{130} RH(xxii): Psg

and

0^{131} RH(xxiii):   Phg

---

117. From RH(iv) (Pso), and Pso $\rightarrow$ ($\exists$w)(Ew&Pwg*&Psw), above, MP.
118. From RH(v) (Pho), and Pho $\rightarrow$ ($\exists$w)(Ew&Pwg*&Phw), above, MP.
119. From P1$_{\text{GNT-F}}$, by $\exists$ Elimination, g$\prime$/w
120. From P2$_{\text{GNT-F}}$, by $\exists$ Elimination, g$\prime\prime$/w.
121. From P3$_{\text{GNT-F}}$, by $\exists$ Elimination, g$\prime\prime\prime$/w.
122. From Eg$\prime$ & Pg$\prime$g* & Pfg$\prime$, above, by & Elimination.
123. From Eg$\prime\prime$ & Pg$\prime\prime$g* & Psg$\prime\prime$, above, by & Elimination.
124. From Eg$\prime\prime\prime$ & Pg$\prime\prime\prime$g* & Phg$\prime\prime\prime$, above, by & Elimination.
125. From Eg$\prime$ & Pg$\prime$g* & Pfg$\prime$, above, by & Elimination.
126. From Eg$\prime\prime$ & Pg$\prime\prime$g* & Psg$\prime\prime$, above, by & Elimination.
127. From Eg$\prime\prime\prime$ & Pg$\prime\prime\prime$g* & Phg$\prime\prime\prime$, above, by & Elimination.
128. See footnote 186, p. 240.
129. From RH(xviii) (Pfg$\prime$) and $\Sigma_{\text{g}*}$, by = g/g$\prime$.
130. From RH(xix) (Psg$\prime\prime$) and $\Sigma_{\text{g}*}$, by = g/g$\prime\prime$.
131. From RH(xx) (Phg$\prime\prime\prime$) and $\Sigma_{\text{g}*}$, by = g/g$\prime\prime\prime$.

Relations Had by the *Idiomata*

The *idiomata* are had by the three hypostases in the ways described in the section on hypostases above (RH(vi) – RH(xviii)), and we will not repeat that discussion here.

Additionally, although within Gregory's metaphysics they are the sorts of things that would be *candidates* to be, the *idiomata* are not had by any of the divine *energeia* tokens. Thus, prior to creation:

$+$ ¬EI: ¬($\exists$x)($\exists$y)(Ex & Iy & Pxy)

Relations Had by the *Ousia*

The divine *ousia* is had by all the hypostases, as discussed above (RH(i), RH(iv) and RH(v), p. 226 ff.), a discussion we will complete below (5.2.3, p. 233 ff. and Appendix A.1, p. 315.). It is not itself had by anything else, nor does it itself bear metaphysical predication relations to ("have") anything at all. Nor is it natural to anything. Certain *energeia* types are natural to it, as described in the following subsection.

Relations Had by the Divine *Energeia* Types

As mentioned above, certain *energeia* types ("divine *energeia* types") are natural to the divine *ousia*, thus:

0^{132} ($\exists$y)(E*y & Nyo)

Again, we will not here settle the question of how many divine *energeiai* types there are. But we have arbitrarily selected one such *energeia* type and named it "g*," thus:

0^{133} RE*(i): Ng*o

Although on Gregory's view it is clear that there must be at least one divine *energeia* type that is natural to the divine *ousia*, some interesting questions remain as to whether a divine *energeia* type could also be natural to a created *ousia*. That is, if *ousiai* are individuated "weakly," whether some *energeia* type could be natural both to the divine *ousia* and to one or more non-divine *ousiai*.

Likewise, regardless of the answer to that question, there is nothing in Gregory's metaphysics to say that a non-divine hypostasis could not have a token of some divine *energeia* type, indeed, there is nothing in Gregory's metaphysics (at least this subset of his metaphysics – the metaphysics contained in GNT) to say that a non-divine hypostasis could not synergize with a divine hypostasis on some token *energeia*. But we will not further pursue those matters here.

---

132. See footnote 65. From NOE* and O(i), by the T Axiom (See footnote 49 for my use of this axiom as an inference rule), followed by ∀MP.

133. See footnote 71. From E*g* & Ng*o, by & Elimination.

Relations Had by the Divine *Energeia* Tokens

The divine *energeia* tokens are had by the three hypostases in the ways described in the section on hypostases above (RH(xviii) – RH(xxii)). To repeat:

0^{134} RH(xviii): Pfg$\prime$
0^{135} RH(xix):   Psg$\prime\prime$
0^{136} RH(xx):   Phg$\prime\prime\prime$

And again, in 5.2.3, pp. 235–243, below, we will show that:

0^{137} Σ_{g*}:   g = g$\prime$ = g$\prime\prime$ = g$\prime\prime\prime$

which, together with RH(xviii)–RH(xx), will entail:

0^{138} RH(xxi):   Pfg
0^{139} RH(xxii):   Psg

and

0^{140} RH(xxiii):   Phg

Additionally, g / g$\prime$ / g$\prime\prime$ / g$\prime\prime\prime$ is a token of g*, thus:

0^{141} RE(i):   Pgg*

   Finally, although within Gregory's metaphysics they are the sorts of things that would be *candidates* to, the divine *energeia* tokens do not have any of the *idiomata*. (None of the divine *energeiai* tokens beget or spirate anything, nor are they begotten or spirated by anything.) Thus, prior to creation:

+ ¬EI: ¬($\exists$x)($\exists$y)(Ex & Iy & Pxy)

---

134. See footnote 125. From Eg$\prime$ & Pg$\prime$g* & Pfg$\prime$, above, by & Elimination.
135. See footnote 126. From Eg$\prime\prime$ & Pg$\prime\prime$g* & Psg$\prime\prime$, above, by & Elimination.
136. See footnote 127. From Eg$\prime\prime\prime$ & Pg$\prime\prime\prime$g* & Phg$\prime\prime\prime$, above, by & Elimination.
137. See footnote 186, p. 240.
138. See footnote 129. From RH(xviii) (Pfg$\prime$) and Σ_{g*}, by = g/g$\prime$.
139. See footnote 130. From RH(xix) (Psg$\prime\prime$) and Σ_{g*}, by = g/g$\prime\prime$.
140. See footnote 131. From RH(xx) (Phg$\prime\prime\prime$) and Σ_{g*}, by = g/g$\prime\prime\prime$.
141. See footnote 83. From Eg & Pgg*, by & Elimination.

5.2.3   Individuation of the Token Objects

The Individuation of the Hypostases

The three hypostases of the Trinity are all numerically distinct, being individuated by their *idiomata*. Recall that Gregory's principle of individuation for hypostases is either:

+ IDH$_{\text{Weak}}$: $\Box(\forall x)(\forall y)\{[Hx \ \& \ Hy] \rightarrow [x{=}y \leftrightarrow (\forall z)(Iz \rightarrow [Pxz \leftrightarrow Pyz])]\}$

i.e., necessarily, for any hypostases, x and y, x and y are identical if and only if x and y have *all and only* the same *idiomata*,[142] or:

+ IDH$_{\text{Strong}}$: $\Box(\forall x)(\forall y)\{[Hx \ \& \ Hy] \rightarrow [x{=}y \leftrightarrow (\exists z)(Iz \ \& \ [Pxz \ \& \ Pyz])]\}$

i.e., necessarily, for any hypostases, x and y, x and y are identical if and only if x and y have *any idioma* in common.[143]

First let us consider the individuation of the hypostases on IDH$_{\text{Weak}}$.

The Father and the Son are individuated by b*. That is, making the substitutions f/x and s/y in IDH$_{\text{Weak}}$, yields:

0^{144} $[Hf \ \& \ Hs] \rightarrow [f{=}s \leftrightarrow (\forall z)(Iz \rightarrow [Pfz \leftrightarrow Psz])]$

Since on Gregory's theology the Father and the Son are both hypostases, it follows that:

0^{145} $f{=}s \leftrightarrow (\forall z)(Iz \rightarrow [Pfz \leftrightarrow Psz])$

I.e., the Father and the Son are identical if and only if it is the case that they have all the same *idiomata*.

So, suppose that the Father and Son were identical:

0^{146} $f{=}s$

It would follow that they have all the same *idiomata*:

0^{147} $(\forall z)(Iz \rightarrow [Pfz \leftrightarrow Psz])$

---

142. See footnote 31, p. 208 for a discussion of why I do not include *ousiai* as objects that would individuate hypostases.
143. See footnote 31, p. 208 for a discussion of why I do not include *ousiai* as objects that would individuate hypostases.
144. From IDH$_{\text{Weak}}$, by the T Axiom, followed by $\forall$ Elimination, f/x and s/y.
145. From H(i) (Hf) and H(ii) (Hs), it follows that (Hf & Hs), by & Introduction.
   Then from (Hf & Hs) and [Hf & Hs] $\rightarrow$ [f=s $\leftrightarrow$ ($\forall z$)(Iz $\rightarrow$ [Pfz $\leftrightarrow$ Psz])], just above,
   f=s $\leftrightarrow$ ($\forall z$)(Iz $\rightarrow$ [Pfz $\leftrightarrow$ Psz]) follows by MP.
146. Assumption for *reductio*.
147. From f=s and f=s $\leftrightarrow$ ($\forall z$)(Iz $\rightarrow$ [Pfz $\leftrightarrow$ Psz]), just above, by $\leftrightarrow$ Elimination.

But on Gregory's theology, being begotten (or being begotten by the Father) is an *idioma* that the Son has, but that the Father lacks:

0^{148} Ib* & (¬Pfb* & Psb*)

Which contradicts the previous statement (that they have all the same idiomata).[149] Therefore, by *reductio*, the Father and Son are not identical:

0^{150} P4$_{\text{GNT-F}}$: f ≠ s

Although we will not give the proofs in details, the Father and Son would be individuated by b as well.[151] Whether they are individuated by p is at the heart of the *filioque* controversy.[152] They are of course not individuated by p*.[153]

It is obvious that parallel proofs can be given for the individuation of the Father and the Holy Spirit, and for the individuation of the Son and the Holy Spirit as well. So we will not give the proofs, but only note the following.

First, with respect to:

0^{154} P5$_{\text{GNT-F}}$: f ≠ h

the Father and the Holy Spirit are individuated by p*. [155] They are individuated by p as well.[156] They are also individuated by b.[157] They are not individuated by b*.[158]

Finally, with respect to:

0^{159} P6$_{\text{GNT-F}}$: s ≠ h

the Son and the Holy Spirit are individuated by b*.[160] The two are also individuated by p*.[161] Whether they are individuated by p is at the heart of the *filioque* controversy.[162] They are not individuated by b.[163]

---

148. From I(iii), RH(viii) and RH(xii)

149. Proof is left as an exercise for the reader.

150. From f=s ↔ (∀z)(Iz → [Pfz ↔ Psz]) and Ib* & ¬Pfb* & Psb*, by *reductio*. Proof is trivial, and left as an exercise for the reader. In terms of substantive assumptions, then:
P4$_{\text{GNT-F}}$ follows from IDH$_{\text{Weak}}$, H(i), H(ii), I(iii), RH(viii) and RH(xii).

151. I.e., P4$_{\text{GNT-F}}$ follows from IDH$_{\text{Weak}}$, H(i), H(ii), I(i), RH(vi) and RH(x), assuming we have RH(vi) and RH(x) as additional theological assumptions to appeal to.

152. I.e., P4$_{\text{GNT-F}}$ would follow from IDH$_{\text{Weak}}$, H(i), H(ii), I(ii), RH(vii) and ¬Psp, if we made that assumption.
P4$_{\text{GNT-F}}$ obviously does not follow from IDH$_{\text{Weak}}$, H(i), H(ii), I(ii), RH(vii) and Psp.

153. I.e., P4$_{\text{GNT-F}}$ does not follow from IDH$_{\text{Weak}}$, H(i), H(ii), I(iv), RH(ix) and RH(xiii).

154. From IDH$_{\text{Weak}}$, H(i), H(iii), I(ii), RH(vii) and RH(xv). Proof omitted.

155. I.e., P5$_{\text{GNT-F}}$ follows from IDH$_{\text{Weak}}$, H(i), H(iii), I(iv), RH(ix) and RH(xvii).

156. I.e., P5$_{\text{GNT-F}}$ follows from IDH$_{\text{Weak}}$, H(i), H(iii), I(ii), RH(vii) and RH(xv).

157. I.e., P5$_{\text{GNT-F}}$ follows from IDH$_{\text{Weak}}$, H(i), H(iii), I(i), RH(vi) and RH(xiv).

158. I.e., P5$_{\text{GNT-F}}$ does not follow from IDH$_{\text{Weak}}$, H(i), H(iii), I(iii), RH(viii) and RH(xvi).

159. From IDH$_{\text{Weak}}$, H(ii), H(iii), I(iii), RH(xii) and RH(xvi). Proof omitted.

160. I.e., P6$_{\text{GNT-F}}$ follows from IDH$_{\text{Weak}}$, H(ii), H(iii), I(iii), RH(xii) and RH(xvi).

161. I.e., P6$_{\text{GNT-F}}$ follows from IDH$_{\text{Weak}}$, H(ii), H(iii), I(iv), RH(xiii) and RH(xvii).

162. I.e., P6$_{\text{GNT-F}}$ follows from IDH$_{\text{Weak}}$, H(ii), H(iii), I(ii), RH(xv) and Psp.
P6$_{\text{GNT-F}}$ does not follow from IDH$_{\text{Weak}}$, H(ii), H(iii), I(ii), RH(xv) and ¬Psp.

163. I.e., P6$_{\text{GNT-F}}$ does not follow from IDH$_{\text{Weak}}$, H(ii), H(iii), I(i), RH(x) and RH(xiv).

Since IDH$_{\text{Strong}}$ requires that the hypostases differ with respect to *all* of the *idiomata*, the proofs become so lengthy it seems unreasonable to include them explicitly. But it should be obvious how they would go, given that, on the assumption that the *filioque* (Psp)† is false,[164,165] we have:

$$
\begin{array}{lll}
\text{Pfb} & \& & \neg\text{Psb} \\
\text{Pfp} & \& & \neg\text{Psp}\dagger \\
\neg\text{Pfb}^* & \& & \text{Psb}^* \\
\neg\text{Pfp}^* & \& & \neg\text{Psp}^*
\end{array}
$$

$$
\begin{array}{lll}
\text{Pfb} & \& & \neg\text{Phb} \\
\text{Pfp} & \& & \neg\text{Php} \\
\neg\text{Pfb}^* & \& & \neg\text{Phb}^* \\
\neg\text{Pfp}^* & \& & \text{Psp}^*
\end{array}
$$

$$
\begin{array}{lll}
\neg\text{Psb} & \& & \neg\text{Phb} \\
\neg\text{Psp}\dagger & \& & \neg\text{Php} \\
\text{Psb}^* & \& & \neg\text{Phb}^* \\
\neg\text{Psp}^* & \& & \text{Psp}^*
\end{array}
$$

And thus (assuming the falsehood of Psp), none of the hypostases shares any *idiomata* with any of the others.

The Individuation of the *Idiomata*

We are assuming that there are either three or four *idiomata* (b, p, b* and p*), and, although it is unclear whether b=p or b≠p, it seems they are all otherwise supposed to be distinct, and any *idiomata* that *are* distinct, are *intrinsically* distinct (5.1.4, p. 208).

The Individuation of the *Ousia*

There is a single divine *ousia*, individuated by its natural *energeiai*. Recall our principle of individuation for *ousiai* is:

+ IDO: $\Box(\forall x)(\forall x)[(\text{O}x \,\&\, \text{O}y) \rightarrow (x=y \leftrightarrow (\forall z)[\text{E}^*z \rightarrow (\text{N}zx \leftrightarrow \text{N}zy)])]$

---

164. Otherwise the Father and Son will be identical, since {IDH$_{\text{Strong}}$, Pfp, Psp} ⊢ f=s.

165. Technically speaking, Psp may not be the right way – certainly it is not the only way – to interpret the *filioque*. It may be that one ought to interpret the *word* "*filioque*" in an equivocal way. The Holy Spirit proceeds-$_1$ from the Father in the sense of deriving His hypostasis, or concrete existence, from the Father. Whereas he proceeds-$_2$ from the Son only in the "economic" sense of being sent into the world by the Son. Psp is simply the most straight-forward way of reading the *filioque* in a metaphysically serious sort of way. Thus, the problem of the *filioque* arises out of a combination of (1) assuming that IDH$_{\text{Strong}}$ gives the correct identity conditions for hypostases, *and* (2) interpreting the *word* "*filioque*" in a metaphysically serious way. The problem does not arise from (1) by itself.

Also recall that the Cappadocian Assertion (CA) was the claim that the hypostases (or more precisely, their *ousiai*) share all the same natural *energeiai*. I.e., Gregory asserts that:

+ CA: $(\forall x)\{E^*x \rightarrow (Nxo \leftrightarrow Nxn \leftrightarrow Nxm)\}$

From IDO, CA and O(i)–O(iii), it follows that:

0^{166} $O_{homoousion}$: o=n=m

which was what was in fact at the heart of the fourth century Trinitarian controversy.

He also issues what I will call "the Cappadocian Challenge" to Eunomius (or really to any heteroousians – i.e., those who deny the homoousion). That is, in order to disprove the Cappadocian Assertion that:

+ CA: $(\forall x)\{E^*x \rightarrow (Nxo \leftrightarrow Nxn \leftrightarrow Nxm)\}$

one must show that:

¬CA: $(\exists x)\{E^*x \ \& \ \neg(Nxo \leftrightarrow Nxn \leftrightarrow Nxm)\}$

and to show that some *energeia* type is not natural to some *ousia*, one must show that it is possible for there to be a hypostasis of that *ousia* that does not bear a metaphysical predication relation to any token of that *energeia* type.

Of course, there are some deep questions here as to how precisely to formulate IDO and N_{Def}. As I've formulated them, it would be open to the Eunomians to simply assert that, although the hypostases all *in fact* exhibit tokens of all the same *energeiai* types, some of those *energeia* types might be natural to the *ousia* of one hypostasis while another hypostasis has some token of that *energeia* type only accidentally. (Gregory, after all, admits that it is not only possible, but *actual* that other hypostases, including demons and humans, have tokens of various divine *energeiai* types – including "god-ding" itself, whatever exactly that is.)[167]   And as I've formulated Gregory's position in GNT_F, this would at least be logically possible. We then would have to interpret Gregory as simply challenging the Eunomians to *prove* the distinction of *ousiai* between the hypostases by showing that there is actually some *energeia* type that is not shared by all three hypostases. In other words, he would be challenging them to show:

(ChEun): $(\exists x) \ \{ \ E^*x \ \& \ Nxo \ \& \ \neg(\exists y) \ (Ey \ \& \ Pyx \ \& \ Psy) \ \}$

---

166. From IDO, CA & O(i)–O(iii). Proof in Appendix A.1, p. 315.
167. See above, 4.2.3, p. 134.

to prove that the Son is not *homoousios* with the Father by noting some divine *energeia* type, no token of which is engaged in by the Son.[168]

On the other hand, one might interpret Gregory as holding a stronger view about the individuation of *ousiai* by *energeia* types such that it would be impossible to "accidentally" engage in all the natural *energeiai* of some *ousia* without being *of* that *ousia*. ("If it walks like a duck, and it quacks like a duck, *it's a duck.*") Gregory does seem to speak this way at times. All I will say here is that, if he does take this stronger view, then his argument is logically tighter than if not, although he relies on a stronger and perhaps more controversial assumption. However, here again, I will simply go with the weaker assumption, since either way, Gregory is certainly committed to the formulations we will be working with (even if he would also accept stronger ones) and the weaker ones are all we need to make our points.

The Individuation of the Divine *Energeia* Types

As discussed above (5.1.4, p. 209), *energeia* types are presumably intrinsically distinct. From the available evidence, we can show that Gregory is committed to there being at least one divine energeia type, but we can't say precisely how many there are.[169]

The Individuation of the Divine *Energeia* Tokens

While we can't say how many divine *energeia* types there are (See just above), nor how many divine *energeia* tokens there are, we can show that there exists exactly one divine *energeia* token for every divine *energeia* type. That is, we can show that:

0^{170} E_{Unique}: $(\forall x)[(E^*x \ \& \ Nxo) \rightarrow (\exists! y)(Ey \ \& \ Pyx)]$

This, however, does not follow directly from the principle of individuation for *energeia* tokens we attributed to Gregory, or even from that principle and the fact that, prior to creation, the divine *energeia* tokens have no *idiomata*.

Recall that principle of individuation for *energeia* tokens is:

$+$ IDE: $\Box(\forall x)(\forall y)\{[Ex \ \& \ Ey] \rightarrow [x=y \leftrightarrow (\forall z)([Iz \ v \ E^*z] \rightarrow [Pxz \leftrightarrow Pyz])]\}$

From this and the fact that, prior to creation, the divine *energeia* tokens have no *idiomata* to individuate them, i.e.:

---

168. Likewise, with respect to the Pneumatomachians – those who affirmed the consubstantiality of the Father and Son, but denied the Holy Spirit's consubstantiality with either of the former, thus "*pneumatomachoi*" or "fighters against the Spirit. Gregory would be challenging them to show:
  (ChPnM): $(\exists x) \{ E^*x \ \& \ Nxo \ \& \ \neg(\exists y) (Ey \ \& \ Pyx \ \& \ Phy) \}$
169. See 5.2.1, p. 219 ff.
170. See footnote 177 below. From IDE, ¬EI, E^*_{Lemma} and $EE^*_{\leq 1}$ just below. Proof in Appendix A.4, p. 318.

+ ¬EI: ¬(∃x)(∃y)(Ex & Iy & Pxy)

it only follows that:

0^{171} (∀x)(∀y){[Ex & Ey] → [x=y ↔ (∀z)(E*z → [Pxz ↔ Pyz])]}

i.e., prior to creation, *energeiai* tokens x and y are identical if and only if x and y have all and only the same *energeia* types.

However, I said earlier (5.1.4, p. 209, footnote 34) that we face a choice as to how to formulate Gregory's view on the individuation of token *energeiai*, and that I suspect he would want to say that they are individuated not only by their *idiomata*, but by their *energeia* types as well. I said this was due to the logical consequences of their not being individuated by *energeia* types. Now is the time to explain why. Again, as far as I know, Gregory does not explicitly discuss the issue. But there are good reasons to think he would want to take the view that *energeiai* tokens cannot have multiple types. There are two logical possibilities to consider here.

First, it may be that a given token *energeia* can have *at most one energeia* type:

+ EE*$_{\leq 1}$: □(∀x)(∀y)(∀z)[(Ex & E*y & Pxy & E*z & Pxz) → y = z]

Second, it may be that, in principle, a given token *energeia* could have *more than one energeia* type:

+ EE*$_+$: ◇(∃x)(∃y)(∃z){(Ex & E*y & Pxy & E*z & Pxz) & y ≠ z}

In the first scenario, there would be a one-to-one correspondence between divine *energeia* types and tokens. But in the latter, there could be as few as one divine *energeia* token, and as many as the cardinality of the power set of the divine *energeia* types (i.e., where n is the number of divine *energeia* types, the number of divine *energeia* tokens could be as high as 2^n), or that minus one.[172]

Although these latter options following on EE*$_+$ are logically possible, I believe Gregory would be happier with our initial assumption – that a given token *energeia* must have at most one *energeia* type, and thus that there is a one-to-one correspondence between divine *energeia* types and tokens. And this is not merely because it seems simpler or more intuitive from a metaphysical point of view (although it does), but for theological reasons.[173] Gregory wants

---

171. From IDE and ¬EI. We will not make use of this inference, so no proof will be given.

172. The first extreme would occur if there were only a single divine *energeia* token having all of the divine *energeia* types at once. The latter would occur if we took every possible combination of *energeia* types (which would correspond to the power set of the set of *energeia* types, with the possible exception of the empty set – assuming we adopt an assumption that an *energeia* token must have at least one *energeia* type) and postulated one *energeia* token having each such possible combination.

173. And what follows is a good example of how theological concerns can constrain one's metaphysics or vice-versa.

to say that the three divine hypostases all have numerically the same token act of god-ding. But as we saw in the *Ad Ablabium*,[174] he also wants to say the same is true for *all* of their activities (modulo complications from the incarnation).[175]

Now, as we said, on the assumption that a given divine *energeia* token can have at most one divine *energeia* type, this theological result simply follows as a necessary consequence from his metaphysics and his other theological postulates. But suppose instead that a divine *energeia* token can have multiple types. Although it would still be *possible* for the hypostases to have all the same token *energeiai*, it would then be logically contingent (in the "narrowly" logical sense) and thus would have to be postulated as a substantive theological assumption.

For example, suppose there are three divine *energeia* types: 1*, 2* and 3*. If *energeia* tokens can have multiple *energeiai* types, there could be divine *energeiai* tokens 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 that have these types in the following way:

P(1,1*)
P(2,2*)
P(3,3*)
P(4,2*)
P(4,3*)
P(5,1*)
P(5,3*)
P(6,1*)

and

P(6,2*)

And then the three hypostases could each have some token of each of the the divine *energeia* types without any of them having any common divine *energeia* tokens as follows:

P(f,1)
P(f,4)
P(s,2)
P(s,5)
P(h,3)

and

P(h,6)

---

174. See 4.4.3, esp. p. 183.

175. This feature of Gregory's view allows him to fully generalize his solution to the LPT. That is, since, for Gregory, all of the things we want to call God – Lord, Creator, Savior, Provider, All-Knower, All-Ruler, and so on – all ultimately derive from some power or activity, and since he holds that the hypostases share *all* of their powers and activities, his Unity of Action Argument generalizes to any of the titles we want to apply to God. There will be, on Gregory's view, only one Lord, only one Creator, only one Savior, and so on.

The Father's having token 1 means He has a token of type 1*, while His having token 4 means he has a token of type 2* and a token of type 3*. The Son's having token 2 means He has a token of type 2*, while His having token 5 means He has a token of type 1* and a token of type 3*. And the Holy Spirit's having token 3 means He has a token of type 3*, while His having token 6 means He has a token of type 1* and a token of type 2*.

Thus, each hypostasis has some token of type 1*, some token of type 2* and some token of type 3*. Yet there is no token x such that each hypostasis has x. Thus, there is no synergy among the hypostases.

Gregory would not be very happy with such a possibility.

Suppose the *energeia* types in the example above were "god-ding," "creating," and "lording," respectively. As we will see, given Gregory's semantics below, the above scenario would entail that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are each "God," "Creator," and "Lord," but that there are exactly three gods, three creators, and three Lords. For 1, 5 and 6 are all god-dings; 2, 4 and 6 are all creations, and 3, 4 and 5 are all lordings.

Again, on EE*$_+$, it would still be logically possible for the hypostases to synergize as well. But it would also be logically possible for some such scenario as the case of three god-dings, creations and lordings above to be the case. Thus, it would turn out to be a substantive theological assumption to say that the hypostases share all of their *energeiai* and *dynameis*.

But Gregory does not write as though he considers this sort of thing to be even theoretically possible. He does not seem to think that the matter is contingent and that he is simply making an assumption. (He does not, for example, give any kind of scriptural or other theological argument for his view that the hypostases synergize on all of their actions.) He seems rather to think that it would not be possible, even in theory, for the three hypostases not to share their *energeiai* in common in the way he believes they do.

So, it seems more likely to me that Gregory would want to say that the hypostases' sharing *energeia* tokens is just a necessary consequence of the rest of his metaphysics and theology. In other words, I believe he would want to say that it is simply a truth of metaphysics that a given *energeia* token must bear a metaphysical predication relation to at most one *energeia* type. Thus:

+ EE*$_{\leq 1}$: $\Box(\forall x)(\forall y)(\forall z)[(Ex \ \& \ E^*y \ \& \ Pxy \ \& \ E^*z \ \& \ Pxz) \rightarrow y = z]$

And together with:

+ IDE: $\Box(\forall x)(\forall y)\{[Ex \ \& \ Ey] \rightarrow [x=y \leftrightarrow (\forall z)([Iz \ v \ E^*z] \rightarrow [Pxz \leftrightarrow Pyz])]\}$
+ ¬EI: $\neg(\exists x)(\exists y)(Ex \ \& \ Iy \ \& \ Pxy)$

and

0^{176} E*$_{Lemma}$: $(\forall x)[(E^*x \ \& \ Nxo) \rightarrow (\exists y)(Ey \ \& \ Pyx)]$

---

176. See footnote 77. From NE*E, O(i), H(i) and RH(i). Proof in Appendix A.3, p. 317.

it follows that:

0^{177} E_{Unique}: $(\forall x)[(E^*x \;\&\; Nxo) \to (\exists! y)(Ey \;\&\; Pyx)]$

i.e., for any divine *energeia* type, there is exactly one token *energeia* of that type.

Of course, it follows from E_{Unique} (along with N_{Def} and Σ^*_{Def}) that the divine hypostases synergize on every divine *energeia* type. That is:

0^{178} $\Sigma^*_{\forall}$: $(\forall x)\{[E^*x \;\&\; Nxo] \to (\forall y)(\forall z)[(Hy \;\&\; Hz \;\&\; y{\neq}z \;\&\; Pyo \;\&\; Pzo) \to \Sigma^*yzx]\}$

i.e., for any divine *energeia* type x, all divine hypostases synergize on x. In other words, what we called in the previous chapter the "Universal Synergy Claim."

Now, let us turn specifically to the case of "g*." $\Sigma^*_{\forall}$ entails that the divine hypostases will synergize on g*. What's more, making the substitution g*/x in E_{Unique}, yields:

0^{179} $(E^*g^* \;\&\; Ng^*o) \to (\exists! y)(Ey \;\&\; Pyg^*)$

and from that and:

0^{180} $E^*g^* \;\&\; Ng^*o$

above, it follows that:

0^{181} $P7_{Lemma}$: $(\exists! y)(Ey \;\&\; Pyg^*)$

and since:

0^{182} $Eg \;\&\; Pgg^*$
0^{183} $g\prime_{Lemma}$: $Eg\prime \;\&\; Pg\prime g^*$
0^{184} $g\prime\prime_{Lemma}$: $Eg\prime\prime \;\&\; Pg\prime\prime g^*$

and

---

177. From IDE, $\neg$EI, E^*_{Lemma} and $EE^*_{\leq 1}$. Proof in Appendix A.4, p. 318.
178. From E_{Unique}, N_{Def} and Σ^*_{Def}. Proof in Appendix A.5, p. 320.
179. From E_{Unique}, by $\forall$ Elimination, g*/x.
180. See footnote 69. From $(\exists y)(E^*y \;\&\; Nyo)$, by $\exists$ Elimination g*/y.
   NOTE: This may seem suspect, as $\exists$ Elimination must always use a *new* term in place of a variable, whereas just above we instantiated a universally quantified sentence with g*. But in fact, this step – $E^*g^* \;\&\; Ng^*o$ – was derived already, in footnote 69. Thus, the order was actually that we *first* used $\exists$ Elimination to get g*, back at foot note 69, when as yet g* had not been used. We *later* use $\forall$ Elimination to derive $(E^*g^* \;\&\; Ng^*o) \to (\exists! y)(Ey \;\&\; Pyg^*)$. And $\forall$ Elimination does not require the use of a previously unused term.
181. From $(E^*g^* \;\&\; Ng^*o) \to (\exists! y)(Ey \;\&\; Pyg^*)$ and $E^*g^* \;\&\; Ng^*o$ above, MP.
182. See footnote 81. From $(\exists y)(Ey \;\&\; Pyg^*)$, by $\exists$ Elimination (g/y).
183. See footnote 122. From $Eg\prime \;\&\; Pg\prime g^* \;\&\; Pfg\prime$, above, by $\&$ Elimination.
184. See footnote 123. From $Eg\prime\prime \;\&\; Pg\prime\prime g^* \;\&\; Psg\prime\prime$, above, by $\&$ Elimination.

0^{185} g‴$_{\text{Lemma}}$:   Eg‴ & Pg‴g*

it follows that:

0^{186} Σ*$_{\text{g*}}$ g = g′ = g″ = g‴

And since:

0^{187} RH(xviii):   Pfg′
0^{188} RH(xix):   Psg″

and

0^{189} RH(xx):   Phg‴

it follows that

0^{190} RH(xxi):   Pfg
0^{191} RH(xxii):   Psg

and

0^{192} RH(xxiii):   Phg

which we had promised to show at the end of the section on relations had by the hypostases (5.2.2, p. 228).

