

**THE FUNCTIONAL MONOTHEISM MODEL
AND THE TRI-THEISM OBJECTION**

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ABSTRACT

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AND THE TRI-THEISM OBJECTION

In this thesis, I argue that the Functional Monotheism model is not tri-theistic, but is a model of pro-Nicene Trinitarianism. In establishing this thesis, I focus on countering a specific objection prevalent in the Analytic Theology literature; the Tri-Theism Objection, which has charged the Functional Monotheism model with “tri-theism”. This objection, formulated by Kelly James Clark and Edward Feser, asserts that the Functional Monotheism model is tri-theistic and thus should be rejected as a possible model of scriptural monotheism and “orthodox” Trinitarianism. I argue against this objection by demonstrating that the Functional Monotheism model, once certain necessary philosophical clarifications and modifications are made, is not tri-theistic (in the classical sense of the term), but is in fact in line with “strict” (Second Temple) Jewish monotheism and “orthodox” (pro-Nicene) Trinitarianism. The Functional Monotheism model, contra the proponents of the objection, is therefore not subject to a charge of tri-theism, and thus should be taken as a viable model of “orthodox” Trinitarianism that can aid analytic theologians in their Trinitarian theorising.

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ABBREVIATIONS

General Sources

GNO	Gregorii Nysseni Opera
NPNF ₁	Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, First Series
NPNF ₂	Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series

Specific Sources

Ambrose of Milan

<i>Fid.</i>	Christian Faith
<i>Spir.</i>	On the Holy Spirit

Augustine of Hippo

<i>Civ.</i>	City of God
<i>Ep.</i>	Epistles
<i>Trin.</i>	De Trinitate

Basil of Caesarea

<i>Ep.</i>	Epistles
<i>Spir.</i>	On the Holy Spirit

Gregory of Nazianzus

<i>Ep.</i>	Epistles
<i>Or.</i>	Orations

Gregory of Nyssa

<i>Abl.</i>	Ad Ablabium
<i>C. Eun.</i>	Contra Eunomium
<i>Ep.</i>	Epistles
<i>Graec.</i>	Ad Graecos

Hilary of Poitiers

<i>Trin.</i>	De Trinitate
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John Philoponus

<i>Arb.</i>	Arbiter
<i>C. Them.</i>	Contra Themistium
<i>De Theo.</i>	De Theologia

Theodoret of Cyrus

<i>Er.</i>	Eranistes
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DEDICATION

To

Priscilla

Thank you for your tireless sacrifice, encouragement and support, as without it, I would not be the individual that I am today. Thank you for being the loving wife that you have been to me over these years. You are the love of my life, and such a blessing, not only to me, but to all those who are privileged to know you for the wonderful person that you are. You are a caring mother, a devoted wife, and an amazing human being. May our love and journey together be eternal.

Alison and Eléna

Thank you for your loving smiles, hugs and kisses, as without them, I would not have had the daily motivation to have completed this project. You are both my sunshine and my heart. May this work be edifying for you both in your walk with Christ. Through you both I live and find my purpose.

David

Thank you for your loving patience and guidance, as without it, this work would not have been possible. Your gentleness and kindness as a supervisor, and as a person, is a model for us all. You never tired from giving me your everything. Thank you for all that you have done for me during this journey. It will never be forgotten. It has been an honour to have called you my supervisor, and most of all, my friend. May your soul forever rest in peace and may we meet again in paradise.

Psalm 36:9

For with you is the fountain of life; in your light we see light.

DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is a presentation of original work and I am the sole author. This work has not previously been presented for an award at this, or any other, University. All sources are acknowledged as References.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Section 1: Context of Study - Statement, Relevance and Contribution

1.1. Central Focus of Thesis

Thesis Statement: Functional Monotheism and Tri-Theism Objection

I argue that the Functional Monotheism model is not tri-theistic, but is a model of pro-Nicene Trinitarianism (Trinitarian monotheism). By "tri-theism" I mean the view expressed by the Classical Tri-Theist trajectory of the 6th century, which posited the existence of three particular substances and natures within the Trinity, with the common nature shared between the Trinitarian persons being a conceptual abstraction. By "Functional Monotheism model" I mean the specific model proposed by Richard Swinburne, which posits the existence of three divine persons, who each possess the same property of essential, everlasting omnipotence, and are ontologically and volitionally interdependent, so as to form an indivisible collective, that is rightly referred to as the one God.

The thesis question that I will be focusing on is:

(TQ) Is the Functional Monotheism model tri-theistic?

The thesis statement (TS) that I will be defending, in answer to (TQ), is thus the following:

(TS) The Functional Monotheism model is not tri-theistic, but is a model of pro-Nicene Trinitarianism.

The context of my argument is that of answering the "Tri-Theism Objection", which I specify as two sub-objections; the Scriptural Objection and the Historical Objection, that have been proposed in the literature against the Functional Monotheism model by Kelly James Clark and Edward Feser.¹ This objection aims to show that the Functional Monotheism model does not

¹ Following Alvin Plantinga (2000), I take the Functional Monotheism model, to be a model in the sense of a collection of propositions (i.e., Functional Monotheism) that shows *how it could be* that another collection of target propositions (i.e., the doctrine of the Trinity) are true or actual.

fit with scriptural and “orthodox” Trinitarianism, but is instead a tri-theistic conception of God. How I will address this objection will be through:

- (i) Identifying plausible historical conceptions of “strict” Jewish monotheism, tri-theism, and "orthodox" Trinitarianism.
- (ii) Assessing the Functional Monotheism model according to the central elements of these historical conceptions.
- (iii) Concluding that the Functional Monotheism model, once certain clarifications and modifications are made, does, in fact, disaffirm the central elements of the historical conception of tri-theism and affirms the central elements of the assumed historical conceptions of “strict” Jewish monotheism and “orthodox” Trinitarianism.

This all allowing the thesis conclusion to be reached that the Functional Monotheism model is not tri-theistic, but, through its correspondence with “strict” Jewish monotheism and "orthodox" Trinitarianism, is, in fact, a model of scriptural and Trinitarian monotheism, that is, Trinitarianism.

Relevance of Thesis: Advance in Trinitarian Theorising

The position defended in this thesis is important and relevant, due to the fact that the Functional Monotheism model is regularly, unlike other models,² taken to be a logically coherent model of the Trinity (Anderson, 2007). The main issue against it being its theological validity, which usually centres around the charge of it being tri-theistic. Thus, in successfully addressing this issue, I have highlighted the fact there is, in fact, a model of the Trinity available that can be taken to authentically express Trinitarian monotheism, in a logically coherent manner. This thesis is thus important and relevant for making further advances in Trinitarian theorising, in the area of Analytic Theology.

I will now explain the areas of original (general and specific) contributions that I will be seeking to make through my thesis.

² Such as Brian Leftow's (2004, 2007) Latin Trinitarian model, that faces issues surrounding the coherence of time-travel, or Peter van Inwagen's (1995, 2003) Relative Identity model, that faces issues surrounding the cogency of relative identity.

General Original Contribution: Focus on Objection

Through this thesis, I make a *general* original contribution to the field of Analytic Theology by focusing on an objection against Richard Swinburne's Trinitarianism that has not been adequately addressed in the literature: The Tri-Theism Objection. In the literature, the objection was introduced by Kelly James Clark (1996) and further defended by Edward Feser (1997). However, there has not been any extended discussion of the objection outside of these works. Additionally, there has been no attempt to rebut the objection, with most assuming, without further argument, that the Functional Monotheism model is indeed tri-theistic. Thus, I make an original contribution in my thesis through extensively discussing and rebutting this important objection, ultimately resulting in a successful rehabilitation of the Functional Monotheism model.

Specific Original Contribution: Integration of Theology and Philosophy

Through this thesis, I make a *specific* original contribution to the field of Analytic Theology, firstly, by situating the Tri-Theism Objection, and the Functional Monotheism model, within a historical framework, which will allow an accurate assessment of the Functional Monotheism model. That is in:

- Chapter 2, I assess the Functional Monotheism model according to the central tenets of Second Temple Jewish Monotheism,
- Chapter 3, I assess the Functional Monotheism model according to the central tenets of Classical (6th century) Tri-Theism
- Chapter 4 – 6, I assess the Functional Monotheism model according to the central tenets of pro-Nicene Trinitarianism.

