

The Intuitionist Reasoning in the Theology of Nicholas of Cusa

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A century ago Cassirer has suggested that Cusanus (1401-1464) has by ingenuity introduced a new logic. As a fact, Cusanus, in opposition to the "*Aristotelis secta [logica]*"¹⁾ and by going beyond even the 'negative theology', wanted to find out a new way of arguing in order first of all to discover new names of God. Cusanus has invented several names which actually belong to modal and intuitionist logic.²⁾ In particular, his more important book suggests the name *Non Aliud* (1462). Being *Aliud* a negative word (= not the same), the new name is a double negation which he stresses that it is not equivalent to the corresponding affirmative word, *Idem*; it represents a failure of the double negation law and hence it pertains to intuitionist logic.³⁾ Moreover, by avoiding Aristotle's syllogisms, Cusanus has reasoned so precisely that he has organized almost all his books in a different way from the apodictic-axiomatic way. In a previous paper⁴⁾ I have proved that there exists an alternative organization of a theory; it is aimed at discovering, by means of indirect proofs, a new method for solving a general problem. An inspection of the logical features of both a summary of the above book (in *De Venatione Sapientiae*, 1463, chp. 14) and the antecedent short writing *De Deo Abscondito* (1440-5) (also it is full of doubly negated propositions of the intuitionist kind) shows that Cusanus has reasoned in a substantial agreement with the above logical features of the alternative model of organization and moreover in the latter writing he has improved his reasoning up to define some basic laws of the intuitionist logic. I conclude that, although Cusanus has illustrated his ideas in several other ways, in some writings he has closely approached the typical way of reasoning pertaining to intuitionist logic. Hence, Carnap's appraisals of an essential irrationality of religious thinking and a similar Hopkins' negative appraisal of Cusanus' arguing⁴⁾ are wrong, having ignored both *ad absurdum* arguments and non-classical logic.

In addition, through the intuitionist name of God Cusanus has suggested a surprisingly suitable definition of the Tri-Unity: "The Not-Other is Not-Other than the Not-Other". This proposition represents at the same time the trinity and the unity. Being his entire thinking addressed to this tri-unity, called by him "tri-unity of concordance", his logical reasoning made reference to instead of Aristotle's square of opposition, a tri-unitarian logical structure, which represents through intuitionist logic the inner relations of the three divine Persons.

Bibliography

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