And for our last trick, we note that from any one of

0^{193} RH(xxi):   Pfg
0^{194} RH(xxii):   Psg

or

0^{195} RH(xxiii):   Phg

185. See footnote 124. From Eg‴ & Pg‴g* & Phg‴, above, by & Elimination.
186. From P7$_{\text{Lemma}}$, Eg & Pgg*, g′$_{\text{Lemma}}$, g″$_{\text{Lemma}}$, and g‴$_{\text{Lemma}}$. Proof is left as an exercise for the reader.
187. See footnote 125. From Eg′ & Pg′g* & Pfg′, above, by & Elimination.
188. See footnote 126. From Eg″ & Pg″g* & Psg″, above, by & Elimination.
189. See footnote 127. From Eg‴ & Pg‴g* & Phg‴, above, by & Elimination.
190. See footnote 129. From RH(xviii) (Pfg′) and Σ$_{\text{g*}}$, by = g/g′.
191. See footnote 130. From RH(xix) (Psg″) and Σ$_{\text{g*}}$, by = g/g″.
192. See footnote 131. From RH(xx) (Phg‴) and Σ$_{\text{g*}}$, by = g/g‴.
193. See footnote 129. From RH(xviii) (Pfg′) and Σ$_{\text{g*}}$, by = g/g′.
194. See footnote 130. From RH(xix) (Psg″) and Σ$_{\text{g*}}$, by = g/g″.
195. See footnote 131. From RH(xx) (Phg‴) and Σ$_{\text{g*}}$, by = g/g‴.

plus

0^{196} P7$_{\text{Lemma}}$: $(\exists!y)(Ey \ \& \ Pyg^*)$

and

0^{197} E(i) & RE(i):   Eg & Pgg*

we can derive:

0^{198}
P7$_{\text{GNT-EQ}}$. $(\exists x)(\forall y)\{[Ex\&Pxg^*\&(\exists z)(Pzx)] \ \& \ [(Ey\&Pyg^*\&(\exists w)[Pwy])\rightarrow y=x]\}$

which, naturally, we will discuss more in the next section (5.3.3, pp. 246 ff.).

Finally, before we leave this section, recall that in the section on the identity conditions for *energeia* tokens, we simply assumed that *energeia* tokens can be individuated by *energeia* types in addition to their own *idiomata* (which turn out to be irrelevant in the case of the Trinity's natural *energeiai*).

We have also seen there are reasons to suppose Gregory would want to add that every *energeia* token must have exactly one *energeia* type (EE*$_{\leq 1}$).

Suppose, for example, an event of lighting and heating occur at the same time and place. Say they both emanate from the sun at exactly the same time. On the assumptions we have been working with, these would be two distinct, but co-located, token *energeiai*, each participating in its own unique *energeia* type.

Now let us consider the possibility that it is only *idiomata* that individuate *energeia* tokens, and that energeia types don't individuate *energeia* tokens. (Thus, for example, "co-located" lightings and heatings would in fact count as a single token *energeia*).

Since there are no *idiomata* to individuate divine *energeia* tokens, it would follow that, prior to creation, there would be only one, single token *energeia*.

In that case, suppose we still assumed that there is at most one *energeia* type per *energeia* token (EE*$_{\leq 1}$). Then, prior to creation, there could be only one, single divine *energeia* type.

On the other hand, suppose we allowed that one *energeia* token could have more than one *energeia* type EE*$_{+}$. Since we are now assuming that tokens are not individuated by types, we would not have the problem discussed above in which there could be three god-dings, three creatings and three lordings. Instead, it would follow that there could be as many *energeia* types as we like, but they would all have to be realized in a single *energeia* token, which would be had by all three hypostases.

---

196. See footnote 181. From (E*g* & Ng*o) $\rightarrow$ $(\exists!y)(Ey$ & Pyg*) and E*g* & Ng*o above, MP.

197. From E(i) and RE(i) above (see footnotes 82 and 83), by & Int.

198. From RH(xxi) or RH(xxii) or RH(xxiii) plus P7$_{\text{Lemma}}$ and E(i) & RE(i). Proof in Appendix A.6, p. 322.

I doubt Gregory would be happy with either of those results, though it wouldn't ultimately affect Gregory's response to the LPT.

Gregory indicates that there are *multiple* distinct *energeiai*. (4.2.3, p. 137. "We have ... been taught differences of *energeiai* ...." Similar claims are made elsewhere.) Of course, if one takes him to mean that there are multiple divine *energeia* tokens, it follows immediately that he wouldn't be happy with either of the views we are now considering.

On the other hand, if we take him to mean only that there are multiple divine *energeia* types, he could accept the second of the views we are considering (multiples divine *energeia* types, all realized by a single divine *energeia* token), but not the first (a single divine *energeia* type with a single divine *energeia* token).

Such a view might appeal to one who wants to claim that God's foreknowing *is* in fact the same as His creating, and so forth. And this might also seem more congenial to a certain kind of theory of divine simplicity. I don't think Gregory or the other Cappadocians held such a strong view of divine simplicity, and I doubt very much that he would have been happy with this either, but I won't argue for that point here as, fortunately, deciding this issue will not be necessary for our purposes, since, in any case E_{Unique} will be true, as will $\Sigma^*_\forall$. Either because:

(1) there is only a single divine *energeia* type with a single token (had by all the hypostases), or because

(2) there are $n > 1$ types with exactly one token instantiating all n types (that one token being had by all the hypostases), or because

(3) there are $n > 1$ types and exactly n tokens with a one-to-one correspondence between types and tokens, and each hypostasis has every token (as I think Gregory would actually want to say).

But in all of these scenarios, E_{Unique} would be true, as would $\Sigma^*_\forall$. And so, I will proceed on the assumption that Gregory would prefer the formulation we have been assuming (that (3) there are $n > 1$ types and exactly n tokens, with a one-to-one correspondence between types and tokens), only noting that taking one of the other routes just discussed, though I suspect it would probably be less true to Gregory's actual thought, would make no difference with respect to Gregory's solution to the LPT.

E_{Unique} and $\Sigma^*_\forall$ are the keys to Gregory's solution to the LPT (and the keys to the *generality* of his position with respect to *all* of our predicates and descriptions of God – not *merely* the predicate "God," but "Creator," "Savior," "Lord," etc.), since Gregory holds that counting by agent nouns hinges not on (or at least not only on) distinctions between hypostases engaged in *energeiai*, but between token *energeiai* being engaged in by hypostases. Because of E_{Unique}

242

and $\Sigma^*_\forall$, prior to creation, the hypostases will count as one E*-er for any *energeia* type E* (and similarly for any *dynamis*, which we are "rolling into" our discussion of *energeiai* – see footnote 11, p. 201 above). They would thus not only count as one God, but as one Lord, one Creator, one Provider, one Savior, one Pantokrator (All-Ruler), one All-Knower, etc. And it is to Gregory's semantics that we turn now.

5.3   Gregory's Semantics

Now that we have stated all of the relevant aspects both of Gregory's metaphysics and of his substantive theology, we will explain the principles by which he believes this content maps onto the linguistic expressions we are concerned with. Again, we have done this implicitly all along the way for our formal language (PLI), since it has been a useful way to make the content of Gregory's view more precise. Now we will make his N-semantics explicit. Then we will be in a position to give a model for the (relevant)[199] content of Gregory's view (via the F-semantics for P1 through P7),[200] and to see how that content is supposed to be expressed by the natural language sentences S1 through S7, used to express P1 through P7 (via the N-semantics for the various expressions that make up those sentences).

5.3.1   Gregory's Semantics for S4 through S6

First, as it seems to me, Gregory quite clearly sees a very strong distinction between the three hypostases.[201] And as we have said before, $\neq$ is the weakest real distinction there is. So Gregory is committed to analyzing P4 through P6 as having the logical forms of:

0^{202} $P4_{\text{GNT-F}}$. f$\neq$s
0^{203} $P5_{\text{GNT-F}}$. f$\neq$h
0^{204} $P6_{\text{GNT-F}}$. s$\neq$h

(or in any case, he affirms some propositions χ_1–χ_3 with logical forms:[205]

> P4. χ_1 such that $\chi_1 \models$ f$\neq$s
> P5. χ_2 such that $\chi_2 \models$ f$\neq$h

---

199. In fact, the model we will construct below, $M_{\text{P-GNT-F}}$, will be a model of all of Gregory's metaphysics and theology that we've discussed in this chapter. But we will only *show* that it is a model for his interpretations of P1–P7. The rest is left as an exercise for the reader.

200. In the actual, model-theoretic sense of "model," as opposed to the looser sense of the term "model" typically employed in defenses of the doctrine of the Trinity.

201. At least, interpreting him in what I see as the most straight-forward way. See p. 200 for my response to the concern that Gregory may have had no concept of strict identity.

202. See footnote 150.

203. See footnote 154.

204. See footnote 159.

205. See 5.2.3, pp. 231 – 233.

P6. χ_3 such that $\chi_3 \models$ s≠h

but for simplicity's sake, we will suppose he would simply analyze P4 through P6 as simple non-identity claims).

As a result, Gregory's view will not fall into the Naïve Modalism Family, since these truth conditions are not compatible with the essential feature of Naïve Modalism.

So, it would seem that Gregory would accept the following N-semantics for S4–S6:

S4: "The Father is not the Son" is true, if and only if "f≠s" is true, if and only if the hypostasis we have named "f" in PLI or "the Father" in English ("ὁ πατήρ" in Greek) is not identical to the hypostasis named "s" in PLI or "the Son" in English ("ὁ υἱός" in Greek).

S5: "The Father is not the Holy Spirit" is true, if and only if "f≠h" is true, if and only if the hypostasis we have named "f" in PLI or "the Father" in English ("ὁ πατήρ" in Greek) is not identical to the hypostasis named "h" in PLI or "the Holy Spirit" in English ("τὸ ἅγιον πνεῦμα" in Greek).

S6: "The Son is not the Holy Spirit" is true, if and only if "s≠h" is true, if and only if the hypostasis we have named "s" in PLI or "the Son" in English ("ὁ υἱός" in Greek) is not identical to the hypostasis named "h" in PLI or "the Holy Spirit" in English ("τὸ ἅγιον πνεῦμα" in Greek).

Given Gregory's metaphysics and theology, these truth conditions all hold (see 5.2.3, p. 231 ff.), so S4 through S6 will express true propositions, if Gregory's metaphysics, theology, and semantics are true.

5.3.2 Gregory's Semantics for S1 through S3

Next, as we've seen, Gregory takes statements of the form, *x is God*, to be predications, not of an identity relation to some individual named "God,"[206] but predication of engagement in some token action (*energeia*) of a certain type we have named "g*" ("beholding" or, as we are calling it, "god-ding"). So it would seem that Gregory is committed to analyzing P1 through P3, not as having the logical forms of:

P1$_{\text{LPT-1}}$. f=g
P2$_{\text{LPT-1}}$. s=g
P3$_{\text{LPT-1}}$. h=g

but as having the logical forms of:

0[207] P1$_{\text{GNT-F}}$. $(\exists x)(Ex \,\&\, Pxg^* \,\&\, Pfx)$

---

206. Nor predications of a certain natural kind, though that is not to the point just now.
207. See footnote 116.

0^{208} P2$_{\text{GNT-F}}$. $(\exists x)(Ex \,\&\, Pxg^* \,\&\, Psx)$
0^{209} P3$_{\text{GNT-F}}$. $(\exists x)(Ex \,\&\, Pxg^* \,\&\, Phx)$

As a result, Gregory's view will not fall into the LPT$_1$ Family, since these truth conditions are not compatible with the essential feature of all LPT$_1$ Family accounts. That is, the logical forms of P1$_{\text{GNT-F}}$ through P3$_{\text{GNT-F}}$ do not fit the more general descriptions of:

P1. ϕf such that $\phi\alpha \models \alpha = t_i$ for any term t_i such that $t_i \neq \alpha$
P2. ϕs such that $\phi\alpha \models \alpha = t_i$ for any term t_i such that $t_i \neq \alpha$
P3. ϕh such that $\phi\alpha \models \alpha = t_i$ for any term t_i such that $t_i \neq \alpha$

So, it would seem that Gregory would accept the following N-semantics for S1–S3:

S1: "The Father is (a) God" is true, if and only if "$(\exists x)$ (Ex & Pxg* & Pfx)" is true, if and only if the hypostasis named "f" in PLI or "the Father" in English ("ὁ πατήρ" in Greek) has some token of the divine *energeia* type we have named "g*" in PLI ("godding," or "beholding," or whatever it is).

S2: "The Son is (a) God" is true, if and only if "$(\exists x)$ (Ex & Pxg* & Psx)" is true, if and only if the hypostasis named "s" in PLI or "the Son" in English ("ὁ υἱός" in Greek) has some token of the divine *energeia* type we have named "g*" in PLI ("godding," or "beholding," or whatever it is).

S3: "The Holy Spirit is (a) God" is true, if and only if "$(\exists x)$ (Ex & Pxg* & Phx)" is true, if and only if the hypostasis named "h" in PLI or "the Holy Spirit" in English ("τὸ ἅγιον πνεῦμα" in Greek) has some token of the divine *energeia* type we have named "g*" in PLI ("godding," or "beholding," or whatever it is).

Given Gregory's metaphysics and theology, these truth conditions all hold (see 5.2.2, p. 227), so S1 through S3 will express true propositions, if Gregory's metaphysics, theology, and semantics are true.

Since we saw above that Gregory's view does not fall into the Naïve Modalist Family, and see here that it does not fall into the Arian Family or the LPT$_1$ Family, it must fall into either the Equivocation Family or the NCIC Family, if it is to avoid falling into the LPT$_2$ Family. Both of these hinge on one's analysis of S7. And so let us examine the final aspect of Gregory's view, his semantics for S7.

---

208. See footnote 117.
209. See footnote 118.

5.3.3 Gregory's Semantics for S7

Finally, as we've seen, Gregory holds that we count E*-ers, not by counting the number of distinct hypostases engaged in some token of E*, but by counting the number of distinct tokens of E* being engaged in by some hypostasis. That is, he seems to take it that sentences of the form *there are* n *E*-ers*, where "E*-er" is an agent noun, to be true when the number of token E-ings is equal to n.[210] So Gregory is committed to analyzing S7 not as having the logical form of:

7$_\text{LPT-2-FAMILY-SCHEMA}$. $(\exists x)(\forall y)(\phi x \ \& \ (\phi y \to y \ \mathbb{R} \ x))$
(Such that y $\mathbb{R}$ x $\models$ y = x.)

fleshed out (for ϕ here to be univocal with P1–P3 on Gregory's account) as:

7$_\text{LPT-2-GNT-F}$. $(\exists x)(\forall y)\{(\exists z)(Ez\&Pzg^*\&Pxz) \ \& \ [(\exists z)(Ez\&Pzg^*\&Pyz) \to y\mathbb{R}x]\}$
(Such that y $\mathbb{R}$ x $\models$ y = x.)

(i.e., there is exactly one thing that has a token god-ding), but, perhaps, as:

P7$_\text{GNT-EQ}$. $(\exists x)(\forall y)\{[Ex\&Pxg^*\&(\exists z)(Pzx)] \ \& \ [(Ey\&Pyg^*\&(\exists w)[Pwy]) \to y=x]\}$

(i.e., there is exactly one token god-ding that is had by anything).

    I say "perhaps" because, while it is not hard to say, in a concrete way, what Gregory's view about counting amounts to, specifying its logical form precisely and placing it within our taxonomy does bring up an interesting dilemma. This is because there are distinct, though logically equivalent, ways of stating Gregory's view, and which we choose will determine whether the solution falls into the Equivocation Family or the NCIC Family. This may seem confusing or surprising. I'll try to dispel that confusion below. But first let's look at two ways of formalizing Gregory's view of S7, one that fits into the Equivocation Family, and one that fits the NCIC Family. Then we will discuss what moral we should take away from the fact, which may at first seem puzzling, that the view can be put into either family.

Formalizing Gregory's View as an Equivocation Account

The simplest way to express the logical form of P7 on Gregory's view is, as we saw just above:

P7$_\text{GNT-EQ}$. $(\exists x)(\forall y)\{[Ex\&Pxg^*\&(\exists z)(Pzx)] \ \& \ [(Ey\&Pyg^*\&(\exists w)[Pwy]) \to y=x]\}$

(i.e., there is exactly one token god-ding that is had by anything).
    On this reading of Gregory, he would presumably want to give the following N-semantics for S7:

---

210. Or perhaps when *both* the number of hypostases engaged in some token act of E-ing is at least n, *and* the number of token acts of E-ing being engaged in by some hypostasis is at least n. See p. 190.

S7: "There is exactly one God" is true, if and only if

"$(\exists x)(\forall y)\{[Ex\&Pxg^*\&(\exists z)(Pzx)] \& [(Ey\&Pyg^*\&(\exists w)[Pwy]) \rightarrow y{=}x]\}$" is true, if and only if there is some token *energeia* x of the *energeia* type we have named "g*" in PLI ("godding" or "beholding" or whatever we call it in English – "ϑεωρεῖν," or "ϑέειν," or whatever we call it in Greek) such that x is had by some z, and if there is any token *energeia* y of the *energeia* type we have named "g*" in PLI ("godding" or "beholding" or whatever we call it in English – "ϑεωρεῖν," or "ϑέειν," or whatever we call it in Greek) such that y is had by some w, then x and y are identical.

Given Gregory's metaphysics and theology, these truth conditions hold (see 198, p. 241 ff.), so S7 will express a true proposition, if Gregory's metaphysics and theology and this N-semantics are true.

Putting this together with the logical forms that Gregory's view implicitly attributes to P1 through P6, gives us:

P1$_{\text{GNT-F}}$. $(\exists x)$ (Ex & Pxg* & Pfx)
P2$_{\text{GNT-F}}$. $(\exists x)$ (Ex & Pxg* & Psx)
P3$_{\text{GNT-F}}$. $(\exists x)$ (Ex & Pxg* & Phx)
P4$_{\text{GNT-F}}$. f $\neq$ s
P5$_{\text{GNT-F}}$. f $\neq$ h
P6$_{\text{GNT-F}}$. s $\neq$ h
P7$_{\text{GNT-EQ}}$. $(\exists x)(\forall y)\{[Ex\&Pxg^*\&(\exists z)(Pzx)] \& [(Ey\&Pyg^*\&(\exists w)[Pwy]) \rightarrow y{=}x]\}$

This would have the result that:

1. we count gods by the classical identity relation, but

2. in P1–P3 "x is (a) God" means "x has a token god-ding," whereas

3. in P7 "x is (a) God" means "x is a token god-ding that is had."

Thus, this would fall into the Equivocation Family as we've defined it, and not the NCIC Family.

Formalizing Gregory's View as an NCIC Account

On the other hand, with much more complexity, we could represent the logical form of P7 on Gregory's view within the NCIC Family as follows. Recall that in this family, we count by the schema:

(7_{SCHEMA}) $(\exists x)(\forall y)(\phi x \,\&\, (\phi y \rightarrow y\ \mathbb{R}\ x)\,)$
(where x $\mathbb{R}$ y $\not\models$ x=y.)

and that $\phi\alpha$ is supposed to be univocal not only among P1–P3, but between P1–P3 on the one hand and P7 on the other. Thus, since in P1–P3 $\phi\alpha$ is fleshed out with formulae of the form:

247

(∃z) (Ez & Pzg* & Pαz)

yielding:

P1$_{\text{GNT-F}}$. (∃x) (Ex & Pxg* & Pfx)
P2$_{\text{GNT-F}}$. (∃x) (Ex & Pxg* & Psx)
P3$_{\text{GNT-F}}$. (∃x) (Ex & Pxg* & Phx)

in P7 this would yield:

P7$_{\text{GNT}_{\text{SCHEMA}}}$.　(∃u)(∀v) { (∃w)(Ew & Pwg* & Puw) &
　　　　　　　　　　　[(∃x) (Ex & Pxg* & Pvx) → u ℝ v] }

i.e., there is a u that has some token act of god-ding, and any v that has a token act of god-ding is such that u bears ℝ to v. In the case of Gregory's view, we could then flesh out u ℝ v as:

0[211]　ℝ$_{\text{Def}}$: (∀u)(∀v){ u ℝ v ↔ (∃!y) [Ey & Pyg* & (Puy v Pvy)] }

or more fully:

0[212]　ℝ$_{\text{Def}}$: (∀u)(∀v){ u ℝ v ↔ (∃y)(∀z)[(Ey & Pyg* & [Puy v Pvy]) &
　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　([Ez & Pzg* & (Puz v Pvz)] → y = z)]}

i.e., u and v bear the relation to one another that there is exactly one token act of godding that either one has. They are, as we might put it, "single-tokened with respect to god-ding."[213]

　　Thus, to put it all together:

P7$_{\text{GNT-NCIC}}$. (∃u)(∀v){(∃w)[Ew & Pwg* & Puw] &
　　　　　　　　((∃x)[Ex & Pxg* & Pvx] →
　　　　　　　　(∃!y)[Ey & Pyg* & (Puy v Pvy)]) }

or more fully:

P7$_{\text{GNT-NCIC}}$. (∃u)(∀v){(∃w)[Ew & Pwg* & Puw] &
　　　　　　　　((∃x)[Ex & Pxg* & Pvx] →

---

211. Stipulative Definition.

212. Stipulative Definition.

213. Note that, by itself, u ℝ v just says that u and v have exactly one god-ding *between them* – thus, not that *there is only one* god-ding, but that u and v in particular *have* only one god-ding between them. But of course, I think that is as Gregory would want it. See the discussion at p. 134 ff. What will get the result that *there is only one God* below is assuming that *anything* that gods is single-tokened with respect to god-ding with anything else that gods. In fact, as we've seen, Gregory would not take this to be strictly speaking true. But he would affirm it if we restrict our domain of quantification to those things that exist "prior to creation," or probably even just to those things that have "god-ding" *by nature*, rather than accidentally.

$$(\exists y)(\forall z)[(Ey \ \& \ Pyg^* \ \& \ [Puy \ v \ Pvy] \ ) \ \& $$
$$([Ez \ \& \ Pzg^* \ \& \ (Puz \ v \ Pvz) \ ] \rightarrow y = z)]\}$$

i.e., there is a u that has some token act of god-ding, and, if any v has any token act of god-ding, then there is exactly one token act of god-ding that either u or v has. To put it another way, there is a u that gods, and any v that gods is such that u and v are "single-tokened" with respect to "god-ding."

So, on this reading of Gregory, he would want to give the following N-semantics for S7:

S7: "There is exactly one God" is true, if and only if P7$_{\text{GNT-NCIC}}$ is true, if and only if there is a u that has some token *energeia* of the *energeia* type we have named "g*" in PLI ("godding" or "beholding" or whatever we call it in English – "ϑεωρεῖν," or "ϑέειν," or whatever we call it in Greek) and if any v has any token *energeia* of the *energeia* type g*, then u and v are single-tokened with respect to g*.

Given Gregory's metaphysics and theology, these truth conditions hold (see 198, p. 241 ff. along with refTwoFormulations, p. 250 ff. for an explanation), so S7 will express a true proposition, if Gregory's metaphysics and theology and this N-semantics are true.

Putting this together with the logical forms that Gregory's view implicitly attributes to P1 through P6, gives us:

P1$_{\text{GNT-F}}$. $(\exists x) \ (Ex \ \& \ Pxg^* \ \& \ Pfx)$
P2$_{\text{GNT-F}}$. $(\exists x) \ (Ex \ \& \ Pxg^* \ \& \ Psx)$
P3$_{\text{GNT-F}}$. $(\exists x) \ (Ex \ \& \ Pxg^* \ \& \ Phx)$
P4$_{\text{GNT-F}}$. $f \neq s$
P5$_{\text{GNT-F}}$. $f \neq h$
P6$_{\text{GNT-F}}$. $s \neq h$
P7$_{\text{GNT-NCIC}}$. $(\exists u)(\forall v)\{(\exists w)[\ Ew \ \& \ Pwg^* \ \& \ Puw \ ] \ \& $
$(\ (\exists x)[\ Ex \ \& \ Pxg^* \ \& \ Pvx \ ] \rightarrow$
$(\exists y)(\forall z)[(Ey \ \& \ Pyg^* \ \& \ [Puy \ v \ Pvy] \ ) \ \& $
$([Ez \ \& \ Pzg^* \ \& \ (Puz \ v \ Pvz) \ ] \rightarrow y = z)]\}$

This would have the result that:

1. we count gods by the relation of "being singled-tokened with respect to 'god-ding'," not classical identity,[214] but

2. in P1–P3 "x is (a) God" means "x has a god-ding," and

3. in P7 "x is (a) God" means "x has a god-ding" as well.

Thus, this would fall into the NCIC Family as we've defined it, and not the Equivocation Family.

---

214. Of course, this is just because, in general, when counting by agent nouns, we count X-ers by the relation of "being single-tokened with respect to 'X-ing'."

A Note on the Two Formulations

As I said, one might find it puzzling that we could formalize Gregory's view in two very different ways, with the result that his view could be put into either one of two different Families that attribute two very different logical forms to P7. First, one might think that it shouldn't be possible, since a single proposition can't have more than one logical form. Or again, one might think it just means that the difference between the two formulations is nil, so that we should be indifferent between them. I don't think either of these reactions is right.

First, recall that our taxonomy is exhaustive, but not exclusive, so it is possible for certain solutions to the LPT to fall into *both* the Equivocation Family *and* the NCIC Family.

Next, note that the two formulations are logically equivalent.

Suppose it is the case that something bears some relation R (like "having") to some object of type A (like token acts of "god-ding").

Now suppose that any things that bear R to any A, bear R to at most a single A between them all. (This is essentially what P7$_{\text{GNT-NCIC}}$ says.) Clearly it will also be the case that there is only one A to which anything bears R. (This is essentially what P$_{\text{GNT-EQ}}$ says.)

And likewise, suppose it is the case that there is only one A to which anything bears R. Clearly it will also be the case that any things that bear R to any A, bear R to at most a single A between them all.

So, the worry that this should not have been possible is misguided, because, for any given account A, there can easily be distinct, *but logically equivalent* ways of putting all of the relevant content of A. And our taxonomy was not created for the purpose of grouping all logically equivalent accounts together, with no overlap between Families, but for the purpose of showing that all answers to the LPT will have to have one (or more!) of a certain set of logical properties, all of which have seemed objectionable to some philosophers. (Thus, that there can be no new answers to the LPT that have a novel logical form that would escape all of those criticisms.) Of course, that's not to say one *couldn't* create a taxonomy of answers to the LPT that would group logically equivalent accounts together into Families that were mutually exclusive. That simply wasn't the purpose of the taxonomy provided. So it shouldn't come as a surprise that some accounts could be members of two different Families.

On the other hand, one might think this means that there is thus no important difference between the two ways of formulating P7, so that we should be indifferent between them. Either one essentially says the same thing.

I think this is also mistaken. All it means for these formulations to be *logically* equivalent is merely that any time the one is true the other will be and vice-versa (any model for one is a model for the other). But the *semantic principles* (F-semantics) that we use to map Gregory's metaphysics and substantive theology *onto* these two different formal representations are quite different. As are the parallel semantics principles (N-semantics) by which we would map his view onto S7.

Now there is a certain sense in which I will say that semantics doesn't matter

much (see Chapter 6.2, p. 273 ff. below). Namely, when *all that one is concerned about* is (the truth of, or consistency of) one's substantive theory. However, given that the substantive theory one is trying to defend is consistent, there are certainly cases in which one semantics is preferable to another.

Putting aside any purely philosophical concerns, we have in this case an issue that concerns the very title of the work we focused on in the previous chapter – "On Not Thinking to Say 'Three Gods'." A problem with *any* solution to the LPT within the Equivocation Family is that, whether or not it has the resources to *allow* Trinitarians to straight-facedly claim that "there is exactly one God," it will always face a difficulty when it comes to finding the resources to *forbid* Trinitarians to say that "there are exactly three gods." For if the two senses in which something can be said to be a god, or divine, are *equally good*, then, even if there is some perfectly good sense in which there is one God, there is an *equally good* sense in which there are three gods. And however one tries to sort out that issue on any *other* Equivocation Family account, it's difficult to see, if we formulate GNT as an Equivocation account, how Gregory would argue that a *token action* is somehow *primarily* what we mean by "God."

On the other hand, on the NCIC formulation, there is no sense in which there are three gods, because there is only one sense of "is God" and only one way to count gods.

There are some textual reasons to prefer the NCIC formulation as well. For example, in *Contra Eunomium*, after discussing various biblical passages in which the same *energeiai* are attributed to all three hypostases in different passages, Gregory says, "Those who keep repeating against us the phrase 'three Gods,' because we hold these views, have perhaps not yet learnt how to count."[215] Some similar statements can be found elsewhere in Gregory, as well as in Gregory Nazianzen.

But, although I would be prepared to argue that the NCIC formulation is preferable, since the two are logically equivalent, the model we will construct in the next section will be a model for either of these formulations. Therefore, both formulations count as solutions to the LPT. Therefore, so long as *at least one* of them is formally adequate, the LPT will have a formally adequate solution. So, although I do think P7$_{\text{GNT-NCIC}}$ is the philosophically preferable way to understand Gregory, for purposes of constructing a model, I will use "P$_{\text{GNT-F}}$" to denote the set {P1$_{\text{GNT-F}}$–P6$_{\text{GNT-F}}$, P7$_{\text{GNT-EQ}}$, P7$_{\text{GNT-NCIC}}$}. And I will refer to this model as "M$_{\text{P-GNT-F}}$." We turn to the model next.

---

215. *Contra Eunomium* II,14. ((St. Gregory of Nyssa 1893), pp. 129-130.)

5.4 A Model for P_{GNT-F}

Here, then, is a model for P_{GNT-F} (which, again, models either of the two formulations of P7 we discussed in the previous section). We will call the model, "$M_{P-GNT-F}$." We will name the proof I give that $M_{P-GNT-F}$ is a model for P_{GNT-F}, "O.E.Δ."

$M_{P-GNT-F}$

Domain: {0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9}

o = 0
f = 1
s = 2
h = 3
g = 4
g* = 5
b = 6
b* = 7
p = 8
p* = 9

H: {1, 2, 3}
I: {6, 7, 8, 9}
O: {0}
E: {4}
E*:{5}

P: {<1,0>,
   <2,0>,
   <3,0>,
   <1,6>,
   <1,8>,
   <2,7>,
   <3,9>,
   <1,4>,
   <2,4>,
   <3,4>,
   <4,5>}

N: {<5,0>}

$M_{P-GNT-F}$ is a model for P_{GNT-F}:[216]

---

216. $M_{P-GNT-F}$ is also a model for the entirety of GNT_F. Showing that this is so is left as an

P1$_{\text{GNT-F}}$. ($\exists$x) (Ex & Pxg* & Pfx)
P2$_{\text{GNT-F}}$. ($\exists$x) (Ex & Pxg* & Psx)
P3$_{\text{GNT-F}}$. ($\exists$x) (Ex & Pxg* & Phx)
P4$_{\text{GNT-F}}$. f $\neq$ s
P5$_{\text{GNT-F}}$. f $\neq$ h
P6$_{\text{GNT-F}}$. s $\neq$ h
P7$_{\text{GNT-EQ}}$. ($\exists$x)($\forall$y){[Ex&Pxg*&($\exists$z)(Pzx)] & [(Ey&Pyg*&($\exists$w)[Pwy]) $\rightarrow$ y=x]}
P7$_{\text{GNT-NCIC}}$. ($\exists$u)($\forall$v){($\exists$w)[Ew & Pwg* & Puw] &
$\qquad$ (($\exists$x)[Ex & Pxg* & Pvx] $\rightarrow$
$\qquad$ ($\exists$y)($\forall$z)[(Ey & Pyg* & [Puy v Pvy]) &
$\qquad\qquad$ ([Ez & Pzg* & (Puz v Pvz)] $\rightarrow$ y = z)]}

To make this easier to see, replace the names "o, f, s, h, g, g*, b, b*, p, and p*" with "0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9," respectively. Thus:

P1$_{\text{NUM}}$. ($\exists$x) (Ex & Px5 & P1x)
P2$_{\text{NUM}}$. ($\exists$x) (Ex & Px5 & P2x)
P3$_{\text{NUM}}$. ($\exists$x) (Ex & Px5 & P3x)
P4$_{\text{NUM}}$. 1 $\neq$ 2
P5$_{\text{NUM}}$. 1 $\neq$ 3
P6$_{\text{NUM}}$. 2 $\neq$ 3
P7$_{\text{NUM-EQ}}$. ($\exists$x)($\forall$y){[Ex&Px5&($\exists$z)(Pzx)] & [(Ey&Py5&($\exists$w)[Pwy]) $\rightarrow$ y=x]}
P7$_{\text{NUM-NCIC}}$. ($\exists$u)($\forall$v){($\exists$w)[Ew & Pw5 & Puw] &
$\qquad$ (($\exists$x)[Ex & Px5 & Pvx] $\rightarrow$
$\qquad$ ($\exists$y)($\forall$z)[(Ey & Py5 & [Puy v Pvy]) &
$\qquad\qquad$ ([Ez & Pz5 & (Puz v Pvz)] $\rightarrow$ y = z)]}

Proof:[217]

P1 ($\exists$x) (Ex & Px5 & P1x)
is true on M$_{\text{P-GNT-F}}$ if and only if there is some number x such that:
x $\in$ E, and <x,5> $\in$ P and <1,x> $\in$ P.
And in fact there is, since:
4 $\in$ E, and <4,5> $\in$ P and <1,4> $\in$ P.
Thus, P1 is true on M$_{\text{P-GNT-F}}$.

P2 ($\exists$x) (Ex & Px5 & P2x)
is true on M$_{\text{P-GNT-F}}$ if and only if there is some number x such that:
x $\in$ E, and <x,5> $\in$ P and <2,x> $\in$ P.
And in fact there is, since:
4 $\in$ E, and <4,5> $\in$ P and <2,4> $\in$ P.
Thus, P2 is true on M$_{\text{P-GNT-F}}$.

exercise for the reader.

217. Below I use the sentences with logical names replaced by numerals for the numbers the logical names denote in the model. But note that the proofs given actually count as proofs for the elements of P$_{\text{GNT-F}}$ themselves.