Assessing the Functional Monotheism model within these historical frameworks will provide a means to correctly classify the Functional Monotheism model, rather than presupposing a classification of it as tri-theistic, without further argumentation, which has unfortunately been done within the wider literature (Feser, 1997). Furthermore, this method here also allows an additional advance to be made concerning the correspondence of

historical and philosophical theology, which has only recently been given more attention to (Branson, 2018).³

A second, *specific* original contribution made to the field of Analytic Theology, is that of the application of various concepts from contemporary metaphysics within a theological context. The specific chapters that I do this are:

- Chapter 3, where I employ concepts from the metaphysics of substance, essence (and ontological dependence), and modes, to clarify the notion of “tri-theism”.
- Chapter 4, where I employ concepts from the metaphysics of grounding (and causation), to modify the Functional Monotheism model, so as to affirm the Monarchy of (God) the Father.
- Chapter 5, where I employ concepts from formal ontology, to modify the Functional Monotheism model, so as to affirm the numerical singularity of the divine nature.
- Chapter 6, where I employ concepts from mereology, to modify the Functional Monotheism model, so as to affirm the simplicity of (God) the Trinity.
- Appendix, where I employ concepts from the metaphysics of tropes and further concepts from the metaphysics of substance to elucidate subsidiary issues related to those in the main text.

Many of these concepts have not been applied within a theological context before.⁴ Thus, in addition to its correspondence with historical theology, I am making a specific contribution to the integrative task of Analytic Theology through furthering the overall correspondence between theology and analytic philosophy.

³ Thus, this thesis assumes a different methodology for analysis than Swinburne's (1994) approach (and his approach in general) which firstly adduced various philosophical concepts, and then formulated and/or assessed the Functional Monotheism model by those concepts. Instead, the starting point here will be that of a historical one, with the Model being formulated and/or assessed within a historical framework, with the application of various philosophical concepts being made solely to clarify and modify the Functional Monotheism model, so as to bring it in line within that framework. Interestingly Swinburne's (2018) seems to follow the latter approach as well.

⁴ Importantly, given that my focus in modifying the Functional Monotheism model is on an application of the philosophical concepts, rather than an evaluation of them, I am thus *assuming* that these concepts are indeed cogent. I will thus not be arguing for their cogency, but presupposing it in my explication and application of them. If this is problematic then conclusion of my position would thus be conditional. In that *if* these concepts are indeed cogent, then the model fits with the historical conceptions detailed in this thesis.

Specific Original Contribution: Theistic Pluralism

A third, *specific* original contribution to the field of Analytic Theology, is that of further developing the *equivocation* method provided by Cornelius Plantinga (1989) and William Hasker (2013), concerning the *three senses* in which the “oneness” of God can be construed (i.e. the one God being the Father, the one God being the divine nature and the one God being the Trinity). I term these three senses “Theistic Pluralism”. Outside of these works, Theistic Pluralism has not been further developed within the Analytic Theology literature, where, instead, an assumption of a *one sense* view has been the primary position in the literature (i.e. the one God either being the Father *or* the divine nature/substance *or* the Trinity). This one sense view is what I term “Theistic Monism”.⁵ Thus, through my thesis, I am making a further contribution to the development of the method of Theistic Pluralism by grounding it upon a scriptural, historical and philosophical basis, which will enable other researchers to utilise this approach to further specify the nature of Trinitarianism.

Given the relevance of my thesis, and the original contributions that will be made through it to the field of Analytic Theology, this thesis is thus worth further investigation and defence, as will be done in the subsequent chapters. Now onto a detailed unpacking of the Functional Monotheism model and the Tri-Theism Objection raised against it.

Section 2: Explanation of Content - Model and Objection

2.1.1 The Functional Monotheism Model: Central Features

The Functional Monotheism model (hereafter, the Model),⁶ postulates the existence of three distinct individuals; the Father, the Son and the Spirit. These individuals are persons, in the sense of each of them being a pure mental substance (i.e. each individual has privileged access to pure mental events that are instantiated within them).⁷ That is, they are fully distinct persons

⁵ Theistic Monism is seen for example in the works of Branson (n.d.), who assumes that God is *solely* the Father, Leftow (2004), who assumes that God is *solely* the one substance and Craig and Moreland (2003), who assume that God is *solely* the Trinity.

⁶ Swinburne does not refer to this Model as "Functional Monotheism", instead this term is bestowed upon the Model by (Leftow, 1999). Rather Swinburne in his writings refers to it simply as the "The Social Trinity". I will utilise the first term for the Model, due to its widespread acceptance, and that of the latter term being open to objection.

⁷ For a detailed explication of the notion of privileged access and the nature of pure mental events, see: (Swinburne, 2016).

in a *modern sense* of the term, where each person has their own mental life; are an individual mental substance that possesses the capacity to perform separate intentional actions, and have a "token distinct" consciousness that is, however, "type identical" (Swinburne, 2018). The three "persons" are thus, as Swinburne writes: 'distinct centres of knowledge, love, will and action' (Swinburne, 2018, 10).

These persons are divine, in the sense of each of them possessing, that is *instantiating*, the same essential, intrinsic property necessary and sufficient for being divine: everlasting omnipotence (or pure, limitless, intentional power).⁸ Thus, even though they are distinct persons, the Father, Son and Spirit all possess the same essence (or nature), that is the same divine property, and thus are equally divine. Each of the persons, however, are individuated by their essential relational properties, where:

- (i) the relational property of the Father is that of "unbegottenness" (i.e. *being uncaused*),
- (ii) the relational property of the Son is that of "begottenness" (i.e. *being caused to exist, by an uncaused divine person acting alone*), and
- (iii) the relational property of the Spirit is that of "spiratedness" (i.e. *being caused to exist by the uncaused divine person and the divine person caused to exist by the uncaused divine person acting alone*).

The three persons of the Trinity are individuated by their relations towards each other (Swinburne, 2018).⁹ Furthermore, these relations indicate that there is an ontological unity or interdependence between the Persons. That is, the Father, the Son and the Spirit are ontologically interdependent through their relations to each other. Where the Father, due to his perfect goodness, would inevitably bring about the existence of the Son, and the Son likewise would inevitably co-operate with the Father in bringing about the Spirit.

However, due to this "tripersonalisation" being an inevitable act of the Father, that is an *act of essence* (i.e. an act stemming from the essence of the Father), rather than an *act of will* (i.e. an act stemming from the volitional action of the Father), the Trinitarian persons could not exist

⁸ The implications of the Model positing the existence of an instantiation relation will be further detailed in Chapter 5.

⁹ This definition of the relational properties of the divine persons are that of Swinburne (1994). The dependence of the divine persons are not so much brought out by their relational properties, but the causal dependencies that stem from their possession of perfect goodness. The identity (and existence) conditions of the Persons are thus reciprocal. More on this below.

without each other. There is thus an ontological interdependence of each of the Trinitarian persons on each other.

Moreover, there is a further unity between them, that is a unity of action, or a "volitional interdependence", which wards off any possibility of volitional conflict between them.¹⁰ This volitional interdependence is based on the fact of each of the Persons understanding that, at each point of time, there are different *spheres of activity* that each would be required to operate within. Thus, they would each see that it would be a bad action for them to perform a (non-cooperative) action outside of their sphere of activity (Swinburne, 2008). The Father, through his initial primacy, that is him being the ultimate source of the two other divine persons,¹¹ would have the authority to establish these separate spheres of activity for each of the Trinitarian persons to operate within. By them each being omniscient and perfectly good, they would thus co-operate with each other, and back the actions of the other persons in their sphere of activity. There is, therefore, a volitional interdependence between the three divine persons.

This unity of being (ontological interdependence), and unity of action (volitional interdependence), is such as which to enable the Trinitarian persons to be an interdependent collective that "functions" as a totally integrated, unified society, which can rightly be designated with the title God. Furthermore, through the manner in which it "functions", through the action of its parts (i.e. the Father, the Son and the Spirit), it can be, by extension of use, taken to be divine, and the ultimate, collective source of being (Swinburne, 1994).

Taking this all into account, we can illustrate the central aspects of the Model through the following diagram, (with "CR" standing for a generic "causal relation", the double headed arrow representing an undefined ontological (inter)dependence relation,¹² "DN" standing for

¹⁰ This volitional conflict is known as the problem of omnipotence, which Swinburne (1989) and (1994) took as his starting point for constructing the Model. The potential issue presented by this problem is that of a possible failure of volitions (i.e. a "clash" of wills) between two (or more) omnipotent beings, showing that there, logically, cannot be more than one divine being, unless there is some mechanism to forestall this clash.

¹¹ This is still true despite the Father's cooperation with the Son, in bringing about the Spirit the Father alone is the uncaused cause of all the other divine persons, as the Son's causal role is simply that of the Father operating through him. In their cooperative act, the Father is thus the indirect cause of the Spirit, and the Son is the direct cause, who channels the Father's causal action.

¹² Swinburne (2018) modified his view concerning the existence of an "active causal relation" (which stems from the Father to the Son and the Spirit) and "passive causal relation" (which ontologically "ties" each of the persons to each other), due specifically to the implausibility of the latter type of relation. However, Swinburne has not provided a further conception of the generic causal relation stemming from the Father to the Son and the Spirit and an alternative conception of the dependence of each of the Persons on each other. Thus, in Chapter 4 I will provide an alternative causal relation in the form of metaphysical causation and an alternative ontological dependence relation in the form of an essential dependence relation.

the divine nature, “Ins” for an “instantiation relation” and the “outer-circle” representing God the Trinity (i.e. the collective composed of the Trinitarian persons)):

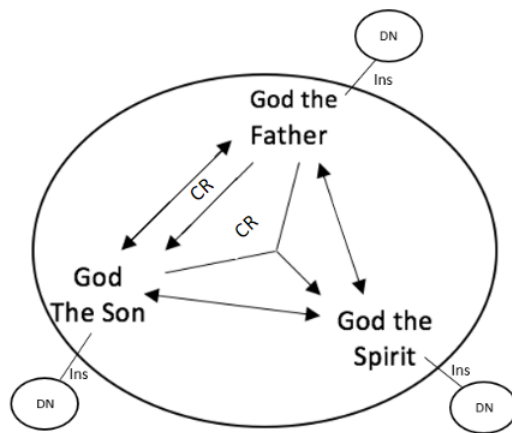


Figure 1.1 The Functional Monotheism model

Therefore, in sum, we see that the Model posits three distinct divine persons, who each possess, (i.e. “instantiate”) the *same* "essence" or "nature" (i.e. the essential, intrinsic property of everlasting omnipotence). Thus, each of the persons being God. They are, ontologically interdependent, in that they rely upon each other for their continued existence. Moreover, they are volitionally interdependent, in that they co-operate together, within and without, their designated spheres of activity. This ultimately resulting in there being *one* God, the “collective” composed of the three divine persons, who functions as the “unified” and ‘ultimate’ source of all of reality.¹³

Now that the central features of the Model have been unpacked, it will be important now to detail the central objection raised against it, that of the Tri-Theism Objection, which will also serve as the central objection that will be addressed in this thesis.

¹³ According to Swinburne (1994) the Model’s Trinitarian interpretation explicated above provides a means for one to deal with the conceptual issues present in the doctrine of the Trinity, as stated by the Athanasian Creed, for example. Specifically, the following statement of the creed: “Thus the Father is God, the Son is God, the Holy Spirit is God. Yet there are not three gods; there is but one God”. How the Model deals with the (apparent) explicit contradiction here is by equivocating on the word God. Where the word God, in application to each of the Persons, is to be interpreted as a predicate ascribing the property of divinity to each of the Persons. However, when the word God is spoken of as one, then it is taken as a name (or title) for the one Supreme Being, that is, in the Model, the "collective" of divine persons. Given this, there is thus no explicit contradiction posited by the doctrine, as interpreted by the Model.

2.1.2 The Tri-Theism Objection: Survey of Objectors

The Tri-Theism Objection contends that the Model is a polytheistic, specifically tri-theistic, construal of the Trinity and thus fails to provide an interpretation of Trinitarianism that is faithful to the demands of scriptural and historical orthodoxy. This objection is not aimed against the coherence of the Model, but its theological validity. The primary proponents of the Tri-Theism Objection in the literature are Kelly James Clark (1996) and Edward Feser (1997).¹⁴ I will now briefly survey the Tri-Theism Objection as found within these thinkers and, from this, provide a clear statement of the objection.

The Tri-Theism Objection (i): Kelly James Clark

The first part of the Tri-Theism Objection is raised by Kelly James Clark (1996) who centres his form of the objection on the Model transgressing the “strict” Judaic monotheism that underpins the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed (381CE).¹⁵ For Kelly, Swinburne’s Model, instead of fulfilling the tenets of Trinitarianism, ‘...moves us in the direction of tri-theism rather than orthodox Trinitarianism’ (Clark, 1996, 464). Why Kelly believes that this is so is based on the fact that, as there are three logically distinct divine beings within the Model, the Model commits one to the existence of three *non-identical divine individuals*, which is multi-theistic. Kelly just does not see this “multi-theistic” stance as being the correct reading of the conciliar creeds. As Kelly notes,

Perhaps it is ambiguous whether or not there are one, two, or three divinities according to the Nicene and Athanasian Creed. Suppose we concede that the documents, taken as isolated texts, are ambiguous in the sense which Swinburne attributes to them and that tri-theism is not an impossible reading of them (I find this considerably more difficult to do with the Athanasian creed). Is it, however, in its context a plausible reading of the creeds? Is tri-theism an all-things-considered best understanding of the development of Christian doctrine? (Clark, 1996, 472).

Kelly thus believes that the Model does not provide the best understanding of the development of Christian doctrine, given the backdrop of “radical Hebrew monotheism” from which the

¹⁴ Other individuals who have raised similar objections to the Model are Brian Leftow (1999) and Daniel Howard-Snyder (2015). However, these objections are quite wide-ranging (specifically Leftow’s) and are not specifically aimed at charging the Model with “tri-theism”, but a more “coarse-grained” polytheism. These objections will not feature in this thesis but will be the subject of further research.

¹⁵ Clark (1996) raises two other objections against the cogency of the Model but which do not focus on the issue of tri-theism and monotheism, and thus will not feature in this survey.

Christian religion, and thus the conciliar creeds, developed. Kelly holds to this radical Hebrew (or “strict” Jewish) monotheism, that distinguished Judeo-Christian belief from its Near Eastern contemporaries, as being grounded on its commitment to a *single divine power* and the preclusion by the Shema against multiple deities with the statement from God to Israel asserting that “the Lord our God is One” (Clark, 1996). Additionally, Kelly sees that in so far as Jesus was maintaining this Hebrew tradition (with his own conception of monotheism constraining the historical development of doctrine), then it is implausible for one to suppose that the early Church intended to affirm the doctrine of tri-theism through its teaching (Clark, 1996). Thus, as Kelly states,

Indeed, the doctrinal innovation of the early church was not the rejection of traditional monotheism but the affirmation of Trinitarianism -- a single divine being who is three in one. The Nicene Creed itself begins by echoing the Shema: “We believe in one God...” The Athanasian creed affirms repeatedly “One God” and denies that there are three gods or three Lords. And yet this one God is three. Orthodox monotheistic, Trinitarianism may be incoherent, as Swinburne alleges, but that is precisely what was affirmed by the ecumenical councils of the early Christian church and how it was understood by the Church for well over a millennium. The classical creeds affirm a unity of nature -- a single, divine being with three persons -- not, as Swinburne alleges, a community united in purpose or will or interdependence (Clark, 1996, 473).

Therefore, Kelly sees that the Model’s conception of Trinitarianism, which, for him, is tri-theistic, rather than monotheistic, is not a plausible reading of the Christian tradition that is committed, at its foundation, to a radical Hebrew (or “strict” Jewish) monotheism. We thus have a construal of the Tri-Theism Objection as presenting the Model with a *scriptural and historical problem*. Now onto an exploration of the critique of the second proponent of the objection.