P3 (∃x) (Ex & Px5 & P3x)
is true on M$_{\text{P-GNT-F}}$ if and only if there is some number x such that:
x ∈ E, and <x,5> ∈ P and <3,x> ∈ P.
And in fact there is, since:
4 ∈ E, and <4,5> ∈ P and <3,4> ∈ P.
Thus, P3 is true on M$_{\text{P-GNT-F}}$.

P4 1 ≠ 2
is true on M$_{\text{P-GNT-F}}$ if and only if 1 is not identical to 2.
And in fact 1 is not identical to 2.
Thus, P4 is true on M$_{\text{P-GNT-F}}$.

P5 1 ≠ 3
is true on M$_{\text{P-GNT-F}}$ if and only if 1 is not identical to 3.
And in fact 1 is not identical to 3.
Thus, P5 is true on M$_{\text{P-GNT-F}}$.

P6 2 ≠ 3
is true on M$_{\text{P-GNT-F}}$ if and only if 2 is not identical to 3.
And in fact 2 is not identical to 3.
Thus, P6 is true on M$_{\text{P-GNT-F}}$.

P7 (∃x)(∀y){[Ex&Px5&(∃z)(Pzx)] & [(Ey&Py5&(∃w)[Pwy]) → y=x]}
is true on M$_{\text{P-GNT-F}}$ if and only if there is a number x such that for every
number y, x ∈ E and <x,5> ∈ P and there is some number z such that <z,x>
∈ P, and if y ∈ E and <y,5> ∈ P and there is a number w such that <w,y> ∈
P, then y is identical to x.

And in fact, there is a number x such that for every number y, x ∈ E and
<x,5> ∈ P and there is some number z such that <z,x> ∈ P, and if y ∈ E and
<y,5> ∈ P and there is a number w such that <w,y> ∈ P, then y is identical
to x.

This is because 4 is such that for every number y, 4 ∈ E and <4,5> ∈ P and
there is some number z such that <z,4> ∈ P, and if y ∈ E and <y,5> ∈ P and
there is a number w such that <w,y> ∈ P, then y is identical to 4.

Proof: arbitrarily select a number y.
4 ∈ E, and <4,5> ∈ P, and <1,4> ∈ P.
So 4 ∈ E, and <4,5> ∈ P, and there is some number z such that <z,4> ∈ P.
Now suppose: y ∈ E, and <y,5> ∈ P and there is some number z such that
<z,y> ∈ P.
So, <y,5> ∈ P.
But the only number y such that <y,5> ∈ P is 4.
So y is identical to 4.
So, if y ∈ E, and <y,5> ∈ P and there is some number z such that <z,y> ∈
P, then y is identical to 4.

254

So, $4 \in$ E, and $<4,5> \in$ P, and there is some number z such that $<z,4> \in$ P and if $y \in$ E, and $<y,5> \in$ P and there is some number z such that $<z,y> \in$ P, then y is identical to 4.

So, since y was arbitrarily selected, for any y, $4 \in$ E, and $<4,5> \in$ P, and there is some number z such that $<z,4> \in$ P and if $y \in$ E, and $<y,5> \in$ P and there is some number z such that $<z,y> \in$ P, then y is identical to 4.

So there is a number x (namely, 4) such that for any y, $x \in$ E, and $<x,5> \in$ P, and there is some number z such that $<z,x> \in$ P and if $y \in$ E, and $<y,5> \in$ P and there is some number z such that $<z,y> \in$ P, then y is identical to x.

Thus, P7$_{\text{GNT-EQ}}$ is true on M$_{\text{P-GNT-F}}$.

P7 $(\exists u)(\forall v)\{(\exists w)[$ Ew & Pw5 & Puw $]$ &
$\qquad$ $((\exists x)[$ Ex & Px5 & Pvx $] \rightarrow$
$\qquad$ $(\exists y)(\forall z)[($Ey & Py5 & [Puy v Pvy] $)$ &
$\qquad\qquad$ $([$Ez & Pz5 & (Puz v Pvz) $] \rightarrow$ y = z$)]\}$

is true on M$_{\text{P-GNT-F}}$ if and only if there is a number u such that for any number v, there is a number w such that $w \in$ E and $<w,5> \in$ P and $<u,w> \in$ P and if there is a number x such that $x \in$ E and $<x,5> \in$ P and $<v,x> \in$ P, then there is a number y such that for any number z, $y \in$ E and $<y,5> \in$ P and either $<u,y> \in$ P or $<v,y> \in$ P, and if $z \in$ E and $<z,5> \in$ P and either $<u,z> \in$ P or $<v,z> \in$ P, then y is identical to z.

And in fact there is a number u such that for any number v, there is a number w such that $w \in$ E and $<w,5> \in$ P and $<u,w> \in$ P and if there is a number x such that $x \in$ E and $<x,5> \in$ P and $<v,x> \in$ P, then there is a number y such that for any number z, $y \in$ E and $<y,5> \in$ P and either $<u,y> \in$ P or $<v,y> \in$ P, and if $z \in$ E and $<z,5> \in$ P and either $<u,z> \in$ P or $<v,z> \in$ P, then y is identical to z.

This is because 1 is such that for any number v, there is a number w such that $w \in$ E and $<w,5> \in$ P and $<1,w> \in$ P and if there is a number x such that $x \in$ E and $<x,5> \in$ P and $<v,x> \in$ P, then there is a number y such that for any number z, $y \in$ E and $<y,5> \in$ P and either $<1,y> \in$ P or $<v,y> \in$ P, and if $z \in$ E and $<z,5> \in$ P and either $<1,z> \in$ P or $<v,z> \in$ P, then y is identical to z.

Proof: Arbitrarily select a number v.

$4 \in$ E and $<4,5> \in$ P, and $<1,4> \in$ P.

So there is a number w (namely 4), such that $w \in$ E and $<w,5> \in$ P, and $<1,w> \in$ P.

Now suppose there is a number x such that $x \in$ E and $<x,5> \in$ P and $<v,x> \in$ P.

In this case, there is a number y such that for any number z, $y \in$ E and $<y,5> \in$ P and either $<1,y> \in$ P or $<v,y> \in$ P, and if $z \in$ E and $<z,5> \in$ P and either $<1,z> \in$ P or $<v,z> \in$ P, then y is identical to z.

This is because 4 is such that for any number z, 4 ∈ E and <4,5> ∈ P and either <1,4> ∈ P or <v,4> ∈ P, and if z ∈ E and <z,5> ∈ P and either <1,z> ∈ P or <v,z> ∈ P, then 4 is identical to z.

Proof: Arbitrarily select a number z.

4 ∈ E and <4,5> ∈ P and <1,4> ∈ P.

So, 4 ∈ E and <4,5> ∈ P and either <1,4> ∈ P or <v,4> ∈ P.

Now suppose z ∈ E and <z,5> ∈ P and either <1,z> ∈ P or <v,z> ∈ P.

So <z,5> ∈ P.

But the only z such that <z,5> ∈ P is 4.

So z is identical to 4. So 4 is identical to z.

So, if z ∈ E and <z,5> ∈ P and either <1,z> ∈ P or <v,z> ∈ P, then 4 is identical to z.

So, 4 ∈ E and <4,5> ∈ P and either <1,4> ∈ P or <v,4> ∈ P and if z ∈ E and <z,5> ∈ P and either <1,z> ∈ P or <v,z> ∈ P, then 4 is identical to z.

So, since z was arbitrarily selected, for any number z, 4 ∈ E and <4,5> ∈ P and either <1,4> ∈ P or <v,4> ∈ P and if z ∈ E and <z,5> ∈ P and either <1,z> ∈ P or <v,z> ∈ P, then 4 is identical to z.

So, 4 is such that for any number z, 4 ∈ E and <4,5> ∈ P and either <1,4> ∈ P or <v,4> ∈ P and if z ∈ E and <z,5> ∈ P and either <1,z> ∈ P or <v,z> ∈ P, then 4 is identical to z.

So, there is a number y (namely 4) such that for any number z, y ∈ E and <y,5> ∈ P and either <1,y> ∈ P or <v,y> ∈ P and if z ∈ E and <z,5> ∈ P and either <1,z> ∈ P or <v,z> ∈ P, then y is identical to z.

So, if there is a number x such that x ∈ E and <x,5> ∈ P and <v,x> ∈ P, then there is a number y (namely 4) such that for any number z, y ∈ E and <y,5> ∈ P and either <1,y> ∈ P or <v,y> ∈ P and if z ∈ E and <z,5> ∈ P and either <1,z> ∈ P or <v,z> ∈ P, then y is identical to z.

And as we said above, 4 ∈ E and <4,5> ∈ P, and <1,4> ∈ P.

So there is a number w (namely 4), such that w ∈ E and <w,5> ∈ P, and <1,w> ∈ P.

So there is a number w such that w ∈ E and <w,5> ∈ P, and <1,w> ∈ P and if there is a number x such that x ∈ E and <x,5> ∈ P and <v,x> ∈ P, then there is a number y (namely 4) such that for any number z, y ∈ E and <y,5> ∈ P and either <1,y> ∈ P or <v,y> ∈ P and if z ∈ E and <z,5> ∈ P and either <1,z> ∈ P or <v,z> ∈ P, then y is identical to z.

So, since v was arbitrarily selected, for any number v, there is a number w such that w ∈ E and <w,5> ∈ P, and <1,w> ∈ P and if there is a number x such that x ∈ E and <x,5> ∈ P and <v,x> ∈ P, then there is a number y (namely 4) such that for any number z, y ∈ E and <y,5> ∈ P and either <1,y> ∈ P or <v,y> ∈ P and if z ∈ E and <z,5> ∈ P and either <1,z> ∈ P or <v,z> ∈ P, then y is identical to z.

So, there is a number u (namely 1), such that, for any number v, there is a number w such that w ∈ E and <w,5> ∈ P, and <u,w> ∈ P and if there is a number x such that x ∈ E and <x,5> ∈ P and <v,x> ∈ P, then there is a number y (namely 4) such that for any number z, y ∈ E and <y,5> ∈ P and

either $<u,y> \in$ P or $<v,y> \in$ P and if $z \in$ E and $<z,5> \in$ P and either $<u,z>$ $\in$ P or $<v,z> \in$ P, then y is identical to z.

Thus, P7$_{\text{GNT-NCIC}}$ is also true on M$_{\text{P-GNT-F}}$.

O.E.Δ.

5.5 What is Essential? – GNT "Lite"

5.5.1 M$_{\text{P-GNT-Lite}}$

Although in order to *understand* Gregory's solution, it is useful to place it within its broader philosophical and theological context, one might wonder how much of Gregory's metaphysics is truly essential to his solution to the purely logical problem that concerns us. Note that in our proofs above, we made no reference to 0, 6, 7, 8, or 9. Nor did we make use of the predicates "H," "I," "O," or "E*," or the relation "N." Thus, we could give an even smaller model for P$_{\text{GNT-F}}$ – call it "M$_{\text{P-GNT-Lite}}$." And O.E.Δ. can also be used to show that M$_{\text{P-GNT-Lite}}$ is a model for P$_{\text{GNT-F}}$.[218]

M$_{\text{P-GNT-Lite}}$

Domain: {1, 2, 3, 4, 5}

f = 1
s = 2
h = 3
g = 4
g* = 5

E: {4}

P: {<1,4>,
     <2,4>,
     <3,4>,
     <4,5>}

If one preferred, one could even eliminate 5, eliminating all occurrences of "g*" from P$_{\text{GNT-F}}$, and simply introduce a primitive predicate (G: {4}), replacing sentences of the form *Pxg** with sentences of the form *Gx*, and dispensing with sentences of the form *Ex* entirely.

Given only the concerns of the logician, one could construct even smaller models of P$_{\text{GNT-F}}$ than M$_{\text{P-GNT-Lite}}$ – for example, by eliminating not only 5 but 4, and making both "g" and "g*" refer to 1 – but these would not be in the spirit of Gregory's overall Trinitarian theory, since he certainly would want to affirm that f≠g and g≠g*, as well as ¬Pff, ¬Psf and ¬Phf.[219]

In any case, if the anti-Trinitarian wants to argue that the doctrine of the Trinity – or the "version" of it that appears in St. Gregory's works – is literally a formal contradiction, he is out of luck. Our precise explication (GNT$_{\text{F}}$) of Gregory of Nyssa's Trinitarian theory (GNT) in the idiom of predicate logic provides us with a formally adequate solution ({PLI, P$_{\text{GNT-F}}$, O.E.Δ.}) to the

---

218. Though M$_{\text{P-GNT-Lite}}$ is not a model for the entirety of GNT$_{\text{F}}$.
219. This isn't to say that every other church father would want to say ¬Pff, ¬Psf or ¬Phf, or that such views are necessarily unorthodox. Only that these aren't views that Gregory holds.

LPT. And since either all formally adequate answers to the LPT are solutions (consistent) or all are non-solutions (inconsistent), it follows that all formally adequate answers to the LPT are solutions (consistent).

Thus, we have achieved the goal we set for ourselves at the beginning of this dissertation (Chapter 1.2, p. 18). The doctrine of the Trinity – or at least the subset of the doctrine of the Trinity we have called P – is logically consistent. But if the anti-Trinitarian can no longer claim that the doctrine of the Trinity, or at least P, is inconsistent, what else, if anything, could he say against it? Where should debate and discussion go from here?

Before answering that question, we should note that $M_{\text{P-GNT-Lite}}$ reveals that we have discussed much more of Gregory's metaphysics and theology than absolutely necessary *merely* to provide a solution to the LPT. Whether or not these other elements of Gregory's metaphysics, theology and semantics are *useful in understanding* his view, and whether or not they are even essential to the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity or to Christian orthodoxy more generally, they are not essential to his *solution to the LPT* specifically. So, if the anti-Trinitarian wishes to continue his argument specifically that P is, for some reason, problematic (though not on the basis of an alleged logical inconsistency), it will be instructive to ask, "What is the 'Smallest' Gregorian Solution to LPT?" That is, what is the simplest account of the Trinity that Gregory would need to defend in order to defend the consistency of P along the lines we have been exploring?

Consider, then, the following "pared down" Nyssen Account of the Trinity.

5.5.2 GNT$_{\text{F-Lite}}$

"Lite" Metaphysics

Possible Object Types

1. Hypostases

   (We will not need any predicate for hypostases.)

2. *Energeia* Types

   We will represent the predicate "is an *energeia* type" with "E*."

3. *Energeia* Tokens

   We will represent the predicate "is an *energeia* token" with "E."

Possible Relations

1. Performing or Being "of" a Type

   We will represent the predicate "performs or is a token of type" with the two-place predicate "P."

   The first relation (performing) can hold between hypostases and *energeia* tokens. Thus, sentences of the form *Pxy* can be true where x is a hypostasis and y is an *energeia* token.

   The second relation (being of a type) can hold between *energeia* tokens and *energeia* types. Thus, sentences of the form *Pxy* can be true where x is an *energeia* token and y is an *energeia* type.

"Lite" Theology

Token Objects:

Hypostases:

The Father	(f)
The Son	(s)
The Holy Spirit	(h)

Energeia Types:

God-ding (type)	(g*)

E*(i):   E*g*

Energeia Tokens:

God-ding (token)	(g)

E(i):   Eg

Relations Posited Between Token Objects:

$P1_{Lite}$ $(\exists x)(Ex \,\&\, Pxg^* \,\&\, Pfx)$
$P2_{Lite}$ $(\exists x)(Ex \,\&\, Pxg^* \,\&\, Psx)$
$P3_{Lite}$ $(\exists x)(Ex \,\&\, Pxg^* \,\&\, Phx)$
$P4_{Lite}$ $f \neq s$
$P5_{Lite}$ $f \neq h$
$P6_{Lite}$ $s \neq h$
$RE(i)_{Lite}$ Pgg^*
$E_{Unique\text{-}Lite}$ $(\forall x)[(E^*x \,\&\, Nxo) \rightarrow (\exists! y)(Ey \,\&\, Pyx)]$

"Lite" Semantics

1. S1–S3: Statements of the form *x is (a) God* are true if and only if x does some token action of the God-ding type, i.e., $(\exists y)(Ey \,\&\, Pyg^* \,\&\, Pxy)$.

2. S4–S6: Statements of the form *x is not y* are true if and only if x is not identical to y ($x \neq y$).

3. S7: Statements of the form *there is exactly one x-er* are true if and only if there is exactly one token action of type x that is done

   i.e., $(\exists! y)[Ey \,\&\, Pyx \,\&\, (\exists z)(Pzy)]$.

Call this account of the Trinity $GNT_{F\text{-}Lite}$ and those aspects of Gregory's Trinitarian theory that it expresses GNT_{Lite}. It is obvious that $GNT_{F\text{-}Lite}$ yields exactly the same answer to the LPT as GNT_F (namely: {PLI, $P_{GNT\text{-}F}$, O.E.Δ.}). Thus, if GNT_F provides a formally adequate solution to the LPT, so does $GNT_{F\text{-}Lite}$. Thus, if Gregory has a formally adequate solution to the LPT, then whether any aspect of GNT that is not contained in GNT_{Lite} is in some sense essential to the doctrine of the Trinity, or to orthodox Christianity, it is *not* essential to Gregory's response to the LPT. Thus, any further philosophical criticism *specifically* of Gregory's answer to the LPT should focus *specifically* on GNT_{Lite}, and, assuming I have done my history correctly, on $GNT_{F\text{-}Lite}$.

But if that further philosophical criticism can no longer be that P is *logically inconsistent*, what else, if anything, could the anti-Trinitarian say against Gregory's solution to the LPT? Where should debate and discussion go from here?

Part V

Evaluation

Chapter 6

Defending Gregory's Account

> It looked not so much as if Christianity was bad enough to include
> any vices, but rather as if any stick was good enough to beat Chris-
> tianity with. – G. K. Chesterton

In the last section, we met the challenge we accepted at the beginning of this
dissertation,[1] and showed that there is a formally adequate solution to the LPT.
The doctrine of the Trinity – or at least the subset of the doctrine of the Trinity
we have called P – is formally consistent. We showed this by taking an account of
the Trinity already known to be a version of the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity
(namely, St. Gregory of Nyssa's Trinitarian theory, or GNT), examining it to
see what logical form it implicitly attributes to P, then showing the consistency
of P on that particular attribution of logical form. We ended the last section
with the question, if the anti-Trinitarian can no longer claim that the doctrine
of the Trinity, or at least P, is inconsistent, what else, if anything, could he say
against it? Where should debate and discussion go from here?

Before giving this final evaluation and suggestions for further discussion, I
want to reiterate what the (much more narrow) scope of the dissertation is: to
show that there is a (formally adequate) solution to the LPT. And that has
been done.

What follows is thus not intended to be a complete list of every possible
further objection that could be made to Gregory's solution or to the doctrine of
the Trinity or to Gregory's broader theological and philosophical commitments.
It is merely what seem to me to be the most obvious ways in which one might
take the discussion from here. Nor again do I intend my responses in this
section to be taken as the final word on a particular subject. They are merely
my impressions of the *prima facie* value of the objections I'll consider. But with
that said, what are the most obvious ways the anti-Trinitarian could object to
Gregory's solution to the LPT, or to Gregory's broader philosophical framework,
or to the doctrine of the Trinity more generally?

---

1. Chapter 1.2, p. 18.

In the first section below (6.1, p. 266 ff.), I will briefly address the possibility that $GNT_{F\text{-Lite}}$ (and thus GNT_F) is not formally adequate for P after all.

Next, if $GNT_{F\text{-Lite}}$ is formally adequate for P, and if it is all that is actually necessary to show that there is a solution to the LPT, why did we discuss other elements of GNT that are not essential to Gregory's solution to the LPT?

We provided these other elements of GNT to show the broader theory within which Gregory's solution to the LPT is situated. We did this first so that it is easier to understand. Secondly, so it can be seen just how much of Gregory's theology simply follows as the logical consequences of just how few basic principles. And finally, so that it can be made clear what precisely those premises are, and that they may not be what one would assume.

But having explicated the broader philosophical framework within which Gregory situates his response to the LPT, we are now in a position to discuss how plausible this broader theory itself is, and what aspects of it may or may not be essential to Trinitarian belief. An interesting phenomenon, though, is that when we strip Gregory's solution to the LPT down to its barest essentials, we can see that there are surprisingly few basic assumptions to attack. In particular, as far as what philosophers, as such, would be concerned with (metaphysics and semantics), only three things jump out at me as obviously essential to his solution to the LPT and potentially objectionable. One is his metaphysics of synergy, discussed in the section on metaphysical objections below (6.3, p. 287 ff.). The other two are aspects of his semantics – first, treating "is God" as predicating an *energeia* or act(ivity) rather than an *ousia* or nature; second, counting doers by the number of token *energeia* done, rather than the number of hypostases doing (both discussed in the section on semantic objections below, 6.2, p. 273 ff.).

Since there is so very little to object to here, though, the next step in the debate must be to move away both from purely logical and even from more generally philosophical objections to the doctrine and raise purely theological objections to the doctrine, directly. In the section on theological objects below (6.4, p. 291 ff.), I explain why I think that any attempt to do so would be massively problematic.

Finally, I briefly consider the possibility of combining various concerns from these different areas, only noting that it would be incumbent on the anti-Trinitarian to articulate any such objections before the Trinitarian needs to respond to them.

6.1   The Formal Adequacy of Gregory's Account

One could attempt to argue that, of the accounts of the Trinity I discussed in the previous chapter (GNT_F and $GNT_{F\text{-Lite}}$), neither yields a formally adequate solution to the LPT.

To fail to be a "formally adequate solution to the LPT" as I've defined that phrase is either:

(a) for the regimentation of P given in the solution to fail to be formally adequate for P, or

(b) for the regimentation of P given in the solution to fail to be logically consistent.

But both (GNT$_F$ and GNT$_{F\text{-Lite}}$) yield the same solution to the LPT, namely {PLI, P$_{\text{GNT-F}}$, O.E.Δ.}.

One cannot argue that P$_{\text{GNT-F}}$ is formally inconsistent, because we've given a model for it.

So it would seem the only way to challenge my argument would be to say that P$_{\text{GNT-F}}$ is not formally adequate for P. This could be for either of two reasons:

First, one might claim that, although the logical form of Gregory's over Trinitarian theory itself (GNT) may yield a formally adequate answer to the LPT (some subset or entailment of GNT may adequately reflect the logical forms of the propositions in P), my formalization of Gregory's Theory (GNT$_F$) is not a formally adequate representation of his actual theory (GNT). And my regimentation (P$_{\text{GNT-F}}$) of the logical form he implicitly attributes to P does not in fact adequately represent the logical forms that he implicitly attributes to P. That is, I have done my history wrong. Indeed, I have misunderstood the content of Gregory's view so much that I have attributed to his view a logical form that is so much different from the logical form his view actually has, that my attribution does not even "reflect the relevant aspects of the logical forms of" his view. This would be to say that there is in fact some very serious flaw in my historical investigation.

Second, one might claim that, although my formalization (GNT$_F$) of Gregory's Theory may be formally adequate to his actual theory (GNT) (may adequately reflect the logical forms of the propositions in GNT), Gregory's Trinitarian Theory (GNT) itself yields a reading of P (P$_{\text{GNT}}$, = P$_{\text{GNT-F}}$) that is not formally adequate for P. That is, although I have done my history correctly, Gregory's view is so unorthodox that the reading of P that it yields has a logical form that does not even "reflect the relevant aspects of the logical form of" P. It would be to say that, not only is Gregory's view *not* partly definitive of the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity (as I have claimed), it is not even an orthodox form of Trinitarian doctrine at all.

(Or, of course, one might think *both* that Gregory's view is not orthodox and that my understanding of him is mistaken.)

To the first objection, I would simply respond by inviting a correction to be given. Historical investigation, by its nature, deals in probability, and must therefore always in principle be open to revision in light of further evidence and argument. Although I would be surprised to find that any of the historical conclusions I've argued for are so wrong as to make my reconstruction of Gregory's view not even formally adequate, I must obviously remain open to the possibility. However, to press this point, it would seem to be incumbent on the anti-Trinitarian to do his own historical homework and provide reasons

for thinking that Gregory's view is in some relevant way different from how I understand it.

As for the second objection, although I can comprehend the individual words that are being said, I find this objection so far-fetched as to *verge on* unintelligibility.[2] I have already said in the section on methodology that, if Gregory's view does not count as a version of the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity, then I would not any longer know what the doctrine of the Trinity was, or why it was important.[3] If an anti-Trinitarian seriously made this objection, at the very least we can certainly say it would be incumbent on him to say whose views *would* count as versions of the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity, and why Gregory's don't.

I do admit, though, that the thesis is (barely) intelligible. One could try to argue for it by showing that there was some broad consensus about P among the pro-Nicenes that Gregory's views lie outside of. To make an understatement, this would be a surprising result.[4] Of course, in theory, one must again remain open to the possibility. But surely it would be incumbent on anyone claiming that Gregory's views do not count as orthodox Trinitarianism to show that, and not the other way around.

Furthermore, especially when we focus in on GNT_{Lite}, we can see that there are really only three aspects of the logical form of GNT that seem directly relevant to the LPT, and that might at all raise questions as to the orthodoxy of Gregory's view.

First, that he takes "is God" to express participation in a token *energeia* (rather than the divine nature). We saw above (Chapter 4.2.3, p. 146 ff.) some evidence that Gregory was by no means alone in this view, and we will not repeat that evidence here.

Second, he holds that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit all engage, not only in the same *types* of *energeiai*, but in *the same token energeiai*. Part of the reason I chose Gregory to focus on is precisely that he is the clearest of the church fathers that I know of on that point (even if one does have to look closely to see the point). So, I can't present as detailed an argument that this is precisely the view taken by a significant group of his pro-Nicene peers. However, I do think that, once we have grasped that distinction, and understand the role it is playing in Gregory's view, when we go back to other pro-Nicenes and look at similar statements, it lends at least some credence to interpretations of their statements on which they are making the same claim. And I think that will come out in some of the quotes I offer below with respect to the final aspect of the logical form of GNT the orthodoxy of which one might question.

Third, he takes it that the the logical form of the claim that there is one God is such that the previous point (that the hypostases synergize on a single token of god-ding) makes it true to say there is one God.

---

2. I am reminded of the old Miracle Ear™ hearing-aid commercials, recommended "if you can hear people talk, but can't understand all the words." Sadly, there is no *philosophical* version of Miracle Ear™.

3. Chapter 3.3.3, p. 109.

4. See p. 271 ff. below for just one of many reasons why such a discovery would be not only amazing, but scarcely intelligible.

These three features together are the reason why, although the hypostases are numerically three,[5] they count as a single God. But we've already seen that Gregory is by no means alone on the first claim (4.2.3, p. 146 ff.). The following, then, are just a few examples as evidence that he is also by no means alone in taking it to be the case that the hypostases count as one in virtue of sharing a single *dynamis* (power) or *energeia* (or in Latin, *operatio*. And I think that a few of them lend credence to the view that these authors understand this sharing of *energeia* in the way that Gregory does as well, though more could certainly be said on the point. We can start with St. Athanasius.

Athanasius (c. 318 AD) *Contra Gentes*:

ἢ τίς, ὁρῶν αὐτὴν τὴν γῆν βαρυτάτην οὖσαν τῇ φύσει, ἐπὶ τὸ ὕδωρ ἑδρασθεῖσαν καὶ ἀκίνητον μένουσαν ἐπὶ τὸ φύσει κινούμενον, οὐ διανοηθήσεται εἶναί τινα τὸν ταῦτα διαταξάμενον καὶ ποιήσαντα Θεόν·	Or who that sees the earth, heaviest of all things by nature, fixed upon the waters, and remaining unmoved upon what is by nature mobile, will fail to understand that there is *One* that has made and ordered it, even *God*?
Τίς … οὐκ ἂν ἐνθυμηθείη ὅτι ἐστὶ μία δύναμις ἡ ταῦτα διακοσμησαμένη καὶ διέπουσα, ὡς ἂν αὐτῇ δοκῇ, μένουσα καλῶς· [6]	Who … can resist the inference that there is *one Power* which orders and administers them, ordaining things well as it thinks fit?[7]

Too many passages from St. Ambrose could be given on these points for me to possibly do justice to. Indeed, *De Fide (Ad Gratianum)* contains so much material on the point, it would be hard to pick out a single passage and not simply quote the work in its entirety. We have already seen some of what Ambrose says about the semantics of "is God" and the phenomenon of synergy above (see 4.2.3, p. 147). Here I have selected just three quotations from *De Spiritu Sancto*, out of a much larger, essentially unmanageable, list of possible passages from Ambrose to quote.

St. Ambrose (c. 381 AD), *De Spiritu Sancto*

Denique ne vel in tempore, vel in ordine aliquam inter Patrem et Filium putares operis esse distantiam, sed eiusdem operationis crederes unitatem:	Lastly, *that one may not think that there is any difference of work* either in time or in order between the Father and the Son, *but may believe the oneness of the same operation*, He says:

---

5. It certainly wouldn't seem that the anti-Trinitarian would want to object to taking "Father," "Son" and "Holy Spirit" to be singular terms, or to object to taking P4 through P6 to be non-identity claims, since these are what make the LPT "work" in the first place. So, what else is even left in the logical forms of P_{GNT} for the anti-Trinitarian to object to?

6. (St. Athanasius 1971), section 36.

7. (St. Athanasius 1892), p. 23.

Et opera, inquit, quae ego facio, ipse facit. *(Joan v,17)*

Et rursus ne discretionem aliquam in operis distinctione sentires, sed idem velle, idem facere, idem posse Patrem et Filium iudicares, dicit tibi Sapientia de Patre:

Quaecumque enim ille fecerit, eadem et Filius facit similiter *(Ibid., 19).*

Non ergo alicui prior vel secundus est actus, sed idem unius operationis effectus.

Et ideo nihil a se posse facere Filius dicitur; quia a Patre non potest eius operatio separari.

Similiter et Spiritus sancti operatio non secernitur.

Unde etiam ea quae loquitur. audire a Patre dicitur.[8]

–Book II, Ch. 12.

Si ergo homo amicum ita definivit, ut alterum se esse diceret, per unitatem videlicet amoris et gratiae; quanto magis in Patre et Filio et Spiritu sancto unitatem maiestatis aestimare debemus,

cum per eamdem operationem ac divinitatem vel unitas, vel certe id quod amplius est, ταυτότης sicut Graece dicitur, exprimatur?

ταυτὸ enim idem significat; eo quod idem habeat et Pater et Filius et Spiritus sanctus; ut idem velle, et idem posse non ex affectione sit

"The works which I do, He doeth." [John 5:17]

And again, *that one may not think that there is any difference in the distinction of the works*, but may judge that *the will, the working, and the power of the Father and the Son are the same*, Wisdom says concerning the Father:

"For whatsoever things He doeth, the Son doeth the same likewise." [John 5:19]

So that *the action of neither Person is before or after that of the Other, but the same result of one operation.*

And for this reason the Son says that He can do nothing "of Himself," *because His operation cannot be separated from* that of the Father.

In like manner *the operation* of the Holy Spirit is not separated.

Whence also the things which He speaks, He is said to "hear" from the Father.[9]

If, then, a man so defined a friend as to say, he was "a second self," that is to say, through a oneness of love and good-will, how much more ought we to esteem *the oneness of Majesty*, in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,

when *by the same operation and divine power*, either the unity, or certainly *that which is more* [than unity], the ταυτότης, as it is called in Greek, is expressed,[10]

for "ταυτὸ" signifies "the same," so that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit have the same; so that to have the same will and the same

_____

8. PL 16, pp. 771-772.

9. (St. Ambrose of Milan 1896), p. 132.

270

voluntatis, sed in substantia Trinitatis..[11]

–Book II, Ch. 13.

power does not arise from the affection of the will, but inheres in the substance of the Trinity.[12]

Etenim secundum nostram sententiam quia unus Deus, una divinitas, et unitas intelligitur potestatis.

Sicut unum Deum dicimus, et Patrem vero deitatis nomine confitentes, nec Filium denegantes; ita etiam Spiritum sanctum a deitatis non excludimus unitate, et tres deos non asserimus, sed negamus;

quia pluralitatem non unitas facit, sed divisio potestatis.[13]

–Book III, Ch. 13.

According to our opinion, because there is one God, one Godhead and oneness of power is understood.

For as we say that there is one God, confessing the Father, and not denying the Son under the true Name of the Godhead; so, too, we exclude not the Holy Spirit from the Unity of the Godhead, and do not assert but deny that there are three Gods,

because it is not unity [of power] but a division of power which makes plurality.[14]

We can even see hints of this theology in Roman law passed as a result of the Second Ecumenical Council.

Codex Theodosianus XVI.1.3 (July 30, 381 AD):

Idem aaa. ad Auxonium proconsulem Asiae.

Episcopis tradi omnes ecclesias mox iubemus, qui unius maiestatis adque virtutis patrem et filium et spiritum sanctum confitentur eiusdem gloriae, claritatis unius. . .

quos constabit communioni . . . Gregorio episc(opo) Nysseno . . .

The same Augustuses to Auxonius, Proconsul of Asia.

We command that all churches shall immediately be surrendered to those bishops who confess that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are *of one majesty and virtue [power], of the same glory, and of one splendor. . .*

to those bishops who appear to have been associated in the communion of . . . Gregorius [Gregory], Bishop of Nyssa . . .

---

10. Incidentally, this seems to show that Ambrose, at least, is working with a distinction between "oneness" ("unitas") and "sameness," the former of which is clearly "looser" than classical identity, but the latter of which I take just to be classical identity.