The Tri-Theism Objection (ii): Edward Feser

The Tri-Theism Objection is further developed by Edward Feser (1997).¹⁶ In his formulation of the objection, Feser sees the Model, and the a-priori argumentation that he utilises to develop this Model, clearly supporting a *tri-theistic* concept of God rather than a Trinitarian concept.¹⁷

¹⁶ Feser (1997) also raises three other objections against the cogency of the Model but, as with the case of Kelly, these do not focus on the issue of tri-theism and monotheism, and thus will also not feature in this survey.

¹⁷ For an explication of Swinburne’s a priori argument from love for the Trinity, see: (Swinburne 1994). For a re-development of this argument by Swinburne, see: (Swinburne, 2008) and (Swinburne, 2018).

As Feser states, '[the Model] at first glance, surely amounts to Tri-theism, the heretical claim that there are three gods, not Trinitarianism' (Feser, 1997, 180, square parenthesis added). Feser sees Swinburne however, as countering this charge of Tri-Theism through highlighting that his account, the Model, is what Trinitarianism specifically amounts to. Feser sees Swinburne attempting to do this through an *equivocation* method, which interprets certain tenets of the conciliar creeds as taking the Trinitarian persons to be distinct divine persons.¹⁸ The oneness of God, rather than being an identity claim concerning the Persons (which would result in the creeds asserting that there is only one divine person), is rather taken to assert, as Feser (1997, 181) writes, 'the existence of a single collective of divine individuals who are ontologically interdependent and unified in their courses of action in the ways we have seen his account entails'. Feser thus notes that Swinburne holds to the conception of tri-theism that was rejected by the creedal formulators as one that asserted the existence of three *independent* divine persons who could exist without each other and act independently of each other (Feser, 1997). However, according to Swinburne, the Model's interpretation of Trinitarianism does not commit one to this assertion and thus cannot be deemed as tri-theistic.

Feser sees this line of thought as problematic, however, for three reasons. The first reason is that of Feser seeing Swinburne's interpretation of Trinitarianism as resting on linguistic considerations that, even if possible, could not be the correct ones, given such scriptural passages like 'I am the Lord and there is no other; there is no God besides Me' (Isaiah 45: 5) (to take just one example)' (Feser, 1997, 181). Feser asserts the fact that few, if any, individuals would have taken passages, such as this, as providing support for Swinburne's interpretation of the one God as referring to a collective of divine persons. In further illustrating this point Feser (1997, 181, emphasis added) asks us to imagine 'a *Jewish* reader of this Old Testament passage trying to see in it an affirmation of Swinburne's collective of divine individuals!'. Thus, Feser sees that in so far as the creedal statements of the oneness of God reflect such scriptural affirmations, Swinburne's reading, and the Model established upon this reading, is highly implausible.

The second reason for Feser's rejection of Swinburne's reply is that of other creedal statements, found within the Athanasian Creed (such as the statements "So likewise the Father is Almighty, the Son Almighty, and the Spirit Almighty. And yet there are not three Almighties, but one Almighty"), telling against Swinburne's equivocation method. As these statements, according

¹⁸ For a brief explanation of this equivocation method, see: n14 above.

to Feser, indicate that one must affirm the existence of one Almighty as being part of what the creed is declaring in stating that there is one God. However, this passage conflicts with Swinburne's description of the three, *distinct* divine persons as postulated by the Model, each of whom are individually taken to be omnipotent. Thus, if there are three distinct omnipotent individuals, then there are, in fact, three Almighties, which goes against the creed.

Lastly, Feser's third reason for rejecting Swinburne's interpretation is that of the extensive controversy in interpreting the doctrine providing evidence against Swinburne's claim that his construal of Trinitarianism is indeed correct. As, on his construal, according to Feser (1997, 182, square parenthesis added), 'the logical consistency of... [the Athanasian creed] is obvious. What, then, has all the fuss been about? Have Davis, Martinich, van Inwagen, Cartwright, Macnamara et al...and many others all been committing an embarrassingly colossal blunder in even thinking that there was any question as to whether Trinitarianism is coherent?'

Feser sees that Swinburne *might* be correct and thus the other philosophers and theologians cited above being mistaken. However, he does not see this as having a high likelihood and for Swinburne to have shown this to be so. And thus, Feser sees Swinburne as needing to present detailed historical, philological and theological arguments 'that go well beyond the few remarks he makes in defence of it in *The Christian God*' (Feser, 1997, 182), for his reading, and Model, to stand. Given the lack of further argumentation, Feser sees Swinburne's account; the Model, as failing to correctly state the content of the doctrine of the Trinity, and thus provide a coherent account of it.

We thus see that the Tri-Theism Objection, as presented by Clark and Feser, provide a *scriptural* and *historical* challenge against the Model. I will now extract these "challenges" from the survey of the above objectors and re-classify them as two fundamental "sub-objections" against the Model, which require the Model to be classed as tri-theistic:

- The Scriptural Objection
- The Historical Objection

I will now briefly explain these objections and proceed onto an explanation of how these objections will be answered in this thesis.

2.1.3 The Tri-Theism Objection (i): The Scriptural Objection

The first sub-objection, termed in this thesis, the Scriptural Objection, focuses on asserting that the Model is not in line with the biblical construal of God's nature and thus should be rejected. The objection emphasises the apparent fact of the “strict” monotheism¹⁹ of Jewish thought which outlaws any view of God that would view him as being composed of a plurality of distinct persons, instead of being a single “being” (or “power”). Thus, as the Model postulates that the one God is a collective, composed of three (inter)dependent, yet distinct, divine persons, the Model fails to provide a scripturally sound construal of the tri-personality of God.

2.1.4 The Tri-Theism Objection (ii): The Historical Objection

The second sub-objection, termed in this thesis, the Historical Objection, focuses on asserting that the Model is not in line with the historical construal of God's nature, found within the central creeds (i.e. the Nicene Creed (325CE) and the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed (381CE), and the teaching of the Church Fathers. The objection highlights the apparent fact of the creeds and the Church Fathers teaching a specific view of Trinitarianism that is grounded on a type of "ontological oneness" that negates a plurality of (individual) persons. This thus showing that the Model transgresses the boundaries of historical orthodoxy, and fits more with a tri-theistic conception that posits "three gods". Therefore, rather than the Model being in line with "orthodox" Trinitarianism, it is in fact in line with tri-theism and should be classed as such.

2.1.5 Summary Statement: T-OBJECTION

Now, taking into account these two sub-objections, we can thus succinctly state the central tenets of the Tri-Theism Objection as such:

T-OBJECTION: The Model is tri-theistic through postulating a plurality of distinct persons, who are each God, and thus (i) does not fit the “strict” Judaic monotheism that underpins the Christian religion and (ii) transgresses the boundaries of orthodoxy set by the historical creeds and Church Fathers.

¹⁹ I see the term “strict” Jewish monotheism and “radical Hebrew monotheism”, to be equivalent. However, I prefer the former due to it seeming less contentious.

Thus, according to the proponents of this objection, due to the Model being subject to this objection, it seems to be of no use for the Christian in understanding the doctrine of the Trinity, and thus should be rejected.

Now that I have unpacked the central features of the Tri-Theism Objection, I will now briefly outline how I seek to argue against this objection in my thesis.

2.1.6 The Tri-Theism Objection (i): Addressing the Scriptural Objection

The Scriptural Objection will be successfully contested in this thesis by identifying a historical conception of “strict” Jewish monotheism which will provide a basis to demonstrate that Model does, in fact, affirm the central tenets of a relevant historical conception of Jewish monotheism. This identification has not been clearly made by the Tri-Theism objectors, which will need to be done if the Model is to be accurately shown to be in conflict with the “strict” Jewish foundation of the Christian religion.

The historical identification that will be made is that of a conception of monotheism posited by the Second Temple Jewish trajectory, which is taken to be the trajectory from which the Christian religion developed out of.²⁰ This is an important point, as the notion of monotheism needs to be grounded on a form of monotheism that served as the Judaic “backdrop” for the formation of Trinitarian doctrine. This historical position, through its closeness to the scriptural authors contextual setting, will thus serve us well as a standard for assessing “strict Jewish monotheism”.²¹ Therefore, after this important identification has been made, the focus will be on further exploring the doctrine of the trajectory, and assessing whether the Model does, in fact, disaffirm the central tenets of the monotheistic conception of the Second Temple Jewish trajectory.

Now, in this exploration it will be shown that the Second Temple Jewish trajectory conceived of the monotheism as centring around

- (i) God’s “species” and “transcendent” uniqueness.

²⁰ Cf. (Hasker, 2013).

²¹ Kelly (1996) and Feser (1997) just quoting the Shema doesn’t seem to cut it as a worthy standard for assessment.

The Model will then be assessed in a manner to see if it affirms the conception of the monotheism expressed by (i). As a first approximation, the result that will be reached will be that of the Model affirming this tenet. Thus, given the centrality of tenet to the historical conception of monotheism, the Model is rightly classified as a monotheistic model in this specific sense.

Given this, the Model can be deemed to be acceptable to the “strict” Jewish monotheism that grounds the Scriptural texts. Thus, on this basis, there is no scriptural problem for the Model. One must, therefore, focus on a different objection presented by the Tri-Theism Objection if one is to issue the Model its tri-theistic credentials. To this other objection, we now turn.

2.1.7 The Tri-Theism Objection (ii): Addressing the Historical Objection

The Historical Objection will be successfully contested in this thesis by identifying a historical conception of “tri-theism” and “orthodox Trinitarianism”, which will provide a basis to demonstrate that Model does, in fact, firstly, disaffirm the central elements of the identified historical conception of tri-theism, and, thus, should not be classed as tri-theistic in that sense.²² Secondly, that of it, in fact, affirming the central elements of the identified historical conception of orthodox Trinitarianism, and thus should be classed as monotheistic in that specific sense as well. These identifications, again, have not been clearly made by the Tri-Theism objectors, which will also need to be done if the Model is to be accurately shown to be in conflict with the orthodox Trinitarian position and correspondence with a tri-theistic interpretation of the Trinity.

The historical identification that will be made firstly, for tri-theism, is that of the conception of the doctrine posited by the “Classical” Tri-Theist trajectory, that was widely disputed in the 6th century and ultimately condemned by an Ecumenical Council (i.e. the Third Council of Constantinople).²³ Secondly, the historical identification made for “orthodox” Trinitarianism, is that of the conception of the doctrine posited by the “pro-Nicene” trajectory,²⁴ whose theologians helped shape the intellectual matrix, in which the central

²² Once necessary (philosophical) modifications are made.

²³ This, rather than Kelly (1996) and Feser’s (1997) presupposed multi-theistic conception of tri-theism seems to have more going for it, due to a declaration from an Ecumenical council rendering this specific form of tri-theism to be below the standard of “orthodoxy”.

²⁴ Pro-Nicene Trinitarianism, which developed in the second half of the 4th century, centred on expressing a certain set of principles that governed the grammar of trinitarian discourse for the Greek and Latin speaking theologians; who favoured the interpretation of Trinitarianism provided by the First Council of Nicaea (325 CE) and the First Council of Constantinople (381 CE), and whose defence of the consubstantiality and irreducibility

creeds are to be correctly interpreted. These two historical positions, through the former's conciliar rejection, and the latter's influence, will thus serve us well as a standard for assessing tri-theism and "orthodox" Trinitarianism.

Thus, after these important identifications have also been made, the focus will be on further exploring the doctrines of both of the trajectories and assessing whether the Model does, in fact, affirm the central tenets of the teaching of the Classical Tri-Theistic trajectory, and disaffirm the central tenets of the teaching of the pro-Nicene Trinitarian trajectory. Now, in this exploration, it will be shown, that the Classical Theistic trajectory conceived of the Trinity as including within it

- (ii) three particular substances and three particular natures, with
- (iii) the common nature, shared between the Trinitarian persons, being a conceptual abstraction.

The Model will then be assessed to see if it affirms the conception of the Trinity expressed by (ii) and (iii). As a first approximation, the result that will be reached will be that of the Model disaffirming each of these tenets, and thus, given the centrality of these tenets to the historical conception of tri-theism, the Model is not rightly classified as a tri-theistic model in this specific sense. It will also be shown, in this exploration, that the pro-Nicene trajectory's conception of Trinitarianism, or more specifically, "Trinitarian monotheism", centred around three grammatical uses (or senses) of the word God, termed, in this thesis, "Theistic Pluralism, which provides three possible interpretations of the oneness of God:²⁵

- (iv) The Nominal Sense: God used as a proper name in reference to the Father, thus the one God being the Father.
- (v) The Predicative Sense: God used as a predicate in reference to the (propertied) divine nature, thus the one God being the divine nature.
- (vi) The Titular Sense: God used as a title in reference to the Trinity, thus the one God being the Trinity.²⁶

of the Father, the Son and the Spirit set the standard for Trinitarian orthodoxy. For a further detailing and explanation of the term "pro-Nicene", see: (Ayes, 2004).

²⁵ These ways, however, are not mutually exclusive, with some theologians affirming more than one way, such as Augustine's affirmation of (iv) and (vi) cf. (Ayes, 2010).

²⁶ The terminology for this three-way distinction (i.e. nominal, predicative and titular) is original to this thesis.

Again, as above, the Model will be assessed in a manner to see if it affirms the use of the word God in those senses and the conception of the Trinitarian monotheism that is expressed by (iv) - (vi). As a first approximation, the result that will be reached will be that of the Model affirming each of these tenets, and thus, again, given the centrality of these tenets to the historical conception of Trinitarian monotheism, the Model is rightly classified as a monotheistic model in either one (or all) of these three senses.

Given this, the Model can be deemed to be outside of the boundaries of (Classical) tri-theism, and within the boundaries of pro-Nicene, and thus orthodox, Trinitarianism. Hence, as with the Scriptural Objection, there is thus no Historical Objection for the Model. Therefore, based on the fact that the Model is not subject to any of the sub-objections presented, that underpin the Tri-Theism Objection, the Model is not tri-theistic, but instead, is a model of pro-Nicene Trinitarianism.

Chapter Conclusion

In this chapter, I detailed the central focus (thesis statement, relevance and original contribution) of my thesis. I also unpacked the Model and explained the central features of the Tri-Theism Objection through a survey of the objection raised by the central proponents of it. After this survey, I extracted the central problems, and re-construed them as sub-objections, termed the Scriptural Objection and the Historical Objection.

I then proceeded to explain how these sub-objections, and the Tri-Theism Objection (stated succinctly as T-OBJECTION) that they underpin, will be addressed throughout the rest of this thesis. Leading to the conclusion that the Model is not tri-theistic, but a model of pro-Nicene Trinitarianism. I will now turn my attention to successfully reaching this conclusion, by focusing firstly on addressing the Scriptural Objection in the next chapter. Then, in the subsequent chapters, I will turn my attention to addressing the Historical Objection, as construed in four ways.

Chapter 2: Scriptural Objection: Identifying Second Temple Jewish Monotheism

Chapter Introduction

In this chapter, I demonstrate that the Model fits with the conception of monotheism, found within the Second Temple Jewish theological trajectory (i.e. God being species and transcendent unique). To achieve this end, I firstly unpack the traditional meaning of the term “strict” monotheism”, and then proceed to detail the historical context of the central concepts that underpin this term within the context of Second Temple Judaism. From this, I then proceed to provide a clear statement that expresses the concept of monotheism held by the trajectory of Second Temple Judaism, termed: DIVINE IDENTITY, and then examine whether the Model affirms this statement. This allowing me to reach the position of the Model affirming the statement and thus, because of this, it being in line with the concept of monotheism found within the Second-Temple Jewish trajectory, resulting in the Scriptural Objection being unsuccessful.