11. PL 16, p. 776.

12. (St. Ambrose of Milan 1896), p. 135.

13. PL 16, p. 799.

14. (St. Ambrose of Milan 1896), p. 148.

Hos ad optinendas catholicas ec-clesias ex communione et consor-tio probabilium sacerdotum oportebit admitti:

omnes autem, qui ab eorum, quos commemoratio specialis expres-sit, fidei communione dissentiunt, ut manifestos haereticos ab ecclesiis expelli ...

Those bishops who are of the communion and fellowship of such acceptable priests must be permit-ted to obtain the Catholic churches.

All, however, who dissent from the communion of the faith of those who have been expressly mentioned in this special enumeration shall be expelled from their churches as man-ifest heretics ...

DAT. III KAL. AVG. HERACL(EAE) EVCHERIO ET SYAGRIO CONSS.[15]

(Given on the third day before the kalends of August at Heraclea in the year of the consulship of Eucherius and Syagrius. – July 30, 381).[16]

Humfress notes that, "taken in conjunction with the Edict of Thessalonica, this law is considered by modern scholars to have settled the legal definition of orthodox belief."[17] I note that the edict contains no mention of unity of essence, nature or substance at all – only of "majesty ... power ... glory,[18] and ... splendor."

And the view seems to have continued in the subsequent orthodox Trinitarian tradition, for example:

Pope St. Leo the Great (mid-400's AD) *Sermon LXXV*:

Ideo enim hanc beatam Trini-tatem unum confitemur Deum, quia in his tribus personis nec substan-tiae, nec potentiae, nec voluntatis, nec operationis est ulla diversitas.[19]

For we confess this blessed Trin-ity to be One God *for this reason*, because in these three Persons *there is no diversity either of substance, or of power, or of will, or of opera-tion.*[20]

I conclude, then, that what is really essential to Gregory's solution to the LPT – that "God" expresses an *energeia*, that the hypostases synergize on that *energeia*, and that synergizing on this *energeia* is the fact in virtue of which the hypostases count as "one," was clearly part of the orthodox (pro-Nicene) consensus. I would even be prepared to argue that it derives from a tradition earlier than that, which goes back at least to the second century, if not to the

---

15. CT 16.1.3. Latin text from (MOMMSEN and MEYER 1905), p. 834.

16. Translation from (PHARR, DAVIDSON, and PHARR 1952), p. 440. Emphasis mine.

17. (HUMFRESS 2000), p. 145.

18. On the equivalence of "glory" and *energeia*, see (BRADSHAW 2006), esp. pp. 291-292.

19. PL 54, p. 402.

20. (POPE ST. LEO THE GREAT and ST. GREGORY THE GREAT 1895), p. 191.

New Testament writings themselves (on which, see p. 294 ff.), although that is not necessary to show for our present concerns.

Again, historical arguments are always open to potential revision, whether we are speaking of the link between my formalization and Gregory's actual view, or that between Gregory's view and the pro-Nicene consensus itself. But since I have presented my historical arguments, it would be incumbent upon the anti-Trinitarian to attack them if he wishes to show P_{GNT} not to be formally adequate for P.

6.2   Semantic Objections

Probably the single aspect of Gregory's solution to the LPT that one could most easily attack, and that, although not strictly logical, would come *closest* to counting as a "logical" problem, would be his semantics for counting by agent nouns. Also, while it would clearly not count as a "logical" problem, one could take issue with his view that "is God" predicates an *energeia* (activity) rather than an *ousia* (a nature or kind). We'll take these in reverse order.

The main concern I have about the second issue is that it seems, so to speak, too "private." Externalist concerns notwithstanding, it seems like Gregory and other church fathers should be able to mean whatever they want to mean by "is God." (And see just above as well as 4.2.3, p. 146 ff. for evidence that this particular bit of semantics was common among pro-Nicenes and earlier Christians as well.)

On the other hand, if one wants to hold him to the standard of the Bible, then one will have to respond to his arguments about how the Bible itself uses the predicate "is God" (Chapter 4.2.3, p. 134 ff.).

But even if one could make the case that "god" in the Bible *does* in fact express the divine nature rather than, as Gregory claims, an activity, it's not clear how devastating this objection would be in the end, because it isn't clear how important the semantics really is to Gregory. Or rather, it's pretty clear that, at least in a certain sense, it *isn't* very important to him.

The objection seems very much analogous to a somewhat common, deeply problematic objection one sometimes hears from undergraduates studying the Ontological Argument. From time to time I have students object that, "Perhaps God really *isn't* that than which nothing greater can be conceived. Perhaps there is some conceivable being that would be even greater than God." But of course, it is up to Anselm what he wants to use the word "God" to mean. So I often say something like this:

> Suppose we gave Anselm a computer and a copy of Microsoft Word. Suppose he types up his Ontological Argument as a Word document. Suppose further that you argue with Anselm that God really isn't that than which nothing greater can be conceived after all, or that for whatever reason he shouldn't use "God" to mean *that than which nothing greater can be conceived.*

Now suppose Anselm says, "Very well. I give in. Henceforth, I vow never again to use the word 'God' to mean *that than which nothing greater can be conceived.*" Then he opens his file in Microsoft Word and clicks on "Find and Replace." In the "Find" field, he enters the string "God." In the "Replace With" field, he enters the string "that than which nothing greater can be conceived." Then he clicks on "Replace All," whereupon all instances of "God" in the Ontological Argument are changed to "that than which nothing greater can be conceived." Now the argument doesn't even mention God at all – only *that than which nothing greater can be conceived.*

Then Anselm turns to you and says, "Now. I take it that, although you rejected my definition that *God is that than which nothing greater can be conceived*, you will admit that *that than which nothing greater can be conceived is that than which nothing greater can be conceived.* And so on for the rest of my premises. And now the conclusion will simply be that "that than which nothing greater can be conceived, cannot be conceived not to exist." So, although you reject the claim that *God* cannot be conceived not to exist, unless you have further, more substantive objections, you will still have to admit that *that than which nothing greater can be conceived cannot be conceived not to exist.* We won't call it "God," of course, but this being (whatever it is to be called) must have every great-making property conceivable, and to the highest conceivable degree. It must be omniscient, omnipotent, omni-benevolent, immortal, and so on. And we must believe that it exists, not only in the mind, but in reality.

That is, he seems to get all the same substantive theological results, but simply can't utter the sentence "God exists" due to his newly-adopted semantics.

Would Anselm (*should* Anselm) really be very upset about this outcome? You may have kept him from being able to assert the *sentence* "God exists." But hasn't he gotten every bit of the *substance* of what he wanted to prove? He can still believe in the *existence* of a being of exactly the sort he believed in before. He'll just have to call it something other than "God."

Likewise, suppose we allow Gregory the result that there are three uncreated hypostases that all synergize on all of their activities, including "beholding." But we insist that he can't call them "God," or else that, if he did, then he would have to admit there are "three" Gods, because "God" predicates a *kind*, and that is how we count by kind terms.

Would Gregory (*should* Gregory) really be very upset about this outcome? We may have kept him from being able to assert the *sentence* "there is exactly one God." But hasn't he gotten every bit of the *substance* of what he wanted to prove? He can still believe all of the *substantive theology* he believed before. He'll just have to eschew using the word "God" and replace it with something like "Lord" (or "Beholder," or "Creator," or some other agent noun, or a noun

expressing some kind of power, so that he can again say there is only "one" of it.)

So, it seems to me that merely attacking Gregory's understanding of the predicate "is God" here (without *also* attacking his counting principle, which of course would then make the current objection superfluous) is not much different from attacking Anselm's definition of "is God" in the Ontological Argument.

If Anselm still gets to hold onto *the same picture* with respect to his metaphysics and substantive theology, who cares if he doesn't get to use the word "God" when describing his view?

Likewise, if Gregory gets to hold onto *the same picture* with respect to his metaphysics and substantive theology, who cares if he doesn't get to use the word "God" when describing his view?

So, not only does this not count as a strictly *logical* problem with Trinitarian theology – it doesn't seem to count as much of a problem at all. At most, it might play a role in a larger argument that Trinitarian theology is *not biblical*. But see below in the section on theological objections why such attempts all share an important, and in my view probably insurmountable, difficulty (6.4 293).

Returning, then, to the first issue (Gregory's semantics for counting by agent nouns), the main concern I have is that, while in this case the semantics seems "public" enough that it makes more sense to criticize it, it isn't quite as obviously a problem with the *logical form* of the doctrine of the Trinity itself as one might initially think.

First, as I mentioned above,[21] at least *the most obvious* facts about our ordinary linguistic practices on this point don't seem capable of settling the matter, as we always use agent nouns to count by *pairs of* hypostasis-plus-*energeia*.

That is, when we count "one shoemaker," we count *one pair* of hypostasis-plus-token-shoemaking-*energeia*. And when we count "two shoemakers," we count *two distinct (non-overlapping) pairs* of hypostasis-plus-token-shoemaking-*energeia*. And, outside of the Trinity, there are no instances of multiple hypostases sharing a single, token *energeia*. Thus, there simply *are no* ordinary counting practices there to make reference to that provide a straight-forward analogy to the case of the Trinity.

Thus, there simply are no facts *of this sort* about our ordinary linguistic practices that settle the question of how many shoemakers to count should there be *multiple hypostases* participating in a *single token* shoemaking *energeia*. This is not to rule out the possibility that there might be *other* facts about our ordinary linguistic practices that could settle the question. (Indeed, Gregory, at least, believes other such facts rule in his favor.) I only flag that the issue is not such a simple one to settle.

But even if turned out one could show that Gregory was wrong about his semantics for counting by agent nouns, it isn't clear that the *way* in which he

---

21. Chapter 4.4.5, p. 191.

would be wrong would count as a "logical" problem.

Here is an analogy:

Suppose someone says, "it's raining and it's not raining," and agreed to the standard truth table definitions for "and" and "not" and that he wasn't equivocating on "it's raining." That would certainly be a *logical* problem. That is, it would certainly mean that what this person was asserting was formally, logically inconsistent.

But suppose someone says, "it's raining and it's not raining," and agreed to the standard truth table definition for "not" and that he wasn't equivocating on "it's raining," but then said that, in his view, the semantics for "*and*" is much more complicated than we usually think. In most cases it will match up to the standard truth table definition we have for it, but in certain rare circumstances, given this more complicated semantics, it ends up computing an importantly different function.

Then it doesn't seem he has so blatantly contradicted himself. It seems, rather, to be a much deeper disagreement, a disagreement more like those in the philosophy of logic. Not a disagreement about our pictures of the world, but about the meanings of certain logical operators.

Here is an even better analogy:

Suppose A says that, "If John is in London, then he is in England" and "If John is in Paris, then he is in France" entail "*either* if John is in London, then he is in France, *or* if John is in Paris, then he is in England," because he believes that the logical connective "if... then," as it appears in these sentences, is definable by the standard truth table for material conditionals. He argues that if B accepts the first two, he must not – *on pain of contradiction!* – deny the third.

Suppose B argues that this is absurd, and maintains that the first two statements are clearly true, while the third is false. Suppose he then proposes a more complicated semantics, not for any of the *non-logical* constants involved, but *for the logical connective* "if... then" *itself.* (Perhaps he proposes a Stalnakerian or Lewisian possible-worlds semantics, or something even more complicated than those).

A can accuse B of being wrong about his logic. And if A is right, then the propositions expressed by B's statements, as interpreted according to standard English usage, may in fact be inconsistent. But at a deeper level, there is nothing particularly untoward about B's picture of the world – his metaphysics and his substantive theory. He simply thinks that London is inside England but *not* inside France, and Paris is inside France but *not* inside England, and he believes certain things about the properties of relations like "inside of" and so forth. And since B understands the semantics of "if... then" differently, he thinks the disjunctive statement is false. And while, if he is wrong about that, so that the set of sentences he endorses express contradictory claims, it is only

276

because they express something other than what B takes them to express, and other than what B actually believes about the world. So, while one can call this a case of B endorsing a formally inconsistent set of propositions, it isn't so in the same sense as we would normally think when hearing that sort of accusation.

Normally when we think of someone affirming a formally inconsistent set, we are thinking of a case where how we understand the uses of the *natural language* logical operators involved is agreed on or held constant. The notions of being "inconsistent" and "unsatisfiable" in a *formal* language are intimately tied to the idea of possible interpretations specifically for the *non-logical* constants, holding the logical operators themselves fixed in their definitions. And therefore the notions of being inconsistent or unsatisfiable are intimately tied to the assumption that there is no issue as to what the semantics for the logical operators themselves should be.

Thus, since Gregory of Nyssa quite clearly has a particular view about counting, it seems to me that if one attacks him on the point of his semantics in S7, one may (or may not) have some reasonable objection to make to his view, but it would be less analogous to a "logical problem" like saying, unequivocally, "it's both raining and not raining" while *agreeing* to the truth tables for "and" and "not" (a formal contradiction), and more like the sorts of "logical problems" involved in debates over the philosophy of logic.

In other words, while the anti-Trinitarian has promised to show the doctrine of the Trinity to be a blatant contradiction (like saying, unequivocally, "it's both raining and not raining," while agreeing to the truth tables for "and" and "not"), he now would only be saying that the doctrine of the Trinity relies on a certain view about language or logic that (he alleges) isn't how natural languages really work. That is, he seems to have begun by promising us a devastating objection to the *truth* of Trinitarian *theology* itself, but ended by saying only that, while the substantive theology involved may be consistent, Trinitarians have faulty views about how to use *language*, and that it would be more accurate for them to express themselves by saying that there are three gods.

Now I admit that, if Gregory's semantics could somehow be shown to be wrong on this point, it would be *in some sense* a problem or embarrassment for Trinitarians. Still, it doesn't seem like *the kind* of problem we were promised.

What's more, as we discussed above (Chapter 4.4.5, p. 191), even if one could show that the sober truth of the matter is that, given Gregory's substantive theology, it is strictly and literally true that there are three gods, there is still an issue of whether the claim that there are three gods would not be *more misleading* than the technically false but non-misleading claim that there is only one God. Indeed, compare this to the example immediately above. Suppose it turns out that B is wrong in his semantics, and that, strictly speaking, it really is true that, *either* if John is in London then he is in France, *or* if John is in Paris then he is in England. Still, wouldn't B be right to claim that it is, even if strictly speaking true, nevertheless highly misleading? And that, even if it is false to say that it is *neither* the case that if John is in London then he is in France *nor* that if John is in Paris then he is in England, it is nevertheless not nearly as misleading as its negation?

And finally, attacking Gregory's semantics here (just as in the previous semantic objection) raises a deeper question. Namely, "which is more important: whether certain canonical *sentences* end up being true, or whether the theological *states of affairs* behind those sentences actually obtain?"

After all, two people could, in theory, have radically different metaphysics, and radically different theology, but end up agreeing on certain sentences being true or false, because they also have radically different semantics – *they use the same words to mean different things*.

On the other hand, two people could have precisely the same metaphysics and precisely the same theology, but end up disagreeing on what sentences are true or false, because, again, they have different semantics – *they use different words to mean the same things*.

Historically, both of the above sorts of issues arose during the Trinitarian controversy. And in both cases, the church fathers seem to have come down clearly on the side of *substantive theology* being what was primarily important, not semantics.

On the first point, when arguing with the Arians, the introduction of the *homoousion* itself was motivated precisely by the fact that the Arians had a significantly different *substantive theology*, but were willing to agree on *all the same creedal sentences* as the *homoousians*, by simply re-interpreting them (adopting a different semantics). *They used the same words, but meant a different thing*. And the *homoousians* didn't think that was enough. So they added the controversial term "*homoousios*" to the creed. It was only when that term was added that the orthodox could even use the creed to exclude Arian theology. St. Athanasius explains:

Τῆς συνόδου βουλομένης τὰς μὲν τῶν Ἀρειανῶν τῆς ἀσεβείας λέξεις ἀνελεῖν, τὰς δὲ τῶν γραφῶν ὁμολογουμένας φωνὰς γράψαι, ὅτι τε υἱός ἐστιν οὐκ ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων, ἀλλ' ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ, καὶ λόγος ἐστὶ καὶ σοφία, ἀλλ' οὐ κτίσμα οὐδὲ ποίημα, ἴδιον δὲ ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς γέννημα, οἱ περὶ Εὐσέβιον ὑπὸ τῆς πολυχρονίου κακοδοξίας ἑαυτῶν ἑλκόμενοι ἐβούλοντο τὸ ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ κοινὸν εἶναι πρὸς ἡμᾶς καὶ τὸν τοῦ θεοῦ λόγον μηδέν τε ἐν τούτῳ διαφέρειν ἡμῶν αὐτὸν διὰ τὸ γεγράφθαι·

«εἷς θεὸς ἐξ οὗ τὰ πάντα»,

καὶ πάλιν· «τὰ ἀρχαῖα παρῆλθεν, ἰδοὺ γέγονε τὰ πάντα καινά, τὰ δὲ πάντα ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ».

The Council wishing to do away with the irreligious phrases of the Arians, and to use instead the acknowledged words of the Scriptures, that the Son is not 'from nothing' but 'from God,' and is 'Word' and 'Wisdom,' and not creature or work, but a proper offspring from the Father, Eusebius and his fellows, led by their inveterate heterodoxy, *understood* the phrase 'from God' *as belonging to us, as if in respect to it the Word of God differed nothing from us, and that because it is written,*

'There is one God, *from whom, all things*;'

and again, 'Old things are passed away, behold, all things are become new, and all things are *from God*,'

ἀλλ’ οἱ πατέρες θεωρήσαντες ἐκείνων τὴν πανουργίαν καὶ τὴν τῆς ἀσεβείας κακοτεχνίαν ἠναγκάσθησαν λοιπὸν λευκότερον εἰπεῖν τὸ ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ

καὶ γράψαι ‘ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας τοῦ θεοῦ εἶναι τὸν υἱὸν’ ὑπὲρ τοῦ μὴ τὸ ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ κοινὸν καὶ ἴσον τοῦ τε υἱοῦ καὶ τῶν γενητῶν νομίζεσθαι, ἀλλὰ τὰ μὲν ἄλλα πάντα κτίσμα, τὸν δὲ λόγον μόνον ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς πιστεύεσθαι.

κἂν γὰρ ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ τὰ πάντα λέγηται, ἀλλὰ ἄλλως ἢ ὡς ἔστιν ὁ υἱὸς εἴρηται.

Τῶν δὲ ἐπισκόπων πάλιν λεγόντων δεῖν γραφῆναι δύναμιν ἀληθινὴν καὶ εἰκόνα τοῦ πατρὸς τὸν λόγον ὅμοιόν τε καὶ ἀπαράλλακτον αὐτὸν κατὰ πάντα τῷ πατρὶ καὶ ἄτρεπτον καὶ ἀεὶ καὶ ἐν αὐτῷ εἶναι ἀδιαιρέτως οὐδέποτε γὰρ οὐκ ἦν, ἀλλὰ ἦν ὁ λόγος ἀεὶ ὑπάρχων ἀιδίως παρὰ τῷ πατρὶ ὡς ἀπαύγασμα φωτός—οἱ περὶ Εὐσέβιον ἠνείχοντο μὲν μὴ τολμῶντες ἀντιλέγειν διὰ τὴν αἰσχύνην, ἣν εἶχον ἐφ’ οἷς ἠλέγχθησαν, κατελήφθησαν δὲ πάλιν πρὸς ἑαυτοὺς τονθορύζοντες καὶ διανεύοντες τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς, ὅτι καὶ τὸ ὅμοιον καὶ τὸ ἀεὶ καὶ τὸ τῆς δυνάμεως ὄνομα καὶ τὸ ἐν αὐτῷ κοινὰ πάλιν ἐστὶ πρὸς ἡμᾶς καὶ τὸν υἱόν, καὶ οὐδὲν λυπεῖ τούτοις ἡμᾶς συνθέσθαι. . .

ἀλλ’ οἱ ἐπίσκοποι καὶ ἐν τούτῳ θεωρήσαντες τὴν ὑπόκρισιν ἐκείνων . . . ἠναγκάσθησαν καὶ αὐτοὶ αὖθις συναγαγεῖν ἐκ τῶν γραφῶν τὴν διάνοιαν καί, ἅπερ πρότερον ἔλεγον, ταῦτα πάλιν λευκότερον εἰπεῖν καὶ γράψαι, ὁμοούσιον εἶναι τῷ πατρὶ τὸν υἱόν, ἵνα μὴ μόνον ὅμοιον τὸν υἱόν, ἀλλὰ ταὐτὸν τῇ ὁμοιώσει

But the Fathers, perceiving their craft and the cunning of their irreligion, *were forced to express more distinctly the sense* of the words 'from God.'

Accordingly, they wrote 'from the *ousia* of God,' in order that 'from God' might not be considered common and equal in the Son and in things originate, but that all others might be acknowledged as creatures, and the Word alone as from the Father.

For though all things be said to be "from God," yet this is *not in the sense in which* the Son is "from" Him. . .

Again, when the Bishops said that the Word must be described as the True Power and Image of the Father, in all things exact and like the Father, and as unalterable, and as always, and as in Him without division (for never was the Word not, but He was always, existing everlastingly with the Father, as the radiance of light), Eusebius and his fellows endured indeed, as not daring to contradict, being put to shame by the arguments which were urged against them; *but withal they were caught whispering to each other and winking with their eyes, that 'like,' and 'always,' and 'power,' and 'in Him,' were, as before, common to us and the Son, and that it was no difficulty to agree to these. . .*

But the Bishops discerning in this too their dissimulation . . . were again compelled on their part to collect *the sense* of the Scriptures, and to *re-say and re-write what they had said before, more distinctly still,* namely, that the Son is 'one in *ousia*' with the Father: by way of signifying, that the Son was "from" the

ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς εἶναι σημαίνωσι καὶ ἄλλην οὖσαν τὴν τοῦ υἱοῦ ὁμοίωσιν καὶ ἀτρεψίαν δείξωσι παρὰ τὴν ἐν ἡμῖν λεγομένην μίμησιν, ἣν ἐξ ἀρετῆς διὰ τὴν τῶν ἐντολῶν τήρησιν ἡμεῖς προσλαμβάνομεν...[22]

Father, and not merely like, but the same in likeness, and of shewing that the Son's likeness and unalterableness was different from such copy of the same as is ascribed to us, which we acquire from virtue on the ground of observance of the commandments...[23]

Thus, according to Athanasius' account, merely *assenting to the same sentences or creedal formulae* was not what was important to the fathers of Nicea, but *accepting the same propositions* they understood. One sometimes hears the claim that the results of the early councils were simply certain linguistic formulae that are essentially so open to interpretation as to be without any determinate meaning. I'm not convinced, though, that this was how *the participants themselves* saw what they were doing, as the passage above shows. Of course, one can say that, even if the fathers of Nicaea *believed themselves* to be, and *intended* to be, having a substantive theological discussion, they were simply mistaken about themselves, and they failed in their attempt. I'm not convinced of that either, although it is not essential to my point here. The point is that it seems to me that there was *intelligible content* in the Arian position that the fathers wished to *deny*, not merely that they disliked the way certain characteristically Arian noises *sounded*. But in any case, that is not the point to be argued here. What I am arguing is that Athanasius here at least *claims*, and thus commits himself to the view, that he is not interested in mere verbal agreement, that agreement on mere words is not sufficient, when one is using the same words to mean different things.

Now on the second point (using different words to mean the same thing), when certain groups at Antioch had ceased communion with each other, on suspicion of heresy, but in reality due to *having a different semantics*, Athanasius united them upon inquiring into their *substantive theology*. Because, just as in the above example, it was the substantive theology that seemed important to him, and to them all, not what *sentences* turned out to be true. I think it's instructive to read a bit from the *Tome of Antioch* issued after the synod in question (AD 362):

Ο ΠΡΟΣ ΤΟΥΣ ΑΝΤΙΟ-ΧΕΙΣ ΤΟΜΟΣ ΑΘΑΝΑΣΙΟΥ ΑΡΧΙΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΟΥ ΑΛΕΞΑΝ-ΔΡΕΙΑΣ

... Πάντας τοίνυν τοὺς βουλομέ-νους εἰρηνεύειν πρὸς ἡμᾶς, καὶ μάλιστα τοὺς ἐν τῇ Παλαιᾷ συναγομέ-νους, καὶ τοὺς ἀποτρέχοντας δὲ ἀπὸ

Tome or Synodal Letter to the People of Antioch

... As many then as desire peace with us, and specially those who assemble in the Old [Church] and those again who are seceding from

---

22. (St. Athanasius 1941), Ch. 19, Sec. 1 – Ch. 20, Sec. 3.
23. (St. Athanasius 1892), pp. 162-164.

τῶν Ἀρειανῶν προσκαλέσασθε παρ' ἑαυτοῖς, καὶ ὡς μὲν πατέρες υἱοὺς προσλάβεσθε, ὡς δὲ διδάσκαλοι καὶ κηδεμόνες ἀποδέξασθε, καὶ συνάψαντες αὐτοὺς τοῖς ἀγαπητοῖς ἡμῶν τοῖς περὶ Παυλῖνον, μηδὲν πλέον ἀπαιτήσητε παρ' αὐτῶν ἢ ἀναθεματίζειν μὲν τὴν Ἀρειανὴν αἵρεσιν, ὁμολογεῖν δὲ τὴν παρὰ τῶν ἁγίων Πατέρων ὁμολογηθεῖσαν ἐν Νικαίᾳ πίστιν, ἀναθεματίζειν δὲ καὶ τοὺς λέγοντας κτίσμα εἶναι τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον, καὶ διηρημένον ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας τοῦ Χριστοῦ. Τοῦτο γάρ ἐστιν ἀληθῶς ἀποπηδᾶν ἀπὸ τῆς μυσαρᾶς αἱρέσεως τῶν Ἀρειανῶν, τὸ μὴ διαιρεῖν τὴν ἁγίαν Τριάδα, καὶ λέγειν τι ταύτης εἶναι κτίσμα. Οἳ γὰρ προσποιούμενοι μὲν ὀνομάζειν τὴν ὁμολογηθεῖσαν ἐν Νικαίᾳ πίστιν, τολμῶντες δὲ κατὰ τοῦ ἁγίου Πνεύματος βλασφημεῖν, οὐδὲν πλέον ποιοῦσιν, ἢ τὴν Ἀρειανὴν αἵρεσιν τοῖς μὲν ῥήμασιν ἀρνοῦνται, τῷ δὲ φρονήματι ταύτην κατέχουσιν...

Οὓς γὰρ ἐμέμφοντό τινες ὡς τρεῖς λέγοντας ὑποστάσεις, διὰ τὸ ἀγράφους καὶ ὑπόπτους αὐτόθεν εἶναι τὰς λέξεις, ἠξιώσαμεν μὲν μηδὲν πλέον ἐπιζητεῖν πλὴν τῆς κατὰ Νίκαιαν ὁμολογίας· ἀνεκρίναμεν δὲ ὅμως τούτους διὰ τὴν φιλονεικίαν, μὴ ἄρ' ὡς οἱ Ἀρειομανῖται λέγουσιν ἀπηλλοτριωμένας καὶ ἀπεξενωμένας, ἀλλοτριοουσίους τε ἀλλήλων, καὶ ἑκάστην καθ' ἑαυτὴν ὑπόστασιν διηρημένην, ὡς ἔστι τά τε ἄλλα κτίσματα, καὶ οἱ ἐξ ἀνθρώπων γεννώμενοι· ἢ ὥσπερ διαφόρους οὐσίας, ὥσπερ ἐστὶ χρυσὸς, ἢ ἄργυρος, ἢ χαλκὸς, οὕτω καὶ αὐτοὶ λέγωσιν· ἢ ὡς ἄλλοι αἱρετικοὶ τρεῖς ἀρχὰς καὶ τρεῖς θεοὺς λέγουσιν, οὕτω καὶ οὗτοι φρονοῦντες, τρεῖς ὑποστάσεις λέγωσι·

the Arians, do ye call to yourselves, and receive them as parents their sons, and welcome them as tutors and guardians; and unite them to our beloved Paulinus and his people, without requiring more from them than to anathematize the Arian heresy and confess the faith confessed by the holy fathers at Nicæa, and to anathematize also those who say that the Holy Spirit is a Creature and separate from the *ousia* of Christ. For *this is in truth a complete renunciation of the abominable heresy of the Arians, to refuse to divide the Holy Trinity, or to say that any part of it is a creature.* For those who, while pretending to cite the faith confessed at Nicæa, venture to blaspheme the Holy Spirit, do nothing more than *in words deny the Arian heresy while they retain it in thought...*

For as to those whom some were blaming for speaking of *three hypostases,* on the ground that the phrase is unscriptural and therefore suspicious, we thought it right indeed to require nothing beyond the confession of Nicæa, but on account of the contention we made enquiry of them, *whether they meant, like the Arian madmen, hypostases foreign and strange, and alien in ou-*sia *from one another,* and that each hypostasis was divided apart by itself, as is the case with creatures in general and in particular with those begotten of men, or like different *ousiai,* such as gold, silver, or brass;—or whether, like other heretics, they meant three Beginnings and three Gods, by speaking of three hypostases.

Διεβεβαιώσαντο μήτε λέγειν, μήτε πεφρονηκέναι ποτὲ οὕτως. Ἐρωτώντων δὲ ἡμῶν αὐτούς· Πῶς οὖν ταῦτα λέγετε· ἢ διὰ τί δὲ ὅλως τοιαύταις χρῆσθαι λέξεσιν· ἀπεκρίναντο, διὰ τὸ εἰς ἁγίαν Τριάδα πιστεύειν, οὐκ ὀνόματι Τριάδα μόνον, ἀλλ' ἀληθῶς οὖσαν καὶ ὑφεστῶσαν, Πατέρα τε ἀληθῶς ὄντα καὶ ὑφεστῶτα, καὶ Υἱὸν ἀληθῶς ἐνούσιον ὄντα καὶ ὑφεστῶτα, καὶ Πνεῦμα ἅγιον ὑφεστὸς καὶ ὑπάρχον οἴδαμεν, μήτε δὲ εἰρηκέναι τρεῖς θεοὺς ἢ τρεῖς ἀρχὰς, μήθ' ὅλως ἀνέχεσθαι τῶν τοῦτο λεγόντων, ἢ φρονούντων· ἀλλ' εἰδέναι ἁγίαν μὲν Τριάδα, μίαν δὲ θεότητα, καὶ μίαν ἀρχὴν, καὶ Υἱὸν μὲν ὁμοούσιον τῷ Πατρὶ, ὡς εἶπον οἱ Πατέρες, τὸ δὲ ἅγιον Πνεῦμα, οὐ κτίσμα, οὐδὲ ξένον, ἀλλ' ἴδιον καὶ ἀδιαίρετον τῆς οὐσίας τοῦ Υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ Πατρός...

Ἀποδεξάμενοι δὲ τούτων τὴν ἑρμηνείαν τῶν λέξεων, καὶ τὴν ἀπολογίαν, ἀνεκρίναμεν τοὺς αἰτιαθέντας παρὰ τούτων, ὡς λέγοντας μίαν ὑπόστασιν, μὴ ἄρα ὡς Σαβέλλιος φρονεῖ, οὕτω καὶ οὗτοι λέγουσιν ἐπὶ ἀναιρέσει τοῦ Υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου Πνεύματος, ἢ ὡς ἀνουσίου ὄντος τοῦ Υἱοῦ, ἢ ἀνυποστάτου τοῦ ἁγίου Πνεύματος· Οἱ δὲ καὶ αὐτοὶ διεβεβαιώσαντο μήτε τοῦτο λέγειν, μήτε οὕτω πεφρονηκέναι πώποτε· ἀλλ' ὑπόστασιν μὲν λέγομεν, ἡγούμενοι ταὐτὸν εἶναι εἰπεῖν ὑπόστασιν καὶ οὐσίαν· μίαν δὲ φρονοῦμεν, διὰ τὸ ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας τοῦ Πατρὸς εἶναι τὸν Υἱὸν, καὶ διὰ τὴν ταυτότητα τῆς φύσεως· μίαν γὰρ θεότητα, καὶ μίαν εἶναι τὴν ταύτης φύσιν πιστεύομεν, καὶ οὐκ ἄλλην μὲν τὴν τοῦ Πατρὸς, ξένην δὲ τούτου τὴν τοῦ Υἱοῦ, καὶ τὴν τοῦ ἁγίου Πνεύ-

They assured us in reply that they neither meant this nor had ever held it. But upon our asking them 'what then do you mean by it, or why do you use such expressions?' they replied, Because they believed in a Holy Trinity, *not a trinity in name only*, but existing and subsisting in truth, 'both a Father truly existing and subsisting, and a Son truly substantial and subsisting, and a Holy Spirit subsisting and really existing do we acknowledge,' and that neither had they said there were three Gods or three beginnings, nor would they at all tolerate such as said or held so, but that they acknowledged a Holy Trinity but One Godhead, and one Beginning, and that the Son is *homoousios* with the Father, as the fathers said; while the Holy Spirit is not a creature, nor external, but proper to and inseparable from the *ousia* of the Father and the Son...