Section 1: The Second Temple Monotheistic Perspective and Assessment

Section Introduction

In this section, I focus on unpacking the construal of “strict” monotheism, found within the Second Temple Jewish Trajectory, which focuses on the notion of God’s species and transcendent uniqueness, rather than the number of deities associated with God. In doing this, I focus firstly on (briefly) detailing the etymological roots of the term “monotheism”. After this, I then turn my attention towards identifying the historical position of the trajectory, through an exploration of the conception of “strict” monotheism found within it. During this exploration, I will then provide a clear statement that expresses this conception of monotheism, termed: DIVINE IDENTITY. After this, I will then show that the Model affirms this statement, and thus should be classed as monotheistic in *this* specific sense.

1.1 The Second Temple Trajectory: The Historical Conception of Monotheism

1.1.1 Scriptural Objection: Central Focus

The central focus of this chapter is on countering the Scriptural Objection, which underpins the Tri-Theism Objection. This objection asserts that the Model is not in line with “strict” Jewish Monotheism. In assessing this objection, this chapter will focus on a conception of monotheism, that is found within the “strict” (Second Temple) Jewish trajectory, and grounded upon a (scholarly) historical foundation. The Scriptural Objection, in this chapter, is thus re-constructed as asserting that the Model is not in line with Second Temple Jewish monotheism, in this specific conception of it.

Thus, the correspondence between the Model and this conception will be assessed, leading to the conclusion, as a first approximation, that the Model corresponds with this conception, and is thus in line with “strict” (Second Temple) Jewish monotheism. The Model is, therefore, monotheistic in this specific sense and the Scriptural Objection, as construed in this manner, does not apply to the model.

1.1.2 The Second Temple Trajectory: The Etymological Roots of Monotheism

The term “monotheism” finds its etymological roots in the 17th-century works of the Cambridge Platonists (Macdonald, 2003).²⁷ Within their writings, the Platonists contested that the semantic and intellectual context of the term demonstrated that the antonym of "monotheism" is, in fact, that of the word "atheism", rather than the more commonly thought term "polytheism" (MacDonald, 2003). At its root, a "monotheist", was thus an individual who believed that "there was a God *with a certain nature*", rather than someone who believed that “there was only *one* spiritual entity that could or should be, named God" (Heiser, 2008).

However, this more accurate understanding of the term has unfortunately been neglected in the contemporary discourse on the term (Heiser, 2008). Instead, the contemporary position is now focused on the term as found within later enlightenment and Deistic thought (Heiser, 2008). With the primary use of the word, within enlightenment and Deistic thought, being that of providing a framework or matrix to assess the truth value of a religion within a European

²⁷ Specifically, it finds its origins within the work of Henry More (Smith, 2013).

context (Bauckham, 2008). Monotheism, as a term for the enlightenment and Deistic thinkers, thus served as an organising principle for the categorisation of religious concepts according to their intellectual claims, with a priority, in the classification and evaluation of religions, given to the question concerning the *number* of gods (Bauckham, 2008).

The contemporary construal of the term, focused on the number of gods (rather than that of their existence and/or nature), has led some historians, such as Peter Hayman (1991) and Paula Fredriksen (2006) to contend that "monotheism" is, in fact, an inappropriate term to describe the monotheism inherent in the biblical teachings. This is due to the contemporary definition of the term now focusing on the "belief in numerically one God", and thus the *denial* of the existence of other divine beings, which the evidence of the period surrounding the texts seems to in fact support (Hayman, 1991). Fredriksen, amongst others, has thus in fact called for a "mandatory retirement" of the term.

However, along with the Biblical historians Michael Heiser (2008) and Larry Hurtado (2004), I do not believe that this is necessary. So long as it is clearly emphasised that the term "monotheism", defined in contemporary discourse as the denial of the existence of any other gods, is inadequate in describing the monotheism of *Second Temple Jewish* belief. The focus on number might fit the contemporary conception of the term. However, it does not capture the historical conceptualisation of the term found within the Second Temple Jewish trajectory, which, as noted in Chapter 1, is the relevant trajectory for our analysis. Thus, to identify the meaning of the term monotheism, it will be necessary to now turn to an exposition of this historical conceptualisation of this term, as interpreted by recent historical scholarship.²⁸

1.1.3 The Second Temple Jewish Trajectory: The Historical Conception of Monotheism

Michael Heiser, Larry Hurtado and N.T. Wright

The historical conceptualisation of monotheism, within Second Temple Jewish belief, is best understood by focusing on the use of the term אֱלֹהִים (Elohim; God or god). One of the primary usages of אֱלֹהִים in the Hebrew texts that requires explanation is that of Psalm 82:1, where it writes:

²⁸ In the following sub-section, unlike the sub-sections in the subsequent chapters, I focus on explicating the certain historical scholarship surrounding the trajectory of Second Temple Judaism, rather than the historical texts and theologians within the trajectory themselves.

God [אלוהים] stands in the divine council; in the midst of the gods [אלוהים] he passes judgement.

The first אלוהים, according to Heiser, clearly refers to a singular entity (God) due to subject-verb agreement featured there. However, the second אלוהים is plural since God cannot be said to be standing in *the midst* of a (singular) god or himself (Heiser, 2008).²⁹ Furthermore, another interpretation of אלוהים, within the ancient Jewish and Second Temple Jewish worldviews, was to take it as a "place of residence" term (Heiser, 2012). אלוהים, within this context, is thus not a term that ascribes a *specific set of attributes* to its referent, but instead simply identifies the proper domain of reality of the referent (Heiser, 2012). As Heiser notes, all אלוהים 'are members of the unseen spiritual world, which is their place of residence. In that realm, there is rank, hierarchy, and differentiation of attributes' (Heiser, 2012, 6). The religious outlook of the Second Temple Jews thus included the existence of a plurality of אלוהים ("gods").

Moreover, as Hurtado highlights, the ancient Jewish religious outlook, constituted a distinctive version of the commonly attested belief structure at the time. This belief structure involved a "high god" who presided over the other deities. The God of Israel, according to Hurtado, 'presides over a court of heavenly beings who are in some measure likened to him (as is reflected in, for example, the Old Testament term for them, "sons of God")' (Hurtado, 2004, 129, parenthesis in text). The ancient Jewish viewpoint shared historical links with the larger religious environment of the ancient world. As we see that in pagan religious viewpoints, as Hurtado further notes, 'the high god can be described as father and source of the other divine beings and as utterly superior to them' (Hurtado, 2004, 129). However, despite the historical ties, and similarities with their religious environment, the Jewish understanding of God certainly had its distinctions in both beliefs and religious practice (Hurtado, 2004).

In the pagan religious outlook, the "high god" is taken to be unknowable. Thus, there was no expectation of one being related directly to the "high god" or to address this deity directly in worship or prayer (Hurtado, 2004). However, in the ancient Jewish belief, the "high god", as Hurtado writes, 'is known as the God of Israel, whose ways and nature are revealed in the Scriptures of Israel' (Hurtado, 2004, 130). Also, as he further adds, 'the evidence of Jewish

²⁹ In addition to Psalm 82, Heiser also notes that there are numerous other explicit references to "gods" and a "divine council" in the Second Temple Jewish literature, with approximately 185 occurrences of the terms in the Qumran sectarian material alone (Heiser, 2008).

prayer and cultic practice...shows, Jews characteristically expected – indeed, felt obliged – to address their high God directly in prayer and worship' (Hurtado, 2004, 130).

Furthermore, in the pagan religious outlook, beliefs about a high god were not usually taken as demanding that one neglect the "cultic" worship of other divine beings (אלוהים). However, in Jewish religious practice, as Hurtado writes, 'cultic reverence ("worship" – for example, sacrifice) characteristically is restricted to the high God alone' (Hurtado, 2004, 130). This was not, however, merely a religious preference, but, as Hurtado further notes, 'it was taken as an obligation, and failure to observe this obligation is idolatry. Philo, for example, urges his readers to avoid confusing the "satraps" with "the Great King (Dec. 61-65) when it comes to worship' (Hurtado, 2004, 130, parenthesis in text). These constituted the primary distinction of the ancient Jewish understanding of the nature of the divine within the broader religious environment of the ancient world. In its basic structure, we see, as Hurtado further notes, that

their view [the ancient Jews], involved a principal deity distinguished from all other divine/heavenly beings but characteristically accompanied by them, a "high-god" or "monarchical theology not completely unlike other high-god beliefs of the ancient world. But in the identification of the high god specifically as the God revealed in the Bible, and, even more emphatically, in their characteristic reservation of worship to this one God, their religion demonstrates what we can call "exclusivist monotheism" (Hurtado, 2005, 130).

The ancient Jewish view takes "monotheism" to have shared similarities with its broader religious environment. However, as we also see here, there was a *distinctive* factor that was present, specifically within, the ancient Jewish religious outlook. This distinguishing factor was, as Hurtado further notes, a concern 'for God's supremacy and uniqueness', with the ancient Jews upholding this with 'an intensity and a solidarity that seem to go far beyond anything else previously known in the Greco-Roman world' (Hurtado, 2005, 130).

The ancient Jews thus did not *deny* the existence of other "gods"; אלוהים, and took the God of Israel to be a אלוהים, but, as Heiser further notes, the distinctive factor was that *no other* 'אלוהים was Yahweh, - *and never was nor could be*' (Heiser, 2008, 29, emphasis in text). The central, and distinctive aspect of their view was thus the *sovereignty and uniqueness* of the God Israel, Yahweh, amongst the retinue of other heavenly beings. Where within ancient Jewish belief,

Yahweh, as אֱלֹהִים, was not held to be one among equals, but was instead *species unique*, in that he was incomparable and unique in terms of his attributes (Heiser, 2008).

An entity which would be "species unique" would thus possess, at least, an attribute that is not shared by any other member in the species. In other words, 'a species unique being need not be unique in every attribute. The entity must only be considered to be set apart in a way or ways that are completely unique' (Heiser, 2012, 30). The uniqueness of Yahweh amongst the existing אֱלֹהִים was thus an incontestable position within ancient Jewish theology, as the Israelites did not believe that the other אֱלֹהִים, that were assumed to exist, were, as Heiser notes, 'species-equal with Yahweh and essentially interchangeable...The canonical authors considered Yahweh to be in a class by himself. He was "species unique"' (Heiser, 2008, 29).

Taking this into account, we see that the religious outlook of the ancient Jews was thus indeed "strict" (or "exclusivist") however this did not negate the existence of any other divine agent outside of the God of Israel. Instead, we thus see that the "strict" "monotheistic" focus being on the *uniqueness* of God, rather than a numerical focus.

We have further insight on this point provided by N.T. Wright who also sees that, within the pre to post-Second Temple Jewish period, there was 'no suggestion that "monotheism", or praying the *Shema*, had anything to do with the numerical analysis of the inner being of Israel's god himself' (Wright, 1992, 259). Moreover, as Wright further notes, it was 'only with the rise of Christianity, and arguably under the influence both of polemical constraint and Hellenizing philosophy, that Jews in the second and subsequent centuries reinterpreted "monotheism" as "the numerical oneness of the divine being"' (Wright, 1992, 259). For Wright, along with Heiser and Hurtado, the monotheism of the Second Temple Period is thus not associated with any type of numerical or quantitative oneness, but is solely a *qualitative* concept focused on a difference between the unique features of Israel's God, and all other types of reality. Israel's God is one *because* of his uniqueness.

Richard Bauckham

Now, turning to a further influential contemporary historical scholar, Richard Bauckham, who we can take to be a paradigm representative of the view that the term monotheism is best captured by the uniqueness of God. Bauckham (2008) has argued that the concept of

“transcendent” uniqueness (or “divine identity”), rather than that of the concept of (divine) nature, is more appropriately taken as the principal category for understanding Second Temple Jewish monotheism (Bauckham, 2008). That is, as Bauckham notes, for ‘Jewish monotheistic belief what was important was *who* the one God is, rather than what divinity is’ (Bauckham, 2008, 2, emphasis in text). Thus, for Bauckham, the essential element of Second Temple monotheism is not the denial of the existence of any other “gods”; instead, it is the transcendent uniqueness of God (i.e. the divine identity) that places him in a wholly different category than any other supernatural being that can be referred to as “god” (Bauckham, 2008).³⁰

Now, the helpfulness of Bauckham's approach for our task is that of him, unlike the other scholars noted above, having explicated the specific features of the "transcendent uniqueness" of God. That is, central to this "transcendent uniqueness", according to Bauckham, is the possibility of God being identified by features within two fundamental categories (a) and (b):

- (a) God in his relationship to Israel and
- (b) God in his relation reality.

The identifiable features within category (a) are (a₁) and (a₂):

- (a₁) God has a name, Yahweh, setting him apart from all other gods and
- (a₂) Yahweh is the God who brought Israel out of Egypt (McGrath, 2011).

Features (a₁) and (a₂) expressed the fact that the one God of Second Temple Jewish belief was in covenant relationship with Israel. That is the monotheism of Second Temple Judaism, emphasised the fact that one God had a *unique* name, and a *unique* relationship to His chosen people Israel. However, what was especially important for the Jews of the Second Temple period, for identifying the transcendent uniqueness of Yahweh, were features that distinguished him from his relationship to the whole of reality (Bauckham, 2008). That is, category (b) is distinguished from category (a) based on the characterisation of the *divine identity* in reference to God's unique relationship with the *whole of reality*, rather than his covenantal relationship with Israel. The identifiable features within category (b) are (b₁), (b₂) and (b₃):

³⁰ I see “species” and “transcendent” uniqueness to be synonymous terms, I will mainly, from now, use the latter as it emphasises to a greater extent the otherness of God in comparison to all other existent beings.

(b₁) Yahweh is the sole creator of all things.

(b₂) Yahweh is the sovereign ruler of all things and

(b₃) Yahweh is the only being worthy of worship (McGrath, 2011).

Features (b₁) – (b₃), according to Bauckham, are the features in which the ancient Jews focused on when they wished to identify God as unique in comparison to all other reality (Bauckham, 2008). These three identifying features characterised God's relationship to the whole of reality, and together were the most precise way, within this period, for one answer the questions: What distinguishes Yahweh, the only true God, from all other reality? What does Yahweh's uniqueness consist of?

These identifying features thus establish a clear and absolute distinction between God and all other reality. That is, firstly, for (b₁), God is the sole creator of all things; he creates all things outside of himself. God is seen as the sole actor in his creative activity (Isaiah 44:23-24). It is God alone who brought all other beings into reality, without assistance or through an intermediary agent. God is alone the creator of all things, and no other being takes part in this activity (Bauckham, 2008). Secondly, for (b₂), God is the sole sovereign ruler over all things; all other things, including beings worshipped as gods by non-Jews, are subject to him in that he reigns supreme over all things outside of himself (Bauckham, 2008). All of reality, outside of God, is thus in strict subordination as servants to him; there are no co-rulers with God.

Lastly, for (b₃), God is the only being worthy of worship, which is that of there being a recognition that worship was the appropriate response to a being who had the unique identifying characteristics of (b₁) and (b₂). Thus, as God was the sole being who possesses these characteristics, *he* is the only being worthy of worship. This prescription to worship God alone is thus grounded upon an acknowledgement of God's transcendent uniqueness and identity as sole creator and ruler (i.e. (b₁) and (b₂)) (Bauckham, 2008), God's unique identity and the exclusive worship of God was thus correlated with, and reinforced by each other. Thus, in answer to the question of why the Jews would not worship any other being than the one God, was simply answered by pointing out that they were created by him, and are subject to him, with any good that comes to them, ultimately finding its source in God.

These characteristics of the unique identity of God are not, in and of themselves, seen by Bauckham as being sufficient to identify God, as they do not provide comprehensive knowledge about God's other characteristics. However, as Bauckham writes, they 'are features which most readily distinguish God absolutely from all other reality. God alone created all things; all other things, including beings worshipped as gods by Gentiles, are created by him. God alone rules supreme over all things; all other things, including beings worshipped as gods by Gentiles are subject to him' (Bauckham, 2008, 9). In ancient Jewish thought, these features enabled one to define the uniqueness of God and marked God out from all the reality. Yahweh, the God of Israel, was worthy of worship *because* He is the sole Creator and Ruler of all reality. Based on these criteria, all other beings, even the אֱלֹהִים, are His creatures and subjects (Bauckham, 2008). These unique identifying features were thus the means of distinguishing God from all else and served as a means of defining the uniqueness (and thus oneness) of the God worshipped by Jews within the Second Temple period.