Having accepted then these men's *interpretation and defence of their language*, we made enquiry of those blamed by them for speaking of *One hypostasis*, whether they use the expression *in the sense of Sabellius*, to the negation of the Son and the Holy Spirit, or as though the Son were non-substantial, or the Holy Spirit impersonal. But they in their turn assured us that they neither meant this nor had ever held it, but 'we use the word hypostasis *thinking it the same thing to say hypostasis or* ousia;' 'But we hold that there is One, because the Son is of the *ousia* of the Father, and because of the identity of nature. For we believe that there is one Godhead, and that it has one nature, and not that there is one nature of the Fa-

ματος. Ἀμέλει κἀκεῖ οἱ αἰτιαθέν-
τες ὡς εἰρηκότες τρεῖς ὑποστάσεις
συνετίθεντο τούτοις· καὶ αὐτοὶ δὲ
οἱ εἰρηκότες μίαν οὐσίαν τὰ ἐκείνων
ὥσπερ ἡρμήνευσαν καὶ ὡμολόγουν...

ther, from which that of the Son
and of the Holy Spirit are distinct.'
Well, thereupon they who had been
blamed for saying there were three
hypostases agreed with the others,
while those who had spoken of one
ousia, also confessed the doctrine of
the former *as interpreted by them...*

Τούτων   τοίνυν   οὕτως
ὁμολογηθέντων,   παρακαλοῦμεν
ὑμᾶς τοὺς μὲν οὕτως ὁμολογοῦν-
τας καὶ ἑρμηνεύοντας οὕτω τὰς
λέξεις, ἃς λέγουσι, μὴ κατακρίνετε
προπετῶς, μηδὲ ἀποβάλλετε, ἀλλὰ
μᾶλλον εἰρηνεύοντας καὶ ἀπολο-
γουμένους προσλαμβάνεσθε· τοὺς
δὲ μὴ βουλομένους οὕτως ὁμολο-
γεῖν καὶ διερμηνεύειν τὰς λέξεις,
τούτους κωλύετε καὶ ἐντρέπετε, ὡς
ὑπόπτους τῷ φρονήματι. Τούτων
τε μὴ ἀνεχόμενοι συμβουλεύετε
κἀκείνοις τοῖς ὀρθῶς ἑρμηνεύουσί τε
καὶ φρονοῦσι μηδὲν πλέον ἀλλήλους
ἀνακρίνειν μηδὲ λογομαχεῖν ἐπ' οὐδὲν
χρήσιμον, μήτε ταῖς τοιαύταις λέξεσι
διαμάχεσθαι, ἀλλὰ τῷ φρονήματι
τῆς εὐσεβείας συμφωνεῖν... πάντων
δὲ μᾶλλον προκρίνετε τὴν τοιαύτην
εἰρήνην, οὔσης ὑγιαινούσης πίστεως·
ἴσως ὁ Κύριος ἐλεήσει ἡμᾶς, καὶ
συνάψει τὰ διῃρημένα, καὶ γενομένης
μιᾶς ποίμνης, πάλιν πάντες ἕνα
ἔχομεν καθηγεμόνα, τὸν Κύριον
ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν.[24]

These things then being thus
confessed, we exhort you not hastily
to condemn those who so confess,
and so explain the phrases they use,
nor to reject them, but rather to
accept them as they desire peace
and defend themselves, while you
check and rebuke, as of suspicious
views, those who refuse so to con-
fess *and to explain their language.*
But while you refuse toleration to
the latter, counsel the others also
who explain and hold aright, *not
to enquire further into each other's
opinions, nor to fight about words
to no useful purpose, nor to go on
contending with the above phrases,
but to agree in the mind of piety...*
and value above all things peace of
that kind, faith being sound. Per-
haps God will have pity on us, and
unite what is divided, and, there be-
ing once more one flock, we shall all
have one leader, even our Lord Jesus
Christ.[25]

Thus, merely disagreeing about sentences or creedal formulae was not what
was important, but agreeing or disagreeing about substantive theological con-
tent. Thus, again, if an opponent insisted on making objections merely to
Gregory's semantics, it is simply unclear whether Gregory would (or should)
have any reason to care, as it is unclear whether semantic disagreements of
this sort are important to him or were to his peers in the intellectual *milieu* of
fourth-century Trinitarian debates. Again, examples could be multiplied, but I
will give a last example from Gregory himself, in his second *Contra Eunomium*

---

24. PG 26, pp. 796-805.
25. (St. Athanasius 1892), pp. 483-485.

lest there be any question as to whether Gregory shares the same views on semantics:

οὐδεμίαν γὰρ ἐν τούτοις κατὰ τὸ σημαινόμενον διαφορὰν ἐννοοῦμεν, ἀλλ’ ἓν δι’ ἑκατέρων τῶν λόγων ἀποσημαίνομεν, κἂν τὸ μὲν θέσιν τὸ δὲ ἀναίρεσίν τινος ἔχειν δοκῇ. . .

ὥστε τὰ μὲν ῥήματα δοκεῖν τῇ τοῦ σχήματος ἐξαλλαγῇ διαφόρως ἔχειν πρὸς ἄλληλα, τὸν δὲ νοῦν τοῖς λεγομένοις ἕνα καὶ τὸν αὐτὸν διαμένειν. τὸ γὰρ σπουδαζόμενον ἐν τοῖς περὶ θεοῦ λόγοις ἐστὶν οὐχὶ ῥημάτων εὐφωνίαν εὔκροτόν τε καὶ ἐναρμόνιον ἐπινοῆσαι, ἀλλ’ εὐσεβῆ διάνοιαν ἐξευρεῖν δι’ ἧς τὸ πρέπον τῇ ὑπολήψει τῇ περὶ θεοῦ φυλαχθήσεται.

ταύτης ἡμῖν ἐρηρεισμένως τῆς διανοίας μενούσης τίς ἔτι περὶ τὰ ῥήματα τοῖς νοῦν ἔχουσιν καταλείπεται μάχη, πάσης φωνῆς, καθ’ ἣν τὸ τοιοῦτον ἐξαγγέλλεται νόημα, τὸ αὐτὸ παριστώσης·

γὰρ . . . πάντα τὰ τοιαῦτα ἰσοστάσιά πως ἀλλήλοις ἐστὶ κατὰ τὴν δύναμιν τῶν σημαινομένων καὶ ὁμοτίμως ἔχει τὰ ῥήματα, καὶ μάταιος ὁ ζυγομαχῶν περὶ τὸν τοιόνδε τῆς φωνῆς ἦχον, ὡς οὐχὶ τῇ διανοίᾳ, ταῖς δὲ συλλαβαῖς καὶ τοῖς φθόγγοις ἐγκειμένης τῆς εὐσεβείας.[26]

. . . For *we understand no difference in the sense of these terms*, but we signify one and the same thing by both, though the one may seem to convey the notion of affirmation, and the other of negation. . .

while *the words* seem by the formal change to be at variance with each other, *the sense* remains one and the same. *For the object to be aimed at, in questions respecting God, is not to produce a dulcet and melodious harmony of words, but to work out an orthodox formula of thought*, whereby a worthy conception of God may be ensured. . .

[I]f this *opinion* is established, *what further contention of words remains* for men of sense and judgment, *when every word whereby such a notion is conveyed to us has the same signification?*

For . . . all these words are, in a manner, of like force, and equivalent to one another, as far as the meaning of the things signified is concerned; *and it is mere folly to contend for this or that vocal intonation, as if orthodoxy were a thing of sounds and syllables rather than of the mind.*[27]

But perhaps the objector might disagree with the fathers here, insisting that, even if it wasn't important *to them*, it is still for some objective reason important. But it would then be incumbent on the objector to tell us *why*.[28] I myself can't think of any very plausible line of attack that one could take in this regard, except to parlay the semantic objection into a theological one in something like the following way:

But the Bible is emphatic that there is exactly one God, and so, *if*

---

26. (St. Gregory of Nyssa 1960), Book 2, Chapter 1, sections 134–138.

27. Translation from (St. Gregory of Nyssa 1893), pp. 263-264. Emphasis mine.

28. I once heard it said, in an accent that made the phrase rhyme, "We ought to use Bible names for Bible things" – but it was never made clear *why*.

one's substantive theology is biblical, *and* one's semantics is biblical, then it ought to turn out that the sentence "There is exactly one God" is true. So that if one could argue Gregory into admitting that, given his overall views, it turns out that the sentence "There is more than one God" is true, it would at least show that there is *something unbiblical* about his view – *either* in the realm of his substantive theology *or* in his semantics.

I'll offer two responses. First of all, the claim that the Bible is emphatic that there is exactly one God is not so obviously true as is usually assumed. Famously, as we saw Gregory allude to, (Chapter 4.2.3, p. 134 ff.) parts of the Bible seem to be merely *monolatrous*, rather than monotheistic. Various statements made in Old Testament writings seem to imply that there are other gods, but simply that Abraham and others only worshipped one God.

The main proof texts usually pointed to in arguments like these are (1) the First Commandment and (2) the *Shema*.

(1) But the First Commandment in fact does not say there are no other gods, or anything that might even seem to *imply* that there are no other gods. It merely says not to put any other gods *before* the Lord. (And in fact, this at least *seems* to, or could not unreasonably be taken to, imply that *there are* other gods that one *could* put before the Lord.)

(2) And the *Shema* in fact does not say "there is exactly one God," but "the Lord is your God; the Lord *is one.*" Famously, there are two words for "one" in Hebrew, *yachid* (יָחִיד), with a meaning closer to something like "single" or "only" (as in "only-begotten") and *echad* (אֶחָד), with a meaning closer to something like "a unified whole" (as one might describe, to take an example from Gregory, "one people" or as in Genesis 2:24 the man and the woman are "one (אֶחָד) flesh," and in Genesis 11:6 "*the people* [building the tower of Babel] were one (אֶחָד).") And famously, the *Shema* uses the latter (אֶחָד), "the Lord is your God; the Lord is one (אֶחָד)." Naturally, there is enormous debate over the *precise* meanings of those terms, as well as how, *precisely*, to interpret them in the context of the Shema. The point I am making is simply that it is, to understate, *less than clear* that the *Shema* can *only* be interpreted as meaning that there is *a single God* (which would, anyway, contradict other passages from the Hebrew Bible),[29] much less that it must be taken to mean, more precisely, that there is a single hypostasis that is divine (which of course, on Gregory's view, are two quite different claims).

Less famously, Hebrew also has the word *yesh* (יֵשׁ), which is just the existential quantifier, and *ayn* (אֵין), which is just the negation of the existential quantifier. Thus, if one really wanted to say, very precisely, that there is exactly one God, one could say, "There is one God and there is not a God other than (distinct from) it." And if one wanted to say that there is exactly one *thing* that is divine, one could say there exists a *davar* (דָּבָר) that is divine and there does not exist a *davar* such that that *davar* is divine and distinct from the

---

29. See 4.2.3, p. 134 ff.

first-mentioned divine *davar*. Of course, that would all be cumbersome. But there are other ways in Hebrew that one could put the point precisely, but less awkwardly. "There is a single God" (*yesh el yachid*) (יֵשׁ אֵל יָחִיד) for example. And for the more restrictive claim, "There is a single divine thing" (*yesh davar elohi yachid*) (יֵשׁ דָּבָר אֱלֹהִי יָחִיד).

Thus, so far from being *emphatic* that there is exactly one God, the evidence even from these proof texts is, at best, inconclusive as to whether there are supposed to be other gods in the view of the author(s) of these passages.

Furthermore, as we noted Gregory points out numerous passages from the Hebrew Bible that in fact seem to *clearly admit* the existence of other gods,[30] or at least created hypostases that *participate accidentally in* divinity (whatever exactly that is).[31]

We saw that the Lord says to Moses, "See, I have made thee a god to Pharaoh."[32] (Exodus 7:1) Also, "The gods of the gentiles are demons."[33] (Psalm 96:5 LXX) To which many other passages could be added, "I have said ye are gods, all of you, sons of the Most High." (Psalm 82:6) Likewise, "Among the gods there is none like unto thee, O Lord; neither are there any *erga* like unto thy *erga*." (Psalm 86:8, LXX.) And, "For the Lord your God is God *of gods*, and Lord *of lords*, a great God, mighty, and terrible . . ." (Deut. 10:17) And so on.

Though there's little about the Bible that is uncontroversial, at least many scholars today would also agree that the primitive Judaic or Abrahamic faith was not monotheistic but simply monolatrous. That is, it was acknowledged that other gods existed, only that they were not worthy of worship (or that, in any case, Israel had made a covenant with the Lord not to offer *latreia* or *service* to any other God but the Lord.)[34]

One might be uncomfortable with this fact. Why only worship one god, if the Bible and later Christian tradition admit the existence of multiple gods? Are the demons that the gentiles worship *on an equal footing* with the Lord? Are *we*? (As the "sons of the Most High?")

Gregory's answers to these questions are obvious: Only the Holy Trinity participate in divinity *by nature*. Other things that participate in the divine *energeia* (or in some other token *energeia* of the same type) do so *only accidentally*.

But the second, and to my mind much more important, response I will give to the charge that the doctrine of the Trinity is unbiblical is given below, in the section on theological objections (Chapter 6.4, pp. 293 ff.).

In conclusion, the semantic objections we've considered seem to turn out to be dead ends. Objecting to Gregory's semantics for the predicate "is God" was

---

30. See Chapter 4.2.3, p. 134.
31. See Chapter 4.2.3, p. 137.
32. Chapter 4.2.3, p. 137.
33. Chapter 4.2.3, p. 134.
34. E.g., (Smith 2002), p. 13. "By the end of the monarchy much of the spectrum of religious practice had largely disappeared; monolatrous Yahwism was the norm in Israel, setting the stage for the emergence of Israelite monotheism. As chapters 2 through 5 illustrate, the period of the monarchy produced the conditions for the gradual development of monotheism."

a non-starter. Further, objecting to his semantics for counting by agent-nouns might initially seem more plausible, and closer to a "logical" objection, but this turns out to be problematic on many levels. It's not clear that our ordinary counting practices can even settle the question, or if they did whether they wouldn't settle it in Gregory's favor, and if they didn't, whether it wouldn't make the anti-Trinitarian argument less clearly an accusation of inconsistency in the usual sense, and more like just a disagreement in the realm of the philosophy of logic. Finally, even if it *could* somehow be shown that the correct view of counting here is such that it *would* be strictly speaking true given Gregory's theology that there are three gods, it seems that this would only be so in a very technical, but highly misleading sense. And given Gregory's concerns, it isn't ultimately clear why he should ignore the misleadingness of the statement that there are three gods and why he should be more invested in purely semantic concerns. Unless, that is, one wants to parlay the objection into a purely theological objection that his view is unbiblical. And for my response to that, see both immediately above, and below (Chapter 6.4, p. 293 ff.)

6.3   Metaphysical Objections

Suppose, then, that the anti-Trinitarian gives up on the attempt to press an allegedly purely "logical" argument against the doctrine of the Trinity, and even gives up on at least the *semblance* of a purely logical objection that the objection to Gregory's semantics for counting considered just above would provide. He might, then, move on to what we can call the *Metaphysical* Problem of the Trinity (MPT), saying that P is not *formally* inconsistent, but that it is *implicitly* inconsistent (see Chapter 1.1, p. 10). That is, he could say that, although one can't simply derive a contradiction from P *via* some logical axioms, P is in conflict with certain necessarily true propositions, so that when we add those propositions into the mix, we can *then* derive a formal contradiction.

Again, I flag that this would not count as the strictly "logical" problem we were promised (which seemed to be that P was simply a *formal* contradiction), but still it would be at least fairly closely related to the original worry, and might be a serious problem for Trinitarianism, even if not the problem we were promised. And while it may be that there are other orthodox accounts of the Trinity within the pro-Nicene consensus (or within the category of orthodox accounts of the Trinity, if that is a broader category than the pro-Nicene consensus), it seems fair enough if the anti-Trinitarian wants to begin by criticizing P as understood on GNT.

But unfortunately for the anti-Trinitarian, there is surprisingly little to object to here. For although it's nice that Gregory gives us a fully fleshed out Trinitarian Theory, it is not clear that *everything* Gregory says about the metaphysics and theology of the Trinity is essential to orthodox Trinitarianism, or indeed even to *his own* ultimate theological motivations. What's more, we also saw that most of Gregory's Trinitarian Theory actually just consists of the logical consequences of a handful of metaphysical and theological assumptions, most

of which seem fairly tame, so that if one wants to raise any objection to the consequences of his basic assumptions, they ought, as a matter of philosophical etiquette, to try to trace the problem back to one of those basic assumptions. Even if one is unsure how to locate the problem in that way, the essential question here is whether the anti-Trinitarian could find some aspect of Gregory's understanding of P that both:

(A) is essential to his response to the LPT, and

(B) is genuinely problematic (viz. false).

Without seeing such an argument fleshed out, although it's easy to see aspects of Gregory's view that might be argued to be one or the other, it's difficult to see how one would argue that there is some aspect which is *both*.

For example, one might object to Gregory's bundle-theoretic account of hypostases and to one or the other (or both) of the criteria of individuation of hypostases we might attribute to him (Chapter 4.3.4, p. 165 ff.). But it isn't clear that any of that is actually *essential* to Gregory's account, or to orthodox Trinitarianism in general. Suppose one argued that hypostases simply "come from the factory" already individuated. This might certainly have consequences for other theological questions (the *filioque* controversy, say, or issues about divine simplicity or the incarnation), but as far as the "threeness / oneness" problem of the Trinity, or really anything *specifically* about the Trinity in itself, it doesn't seem like it would make much difference. As long as the hypostases can be numerically distinct *somehow*, and as long as they can all bear all the same relations to all the same other objects as before (or at least can be *homoousios* and synergistic – even if they don't have any *idiomata*) such an objection would seem to have little consequence.

We've seen that, in fact, all that is strictly essential to Gregory's response to the LPT is GNT_{Lite} (because, essentially, GNT_{Lite} is all that results from analyzing S according to Gregory's N-semantics). And there is not much metaphysics going on in GNT_{Lite} (though we will consider what little there is shortly). So, to press the MPT against Gregory, one would have to find some aspect of GNT_{Lite} to object to. But as I said, there is surprisingly little to object to here.

First, the anti-Trinitarian will surely not want to object to the non-identity of the hypostases in $P4_{GNT}$–$P6_{GNT}$, since that is what makes the LPT "work" in the first place.

Second, as for $P1_{GNT}$–$P3_{GNT}$, to deny, not that these are what S1–S3 *mean*, or at least that they are the *truth conditions* for S1–S3 (as in the first semantic objection above), but simply to say that they *couldn't possibly be true*, is really a *theological objection.* That is, to say this and nothing more, is to object to Gregory's substantive theology (discussed below), not to his metaphysics. Within the context of GNT, it would be to say that atheism is necessarily true. Now that would certainly be a problem for Gregory's view. But it's hard to take seriously the idea that *that* is what the "threeness / oneness" problem amounts to. It would be better called, simply, "the oneness problem," or the "there is no God in the first place" problem. And it's difficult to see how one wouldn't

288

either just beg the question against Gregory here, or, if one argued for the thesis, argue for it on grounds that have essentially little or nothing to do with the considerations originally alleged by the anti-Trinitarian.

Finally, that leaves $P7_{GNT}$, and various entailments of P_{GNT} as a whole. As for claiming, again, not that Gregory's *semantics* for S7 is false (discussed in the second semantic objection above), but that P7 *so explicated* ($P7_{GNT}$) is necessarily false – that would be to say that (1) there cannot be any god (as just above), or that (2) there could not be more than one hypostasis that "gods," or that (3) distinct hypostases cannot share a token god-ding. And it's not obvious what else would be *entailed* by P_{GNT} as a whole that the anti-Trinitarian might object to.[35]

As for (2), of course, the anti-Trinitarian doesn't seem to want to take it to be a *premise* in his argument that there simply couldn't be more than one divine hypostasis. He seems to want to take it to be *entailed by* the Trinitarian's own premises. I can imagine, though, one trying to raise some kind of argument that there simply couldn't be more than one divine hypostasis. But again, this doesn't sound like a "threeness / oneness" problem, so much as a "more than oneness" problem. Indeed, not even a "more than oneness" problem, since on Gregory's view there is still one God. It is a specifically "more than one hypostasis" problem. Although it's slightly easier here to imagine finding some way not to just beg the question against Gregory, one would like to see what the argument would be. And whatever it might be, it again seems like the sort of thing that would have to be argued for on grounds that have essentially little or nothing to do with the considerations originally alleged by the anti-Trinitarian.

That brings us to (3). The anti-Trinitarian can deny that distinct hypostases can share a single token *energeia* between them, or what I have called Gregory's metaphysics of synergy. This seems to me to be the only real bit of *metaphysics* that is genuinely essential to Gregory's analysis of P and that might at all be objectionable. If the phenomenon of synergy were impossible, Gregory's account of why the hypostases count as a single God would indeed be wrecked. We've seen that Gregory's metaphysics of synergy falls out of his more fundamental view about the individuation of token *energeiai*. Therefore, let's take a moment to consider objections to the related issues of synergy and the individuation of token *energeiai*.

First, it seems to me that the burden of proof at this point is on the anti-Trinitarian to show there is some problem with Gregory's metaphysics of synergy. So, there seem to be two salient questions we might ask at this point:

1. Are there good philosophical reasons to think synergy is, not just practically, but metaphysically impossible? (That is, not merely that it is impossible for all spatio-temporal hypostases, due to the way in which they happen to be individuated, but that it is impossible *tout court*.)

2. Should the Christian for some other reason resist being committed to this bit of metaphysics? That is, if Gregory's account of the Trinity commits

35. See Combination Objections below, p. 307.

one to synergy, is that itself a reason to rethink Gregory's account, and to go back to the "business of Trinitarian theorizing," as it were?

With respect to the first question, I only note that Davidson has defended a theory of the individuation of events (and therefore actions) roughly parallel to Gregory's theory of the individuation of token *energeiai*,[36] and which has the result that synergy is at least *logically* possible. That is, without adding in an additional *assumption* to the contrary, no *formal* contradiction arises *merely* from claiming that multiple agents perform the same actions. [37] There is not much that I could add to Davidson's discussion of event individuation. I will only register the fact that I am persuaded by the considerations he offers. There seem to me to be excellent reasons for taking events to be individuals. So, it is the anti-Trinitarian's burden to show why the Trinitarian shouldn't accept a Davidsonian view on event individuation, and along with it the possibility of synergy.

That brings us to the second question, whether there are some sort of *theological* reasons to want to avoid a metaphysics that allows for synergy. Again, we would need to see the argument why. But I register my view that, *prima facie*, things seem quite the opposite to me. The notion of synergy is not only the metaphysical centerpiece of the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity – it would seem to be an incredibly fruitful concept in other areas of philosophical theology as well. For a wee bit of further discussion on that point, see the section on theological objections below (6.4, p. 298).

As far as I can see, the metaphysics of synergy is the only aspect of Gregory's substantive theology and metaphysics that is both obviously *essential* to his response to the LPT (his analysis of P) and open to any serious philosophical objection. So since I don't see any serious reason why synergy should be rejected, I can see no reason to reject Gregory's response to the LPT, or his analysis of P, on purely metaphysical grounds.

But one might object that the *homoousion* is so central to Gregory's thought, as well as to that of all of the Cappadocians and indeed to the pro-Nicene consensus more generally, that a certain amount of metaphysics surrounding *ousiai* is also essential to the doctrine of the Trinity, more broadly speaking. I hasten to reiterate that, surprising as it may be, the *homoousion* is *not*, in fact, essential to Gregory's *solution to the LPT* specifically, nor indeed even *directly* to his *understanding of P*. And so I flag that this takes us yet further away from our original concern. Still, perhaps the anti-Trinitarian will want to move on from objecting merely to the allegedly problematic subset of the doctrine of

---

36. For Davidson's views on the individuation of actions and events, see (DAVIDSON 1963), (DAVIDSON 1966), (DAVIDSON 1969b), and (DAVIDSON 1970) all reprinted in (DAVIDSON 2001), as well as (DAVIDSON 1969a).

37. Though, of course, a contradiction would arise if those agents are individuated by various spatio-temporal relations, and that their actions are in turn individuated by the same spatio-temporal relations as the agents. This is precisely the reason why Gregory draws a real metaphysical distinction between the Trinity – whose token *energeiai* are not individuated "parallel to" the hypostases – and three shoemakers – whose token *energeiai are.*

the Trinity we've named "P," either via the LPT *or* the MPT, and ascend to a yet higher or broader level, attacking the larger doctrine of which P was only a part.

I note again that this takes us yet another step further away from the problem we were originally promised. What we are considering now has left behind even the *appearance* of a merely "logical" problem with just a limited subset of the doctrine of the Trinity. Still, I will admit that, if it were impossible for their to be three distinct hypostases with a single *ousia*, the *homoousion* would be untenable, and that would in some sense be the end of the world for the Gregory, the Cappadocians, and the pro-Nicene consensus in general.

But while it is certainly important to Gregory's overall view that there be three distinct hypostases sharing a single *ousia*, it hardly seems problematic. Distinct hypostases in Gregory's sense (individuals, like Peter, James and John, for example), share *ousiai* in Gregory's sense (natures, like humanity in this case) all the time.

One might make a different objection, namely that *ousiai* are not individuated by *energeiai*, so that Gregory's argument for the *homoousion* is flawed.

But first, even if true, this would not show that the *homoousion* must be *false*. It would only *undercut* one of Gregory's arguments in favor of it.

Secondly, it seems true anyway. As Michel Barnes has shown in detail, the principle has a long pedigree in Greek philosophy beginning with pre-Socratic medical authors and continuing through Plato and up to the time of the Church Fathers who took it up.[38] And as noted above, in recent times, Sydney Shoemaker has defended the thesis that properties are individuated by their causal powers, a thesis clearly analogous to Gregory's.[39] The metaphysical objection under consideration, then, would take one into these debates. (And if one wants to argue that the idea is not *biblical*, see my discussion of this point below in the section on theological objections (p. 299.)

In conclusion, then, besides there being no strictly *logical* problem with Gregory's account of the Trinity, there seems to be no clear basis for making *metaphysical* objections to his account – neither to Gregory's understanding of P specifically, nor even to the broader metaphysical framework within which that understanding is situated.

6.4 Theological Objections

Finally, one might object neither to the logic proper, nor to the purely philosophical (semantic and metaphysical) framework involved in Gregory's account of the Trinity, but simply to *his substantive theological assumptions*, directly.

But first, for non-Christians to object to specific bits of the theology involved seems question-begging, or at least out of place. Without arguing there is some

---

38. (Barnes 2001).

39. See 4.4.4, p. 185 above, and all of (Shoemaker 1979)(Shoemaker 1980a)(Shoemaker 1980b)(Shoemaker 1984)(Shoemaker 1998)(Shoemaker 2003)(Shoemaker 2011), for the development of his view over time

kind of logical, metaphysical, or other problem with a bit of theology, on what basis would the non-Christian argue against it? More to the point, what kind of objection would the non-Christian make to Gregory's theological assumptions that would count as specifically a problem with *the Trinity*, rather than simply a general problem with theism? (E.g., that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit simply *don't exist* in the first place? A devastating criticism, if true. But really just the thesis of *atheism*, and not anything to do with the doctrine of the Trinity *specifically*.)

On the other hand, a Christian might try to object to a bit of theology (or a non-Christian might offer the same objection "in the voice of" a hypothetical Christian, as it were, as an "internal" criticism) on the basis of some other aspect of Christian theology.

In particular, a significant amount of criticism of the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity rests on the assertion that it is not *biblical*. Specifically, this usually takes the form of pointing to scriptural passages that seem to make Christ unequal to the Father, or to a lack of explicit scriptural support for taking the Holy Spirit to be equal to the Father (in some sense of "equal" and "unequal" that would be relevant to the *homoousion* and/or the synergy of the hypostases), or to the lack of the philosophical use of "*ousia*" in the Bible.

Indeed, the charge of un-biblicality seems to be, admittedly, one of Dale Tuggy's biggest concerns. In an interview on his views about the Trinity, Tuggy admits that, "Not all versions of Trinity doctrines are contradictory. The more important question is, 'are they well-founded in the scripture?'."[40] James Anderson likewise argues convincingly that the debate between Tuggy and Himself ultimately centers not on purely philosophical disagreements, but on differences of biblical exegesis.[41]

Without making it entirely explicit, Tuggy's thought process here (along with most who raise the charge of "unbiblicality" against the doctrine of the Trinity) seems to be essentially a form of "Great Apostasy" mythology, and this argument from unbiblicality shares the same fundamental difficulty as all such arguments from Great Apostasy theorists.

The myth of the Great Apostasy takes many forms. What is *essential* to it is that it claims that, at some point, or through some gradual process (call it "the Great Apostasy"), mainstream Christianity lost its way, so that what came to be mainstream Christianity is in fact a perversion of what Christianity once was, or was supposed to be. (Some give this resulting perverted or heretical form of Christianity the charming biblical title of "the Whore of Babylon.") Thus, the Great Apostasy theorist argues, we must go back through the history of the church and separate out the gold from the dross, the wheat from the chaff.

---

40. With my apologies to Tuggy for holding him accountable for something said verbally in an interview posted on YouTube. It may be uncharitable to bring this kind of "unofficial" statement into the discussion. But I do think it is relevant, and that the view also comes through in some of his "official" statements (papers) on the subject. As of 02-21-2014, the video can be found at URL = http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mBzA-4vtToo and the quote occurs around 10:40.

41. (Anderson 2011) pp. 24-29.

Only then can we recover the original, pure Christianity (call it "primitive" Christianity) and either restore Christianity to its primitive form, or at least save ourselves from the Whore of Babylon that displaced primitive Christianity.

What is *accidental* to Great Apostasy mythologies are precisely what elements of mainstream Christianity are claimed to have been part of primitive Christianity, what are claimed to be perverse accretions or distortions that resulted from the Great Apostasy, and when, how and why the Great Apostasy is supposed to have taken place.

Now I am not of course claiming that telling a full-blown story about a Great Apostasy is somehow a necessary condition on making the case that the doctrine of the Trinity is unbiblical. Rather, I am pointing out that the argument that the doctrine of the Trinity is unbiblical shares the same, fundamental problem as all arguments within the broader Great Apostasy family of arguments, as follows. In a nutshell, the strategy of the Great Apostasy theorist is to argue that:

1. Some particular aspect of the Christian tradition X (in this case the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity) is in some way in irreconcilable conflict with some other aspect of the Christian tradition Y (in this case the Bible).

2. Y (in this case the Bible) takes precedence over X (in this case the doctrine of the Trinity). Y is more clearly or obviously a part of primitive Christianity, or more likely to be, than X; or Y is more central to the primitive Christian web of belief, as it were, than X; or Y is a practice that is more essential to primitive Christianity than X, or what have you.

3. Therefore, Christians should reject X (in this case the doctrine of the Trinity) in favor of Y (in this case the Bible).

Now besides the difficulty in establishing the first premise, it is always left unclear what non-arbitrary criteria one could possibly employ that would make sense out of the second premise in arguments of this type.

Thus, there are two problems for this kind of argument, corresponding to the two premises. Let's first look at what I regard as the less deeply problematic (though still incredibly problematic) issue – backing up the claim that the Bible and the doctrine of the Trinity are in conflict in the first place.

There is no shortage of passages anyone would consider "biblical"[42] depicting Christ as pre-existent (e.g., John 1:1-2, 1:15, 1:30), explicitly referring to Him as "God" (e.g., θεός at John 1:1 and, with the definite article, ὁ θεός at Hebrews 1:8), as participating in the creation of the universe (e.g., John 1:3, 1:10, Hebrews 1:2, etc.), and so on. And there is no shortage of contemporary scholarship legitimizing an orthodox Trinitarian understanding of these passages

---

42. For problems with the concept of what counts as "biblical," see my second objection below, p. 299 ff., and for more on the difficulty of showing the doctrine of the Trinity in particular is not biblical, see p. 305 ff.

(e.g., Larry Hurtado's work).[43] But we will not enter into that debate here. I simply flag the fact that there would be a lot of work to do even to make this part of the argument stick.[44]

But what's worse on this score is that, although as we've seen, Christ's being *homoousios* with the Father is in some sense essential to Cappadocian triadology broadly speak, it is not a *basic theological assumption* for Gregory. It is rather a *consequence* of other theological and metaphysical assumptions, so that if we reject this consequence, we need to examine the more basic premises from which it follows.

But Gregory's purely theological assumptions are fairly few, and mostly uncontroversial. Aside from the uncontroversial (among Christians) assumptions that there are such things as the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and the only mildly controversial assumption that these three are distinct, the only purely *theological* assumption he makes in the context of the LPT is that the hypostases engage in *energeiai* of the same type. And at least in the case of Christ and the Father this seems to be amply supported by the words of Christ Himself in the gospels. See all of the following discussion on this, but especially the quote from John 5:17-19 below, p. 295 ("the Son doeth the same..."). One might actually interpret Christ here as *meaning* that He and the Father synergize on all of their actions, in which case Gregory has everything he wants. But even if Christ is only saying that He and the Father perform *energeiai* of all the same types (i.e., the Cappadocian Assertion), it then follows from Gregory's *metaphysics* (not additional theological assumptions) that they have the same, uncreated, nature, and from the fact that there are no *idiomata* to individuate their *token energeiai*, it follows that they synergize anyway. Thus, to attack Gregory's view here, we are led back to making metaphysical (not purely theological) objections after all.

Additionally, besides the fact that Gregory's theological views that the hypostases are *homoousios* and synergistic are really just consequences of his metaphysics and some fairly uncontroversial theological assumptions, it doesn't seem unreasonable to believe that the overall gist of this view – that is, the *basing* of the unity of the Father and the Son on their synergy, the view that the Father and Son *count as "one" because* of synergy – is simply taken into the tradition from the New Testament itself (though the New Testament uses the less technical word *ergon* rather than the more philosophically loaded term *energeia*).

Consider this passage from John 10:

> 10:24 The Jews then gathered around Him, and were saying to Him,

---

43. See, e.g., (Hurtado 2003) and (Hurtado 2005).

44. Also, anti-Trinitarians here sometimes seem to confuse the issues of showing that the doctrine of the Trinity *lacks support* from the Bible (e.g., showing that the sorts of passages I mentioned above aren't to be interpreted in a Trinitarian way), with showing that *the negation of* the doctrine of the Trinity *has support* from the Bible (e.g., showing that a passage like "No man knoweth the day... not even the Son" (Matt. 24:36; Mark 13:32) is to be taken in an anti-Trinitarian sense). Treating the two as equivalent makes sense only to the extent that we *both* reject any kind of mysterian stance *and* assume at the outset that the Bible does not contradict itself, neither of which is uncontroversial in the context of a debate involving both mysterians and anti-Trinitarians.

> "How long will You keep us in suspense? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly." 25 Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe; the *erga* that I do in My Father's name, these testify of Me... 30 I and the Father are one." 31 The Jews picked up stones again to stone Him. 32 Jesus answered them, "I showed you many good *erga* from the Father; for which of them are you stoning Me?" 33 The Jews answered Him, "For a good *ergon* we do not stone You, but for blasphemy; and because You, being a man, make Yourself out to be God." 34 Jesus answered them, "... 37 If I do not do the *erga* of My Father, do not believe Me; 38 but if I do them, though you do not believe Me, believe the *erga*, so that you may know and understand that the Father is in Me, and I in the Father."

Thus, in 25-30, Jesus seems to connect the fact that he does certain *erga* (*energeiai*) to the fact that He and the Father "are one."

In 32, He claims that these *erga* are "from the Father."

Finally, in 37-38, He connects doing the same *erga* with His being "in" the Father and the Father "in" Him. He also moves from the metaphysical claim that the unity of Him and the Father is grounded in their performing the same *erga*, to the epistemic claim that one should *believe* in Him if and only if He does "the *erga* of My [His] Father," and that one can "know and understand" that the Father is "in" Him, and He "in" the Father, due to the fact that He does "the *erga* of My [His] Father."

Later, in chapter 14, He again connects this concept of the Father being "in" Him and He "in" the Father to their unity in virtue of synergy and to Christian knowledge and belief:

> 14:8 Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us." 9 Jesus said to him, "Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how can you say, 'Show us the Father'? 10 Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father who dwelleth in Me, He doeth the *erga*. 11 Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me; otherwise believe because of the *erga* themselves.

This theme of synergy with the Father, and its being the basis on which Christ claims equality with God the Father, runs all through the gospel of John. After being accused of blasphemy for having healed the paralytic in the pool of Bethesda on the Sabbath, Christ says:

> 5:17 ... "My Father works (*ergazetai*) until just now, and I work (*ergazomai*)." 18 Because of this, therefore the Jews sought even more to kill him, because not only had he broken the sabbath, but also said that God was his Father, making himself equal with God. 19 Then Jesus answered and said to them, "Amen, Amen, I say to

you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he sees the Father do: for *whatsoever things He doeth, the Son doeth the same thing, in the same way...*"

This again shows the author of John connected Christ's being "equal to God" with His doing all of "the same thing(s), in the same way," as the Father, i.e., the concept of synergy.[45]

We already saw how John connects the Father and Son's synergy with their unity and with being "in" one another. He later also connects unity and being "in" one another with the relation of Christians to one another and to God, as well as to making known who are His true disciples. In the High Priestly Prayer of Christ, we read:

> 17:20 Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; 21 That they all may be one; just as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. 22 And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; so that they may be one, even as we are one: 23 I in them, and thou in me, so that they may be made perfect in one; and so that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me. 24 Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. 25 O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. 26 And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.

Here He speaks of the "glory" instead of the "*erga*" (though one can argue they are the same thing, or at least that the *Shekhinah* is *one of* the divine *energeiai*),[46] but in any case He claims that Christians will be "one" in the same sense as that in which He and the Father are one, and that He will be "in" them and they will be "in" Him and "in" the Father. And we have already seen that John connects being "in" with synergy.

It is no wonder, then, that Paul constantly refers to his friends as "synergizers" of his,[47] as well as to his synergy with Christ,[48] (the author of the third epistle of John may well be making the same claim when he speaks of "being synergizers with *the Truth*," "Truth" being a title of Christ).[49]

---

45. Though one could interpret this as only asserting the CA. But we've seen how easily Gregory can get from the CA to the *homoousion*, and from the *homoousion* to Universal Synergy.

46. (Bradshaw 2006), pp. 291-292.

47. E.g., Romans 16:3, Romans 16:9, Romans 16:21, 1 Corinthians 16:16, 2 Corinthians 8:23, Philippians 2:25, Philippians 4:3, Colossians 4:11, 1 Thessalonians 3:2, Philemon 1:1, Philemon 1:24.

48. 2 Corinthians 6:1.

49. 3 John 1:8

Paul also explicitly grounds the "oneness" he has with other Christians in his synergy with them. "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase... Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one... For we are synergizers with God..."[50]

Although more pronounced in John, the theme of the Father and Son synergizing with one another, and of Christians synergizing with one another and with the persons of the Trinity, is present in the synoptic gospels as well. (E.g., Mark 16:20, "And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord synergizing with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.")

Indeed, once one knows to look for it, the term "synergy" (συνεργέω) and its inflections shows up all over the New Testament to describe the relationship between the Father and Son, and similarly the relationship between Christians with each other and with Christ, in ways that certainly sound as though this is the fact in virtue of which, and the sense in which, they count as "one." (Compare the story of the Tower of Babel in Genesis 11 as well).

Thus, not only does Gregory's view here seem to lie comfortably at the heart of the pro-Nicene consensus, it seems not unlikely that he derived his views from an even earlier Christian tradition, and in turn there seems to be ample support for the view from the Bible itself on anyone's understanding of what counts as "the Bible."[51]

I hasten to stress that I don't imagine this brief foray into the Bible will be sufficient to persuade anyone to accept the interpretations I'm suggesting who doesn't already accept Gregory's views. Although I would be willing to defend the view in the detail that it deserves, my point at the present is not to show that Gregory interprets the Bible *correctly*. Although I obviously find the interpretation of the Bible I am suggesting plausible, I acknowledge that the Bible is a hard book to interpret and there is more to be said here.

The point of my remarks, however, is not to establish that Gregory's view is biblical in the sense of being in accordance with a *correct* interpretation of the text (a point I would have to argue for separately, and at greater length). Rather, it is, as I said, to show that "it doesn't seem unreasonable to think that the overall gist of this view – that the Father and Son count as 'one' because of synergy – is simply *taken into the tradition from* the New Testament itself." That is to say, that it does not seem *unreasonable* to read the Bible in the way I have briefly outlined above, and so one can suppose, not unreasonably, that Gregory, not unreasonably (and not disingenuously), derived his views from an earlier Christian tradition in combination with the Bible itself. The burden of proof here seems to be on the anti-Trinitarian to show that Gregory's theological assumptions are in some sense un-biblical, either in the sense that he doesn't really believe that the various aspects of his triadology were really intended by the authors of the biblical passages we have in view (that he is "imposing them" on the text), or in the sense that his belief on that point was incorrect. The point I am trying to make clear is that Gregory's most basic theological premises are

---

50. 1 Cor. 3:6-9
51. Though see below, p. 299, for problems about what *does* count as "the Bible."

not quite what one might assume they would be, and that when we see the very few theological assumptions he is actually making, there is hardly any reason at all to think that he couldn't have been sincere in his belief that these most basic theological premises were contained in the Bible. And, although a full defense of the point would be beyond my qualifications, there are at least *some* positive reasons to suppose that he was correct, and.

Of course, one might direct one's charges of un-biblicality not at Gregory's theological *premises*, but directly at his *conclusions*. But then, if one doesn't object to his theological premises, one must go back and attack his metaphysics or semantics, specifically the metaphysical views that (1) synergy is possible, or (2) that *ousiai* are individuated by their natural *energeiai*, or the semantic views that (3) by calling something "God" or "divine" we predicate its engagement in a certain kind of *energeia*, or (4) that synergizing on a token *energeia* is that in virtue of which two *hypostases* count as "one" doer.

We've already seen some of the biblical reasons Gregory holds (3). (See 4.2.3, p. 134 ff.) And just now we've gotten at least a taste of how much the Bible talks about synergy (1), as well as the ways in which multiple New Testament authors conceive of synergy as that in virtue of which "two" count as "one" (4). One might argue that the Bible is only ever speaking of the human or creaturely sort of "synergy" – the kind of cooperation that is possible for beings separated by time and space. But nevertheless, there doesn't seem to be any *biblical* reason to suppose that the beefier sort of synergy Gregory attributes to the Trinity is *not* possible for the Trinity. And anyway, even if one thinks that the Bible is talking here about some lesser kind of synergy – if two things can count as one in virtue of a *lesser* kind of synergy than what Gregory imagines, *how much more so* would the Trinity count as one. Indeed, if the biblical requirement for counting as one is only some lesser kind of synergy, then it wouldn't matter even if synergy were metaphysically impossible – the Trinity could count as one anyway.

What's more, the concept of synergy as Gregory understands it actually seems quite promising. Much of the mystery people seem to find in the issue of divine inspiration seems to be dispelled by it, for example. (We need not accept any dichotomy between the Holy Spirit magically moving a man's hands versus a mere mortal simply being "inspired" by God in the way one can be "inspired" by a painting when there is the possibility of dual agency in the same events.) There is a parallel problem with the agency of miracles, not as much noticed as the problem of inspiration, but equally difficult. The Bible sometimes attributes miracles to the Lord (e.g., the parting of the Red Sea and the drying up of the Jordan in Joshua 4:23).[52] But sometimes to a prophet (e.g., Elisha's raising the widow's son from the dead, and his other miracles, in 2 Kings 8:1-5).[53] Yet it

---

52. "For *the LORD your God dried up the waters of Jordan* from before you, until ye were passed over, *as the LORD your God did to the Red sea*, which he dried up from before us, until we were gone over." (Joshua 4:23).

53. "8:1 Then spake Elisha unto the woman, *whose son he had restored to life*, saying, Arise, and go thou and thine household, and sojourn wheresoever thou canst sojourn: for the LORD hath called for a famine; and it shall also come upon the land seven years. . .

seems we want to say *both* that Moses parted the Red Sea *and* that God did, and *both* that Elisha raised the widow's son *and* that God did. Again, this can be a bit of a conundrum if we assume an exclusionary principle that two distinct individuals cannot both perform the same action. The conundrum is easy to dispel when we accept a metaphysics of synergy.

Finally, the claim that *ousiai* are individuated by their natural *energeiai* seems to me even more clearly biblical. It seems to me to be only a fancy way of saying, "By their fruits shall ye know them. Do men gather grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles?" (Matt. 7:16)

We come at last, then, to the second, and in my view much deeper and more problematic, issue I see for the kind of criticism we are considering. And that is that, even if the Trinitarian were to simply *grant* that the doctrine of the Trinity were in conflict with the Bible, it wouldn't be at all clear that it would be the doctrine of the Trinity, rather than the (or *a*) Bible, that should be the one to go.

Recall Tuggy says:

> When it comes to viewing the councils as instruments of revelation, many agree that the record of councils, even the major ones, is extremely spotty. One finds contradictory, morally objectionable, and unintelligible claims in their documents, as well as some which seem a poor fit with scripture. As to the way these proceedings occurred, one finds a lot more than the hand of God there! Still, one could try to make a case that, in these proceedings, God revealed the truth of the Trinity to His people. But whether one grounds the doctrine in the Bible or in council documents, one will be hard pressed to show that we are so justified in believing that God revealed doctrine X that we should believe X, even though it seems as contradictory as the claim that there is a square circle.[54]

Note how Tuggy simply *assumes* that the being "a poor fit with scripture" is a criterion by which to judge the councils and the doctrine of the Trinity, rather than the other way around.

And yet the doctrine of the Trinity is both *older than*, and – even to this day – *more widely accepted among Christians than*, any of the several canons of scripture that one might intend to refer to as "the" Bible.[55] This might sound surprising. What do I mean?

8:4 And the king talked with Gehazi the servant of the man of God, saying, Tell me, I pray thee, all the great things that *Elisha hath done*.

8:5 And it came to pass, as he was telling the king how he had restored a dead body to life, that, behold, the woman, whose son he had restored to life, cried to the king for her house and for her land. And Gehazi said, My Lord, O king, this is the woman, and this is her son, *whom Elisha restored to life*." (2 Kings 8:1-5)

54. (TUGGY 2003), p. 13.

55. It was apparently John Chrysostom who first used the term "τὰ βιβλία" to refer to the scriptures. Ironically, what he was referring to was probably closer to the *Peshitta* than to

At the simplest level, even when a given canon of scripture is shared by two Christians or two groups of Christians, and when it is agreed what passages constitute the books that in turn constitute the Bible, they might disagree about what particular text type to identify as a given passage.

For example, Tuggy (presumably) and I both accept canons of scripture in which the books of Samuel and the books of Chronicles count as part of the "Old Testament." But if Tuggy follows most Protestants in terms of the canon of scripture, then what he refers to as "the books of Samuel" and "the books of Chronicles" are the *Masoretic* texts known by those names (one particular Hebrew text type), while what I (an Eastern Orthodox) mean are the *Septuagint* texts known by those names (a Greek translation of a different, and probably older, Hebrew text type). Thus, Tuggy will be committed to saying that 2 Samuel 8:4 reads:

> "And David took from him 1,000 chariots, and 700 horsemen, and 20,000 footmen..."

while he is committed to saying that 1 Chronicles 18:4 says, concerning the same battle:

> "And David took from him 1,000 chariots, 7,000 horsemen, and 20,000 foot soldiers..."

On the other hand, what I, as an Orthodox Christian, refer to as "the Old Testament" (the Septuagint) reads:

> "And David took from him 1,000 chariots, 7,000 horsemen, and 20,000 foot soldiers..."

in both passages. So which of these counts as "the" Bible Tuggy wants us to adhere to?

I note in passing that, when Tuggy says, "one will be hard pressed to show that we are so justified in believing that God revealed doctrine X that we should believe X, even though it seems as contradictory as the claim that there is a square circle" and given the particular way in which he resists mysterianism, and given that the claims that, in the exact same battle, David took 7,000 horsemen versus 700 horsemen might "seem as contradictory as the claim that there is a square circle," there is a serious question as to whether Tuggy ought not abandon the Masoretic text of the Old Testament in favor of the Septuagint

But of course, the more interesting point here is that there are a great number of more important discrepancies between the Masoretic text and the Septuagint

---

the Protestant Bible, or even the Roman Catholic or Eastern Orthodox Bibles.

"According to Suicer he [John Chrysostom] is the first writer who gave the Bible its present name τὰ βιβλία, The Books. Of approximately 11,000 quotations that Chrysostom makes from the New Testament, according to Baur there are none from 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John, Jude, or Revelation. In other words, his canon of the New Testament appears to be the same as that of the Peshitta, the Syriac version current at Antioch in his time."

– (METZGER 1997), pp. 214-215.

text, and I claim that Tuggy should abandon the Masoretic text because it is "a poor fit with scripture," to use Tuggy's words. And of course by "scripture" I mean "the Septuagint." Naturally this is begging the question against Tuggy. But by the same token, he begs the question against me to argue the reverse. And that is the point. Namely, that we now face the question: if we must judge other aspects of the Christian tradition by "the" scripture, then which version of "scripture" counts as the standard by which to judge?

What's more, beyond mere disagreements over the precise wording of individual passages, Christians disagree over the inclusion or exclusion of whole passages from the Bible. Suppose we find a way to settle disagreements over text types. Perhaps we agree to simply accept (*de dicto*) that "the original versions of these texts are scripture," assuming that critical scholarship can reveal what the original versions are, or perhaps we simply set these discrepancies aside. A Protestant like Tuggy and an Eastern Orthodox like myself might then seem to at least "agree" that, say, the book of Psalms counts as part of the Bible. But I accept an entire additional psalm (Psalm 151) as being part of the book of Psalms, while Tuggy presumably does not. Similarly, I accept the Song of the Three Holy Children as counting as part of the book of Daniel, while again Tuggy presumably does not. So we seem to disagree even about what passages constitute the various books we "agree" are canonical.

Suppose, then, that we even find a way around those disagreements. Still, beyond disagreement on what passages are to be included in what books, we even disagree over what *list of books* succeeds in enumerating all of the books of the Old and New Testaments. As an Eastern Orthodox, I accept the entire books of Wisdom, Sirach, Tobit, the Maccabees, and the other so-called "apocryphal" books as legitimate parts of the Old Testament, while Tuggy and other "biblical" unitarians presumably do not.

Finally, suppose we take, for example, one of the two (!) canons of scripture (both) accepted by the Orthodox Tewahedo church of Ethiopia. These give us yet larger Old Testaments even than that of any of the Eastern Orthodox churches. Besides the so-called Apocryphal books from the Septuagint, their Old Testament includes, for example, the only surviving version of the books of Enoch and Jubilees, as well as I, II, and III Meqabyan (entirely distinct from the Septuagint books of the Maccabees, despite having the same name) as well as yet additional passages in certain Old Testament books like Jeremiah, etc. Furthermore, in their "broader" New Testament canon, they have, besides those 27 books familiar to most of us, four books of Sinodos, two Books of the Covenant, Ethiopic Clement, and the Ethiopic Didascalia.[56]

There are similar variations between the canons of scripture accepted by numerous ancient churches, such as the Assyrian, Syriac, Coptic, Armenian, Roman Catholic, various Eastern Orthodox, and other churches.

However, one issue on which there is *no* variation among any of the churches named above, is on the issue of accepting the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity, as enshrined in the first and second ecumenical councils. Even non-Chalcedonian

---

56. (Metzger 1997), p. 226.

Christians like the Coptic or the Ethiopian Tewahedo church, despite rejecting the council of Chalcedon, still accept the councils of Nicaea and Constantinople.

The same cannot be said for *any* of the various Christian canons of scripture.

And that, of course, is because, among all of the canons ever issued by any of the ancient ecumenical councils, not one was a canon of *scripture* (this being left to local councils).[57]

One wonders, then – *for what reason* are we supposed to prefer "the" Bible (one particular canon of scripture) over the doctrine of the Trinity?

Perhaps Tuggy simply takes belief in (the Protestant) Bible as basic. But then, why could one not take belief in the doctrine of the Trinity as basic?

And even if, for some reason, it turns out that one's belief in the Bible could be properly basic, but one's belief in the doctrine of the Trinity could not be – why take as basic a belief in *Dale Tuggy's* Bible in particular (a canon of scripture that, if, as I presume, he accepts the Protestant Bible, did not even exist until well over a thousand years after the councils that anathematized the classical Trinitarian heresies of Modalism and Arianism)?

The point here is not to bash the Protestant Bible. The point is to show the *arbitrariness* of accepting it *over* the doctrine of the Trinity. It's true that one can make a case for the Protestant Bible. The question is *how*? How, if one wants, at the same time, to reject the doctrine of the Trinity? The most obvious way to argue for the Protestant Bible is to note that the list of books it takes to constitute the Bible first appears in history in AD 367, in the 39th Festal Epistle of none other than "Mr. Trinity" himself – St. Athanasius – probably the only person who could be argued to occupy an even *more* central role in the fourth-century Trinitarian controversy and the ultimate development of a pro-Nicene consensus than Gregory of Nyssa and the other Cappadocians. And as for the Hebrew text-type, one can argue for it on the basis that it was preferred (even if later rejected) by St. Jerome.[58] But then on the basis of what non-arbitrary criterion would one argue that, when St. Athanasius and St. Jerome recommend we accept the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity, we are free to reject their views, putting ourselves in judgment over them, yet when the self-same men recommend we accept a particular (and, we must admit, at the

---

57. There is in a certain sense a very odd exception to this. And that is that the so-called Quinisext Council or Council *in Trullo* ratified the canons of a number of previous, local councils, some of which contained canons of scripture, as well as a canon of scripture given by Gregory Nazianzen. However, these lists are not identical. The result is multiple conflicting canons of scripture all implicitly ratified by the Quinisext Council, so that there is still no *single* list of books that can claim an advantage over every other in this respect. See (Metzger 1997), p. 217.

58. In a bygone day, one could argue that the Masoretic text, being Hebrew, was obviously the original, and that where the Septuagint (a translation into Greek) seemed to differ, it must simply have been a bad translation. But with the discovery of the Dead Sea scrolls, that avenue has been closed as it seems there were simply multiple Hebrew text types in antiquity, and that the Septuagint is not a particularly bad translation of the Masoretic, but probably just a reasonably good translation of a different Hebrew text type.

time, *novel*!) canon or text-type of scripture, we can no longer question them, but must reject *older* canons and text-types of scripture in favor of theirs?

After all, if one accepts, say, an Arian theology as being "more primitive," why not also accept *the Arian canon of scripture*, which in some sense *was* more primitive, and which seems to have (still) included *The Shepherd of Hermas* for example?[59] Or if one accepts an even lower Christology, alleging it to be "more primitive," why not accept the canon of scripture accepted by whatever allegedly more primitive group one claims to find one's view accepted by? For a biblical unitarian, this might mean going with the canon of scripture accepted by the early Ebionites, which seems to have rejected all of the gospels but Matthew,[60] and on the other hand included some spurious *Acts*, the *Periodoi* of Peter, and the "Degrees of James,"[61] Thus, a Bible not only somewhat different from the Protestant Bible, but radically unlike any Bible accepted by any Christians today. Again, the point is not that the Protestant Bible is crazy. The point is that it is entirely unclear how one would, *at the same time*, argue *in favor of* the Protestant Bible, but *against* the doctrine of the Trinity. How without being pushed, on the question of the scriptural canon, in the direction of accepting such a foreign canon of scripture that referring to oneself as a "biblical" unitarian, or making the charge that the doctrine of the Trinity is "unbiblical" becomes simply laughable?[62]

And in yet another great irony, Great Apostasy theorists frequently claim that the doctrine of the Trinity was in some sense "shoved down the throats" of the ecumenical councils by the "political" machinations of unscrupulous bishops or emperors. But whatever exactly these criticisms amount to, the question is, were the local, North African councils in which the New Testament most commonly accepted today was adopted,[63] or indeed *any* of the councils sanctioning *any* other canon of scripture in use by *any* churches anywhere today, significantly different in this respect from any other church councils in history (like the first or second ecumenical councils)? What is it that makes these "good" councils that give us a canon of scripture somehow *different from* the "bad" ones that give us the doctrine of the Trinity (or whatever other aspect of the Christian tradition the Great Apostasy theorist wants to reject)? Again, what we want is a *non-arbitrary criterion* that somehow distinguishes between the two. To take the Great Apostasy theorist's criticisms seriously, we would need to get some kind of clarity on just what the alleged problem with what the Great Apostasy theorist sees as the "bad" councils amounts to, such that it isn't obviously shared by what he sees as the "good" councils. And it's entirely

---

59. (St. Athanasius 1892), p. 162. "And in the Shepherd it is written (since they allege this book also, though it is not of the Canon) ... "

60. (Epiphanius of Salamis 1987), p. 122.

61. (Epiphanius of Salamis 1987), p. 131 ff.

62. And of course, the considerations in this paragraph show that even if the Great Apostasy theorist were to abandon the peculiarities of the Protestant Bible, opting to accept the Roman Catholic or the Eastern Orthodox (or the Armenian, or Coptic, or the *Peshitta*, or what have you), a substantially similar case might still be made for any more traditional Bible.

63. I.e., the Synod of Hippo Regius (AD 393), whose acts are now lost, but which were read and accepted at the Synod of Carthage (AD 397), see (Metzger 1997), p. 314.

unobvious what such a criterion could possibly be.

On top of that, of course, *within* whichever of those councils the Great Apostasy theorist wants to appeal to in order to support some version of the Bible, we will most likely also need some non-arbitrary criterion that allows us to separate out *the canon of scripture in particular* from all of the other canons passed by the same council. For example, in addition to ratifying the favorite canon of scripture of most Protestants, the third council of Carthage also passed a canon requiring clerical celibacy. So, if the Great Apostasy theorist does not *himself* want to be obligated to have a purely celibate priesthood, yet still wants to obligate *others* to accept the council of Carthage's canon of scripture, he will need a non-arbitrary criterion to sort through "bad" canons and "good" canons *within* the "good" councils. (Of course, he might employ multiple criteria to do all of the different jobs he needs done, or he might try to find a single criterion that will do all of them at once.)

And what's more, he will need a criterion that will allow him to be pretty precise about which canon(s) of scripture make the cut and which don't. For it will not do to say that just *any* of the canons of scripture traditionally in use by some ancient church or another that we would countenance as Christian counts as a legitimate version of the Bible. Otherwise, we would have to go back again to the question of whether the doctrine of the Trinity *is*, after all, "biblical," in the fullest and most problematic sense of the term. Why so?

Although I do not have access to a copy of the Ethiopian *Book of the Covenant*, included in the Ethiopian Tewahedo Church's "broader" New Testament canon (I am not aware that there exists any English translation, and I do not know Ge'ez), I do know that section 61 is supposed to be quite similar to the *Testamentum Domini* (*Testament of the Lord*),[64] which is well known for its anti-Arian theology, and in which we read such gems as:

> Let the church be thus: let it have three entrances as a type of the Trinity. . .[65]

> We lay hands on the servant of God, who hath been chosen in the Spirit. . . for the delivering of true judgement and divine and holy revelations, and of divine gifts and faithful doctrines of the Trinity. . .[66]

> Let him offer on Saturday three loaves for a complete symbol of the Trinity. . .[67]

> [We confess] Him who is pre-existent, and was present, and is, and cometh; who suffered and was buried, and rose, and was glorified by the Father; . . . *who is not only Man but therewith also God*; who . . . descended *in the Godhead* into Sheol. . . the indivisible Thought who is from the Father, and [is] of one will with Him. . .[68]

---

64. According to (Metzger 1997), p. 228.

65. (Maclean 1902) ch. 19, p. 62.

66. (Maclean 1902) ch. 21, p. 65.

67. (Maclean 1902) ch. 23, p. 69.

68. (Maclean 1902) ch. 28, pp. 84-85.

It also seems that the Ethiopian *Sinodos* contains a number of (pseudo-) canons from the council of Nicaea, a section titled "The discourse of the Nicene Fathers on the Holy Trinity," and another titled "On the Essence of the Holy Trinity."[69] In addition, some manuscripts of it contain "The Creed of Africa," which is just the Athanasian Creed in Ge'ez.[70]

Of course, it is true that these books must have been written after the time of the council of Nicaea, and that versions containing "The Creed of Africa" must have only come about after the Athanasian Creed was written. But it is equally true that they were thought worthy to be included in what Ethiopians consider the (or at least *a*) biblical canon. And it is equally true that, though the broader Ethiopian canon may have been formed quite late, it was still formed over a thousand years before the canon of scripture Tuggy presumably subscribes to (the Protestant Bible), and not significantly later than any of the others commonly in use today (late 4th to early 5th century at the earliest).

It seems, then, that there exists at least *some* credible version of "the" Bible that in fact *explicitly asserts* the doctrine of the Trinity. The Great Apostasy theorist, then, will need his criterion (whatever it turns out to be) to rule out the Ethiopian canon as somehow illegitimate. But again, how were the relevant Ethiopian councils (or whatever other factors in the determination of the Ethiopian canon) somehow different from any others? On what basis will Tuggy insist that this Bible is somehow defective and that it is rather *his* Bible, *his* version of scripture, that all other Christians must bow to? One can imagine an Ethiopian Orthodox Christian saying to Tuggy something like the following:

> There are over 40 million of us Ethiopian Orthodox Christians, and very few (surely fewer than a million) of you "biblical" unitarians.
>
> Our church has existed as the dominant religious force in our land since about the fourth century, and in at least some form ever since the apostle Philip himself preached Christ to our Kandake's eunuch. (Acts 8:26-40). Your church has only come into existence in (relatively) recent times.
>
> Our people have had just this Bible, in just this text type, since before your people so much as had *a language* called "English," or were given an alphabet by certain of our fellow Trinitarians with which you would later translate *their* Bible into your language.
>
> And this canon of scripture of ours has been in use for more than a thousand years before yours was ever even *begun*.
>
> So how is it that *your* Bible sits in judgement over *us* and *ours*?

And it seems to me that the Ethiopian would deserve a response from Tuggy.

Now on the Ethiopian's part, he would be willing to tolerate the fact that Tuggy works with a much smaller Bible. (The Ethiopian is in communion with

---

69. (Wright 1877), pp. 269-270.
70. (Harden 1926), p. 62. See also, (Wright 1877), p. 274.

the Coptic, who has a smaller Bible.) But one thing that the Ethiopian would *not* tolerate, is the fact that Tuggy does not accept the doctrine of the Trinity.

And the reason for this discrepancy in what he would be willing to tolerate is simple. Let us grant that the councils are "spotty," whatever precisely that amounts to. Still, one thing that can be said for the doctrine of the Trinity is that it at least *has been accepted at* a "spotty" ecumenical council and by Christians all over the world. The same cannot be said for *any* of the various Christian Bibles – *neither* the Ethiopian's, *nor* Tuggy's.

Again, all of this is just a specific playing out of the general, fundamental problem with all "Great Apostasy" mythologies. Namely, that the Great Apostasy theorist must give us some non-arbitrary criterion by which we are to carve up the history of the Christian tradition. So that, when pitting two aspects, X and Y, of the Christian tradition against one another, we end up preferring Y over X, instead of vice-versa.

Usually the criterion is chronological. Tuggy cites, for example, the book *A.D. 381: Heretics, Pagans, and the Dawn of the Monotheistic State* by Charles Freeman,[71] the thesis of which should be obvious from the title. Suppose for argument's sake we say that the doctrine of the Trinity is something Christians may reject, since it fails to meet the criterion of *being an object of consensus among Christians prior to 381 AD*. In that case, we may then reject *any and all* of the biblical canons currently in use as well. And that is not likely to be a welcome result for a "biblical" unitarian like Tuggy.

On the other hand, suppose that instead of a *chronological* criterion, we make the criterion that the aspect of Christian tradition to prefer (the one that is more primitive, or more likely to be primitive, or whatever the claim is) is the one sanctioned at the largest number of councils, or the biggest councils, or the most widely accepted councils, or the earliest councils, or by the most Christians or the most bishops, or the earliest bishops. All of these criteria would again give us the doctrine of the Trinity before any particular canon of scripture.

But then, what happens if we simply lower the bar? Low enough that the Bible – *some* Bible the Great Apostasy theorist would want to accept – now passes our test. Then the doctrine of the Trinity (along with, likely, a host of other nasty doctrines and practices) will be let in as well.[72]

In summary, to make his argument work, the Great Apostasy theorist needs to give us some non-arbitrary criterion that would let the doctrines *he likes* (e.g., his particular canon of scripture) pass, but that would not let the doctrines *he doesn't like* (e.g., the doctrine of the Trinity) pass. Although there is no way to rule out such a possibility *in theory*, the fact that Great Apostasy mythology has been around now for a number of centuries, and still awaits such a criterion, suggests that there is none to be had.

---

71. (Freeman 2009).

72. Essentially the same points I am making are made fairly briefly, and much more entertainingly, in David Bercot's non-scholarly, but still very well-argued books, (Bercot 1992) and (Bercot 1989), which I highly recommend.

Again, I emphasize that I am not arguing that objections that the doctrine of the Trinity are unbiblical necessarily *entail* a full-blown Great Apostasy theory. I am only saying that any such objection shares the same, familiar, problematic features. Even if such an opposition between a particular Bible and the doctrine of the Trinity were simply *granted*, we would need to be presented with some kind of non-arbitrary criterion with which we can distinguish between those aspects of the Christian tradition that are "primitive" and those that are corruptions, such that the Bible will count as primitive, but not the doctrine of the Trinity. And so far no such criterion has been presented, nor is it obvious how one could be. I conclude that it is unlikely for there to be any good argument for directly opposing the theology involved in the doctrine of the Trinity.

Combination Objections

Finally, I have mostly been considering objections to individual assumptions of Gregory's, one at a time. One might take, dare I call it, a "synergistic" approach here, saying that, although perhaps unobjectionable in isolation, there is some reason why certain of Gregory's assumptions are problematic taken together. Perhaps some aspect of his theology and some aspect of his metaphysics are for some reason not compossible, or have some other problematic feature when taken together.

But to stave off every possible objection to every possible combination of Gregory's basic assumptions would be at best tedious, at worst impossible. In any case, it would be incumbent on the anti-Trinitarian to present such a case, and it is not obvious to me that there is any such case to be made. The next move there belongs to the anti-Trinitarian.

6.5 Final Conclusion

We've seen, then, in the course of this dissertation, that the LPT has a formally adequate solution in Gregory of Nyssa's account of the Trinity. Thus, the doctrine of the Trinity is not logically inconsistent – or at least, if it were, it wouldn't be for the reasons usually alleged.

What's more, Gregory's broader, general philosophical framework (metaphysics and semantics) relies, ultimately, on only a very few assumptions, most of which (save, perhaps, his view on counting by agent nouns, and the metaphysics of synergy) are, if not uncontroversial, at least certainly not outrageous. Likewise, most of Gregory's Trinitarian theory, we saw, turned out simply to consist of the logical consequences of those metaphysical principles and a small number of theological assumptions, all of which seem to have precedent in the Christian tradition prior to his time, and plausibly in the New Testament itself.

Assuming I have done my history rightly, assuming Gregory's view is indeed roughly what I've presented it to be, there is no denying that the doctrine of the Trinity is, at a minimum, logically consistent. Furthermore, even stepping

outside the primary scope of this dissertation into broader questions of whether there are any serious objections to be made to Gregory's doctrine of the Trinity at all, it turned out that there were only two points to attack the doctrine that turn out to be at all plausible – his semantics for counting by agent nouns, and the metaphysics of synergy.

On the first issue (the semantics for counting by agent nouns), we saw, first, that it's a good question whether any disagreement could ever be definitively resolved at all. Second, even if Gregory could be shown to be wrong about his semantics here, it seems more like an (alleged) mistake in the philosophy of logic, rather than like the formal contradiction the anti-Trinitarian originally promised. Next, even if it could be persuasively argued that Gregory's semantics (or philosophy of logic) is wrong here, so long as there is nothing impossible about Gregory's substantive theory, it's not clear how worried Trinitarians should be about the semantic questions involved anyway. And finally, even if it could be shown that, at least in some technical sense, it would be true to say "there are three gods," the case can still be made that saying so would simply be *so misleading* that it would actually be less misleading to assert the technically false, *but non-misleading* statement that "there is one God."

On the second issue (the metaphysics of synergy), it would more obviously be a problem for the Trinitarian if the anti-Trinitarian can make it a problem. But it also is less obvious that the anti-Trinitarian can problematize it at all. Indeed, to my mind, the possibility of the phenomenon of synergy seems to constitute an exciting contribution that patristic thought can make to contemporary philosophical theology, and rather than shying away from it, Trinitarians should gladly embrace the possibilities it offers.

Any direct objections to Gregory's theology that have anything to do specifically with the *Trinity*, whether from an external (non-Christian) or internal ("biblical") perspective, seemed ultimately question-begging. And finally, for any objection directed at some combination of Gregory's assumptions, it would be incumbent on the anti-Trinitarian to articulate those objections before the Trinitarian needs to respond. But however any of these further possible discussions might go, it is clear that the doctrine of the Trinity, properly understood, is not formally inconsistent. At least not for the reasons alleged in the LPT. And the prospects for attacking the broader philosophical framework of Gregory's solution to the LPT seem limited, and dim.

We began this dissertation saying that the doctrine of the Trinity might seem to be an easy target for anti-Christian arguments. It is clearly central to the faith of mainstream Christians, and yet seemed obviously incoherent. But what seemed like an easy target turns out to be mostly a dead end. Upon examination, there is surprisingly little to object to, and none of the possible avenues of attack seem very promising. In any case, should there turn out to be any problem with the doctrine at all, it will clearly not be one of mere logical inconsistency in saying that "These Three are One."

Appendices

Appendix A:
Appendix of Proofs

Rather than presenting them in the main text, I've relegated the more involved inferences from Chapter 5 to this appendix. In what follows, rather than defining a language, axioms and so forth, I simply follow a fairly standard version of predicate logic and make use of well-known inference rules that anyone familiar enough with predicate logic to understand the proofs at all will surely be familiar with.

I have taken shortcuts when it is entirely obvious that I am, and what the shortcut is, and that there is a valid inference there to be had. E.g., deriving P & Q & R & S from P & R & S and Q in one step of & Introduction, rather than decomposing the whole bunch and building it back up again. Likewise, in a few rare cases I've used abbreviations like o = n = m for (o = n) & (o = m) & (n = m), and derived o = m from o = n = m by one step of & Elimination.

A.1 O_{homoousion}

The following:

    IDO: $\Box(\forall x)(\forall y)[(Ox \,\&\, Oy) \rightarrow (x=y \leftrightarrow (\forall z)[E^*z \rightarrow (Nzx \leftrightarrow Nzy)])]$
    CA: $(\forall x)\{E^*x \rightarrow (Nxo \leftrightarrow Nxn \leftrightarrow Nxm)\}$
    O(i): Oo
    O(ii): On
    O(iii): Om

entail:

    O_{homoousion}: o=n=m

Proof:

1	$(Oo \,\&\, On) \rightarrow (o=m \leftrightarrow (\forall z)[E^*z \rightarrow (Nzo \leftrightarrow Nzn)])$ †	
2	$Oo \,\&\, On$	O(i),O(ii) & Int
3	$o=m \leftrightarrow (\forall z)[E^*z \rightarrow (Nzo \leftrightarrow Nzn)]$	1,2 MP
4	Select: a	For $\forall$ Int
5	Suppose: E^*a	For $\rightarrow$ Int
6	$E^*a \rightarrow (Nao \leftrightarrow Nan \leftrightarrow Nam)$	CA $\forall$ Elim a/x
7	$Nao \leftrightarrow Nan \leftrightarrow Nam$	5,6 MP
8	$Nao \leftrightarrow Nan$	7 & Elim
9	$E^*a \rightarrow (Nao \leftrightarrow Nan)$	5-8 $\rightarrow$ Int
10	$(\forall z)[E^*z \rightarrow (Nzo \leftrightarrow Nzn)]$	4-9 $\forall$ Int z/a
11	$o=n$	3,10 $\leftrightarrow$ Elim
12	$(On \,\&\, Om) \rightarrow (n=m \leftrightarrow (\forall z)[E^*z \rightarrow (Nzn \leftrightarrow Nzm)])$ ††	
13	$On \,\&\, Om$	O(ii),O(iii) & Int
14	$n=m \leftrightarrow (\forall z)[E^*z \rightarrow (Nzn \leftrightarrow Nzm)]$	12,13 MP
15	Select: b	For $\forall$ Int
16	Suppose: E^*b	For $\rightarrow$ Int
17	$E^*b \rightarrow (Nbo \leftrightarrow Nbn \leftrightarrow Nbm)$	CA $\forall$ Elim b/x
18	$Nbo \leftrightarrow Nbn \leftrightarrow Nbm$	16,17 MP
19	$Nbn \leftrightarrow Nbm$	18 & Elim
20	$E^*b \rightarrow (Nbn \leftrightarrow Nbm)$	16-19 $\rightarrow$ Elim
21	$(\forall z)[E^*z \rightarrow (Nzn \leftrightarrow Nzm)]$	15-20 $\forall$ Int z/b
22	$n=m$	14,21 $\leftrightarrow$ Elim
23	$o=m$	11,22 = o/n
24	$o=n=m$	11,22,23 & Int

† IDO T Axiom, followed by $\forall$ Elim o/x n/y
†† IDO T Axiom, followed by $\forall$ Elim n/x m/y

A.2 NE*E

The following:

N$_{\text{Def}}$: $(\forall x)(\forall y)\{Nxy \leftrightarrow \Box(\forall z)[Pzy \rightarrow (\exists w)(Ew \ \& \ Pwx \ \& \ Pzw)]\}$

entails:

NE*E: $(\forall x)(\forall y)\{(E^*x\&Oy\&Nxy) \rightarrow$
$(\forall z)[(Hz\&Pzy) \rightarrow (\exists w)(Ew\&Pwx\&Pzw)]\}$

Proof:

1	Select: a	For ∀ Int.
2	Select: b	For ∀ Int.
3	Suppose: E*a&Ob&Nab	For → Int.
4	Select: c	For ∀ Int.
5	Suppose Hc&Pcb	For → Int.
6	Nab	3 & Elim
7	Nab↔□(∀z)[Pzb→(∃w)(Ew&Pwa&Pzw)] †	
8	□(∀z)[Pzb→(∃w)(Ew&Pwa&Pzw)]	6,7 ↔ Elim
9	Pcb→(∃w)(Ew&Pwa&Pcw) ††	
10	Pcb	5 & Elim
11	(∃w)(Ew&Pwa&Pcw)	9,10 MP
12	(Hc&Pcb)→(∃w)(Ew&Pwa&Pcw)	5-11 → Int.
13	(∀z)[(Hz&Pzb)→(∃w)(Ew&Pwa&Pzw)]	4-12 ∀ Int z/c
14	(E*a&Ob&Nab)→(∀z)[(Hz&Pzb)→(∃w)(Ew&Pwa&Pzw)] ‡	
15	(∀y){(E*a&Oy&Nay)→(∀z)[(Hz&Pzy)→(∃w)(Ew&Pwa&Pzw)]} ‡‡	
16	(∀x)(∀y){(E*x&Oy&Nxy)→(∀z)[(Hz&Pzy)→(∃w)(Ew&Pwx&Pzw)]} *	

† N$_{\text{Def}}$ ∀ Elim a/x, b/y
†† 8 T Axiom, followed by ∀ Elim c/z
‡   3-13 → Int
‡‡ 2-14 ∀ Int y/b
*   1-15 ∀ Int x/a

A.3   E*_{Lemma}

The following:

NE*E: $(\forall x)(\forall y)\{(E^*x\&Oy\&Nxy) \rightarrow$
$\qquad (\forall z)[(Hz\&Pzy) \rightarrow (\exists w)(Ew\&Pwx\&Pzw)]\}$
O(i): Oo
H(i): Hf
RH(i): Pfo

entail:

E*Lemma: $(\forall x)[(E^*x \& Nxo) \rightarrow (\exists y)(Ey \& Pyx)]$

Proof:

1	Select: a	For ∀ Int
2	Suppose: E*a&Nao	For → Int
3	(E*a&Oo&Nao)→(∀z)[(Hz&Pzo)→(∃w)(Ew&Pwa&Pzw)] †	
4	E*a	2 & Elim
5	Oo	O(i)
6	Nao	2 & Elim
7	E*a&Oo&Nao	4,5,6 & Int
8	(∀z)[(Hz&Pzo)→(∃w)(Ew&Pwa&Pzw)]	3,7 MP
9	(Hf&Pfo)→(∃w)(Ew&Pwa&Pfw)	8 ∀ Elim f/z
10	Hf	H(i)
11	Pfo	RH(i)
12	Hf&Pfo	10,11 & Int
13	(∃w)(Ew&Pwa&Pfw)	9,12 MP
14	Ec&Pca&Pfc	13 ∃ Elim c/w
15	Ec&Pca	14 & Elim
16	(∃y)(Ey&Pya)	15 ∃ Int y/c
17	(E*a&Nao) → (∃y)(Ey&Pya)	2-16 → Int
18	(∀x)[(E*x&Nxo) → (∃y)(Ey&Pyx)]	1-17 ∀ Int x/a
†	NE*E ∀ Elim a/x, o/y	

A.4   E_{Unique}

The following:

E*_{Lemma}: $(\forall x)[(E^*x \ \& \ Nxo) \rightarrow (\exists y)(Ey \ \& \ Pyx)]$
EE*_{≤1}: $\Box(\forall x)(\forall y)(\forall z)[(Ex \ \& \ E^*y \ \& \ Pxy \ \& \ E^*z \ \& \ Pxz) \rightarrow y = z]$
IDE: $\Box(\forall x)(\forall y)\{[Ex \ \& \ Ey] \rightarrow [x{=}y \leftrightarrow (\forall z)([Iz \ v \ E^*z] \rightarrow [Pxz \leftrightarrow Pyz])]\}$
¬EI: $\neg(\exists x)(\exists y)(Ex \ \& \ Iy \ \& \ Pxy)$

entail:

E_{Unique}: $(\forall x)[(E^*x \ \& \ Nxo) \rightarrow (\exists! y)(Ey \ \& \ Pyx)]$

Proof:

1	Select: a	For ∀ Int
2	Suppose: E*a & Nao	For → Int
3	(E*a & Nao) → (Ey) (Ey & Pya) †	
4	(Ey) (Ey & Pya)	2,3, MP
5	Eb & Pba	4, ∃ Elim, b/y
6	Eb	5, & Elim
7	Select: c	For ∀ Int
8	Suppose: Ec & Pca	For → Int
9	Ec	8, & Elim
10	Eb & Ec	6,9 & Int
11	[Eb&Ec] → [b=c↔(∀z)([IzvE*z]→[Pbz↔Pcz])] ††	
12	b=c ↔ (∀z)([Iz v E*z] → [Pbz ↔ Pcz])	10,11 MP
13	Suppose: b≠c	For Reductio
14	¬(∀z)([Iz v E*z] → [Pbz ↔ Pcz])	12,13 ↔ Elim
15	(∃z)¬([Iz v E*z] → [Pbz ↔ Pcz])	14 DeM Quant
16	¬([Id v E*d] → [Pbd ↔ Pcd])	15 ∃ Elim, d/z
17	[Id v E*d] & ¬[Pbd ↔ Pcd]	16 ¬ → Equiv.
18	Id v E*d	17 & Elim
19	¬[Pbd ↔ Pcd]	17 & Elim
20	¬([Pbd & Pcd] v [¬Pbd & ¬Pcd])	19 ↔ Equiv.
21	¬[Pbd & Pcd] & ¬[¬Pbd & ¬Pcd]	20 DeM
22	[¬Pbd v ¬Pcd] & [Pbd v Pcd]	21 DeM
23	Pbd v Pcd	22 & Elim
24	Suppose: Pbd	For → Int
25	Suppose: E*d	For Reductio
26	(Eb&E*a&Pba&E*d&Pbd) → a=d ‡	
27	Eb	6
28	E*a	2 & Elim
29	Pba	5 & Elim
30	Eb & E*a & Pba & E*d & Pbd	27-29,25,24 & Int

318

31	a = d	26,30 MP
32	¬Pbd v ¬Pcd	22 & Elim
33	¬Pba v ¬Pca	31,32 = a/d
34	¬(Pba & Pca)	33 DeM
35	Pba	5 & Elim
36	Pca	8 & Elim
37	Pba & Pca	35,36 & Int
38	¬E*d	25,34,37 Reductio
39	Id	18,38 Dis. Syl.
40	Eb & Id & Pbd	27,39,24 & Int
41	(∃x)(∃y)(Ex & Iy & Pxy)	40 ∃Int x/b y/d
42	Pbd → (∃x)(∃y)(Ex & Iy & Pxy)	24-41 → Int
43 Suppose:	Pcd	For → Int
44 Suppose:	E*d	For → Int
45	(Ec&E*a&Pca&E*d&Pcd) → a=d ‡‡	
46	Ec	9
47	E*a	2 & Elim
48	Pca	8 & Elim
49	Ec & E*a & Pca & E*d & Pcd	46-48,44,43 & Int
50	a = d	45,49 MP
51	¬Pbd v ¬Pcd	22 & Elim
52	¬Pba v ¬Pca	51,50 = a/d
53	¬(Pba & Pca)	52 DeM
54	Pba	5 & Elim
55	Pca	8 & Elim
56	Pba & Pca	54,55 & Int
57	¬E*d	44,53,56 Reductio
58	Id	18,57 Dis. Syl.
59	Ec & Id & Pcd	9,58,43 & Int
60	(∃x)(∃y)(Ex & Iy & Pxy)	59 ∃ Int x/c y/d
61	Pcd → (∃x) (∃y) (Ex & Iy & Pxy)	43-60 → Int
62	(∃x) (∃y) (Ex & Iy & Pxy)	23,42,61 C.D.
63	¬(∃x) (∃y) (Ex & Iy & Pxy)	¬EI
65	b=c	13,62,63 Reductio
66	(Ec & Pca) → b=c	8-65 → Int
67	(Eb & Pba)	5
68	(Eb & Pba) & {(Ec & Pca) → b=c}	66,67 & Int
69	(∀z)[(Eb & Pba) & {(Ez & Pza) → b=z}]	7-68 ∀ Int z/c
70	(∃y)(∀z)[(Ey & Pya) & {(Ez & Pza) → y=z}]	69 ∃ Int y/b
71	(∃!y)(Ey & Pya)	70 ∃! Equiv.
72	(E*a & Nao) → (∃!y)(Ey & Pya)	2-71 → Int
73	(∀x)[(E*x & Nxo) → (∃!y)(Ey & Pyx)]	1-72, ∀ Int x/a
†	E*_Lemma ∀ Elim a/x	
††	IDE T axiom, followed by ∀ Elim b/x, c/y	
‡	EE*_{≤1} T axiom, followed by ∀ Elim b/x, a/y, d/z	
‡‡	EE*_{≤1} T axiom, followed by ∀ Elim c/x, a/y, d/z	

A.5 $\Sigma^*_\forall$

The following:

N_{Def}: $(\forall x)(\forall y)\{Nxy \leftrightarrow \Box(\forall z)[Pzy \rightarrow (\exists w)(Ew \,\&\, Pwx \,\&\, Pzw)]\}$
Σ^*_{Def}: $(\forall x)(\forall y)(\forall z)\{\Sigma^* xyz \leftrightarrow$
         $[Hx \,\&\, Hy \,\&\, E^*z \,\&\, x{\neq}y \,\&\, (\exists w)(Ew \,\&\, Pwz \,\&\, Pxw \,\&\, Pyw)]\}$
E_{Unique}: $(\forall x)[(E^*x \,\&\, Nxo) \rightarrow (\exists !y)(Ey \,\&\, Pyx)]$

entail:

$\Sigma^*_\forall$: $(\forall x)\{[E^*x\&Nxo] \rightarrow (\forall y)(\forall z)[(Hy\&Hz\&y{\neq}z\&Pyo\&Pzo) \rightarrow \Sigma^* yzx]\}$

Proof:

1	Select: a		For $\forall$ Int
2	Suppose: $E^*a\&Nao$		For $\rightarrow$ Int
3	Select:	b	For $\forall$ Int
4	Select:	c	For $\forall$ Int
5	Suppose:	$Hb\&Hc\&b{\neq}c\&Pbo\&Pco$	For $\rightarrow$ Int
6		$(E^*a\&Nao) \rightarrow (\exists !y)(Ey\&Pya)$ †	
7		$(\exists !y)(Ey\&Pya)$	2,6 MP
8		$Nao \leftrightarrow \Box(\forall z)[Pzo \rightarrow (\exists w)(Ew\&Pwa\&Pzw)]$ ††	
9		Nao	2 & Elim
10		$\Box(\forall z)[Pzo \rightarrow (\exists w)(Ew\&Pwa\&Pzw)]$	8,9 $\leftrightarrow$ Elim
11		$Pco \rightarrow (\exists w)(Ew\&Pwa\&Pcw)$ ‡	
12		Pco	5 & Elim
13		$(\exists w)(Ew\&Pwa\&Pcw)$	11,12 MP
14		$Ed\&Pda\&Pcd$	13 $\exists$ Elim d/w
15		$Pbo \rightarrow (\exists w)(Ew\&Pwa\&Pbw)$ ‡‡	
16		Pbo	5 & Elim
17		$(\exists w)(Ew\&Pwa\&Pbw)$	15,16 MP
18		$Ee\&Pea\&Pbe$	17 $\exists$ Elim e/w
19		$Ed\&Pda$	14 & Elim
20		$Ee\&Pea$	18 & Elim
21		$(\exists y)(\forall z)[(Ey\&Pya)\&[(Ez\&Pza) \rightarrow y{=}z]\,]$	7 Equiv.
22		$(\forall z)[(Ef\&Pfa)\&[(Ez\&Pza) \rightarrow f{=}z]\,]$	21 $\exists$ Elim f/y
23		$(Ef\&Pfa)\&[(Ed\&Pda) \rightarrow f{=}d\,]$	22 $\forall$ Elim d/z
24		$(Ef\&Pfa)\&[(Ee\&Pea) \rightarrow f{=}e\,]$	23 $\forall$ Elim e/z
25		$(Ed\&Pda) \rightarrow f{=}d$	23 & Elim
26		$(Ee\&Pea) \rightarrow f{=}e$	24 & Elim
27		$f{=}d$	19,25 MP
28		$f{=}e$	20,26 MP
29		$d{=}e$	27,28 = d/f
30		Pbe	18 & Elim

31	Pbd	30,29 = d/e
32	Ed&Pda&Pbd&Pcd	14,31 & Int
33	(∃w)(Ew&Pwa&Pbw&Pcw)	32 ∃ Int w/d
34	Hb&Hc&b≠c	5 & Elim
35	E*a	2 & Elim
36	Hb&Hc&E*a&b≠c	34,35 & Int
37	Hb&Hc&E*a&b≠c&(∃w)(Ew&Pwa&Pbw&Pcw) ∗	
38	Σ*bca↔[Hb&Hc&E*a&b≠c&(∃w)(Ew&Pwa&Pbw&Pcw)] ∗∗	
39	Σ*bca	37,38 ↔ Elim
40	(Hb&Hc&b≠c&Pbo&Pco) → Σ*bca	5-39 → Int
41	(∀z)[(Hb&Hz&b≠z&Pbo&Pzo) → Σ*bza]	4-40 ∀ Int z/c
42	(∀y)(∀z)[(Hy&Hz&y≠z&Pyo&Pzo) → Σ*yza]	3-41 ∀ Int y/b
43	[E*a&Nao] → (∀y)(∀z)[(Hy&Hz&y≠z&Pyo&Pzo) → Σ*yza] ⋆	
44	(∀x){[E*x&Nxo] → (∀y)(∀z)[(Hy&Hz&y≠z&Pyo&Pzo) → Σ*yzx]} ⋆⋆	
†	E_Unique ∀ Elim a/x	
††	N_Def ∀ Elim a/x o/y	
‡	10 T Axiom, followed by ∀ Elim c/z	
‡‡	10 T Axiom, followed by ∀ Elim b/z	
∗	33,36 & Int.	
∗∗	Σ*_Def ∀ Elim b/x c/y a/z	
⋆	2-42 → Int	
⋆⋆	1-43 ∀ Int x/a	

A.6 P7_{GNT-EQ}

The following:

P7_{Lemma}:	(∃!y)(Ey & Pyg*)
RH(xxi):	Pfg
E(i) & RE(i):	Eg & Pgg*

entail:

P7_{GNT-EQ}. (∃x)(∀y){[Ex&Pxg*&(∃z)(Pzx)] & [(Ey&Pyg*&(∃w)[Pwy])→y=x]}

Proof:

1	Select: a	For ∀ Int.
2	Suppose: Ea & Pag* & (∃w)[Pwa]	For → Int
3	Ea & Pag*	2 & Elim
4	Eg & Pgg*	E(i) & RE(i)
5	(∃!y)(Ey & Pyg*)	P7_{Lemma}
6	(∃x)(∀y){(Ex & Pxg*) & [(Ey & Pyg*) → y = x]}	5 Equiv
7	(∀y){(Eb & Pbg*) & [(Ey & Pyg*) → y = b]}	6 ∃ Elim b/x
8	(Eb & Pbg*) & [(Ea & Pag*) → a = b]}	7 ∀ Elim a/y
9	(Eb & Pbg*) & [(Eg & Pgg*) → g = b]}	7 ∀ Elim g/y
10	(Ea & Pag*) → a = b	8 & Elim
11	(Eg & Pgg*) → g = b	9 & Elim
12	a = b	10,3 MP
13	g = b	11,4 MP
14	a = g	12,13 = g/b
15	(Ea & Pag* & (∃w)[Pwa]) → a = g	2–14 → Int
16	Pfg	RH(xxi)
17	(∃z)(Pzg)	16 ∃ Int z/f
18	Eg & Pgg* & (∃z)(Pzg)	4,17 & Int
19	[Eg&Pgg*&(∃z)(Pzg)]&[(Ea&Pag*&(∃w)[Pwa])→a=g] †	
20	(∀y){[Eg&Pgg*&(∃z)(Pzg)]&[(Ey&Pyg*&(∃w)[Pwy])→y=g]} ††	
21	(∃x)(∀y){[Ex&Pxg*&(∃z)(Pzx)]&[(Ey&Pyg*&(∃w)[Pwy])→y=x]} ‡	

† 18,15 & Int
†† 1-19 ∀ Int y/a
‡ 20 ∃ Int x/g

A.7 $\phi_{\mathbf{GNT}}\alpha \not\models \alpha{=}t_i$ for any t_i such that $t_i \neq \alpha$

($\exists$x)(Ex & Pxg* & Pfx)

does not fit the description:

$\phi\alpha$ such that $\phi\alpha \models \alpha = t_i$ for some term t_i such that $t_i \neq \alpha$.

Suppose ($\exists$x)(Ex & Pxg* & Pαx) $\models \alpha = t_i$ for some term t_i such that $t_i \neq \alpha$.
   Then $\emptyset \models$ ($\exists$x)(Ex & Pxg* & Pαx) $\rightarrow \alpha = t_i$ for some term t_i such that $t_i \neq \alpha$.
   So, $\emptyset \models \neg$[($\exists$x)(Ex & Pxg* & Pαx) & $\alpha \neq t_i$] for any term t_i such that $t_i \neq \alpha$.
   So there is no model for ($\exists$x)(Ex & Pxg* & Pαx) & $\alpha \neq t_i$) for any term t_i such that $t_i \neq \alpha$.
   So there is no model for ($\exists$x)(Ex & Pxg* & Pfx) & f $\neq$ s (since "f" is not the same term as "s").
   But M$_{\mathbf{P\text{-}GNT\text{-}F}}$, *is* a model for ($\exists$x)(Ex & Pxg* & Pfx) & f $\neq$ s.
   So, ($\exists$x)(Ex & Pxg* & Pαx) $\not\models \alpha = t_i$ for any term t_i such that $t_i \neq \alpha$.

Appendix B:
Summary of GNT$_\text{F}$

Legend

0 = Stipulative definition, naming of an arbitrarily selected individual from a set known to be non-empty, or logical consequence of other proposition(s).

+ = Substantive assumption

B.1   Gregory's Metaphysics

B.1.1   Possible Object Types

"is a hypostasis"	:	"H"
"is an *idioma*"	:	"I"
"is an *ousia*"	:	"O"
"is an *energeia* type"	:	"E*"
"is an *energeiai* token"	:	"E"

B.1.2   Possible Relations Between Tokens of the Object Types

"Metaphysical Predication" or "Having"

"x has y"	:	"Pxy"

The "Natural To" Relation

0   N$_\text{Def}$: $(\forall x)(\forall y)\{Nxy \leftrightarrow \Box(\forall z)[Pzy \rightarrow (\exists w)(Ew\ \&\ Pwx\ \&\ Pzw)]\}$

Synergy

0   Σ_{Def}: $(\forall x)(\forall y)(\forall z)\{\Sigma xyz \leftrightarrow$
            $[Hx \ \& \ Hy \ \& \ Ez \ \& \ x{\neq}y \ \& \ Pxz \ \& \ Pyz]\}$

0   Σ^*_{Def}: $(\forall x)(\forall y)(\forall z)\{\Sigma^* xyz \leftrightarrow$
            $[Hx \ \& \ Hy \ \& \ E^*z \ \& \ x{\neq}y \ \& \ (\exists w)(Ew \ \& \ Pwz \ \& \ Pxw \ \& \ Pyw)]\}$

B.1.3   Relations Possible *for* the Objects

Statements of the form *Pxy* can be true where:
   x is a hypostasis and y is an idioma
   x is a hypostasis and y is an ousia
   x is a hypostasis and y is a token energeia
   x is a token energeia and y is an idioma
   x is a token energeia and y is an energeia type

Statements of the form *Nxy* can be true where:
   x is an energeia type and y is an ousia

B.1.4   Relation Requirements

+   NHI: $\Box(\forall x)[Hx \to (\exists y)(Iy \ \& \ Pxy)]$
+   NHO: $\Box(\forall x)[Hx \to (\exists y)(Oy \ \& \ Pxy)]$
0   NHE: $\Box(\forall x)(\forall y)(\forall z)[(Pxy \ \& \ Nzy) \to (\exists w)(Pwz \ \& \ Pxw)]$
+   NOE*: $\Box(\forall x)[Ox \to (\exists y)(E^*y \ \& \ Nyx)]$
0   NE*E: $(\forall x)(\forall y)\{(E^*x\&Oy\&Nxy) \to$
            $(\forall z)[(Hz\&Pzy) \to (\exists w)(Ew\&Pwx\&Pzw)]\}$
+   EE*$_{\leq 1}$: $\Box(\forall x)(\forall y)(\forall z)[(Ex \ \& \ E^*y \ \& \ Pxy \ \& \ E^*z \ \& \ Pxz) \to y = z]$

B.1.5   Identity Conditions for the Types of Objects

Identity Conditions for Hypostases

+   IDH$_{\text{Strong}}$: $\Box(\forall x)(\forall y)\{[Hx \ \& \ Hy] \to [x{=}y \leftrightarrow (\exists z)(Iz \ \& \ [Pxz \ \& \ Pyz])]\}$
+   IDH$_{\text{Weak}}$: $\Box(\forall x)(\forall y)\{[Hx \ \& \ Hy] \to [x{=}y \leftrightarrow (\forall z)(Iz \to [Pxz \leftrightarrow Pyz])]\}$

Identity Conditions for *Idiomata*

Intrinsically distinct.

Identity Conditions for *Ousiai*

+   IDO: $\Box(\forall x)(\forall x)[(Ox \ \& \ Oy) \to (x{=}y \leftrightarrow (\forall z)[E^*z \to (Nzx \leftrightarrow Nzy)])]$

Identity Conditions for *Energeia* Types

Intrinsically distinct.

Identity Conditions for *Energeia* Tokens

+   IDE: $\Box(\forall x)(\forall y)\{[Ex \ \& \ Ey] \rightarrow [x{=}y \leftrightarrow (\forall z)([Iz \ v \ E^*z] \rightarrow [Pxz \leftrightarrow Pyz])]\}$

B.2   Gregory's Theology

B.2.1   Postulated Token Objects

Hypostases

+	H(i):	Hf
+	H(ii):	Hs
+	H(iii):	Hh

Idiomata

+	I(i):	Ib
+	I(ii):	Ip
+	I(iii):	Ib*
+	I(iv):	Ip*

Ousiai

0	O(i):	Oo
0	O(ii):	On
0	O(iii):	Om

***Energeia* Types**

0	E*(i):	E*g*

***Energeia* Tokens**

0	E(i):	Eg

B.2.2 Relations Posited Between the Token Objects

Relations Had by the Hypostases

0	RH(i):	Pfo
0	RH(ii):	Psn
0	RH(iii):	Phm
(0	O$_{homoousion}$:	o=n=m)
0	RH(iv):	Pso
0	RH(v):	Pho
+/0	RH(vi):	Pfb
+/0	RH(vii):	Pfp
+	RH(viii):	¬Pfb*
+	RH(ix):	¬Pfp*
+/0	RH(x):	¬Psb
+/0	RH(xi):	Psp? / ¬Psp?
+	RH(xii):	Psb*
+/0	RH(xiii):	¬Psp*
+/0	RH(xiv):	¬Phb
+/0	RH(xv):	¬Php
+	RH(xvi):	¬Phb*
+	RH(xvii):	Php*
0	RH(xviii):	Pfg$\prime$
0	RH(xix):	Psg$\prime\prime$
0	RH(xx):	Phg$\prime\prime\prime$
(0	$\Sigma_{\mathrm{g}*}$:	g = g$\prime$ = g$\prime\prime$ = g$\prime\prime\prime$)
0	RH(xxi):	Pfg
0	RH(xxii):	Psg
0	RH(xxiii):	Phg
0	P1$_{\mathrm{GNT\text{-}F}}$.	(∃w)(Ew & Pwg* & Pfw)
0	P2$_{\mathrm{GNT\text{-}F}}$.	(∃w)(Ew & Pwg* & Psw)
0	P3$_{\mathrm{GNT\text{-}F}}$.	(∃w)(Ew & Pwg* & Phw)

Relations Had by the *Idiomata*

See Relations Had by the Hypostases, RH(vi)–RH(xvii) above. Also:

+	¬EI:	¬(∃x)(∃y)(Ex & Iy & Pxy)

Relations Had by the *Ousia*

See Relations Had by the Hypostases, RH(i)–RH(v) above, and Relations Had by the Divine *Energeia* Types, RE*(i) below. Also:

0	O$_{homoousion}$:	o=n=m

Relations Had by the Divine *Energeia* Types

0 RE*(i):   Ng*o

Relations Had by the Divine *Energeia* Tokens

The divine *energeia* tokens are had by the three hypostases in the ways described in the section on hypostases above (RH(xviii) – RH(xxii) and ¬EI) in addition to RE(i):

0	RH(xviii):	Pfg$\prime$
0	RH(xix):	Psg$\prime\prime$
0	RH(xx):	Phg$\prime\prime\prime$
(0	Σ_{g*}:	$g = g\prime = g\prime\prime = g\prime\prime\prime$)
0	RH(xxi):	Pfg
0	RH(xxii):	Psg
0	RH(xxiii):	Phg
0	RE(i):	Pgg*
+	¬EI:	¬($\exists$x)($\exists$y)(Ex & Iy & Pxy)

B.2.3 Individuation of the Token Objects

The Individuation of the Hypostases

0	P4$_{\text{GNT-F}}$:	f $\neq$ s
0	P5$_{\text{GNT-F}}$:	f $\neq$ h
0	P6$_{\text{GNT-F}}$:	s $\neq$ h

(Summary of the *Idiomata*:)

Pfb & ¬Psb
Pfp & ¬Psp†
¬Pfb* &   Psb*
¬Pfp* & ¬Psp*

Pfb & ¬Phb
Pfp & ¬Php
¬Pfb* & ¬Phb*
¬Pfp* &   Psp*

¬Psb & ¬Phb
¬Psp† & ¬Php
  Psb* & ¬Phb*
¬Psp* &   Psp*

The Individuation of the *Idiomata*

The *idiomata* are all intrinsically distinct. It is clear that:

> b ≠ b*,
> p ≠ p*, and
> b* ≠ p*

There is some unclarity as to whether:

> b = p.

The Individuation of the *Ousia*

0 O$_{homoousion}$: o=n=m

The Individuation of the Divine *Energeia* Types

Energeia types are intrinsically distinct. There must be at least one divine *energeia* types, which we have named g*.

The Individuation of the Divine *Energeia* Tokens

0 E$_{Unique}$: (∀x)[(E*x & Nxo) → (∃!y)(Ey & Pyx)]
0 Σ*$_∀$:   (∀x){[E*x & Nxo] → (∀y)(∀z)[(Hy&Hz&y≠z&Pyo&Pzo)→Σ*yzx]}
0 Σ*$_{g*}$:   g = g′ = g″ = g‴

B.3   Gregory's Semantics

B.3.1   Gregory's Semantics for S1 through S3

S1: "The Father is (a) God" is true, if and only if "(∃x) (Ex & Pxg* & Pfx)" is true, if and only if the hypostasis named "f" in PLI or "the Father" in English ("ὁ πατήρ" in Greek) has some token of the divine *energeia* type we have named "g*" in PLI ("godding," or "beholding," or whatever it is).

S2: "The Son is (a) God" is true, if and only if "(∃x) (Ex & Pxg* & Psx)" is true, if and only if the hypostasis named "s" in PLI or "the Son" in English ("ὁ υἱός" in Greek) has some token of the divine *energeia* type we have named "g*" in PLI ("godding," or "beholding," or whatever it is).

S3: "The Holy Spirit is (a) God" is true, if and only if "(∃x) (Ex & Pxg* & Phx)" is true, if and only if the hypostasis named "h" in PLI or "the Holy Spirit"

in English ("τὸ ἅγιον πνεῦμα" in Greek) has some token of the divine *energeia* type we have named "g*" in PLI ("godding," or "beholding," or whatever it is).

B.3.2   Gregory's Semantics for S4 through S6

S4: "The Father is not the Son" is true, if and only if "f≠s" is true, if and only if the hypostasis we have named "f" in PLI or "the Father" in English ("ὁ πατήρ" in Greek) is not identical to the hypostasis named "s" in PLI or "the Son" in English ("ὁ υἱός" in Greek).

S5: "The Father is not the Holy Spirit" is true, if and only if "f≠h" is true, if and only if the hypostasis we have named "f" in PLI or "the Father" in English ("ὁ πατήρ" in Greek) is not identical to the hypostasis named "h" in PLI or "the Holy Spirit" in English ("τὸ ἅγιον πνεῦμα" in Greek).

S6: "The Son is not the Holy Spirit" is true, if and only if "s≠h" is true, if and only if the hypostasis we have named "s" in PLI or "the Son" in English ("ὁ υἱός" in Greek) is not identical to the hypostasis named "h" in PLI or "the Holy Spirit" in English ("τὸ ἅγιον πνεῦμα" in Greek).

B.3.3   Gregory's Semantics for S7

As an Equivocation Account

S7: "There is exactly one God" is true, if and only if

"$(\exists x)(\forall y)\{[Ex\&Pxg^*\&(\exists z)(Pzx)]\ \&\ [(Ey\&Pyg^*\&(\exists w)[Pwy]) \rightarrow y=x]\}$" is true, if and only if there is some token *energeia* x of the *energeia* type we have named "g*" in PLI ("godding" or "beholding" or whatever we call it in English – "θεωρεῖν," or "θέειν," or whatever we call it in Greek) such that x is had by some z, and if there is any token *energeia* y of the *energeia* type we have named "g*" in PLI ("godding" or "beholding" or whatever we call it in English – "θεωρεῖν," or "θέειν," or whatever we call it in Greek) such that y is had by some w, then x and y are identical.

As an NCIC Account

S7: "There is exactly one God" is true, if and only if P7$_{\text{GNT-NCIC}}$ is true, if and only if there is a u that has some token *energeia* of the *energeia* type we have named "g*" in PLI ("godding" or "beholding" or whatever we call it in English – "θεωρεῖν," or "θέειν," or whatever we call it in Greek) and if any v has any token *energeia* of the *energeia* type g*, then u and v are single-tokened with respect to g*.

B.4 M_{P-GNT-F}

Domain: {0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9}

o = 0
f = 1
s = 2
h = 3
g = 4
g* = 5
b = 6
b* = 7
p = 8
p* = 9

H: {1, 2, 3}
I: {6, 7, 8, 9}
O: {0}
E: {4}
E*:{5}

P: {<1,0>,
    <2,0>,
    <3,0>,
    <1,6>,
    <1,8>,
    <2,7>,
    <3,9>,
    <1,4>,
    <2,4>,
    <3,4>,
    <4,5>}

N: {<5,0>}

B.5 M_{P-GNT-Lite}

Domain: {1, 2, 3, 4, 5}

f   = 1
s   = 2
h   = 3
g   = 4
g* = 5

E: {4}

P: {<1,4>,
     <2,4>,
     <3,4>,
     <4,5>}

B.6 GNT$_{\textbf{F-Lite}}$

"Lite" Metaphysics

Possible Object Types

Hypostases	:	(We will need no predicate for hypostases)
Energeia types	:	(We will need no predicate for *energeia* types)
Energeiai tokens	:	E

Possible Relations

1. Performing or Being "of" a Type

   We will represent the predicate "performs or is a token of type" with the two-place predicate "P."

   The first relation (performing) can hold between hypostases and *energeia* tokens. Thus, sentences of the form *Pxy* can be true where x is a hypostasis and y is an *energeia* token.

   The second relation (being of a type) can hold between *energeia* tokens and *energeia* types. Thus, sentences of the form *Pxy* can be true where x is an *energeia* token and y is an *energeia* type.

"Lite" Theology

Token Objects

Hypostases

The Father	:	f
The Son	:	s
The Holy Spirit	:	h

Energeia Types

God-ding (type)	:	g*

Energeia Tokens

God-ding (token)	:	g
E(i):		Eg

Relations Posited Between Token Objects

P1$_{\text{Lite}}$	$(\exists x)(Ex\ \&\ Pxg^*\ \&\ Pfx)$
P2$_{\text{Lite}}$	$(\exists x)(Ex\ \&\ Pxg^*\ \&\ Psx)$
P3$_{\text{Lite}}$	$(\exists x)(Ex\ \&\ Pxg^*\ \&\ Phx)$
P4$_{\text{Lite}}$	$f \neq s$
P5$_{\text{Lite}}$	$f \neq h$
P6$_{\text{Lite}}$	$s \neq h$
RE(i)$_{\text{Lite}}$	Pgg^*
E$_{\text{Unique-Lite}}$	$(\exists!y)[Ey\ \&\ Pyx\ \&\ (\exists z)(Pzy)]$

"Lite" Semantics

1. S1–S3: Statements of the form *x is (a) God* are true if and only if x does some token action of the God-ding type, i.e., $(\exists y)(Ey\ \&\ Pyg^*\ \&\ Pxy)$.

2. S4–S6: Statements of the form *x is not y* are true if and only if x is not identical to y ($x \neq y$).

3. S7: "There is exactly one God" is true if and only if there is exactly one token action of type g* that is done,

   i.e., $(\exists!y)[Ey\ \&\ Pyx\ \&\ (\exists z)(Pzy)]$.

Bibliography

Anderson, James. 2005. "In Defence of Mystery: A Reply to Dale Tuggy." *Religious Studies* 41 (2): 145–163.

———. 2007. *Paradox in Christian Theology: An Analysis of its Presence, Character, and Epistemic Status.* Milton, Keynes, U.K.; Waynesboro, Ga.: Paternoster.

———. 2011. "Positive Mysterianism Undefeated: A Response to Dale Tuggy." Paper available at URL=http://www.proginosko.com/2012/02/positive-mysterianism-undefeated/ Last checked 02-26-14, *Unpublished.*

Apollonius Dyscolus. 1910. *Syntax.* Edited by G. Uhlig. Grammatici Graeci 2. (repr. Hildesheim: Olms, 1965). Leipzig: Teubner. `http://books.google.com/books?id=eHq4nQEACAAJ`.

Ayres, Lewis. 2002. "Not Three People: The Fundamental Themes of Gregory of Nyssa's Trinitarian Theology as Seen in To Ablabius: On Not Three Gods." *Modern Theology* 18 (4): 445–474.

———. 2003. "On Not Three People: The Fundamental Themes of Gregory of Nyssa's Trinitarian Theology as Seen in To Ablabius: On Not Three Gods." Chap. 2 in *Re-Thinking Gregory of Nyssa,* edited by Sarah Coakley, 15–44. Malden, Mass.: Blackwell.

———. 2004. *Nicaea and Its Legacy: An Approach to Fourth-Century Trinitarian Theology.* Oxford University Press.

Baber, H. E. 2008. "Trinity, Filioque and Semantic Ascent." *Sophia* 47 (2): 149–160.

Barnes, Michel René. 2001. *The Power of God: Dunamis in Gregory of Nyssa's Trinitarian Theology.* Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press. `http://books.google.com/books?id=gJ8iacbGpbYC`.

Bealer, George. 1982. *Quality and Concept.* Clarendon Press. `http://books.google.com/books?id=GzzYBYIwFuIC`.

Bercot, David. 1989. *Will the Real Heretics Please Stand Up: A New Look at Today's Evangelical Church in the Light of Early Christianity.* Scroll Publishing. `http://books.google.com/books?id=j7K4S5n8hVAC`.

BERCOT, DAVID. 1992. *Common Sense: A New Approach to Understanding Scripture.* Scroll Publishing. `http://books.google.com/books?id=UCVK9n7uSqAC`.

BOETHIUS. 1998. *Anicii Manlii Severini Boethii De Divisione Liber.* Edited and translated by J. MAGEE. Philosophia Antiqua. Brill. `http://books.google.com/books?id=DO3jAAAAMAAJ`.

BRADSHAW, DAVID. 2006. "The Divine Glory and the Divine Energies." *Faith and Philosophy* 23 (3): 279–298.

BROWER, JEFFREY. 2014. "Medieval Theories of Relations." In *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy,* Spring 2014, edited by EDWARD N. ZALTA. Stanford, CA: The Metaphysics Research Lab. `http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2014/entries/relations-medieval/`.

BROWER, JEFFREY, and MICHAEL REA. 2005a. "Material Constitution and the Trinity." *Faith and Philosophy* 22 (1): 57–76.

———. 2005b. "Understanding the Trinity." *Logos: A Journal of Catholic Thought and Culture* 8 (1): 145–157.

CAIN, JAMES. 1989. "The Doctrine of the Trinity and the Logic of Relative Identity." *Religious Studies* 25 (2): 141–152.

CARTWRIGHT, RICHARD. 1987. "On the Logical Problem of the Trinity." *Philosophical Essays:*187–200.

COAKLEY, SARAH. 2003. *Re-Thinking Gregory of Nyssa.* Malden, Mass.: Blackwell.

CRAIG, WILLIAM LANE. 2006. "Trinity Monotheism Once More: A Response to Daniel Howard-Snyder." *Philosophia Christi* 8 (1): 101–113.

CRISP, OLIVER, and MICHAEL REA. 2011. *Analytic Theology: New Essays in the Philosophy of Theology.* OUP Oxford. `http://books.google.com/books?id=CG9ucgAACAAJ`.

CROSS, RICHARD. 2002. "Gregory of Nyssa on Universals." *Vigiliae Christianae* 56 (4): 372–410.

———. 2012. "Divine Simplicity and the Doctrine of the Trinity: Gregory of Nyssa and Augustine." Chap. IV in *Philosophical Theology and the Christian Tradition: Russian and Western Perspectives,* edited by DAVID BRADSHAW, 53–65. Russian Philosophical Studies, V. Christian Philosophical Studies, III. Washington, D.C.: Council for Research in Values & Philosophy.

DAVIDSON, DONALD. 1963. "Actions, Reasons, and Causes." *Journal of Philosophy* 60 (23): 685–700.

———. 1966. "The Logical Form of Action Statements." In *The Logic of Decision and Action,* edited by NICHOLAS RESCHER and ALAN ROSS ANDERSON. University of Pittsburgh Press.

———. 1969a. "On Events and Event-Descriptions." In *Fact and Existence,* edited by Joseph Margolis, 74–84. Oxford, Blackwell.

———. 1969b. "The Individuation of Events." In *Essays in Honor of Carl G. Hempel,* edited by Nicholas Rescher, 216–34. Reidel.

———. 1970. "Events as Particulars." *Noûs* 4 (1): 25–32.

———. 2001. *Essays on Actions and Events: Philosophical Essays Volume 1.* Clarendon Press.

DelCogliano, Mark. 2010. *Basil of Caesarea's Anti-Eunomian Theory of Names: Christian Theology and Late-Antique Philosophy in the Fourth Century Trinitarian Controversy.* Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae. Leiden; Boston: Brill. `http://books.google.com/books?id=95tKy3Ey%5C_qQC`.

Diogenes Laertius. 1964 (repr. 1966). *Diogenis Laertii Vitae Philosophorum, 2 vols.* Edited by Herbert S. Long. Scriptorum Classicorum Bibliotheca Oxoniensis. Oxford: Clarendon Press. `http://books.google.com/books?id=XXZcmgEACAAJ`.

Dionysius Thrax. 1883. *Dionysii Thracis Ars Grammatica.* Edited by G. Uhlig. Grammatici Graeci 1. Leipzig: G. Olms. `http://books.google.com/books?id=eHq4nQEACAAJ`.

Epiphanius of Salamis. 1987. *The Panarion of Ephiphanius of Salamis: Book I (sects 1-46).* Translated by F. Williams. Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies. E.J. Brill. `http://books.google.com/books?id=K22xQJbzdUIC`.

Feldman, Fred, and Peter Geach. 1969. "Geach and Relative Identity (with Rejoinder and Reply)." *The Review of Metaphysics* 22 (3): 547–561.

Forrest, Peter. 1998. "Divine Fission: A New Way of Moderating Social Trinitarianism." *Religious Studies* 34 (3): 281–297.

Freeman, Charles. 2009. *A.D. 381: Heretics, Pagans, and the Dawn of the Monotheistic State.* Woodstock, NY: Overlook Press.

Geach, Peter Thomas. 1967. "Identity." *The Review of Metaphysics* 21 (1): 3–12.

———. 1968. *Reference and Generality: An Examination of Some Medieval and Modern Theories.* Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press.

———. 1972. *Logic Matters.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

———. 1973. "Ontological Relativity and Relative Identity." In *Logic and Ontology,* edited by Milton Karl Munitz. New York: New York University Press.

Harden, John Mason. 1926. *An Introduction to Ethiopic Christian Literature.* London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. `http://books.google.com/books?id=BRgiAAAAMAAJ`.

Hasker, William. 2009. "A Leftovian Trinity?" *Faith and Philosophy* 26 (2): 154–166.

———. 2012. "Dancers, Rugby Players, and Trinitarian Persons." *Faith and Philosophy* 29 (3): 325–333.

Householder, Fred Walter. 1981. *The Syntax of Apollonius Dyscolus.* Amsterdam: Benjamins.

Howard-Snyder, Daniel. 2003. "Trinity Monotheism." *Philosophia Christi* 5 (2): 375–403.

Humfress, Caroline. 2000. "Roman Law, Forensic Argument and the Formation of Christian Orthodoxy (III-VI Centuries)." In *Orthodoxie, Christianisme, Histoire: Orthodoxie, Christianity, History,* edited by Susanna Elm, Éric Rebillard, and Antonella Romano, 270:125–147. École Française de Rome.

Hurtado, Larry W. 2003. *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity.* Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing.

———. 2005. *How on Earth Did Jesus Become a God?: Historical Questions About Earliest Devotion to Jesus.* Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing.

Kahlos, M. 2007. *Debate and Dialogue: Christian and Pagan Cultures C. 360-430.* New Critical Thinking in Religion, Theology and Biblical Studies. Ashgate Publishing, Limited. http://books.google.com/books?id=k3NH7dv1OfUC.

Keller, John ChristopherAdorno. 2010. "Telling the Whole Truth: The Role of Paraphrase in Philosophical Inquiry." Dissertation, University of Notre Dame.

Leftow, Brian. 1999. "Anti Social Trinitarianism." In *The Trinity : An Interdisciplinary Symposium on the Trinity,* edited by Stephen T. Davis, Daniel Kendall, and Gerald O'Collins, 203–249. Oxford Univ Press.

———. 2004. "A Latin Trinity." *Faith and Philosophy* 21 (3): 304–333.

———. 2007. "Modes without Modalism." In *Persons: Human and Divine,* edited by Peter van Inwagen and Dean Zimmerman, 357–375. Oxford University Press.

———. 2010. "Two Trinities: Reply to Hasker." *Religious Studies* 46 (4): 441–447.

———. 2012a. "On Hasker on Leftow on Hasker on Leftow." *Faith and Philosophy* 29 (3): 334–339.

———. 2012b. "Time Travel and the Trinity." *Faith and Philosophy* 29 (3): 313–324.

Lewis, David. 1986. *On the Plurality of Worlds.* Wiley. http://books.google.com/books?id=U96lhqfqcl0C.

LEWIS, ERIC. 1995. "The Stoics on Identity and Individuation." *Phronesis* 40 (1): 89–108.

MACLEAN, A.J., ed. 1902. *The Testament of Our Lord. Translated Into English from the Syriac. With Introduction and Notes by J. Cooper.* Translated by J. COOPER. Edinburgh: T & T Clark. `http://books.google.com/books?id=qmbxMgEACAAJ`.

MARTINICH, A. P. 1978. "Identity and Trinity." *The Journal of Religion* 58 (2): 169–181.

———. 1979. "God, Emperor and Relative Identity." *Franciscan Studies* 39 (1): 180–191.

METZGER, BRUCE. 1997. *The Canon of the New Testament: Its Origin, Development, and Significance.* Clarendon Press. `http://books.google.com/books?id=gkit-fH4z4YC`.

MOMMSEN, THEODOR, and PAUL MARTIN MEYER, eds. 1905. *Theodosiani libri XVI cum Constitutionibus Sirmondianis: et Leges novellae ad Theodosianum pertinentes.* Theodosiani libri XVI cum Constitutionibus Sirmondianis: et Leges novellae ad Theodosianum pertinentes 2. Berlin: Weidmann. `http://books.google.com/books?id=gY46AQAAMAAJ`.

MORELAND, JAMES PORTER, and WILLIAM LANE CRAIG. 2003. "Christian Doctrines (I): The Trinity." In *Philosophical Foundations for a Christian Worldview,* 575–596. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press.

MURRAY, MICHAEL, and MICHAEL REA. 2012. "Philosophy and Christian Theology." In *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy,* edited by EDWARD N. ZALTA. Stanford, CA: The Metaphysics Research Lab. `http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2012/entries/christiantheology-philosophy/`.

NESTLE, EBERHARD, BARBARA ALAND, KURT ALAND, JOHANNES KARAVIDOPOULOS, and CARLO MARIA MARTINI, eds. 2006. *Novum Testamentum Graece.* 27th ed. Hendrickson. `http://books.google.com/books?id=waROAgAACAAJ`.

ORIGEN. 1836. *Origines De principiis : Primum Separatim Edidit et Annotatione in Usum Academicum : Instruxit Ern. Rud. Redepenning.* Edited by ERNST RUDOLF REDEPENNING. Greek text followed by the Latin translation of Rufinus. Leipzig: In bibliopolio Dykiano.

PHARR, CLYDE, THERESA SHERRER DAVIDSON, and MARY BROWN PHARR, eds. and trans. 1952. *The Theodosian Code and Novels, and the Sirmondian Constitutions.* Corpus iuris Romani. Lawbook Exchange. `http://books.google.com/books?id=-ROBb7SIvYgC`.

Photius. 1983. *On the Mystagogy of the Holy Spirit.* Translated by Holy Transfiguration Monastery. Includes "Saint Photios and the Filioque" by Michael Azkoul and "The Life of Saint Photios the Great" by St. Justin Popovich, translated by Ronald Wertz. Studion Publishers.

Plantinga, Alvin. 1974. *God, Freedom and Evil.* Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans.

Plantinga, Cornelius, Jr. 1986. "Gregory of Nyssa and the Social Analogy of the Trinity." *The Thomist* 50 (3): 325–352.

———. 1988. "The Threeness / Oneness Problem of the Trinity." *Calvin Theological Journal* 23, no. 1 (April): 37–53.

———. 1989. "Social Trinity and Tritheism." In *Trinity, Incarnation, and Atonement,* edited by Ronald J. Feenstra. Univ Notre Dame Pr.

Pope St. Leo the Great and St. Gregory the Great. 1895. *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church: Leo the Great. Gregory the Great.* Edited by Philip Schaff and Henry Wace. Translated by Rev. Charles Lett Feltoe. A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church: Second Series. Oxford; New York: Christian literature Company. `http://books.google.com/books?id=BoQXAAAAYAAJ`.

Porphyry. 1887. *Porphyrii Isagoge, Et in Aristotelis Categorias Commentarium.* Edited by Adolf Busse. Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca. Berlin: Reimer. `http://books.google.com/books?id=BgTrMgEACAAJ`.

———. 1975. *Porphyry the Phoenician: Isagoge.* Edited by Edward W. Warren. Mediaeval Sources in Translation. Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies. `http://books.google.com/books?id=RzSqbIeoOXgC`.

Quine, W. V. O. 1950. "Identity, Ostension, and Hypostasis." *The Journal of Philosophy:*621–633.

———. 1961. "On What There Is." In *From a Logical Point of View,* 2:21–38. Harvard University Press.

Radde-Gallwitz, Andrew. 2009. *Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nyssa, and the Transformation of Divine Simplicity.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Rea, Michael. 2003. "Relative Identity and the Doctrine of the Trinity." *Philosophia Christi* 5 (2): 431–445.

———. 2006. "Polytheism and Christian Belief." *Journal of Theological Studies* 57:133–48.

———. 2009a. *Oxford Readings in Philosophical Theology 1. 1.* Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press.

———. 2009b. "The Trinity." In *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophical Theology,* 403–429. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

SCHAFF, P. 1919. *The Creeds of Christendom: With a History and Critical Notes.* Bibliotheca Symbolica Ecclesiae Universalis. Harper. `http://books.google.com/books?id=yEQCAAAAYAAJ`.

SHOEMAKER, SYDNEY. 1979. "Identity, Properties, and Causality." *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* 4 (1): 321–342.

———. 1980a. "Causality and Properties." In *Time and Cause,* edited by PETER van INWAGEN, 109–35. D. Reidel.

———. 1980b. "Properties, Causation and Projectability." In *Applications of Inductive Logic,* edited by L. J. COHEN and M. HESSE, 291–312. Clarendon Press.

———. 1984. *Cause and Mind.* Cambridge University Press.

———. 1998. "Causal and Metaphysical Necessity." *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 79 (1): 59–77.

———. 2003. *Identity, Cause, and Mind: Philosophical Essays.* Oxford University Press.

———. 2011. "Realization, Powers and Property Identity." *The Monist* 94 (1): 3–18.

SMITH, M.S. 2002. *The Early History of God: Yahweh and the Other Deities in Ancient Israel.* Biblical Resource Series. William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company. `http://books.google.com/books?id=1yM3AuBh4AsC`.

SORABJI, RICHARD. 2005. *The Philosophy of the Commentators, 200-600 AD: Logic and Metaphysics.* Cornell University Press. `http://books.google.com/books?id=s6W-WeLvMh8C`.

ST. AMBROSE OF MILAN. 1896. *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church: St. Ambrose: Select works and letters.* Edited by PHILIP SCHAFF and HENRY WACE. Translated by REV. H. de ROMESTIN, REV. E. de ROMESTIN, and REV. H. T. F. DUCKWORTH. A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church: Second Series. Oxford; New York: Christian Literature Company. `http://books.google.com/books?id=ZYQXAAAAYAAJ`.

ST. ATHANASIUS. 1892. *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church: St. Athanasius: Select works and letters. 1892.* Edited by PHILIP SCHAFF and HENRY WACE. Translated by ARCHIBALD ROBERSTON. A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church: Second Series. Oxford; New York: Christian Literature Company. `http://books.google.com/books?id=IYLYAAAAMAAJ`.

ST. ATHANASIUS. 1941. *Die Apologien: 1. De Decretis Nicenae Synodi ; 2. De Sententia Dionysii ; 3. Apologia de fuga sua ; 4. Apologia secunda ; 5. Epistula Encyclica ; 6. De Morte Arii ; 7. Ep. ad Monachos ; 8. Historia Arianorum ; 9. De Synodis ; 10. Apologia ad Constantinum. ... ; XA-DE.* Edited by H. G. OPITZ and M. TETZ. Athanasius Werke. de Gruyter. `http://books.google.com/books?id=W1XuZwEACAAJ`.

———. 1971. *Contra Gentes and De Incarnatione.* Edited by R. W. THOMSON. Oxford early Christian texts. Clarendon Press. `http://books.google.com/books?id=gn%5C_YAAAAMAAJ`.

ST. BASIL THE GREAT. 1895. *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church: St. Basil: Letters and Select Works.* Edited by PHILIP SCHAFF and HENRY WACE. Translated by REV. BLOMFIELD JACKSON. A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church: Second Series. Oxford; New York: Christian literature Company. `http://books.google.com/books?id=m3A7AQAAMAAJ`.

———. 1897. *Bibliothek der Symbole und Glaubensregeln der Alten Kirche.* 3rd ed. Edited by AUGUST HAHN and GEORGE LUDWIG HAHN HAHN. Breslau: E. Morgenstern. `http://books.google.com/books?id=LuArAAAAYAAJ`.

———. 1930. *Saint Basil, The letters, Volume III: Letters 186-248.* Edited by JEFFREY HENDERSON. Translated by ROY J. DEFERRARI. Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge ; London: Harvard University Press. `http://books.google.com/books?id=mkJaAAAAYAAJ`.

———. 1957-1966. *Lettres.* Edited by YVES COURTONNE. Collection des universités de France. Paris: Les Belles lettres.

ST. CYRIL OF JERUSALEM. 1967. *Cyrilli Hierosolymorum Archiepiscopi Opera Quae Supersunt Omnia.* Edited by JOSEPH RUPP and WILHELM KARL REISCHL. Olms. `http://books.google.com/books?id=UgTXtgAACAAJ`.

ST. CYRIL OF JERUSALEM and ST. GREGORY NAZIANZEN. 1894. *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church: S. Cyril of Jerusalem. S. Gregory Nazianzen.* Edited by PHILIP SCHAFF and HENRY WACE. Translated by EDWIN HAMILTON GIFFORD. A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church: Second Series. Oxford; New York: Christian literature Company. `http://books.google.com/books?id=T4AXAAAAYAAJ`.

ST. GREGORY NAZIANZEN. 1963. *Die Fünf Theologischen Reden; Text und Ubersetzung mit Einleitung und Kommentar.* Edited by JOSEPH BARBEL. Dusseldorf: Patmos-Verlag.

St. Gregory of Nyssa. 1893. *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church: Gregory of Nyssa: Dogmatic treatises, Etc.* Edited by Philip Schaff and Henry Wace. Translated by William Moore and Henry Austin Wilson. A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church: Second Series. Oxford; New York: Christian literature Company. `http://books.google.com/books?id=AIAXAAAAYAAJ`.

———. 1938, reprinted 1962. *Analecta patristica.* Edited by Franz Diekamp. [Orientalia Christiana Analecta] 117. Rome: Pontificum Institutum Orientalium Studiorum.

———. 1958. *Opera Dogmatica Minora.* Edited by Fridericus Mueller and Werner Jaeger. Gregorii Nysseni Opera Series 1. Brill. `http://books.google.com/books?id=VQvuX%5C_yIs%5C_QC`.

———. 1960. *Gregorii Nysseni Opera: Contra Eunomium libri.* Edited by Werner Jaeger. Brill. `http://books.google.com/books?id=l6LaQgAACAAJ`.

———. 1994. *To the Greeks, From Common Concepts.* Translated by Fr. Brian Daley. Unpublished.

———. 2007. *Gregory of Nyssa: The Letters.* Translated by Anna Silvas. Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae : Texts and Studies of Early Christian Life and Language. Leiden; Boston: Brill. `http://books.google.com/books?id=yPj61OkEsXoC`.

———. 2008a. *A Letter of Gregory, Bishop of Nyssa, to Ablabius, A Defense Against the Notion That We Profess Three Gods.* Translated by Brian Duvick. For use during the 11th International Colloquium on Gregory of Nyssa (17-20 Sept. 2008 Tuebingen/Freiburg) only. All rights reserved. (Used by permission of the author). Unpublished.

———. 2008b. *Letter 38: Gregory of Nyssa to His Brother Peter, On the Difference Between Substance and Subsistent Entity.* Translated by Brian Duvick. For use during the 11th International Colloquium on Gregory of Nyssa (17-20 Sept. 2008 Tuebingen/Freiburg) only. All rights reserved. (Used by permission of the author). Unpublished.

St. Justin Martyr. 1915. *Die Ältesten Apologeten.* Edited by E. J. Goodspeed. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht. `http://books.google.com/books?id=kwnmCYnwl2oC`.

St. Justin Martyr, A. Roberts, J. Donaldson, A.C. Coxe, A. Menzies, E.C. Richardson, and B. Pick. 1885. *The Ante-Nicene Fathers: The Apostolic Fathers. Justin Martyr. Irenaeus.* The Ante-Nicene Fathers: Translations of the Writings of the Fathers Down to A.D. 325. C. Scribner's Sons. `http://books.google.com/books?id=fyUMAAAAIAAJ`.

STEAD, CHRISTOPHER. 1990. "Why Not Three Gods?" In *Studien Zur Gregor Von Nyssa und Der Christlichen Spätantike,* edited by H.R. DROBNER and C. KLOCK, 149–164. E.J. Brill. `http://books.google.com/books?id=Cy2uaqZO1R8C`.

STEAD, G. CHRISTOPHER. 1981. "Individual Personality in Origen and the Cappadocian Fathers." In *Arche e Telos,* edited by U. BIANCHI and H. CROUZEL. Milan, Universita Cattolica del Sacro Cuore: Vita e Pensiero.

SWINBURNE, RICHARD. 1988. "Could There Be More Than One God?" *Faith and Philosophy* 5 (3): 225–241.

———. 1994. *The Christian God.* 27:248–254. 2. Oxford University Press.

TERTULLIAN, MINUCIUS FELIX, COMMODIAN, and ORIGEN. 1885. *The Ante-Nicene Fathers: Tertullian, pt. 4th; Minucius Felix; Commodian; Origen, pts. 1st and 2d.* Edited by D.D. COXE A. Cleveland. Translated by D.D. ROBERTS Rev. Alexander and L.L.D. DONALDSON James. The Ante-Nicene Fathers: Translations of the Writings of the Fathers Down to A.D. 325. C. Scribner's Sons. `http://books.google.com/books?id=ZzcMAAAAIAAJ`.

THEOPHILUS OF ANTIOCH. 1970. *Ad Autolycum.* Edited by RICHARD MC-QUEEN GRANT. Oxford early Christian texts. Clarendon Press. `http://books.google.com/books?id=OVJBygAACAAJ`.

THEOPHILUS OF ANTIOCH, A. ROBERTS, J. DONALDSON, A.C. COXE, A. MENZIES, E.C. RICHARDSON, and B. PICK. 1905. *The Ante-Nicene fathers: translations of the writings of the fathers down to A.D. 325.* The Ante-Nicene Fathers: Translations of the Writings of the Fathers Down to A.D. 325. C. Scribner's sons. `http://books.google.com/books?id=xuxYAAAAYAAJ`.

TUGGY, DALE. 2003. "The Unfinished Business of Trinitarian Theorizing." *Religious Studies* 39 (2): 165–183.

———. 2011. "On Positive Mysterianism." *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 69 (3): 205–226.

———. 2013. "Trinity." In *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy,* edited by EDWARD N. ZALTA. Stanford, CA: The Metaphysics Research Lab. `http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/trinity/trinity-history.html`.

Van INWAGEN, PETER. 1988. "And Yet They Are Not Three Gods But One God." In *Philosophy and the Christian Faith,* edited by THOMAS MORRIS, 241–278. University of Notre Dame Press.

———. 1998. "Modal Epistemology." *Philosophical Studies* 92 (1/2): 67–84.

———. 2003. "Three Persons in One Being: On Attempts to Show that the Doctrine of the Trinity is Self-Contradictory." In *The Holy Trinity,* edited by MELVILLE Y. STEWART, 83–97. Springer.

Wright, William. 1877. *Catalogue of the Ethiopic Manuscripts in the British Museum Acquired Since the Year 1847.* London, St. John's square, Clerkenwell, e.c.: Sold at the British Museum. Department of Oriental Printed Books / Manuscripts. Gilbert / Rivington. `http://books.google.com/books?id=UmRvmDoKPcAC`.

Yandell, Keith E. 1994. "The Most Brutal and Inexcusable Error in Counting?: Trinity and Consistency." *Religious Studies* 30 (2): 201–217.