The widely attested position of Second Temple monotheistic belief is thus grounded upon the expression of God's utter uniqueness (his "species" and "transcendent" uniqueness) rather than a negation or denial of the existence of other divine beings. It is God's, Yahweh's, uniqueness amongst these other divine beings which is fiercely espoused and "strictly" protected. This, as Heiser notes, was the 'theology of those who composed and edited the Hebrew Bible' (Heiser, 2012, 6).³¹

1.1.4 Summary Statement: DIVINE IDENTITY

Now from this conclusion, we can thus state succinctly the conception of monotheism found within the Second Temple Jewish trajectory, as such:

DIVINE IDENTITY: God is identifiably unique, and thus one, through being (i) the sole creator of all things, (ii) sole ruler of all things and (iii) being the only being worthy of worship.

These features of DIVINE IDENTITY, taken together express the monotheistic worldview of the Second Temple Jews. Thus, we see that even though there is no direct precedent within Second Temple Jewish monotheism, for the inclusion of more than one "personal agent" within the *unique* being of the one God, Yahweh, there is neither anything that prohibits it.

³¹ This approach also allows one to affirm the existence of other אֱלֹהִים without assuming "polytheism" or "henotheism" (Heiser, 2008).

Now that that the Second Temple Jewish conception of monotheism has been unpacked, I will now assess whether the Model affirms, or disaffirms, the central tenets of this view.

1.2 The Functional Monotheism Model: Affirmation of Statement

1.2.1 Central Target Question

To accurately assess the position of Second Temple monotheism, and the Model's affirmation of the central tenets of this position, as captured by the statement of DIVINE IDENTITY, it will be helpful to ask ourselves one target question, corresponding to the central components of the statement:

(Q) Does the Model affirm the identifiable uniqueness of God?

A positive answer to (Q) by the Model, would indicate an affirmation of DIVINE IDENTITY, resulting in the model being rightly classified as monotheistic, in accord with the statement of the trajectory. I will now proceed onto an assessment of the Model's answer to (Q).

1.2.2 Assessment of Affirmation of DIVINE IDENTITY

The Affirmation of Sole Creatorship

The Model maintains that God is uniquely identifiable as the sole creator of all things; he has no intermediary or helper but is the sole creative agent of all reality outside of Himself. The Model takes it to be the case that God is the creator of the "world" or the "universe".³² Where the universe is taken in two senses; the first sense, the narrow sense, takes the "the world" or "universe" to be a system of all physical and mental substances that are *spatially related to the earth* (Swinburne, 2016). Where to be "spatially related" means to be in "some direction at some distance" (e.g. a million miles along such-and-such a line) (Swinburne, 2016). This system would include, as Swinburne notes, 'all the physical substances, such as stars and planets and the tables, houses, and mental substances (humans and animals) situated on them,

³² The term God is at the moment left undefined.

which are spatially related to the earth. This system forms our universe' (Swinburne, 2016, 126). And, if it is logically possible that there is more than one space, then "the world" or "the universe" is understood in a second sense, the wide sense, which takes the system to include all physical and mental substances other than the ones spatially related to ourselves. God is thus the creator of "the world" or "universe" in the first, or second sense.

Now, within the Trinitarian context, the source of the existence of the universe is, most properly, God the Father, who is the person 'on whom all else depends' (Swinburne, 2004, 344). The Model however also claims that the perfect goodness of the Father (that of him performing the overall best action (overall best kind of action, or equal best action) if there is one) requires him to perform (the overall best action) of inevitably producing a second divine person; the Son, to share his love with. And in order for the Father to perform the (overall best) action of unselfishly cooperating in sharing his love with the Son, which is required of him, the Father would co-operate with (or through) the Son to inevitably produce a third divine person; the Spirit.

Given that the Son and the Spirit would ultimately depend upon the Father for their existence, the Father would have the authority to delimit the sphere within which it would be good for each of the divine persons to act. Each of the divine persons would thus have a specific sphere of activity in which they perform their causal action. However, due to the perfect goodness of each of the divine persons, they would give their active causal support to the actions initiated by the other persons in their sphere of activity. The Model thus takes the creation of "the world" or "the universe" (in the wide or narrow sense) to be within the sphere of activity of God the Father. However, this is also compatible with his creative activity being mediated *through* the Son and the Spirit, in that they causally back this action of the Father in some way. The three divine persons are thus involved in the creation of all things outside of themselves (even if this actively has as its ultimate source, God the Father).

Through this interdependence of action, where the creative activity of the Father would necessarily be totally backed by the causal action of the other persons, the three divine persons form together one God, the "collective" consisting of the Father, the Son and the Spirit. They form a totally integrated divine society which is taken to be a "personal being". This "personal being", is thus, as Swinburne writes, the 'collective source of the being of all other things' (Swinburne, 1994, 180).

Now, why God, the “collective”, can rightly be deemed the “source of the being of all other things” is due to its members fulfilling this role (i.e. the Father who mediates his creative action through the Son and the Spirit). As previously noted, Swinburne states that

They [the three divine persons] form a totally integrated divine society, the Trinity, which acts as one coordinated whole. This can itself be said to be (in a derivative sense) omnipotent (it can do whatever any member of it chooses), omniscient (each member knows everything logically possible to know), perfectly free (no member is subject to any irrational influences in their choices), and eternal (Swinburne, 2010, 34, square parenthesis added).

Similar to the essential properties quoted above, it is the members of God, the "collective", who, strictly speaking, possess the property of *being the creator of all things (outside of the collective)*.³³ However, as previously noted, we can, by a natural extension of use, and in a derivative sense, take the collective to possess this property because its members do.

And thus, we take the one God, the collective, consisting (and composed) of the three divine persons, to firstly, act as a coordinated whole that is the cause of all things outside of its self. Secondly, it is indivisible in its causal action (through its members being mutually dependent and necessarily jointly behind each other's actions). Thirdly, it is causeless (through its members being necessary and everlastingly existing, and thus it not depending on anything outside itself). Thus, as Swinburne writes, as previously quoted, 'the claim that "there is only one God" is to be read as the claim that the source of being of all other things has to it this kind of indivisible unity' (Swinburne, 1994, 181). God, the collective, through the action of its members, is thus rightly deemed the *sole creator of all things* outside of itself. The Model thus affirms the first element of the statement of DIVINE IDENTITY. We will now see how the Model affirms the second element of the conception of monotheism found within the statement; God being the sole ruler of all things.

The Affirmation of Sole Rulership

The Model maintains that God is uniquely identifiable as the sole ruler; God alone rules supreme over all things, in that all other things are subject to him. The Model takes it to be the

³³ More specifically it is God the Father who possesses it, as explained previously.

case that again, strictly speaking, God, the Father, is the *sustaining* cause of all things outside of himself. ³⁴ However, by an extension of use, we refer to God, the “collective”, consisting (or composed) of the three divine persons, as being this sustaining cause.³⁵

Now, God is omnipotent, as previously explained, and thus anything that exists, exists only because God willed it to at that moment in time, or God has permitted something else to allow it to at that moment. Thus, if any substance is persevering through time, then it only does so because God is sustaining it in existence (i.e. continually willing or permitting it to exist). As sustaining cause, God’s creative action is thus not needed merely for things to begin to exist, through being their initial cause or creator, but also for them to *continue* to exist in the here and now (Swinburne, 2016). We thus take it to be the case that God being the creator of “the world” or “the universe” at a time *t*, (a term that refers to his *initial* and *sustaining* activity), is best understood, as Swinburne notes, as God 'sustaining the universe in existence at that time; that is, he causes at *t* the existence of all substances that exist then' (Swinburne, 2016, 128).

How, according to the Model, God “causes at *t* the existence of all substance that exist then” is through sustaining in them their properties and powers from moment-to-moment. Substances have the properties that they do, which includes their causal powers, and can exercise these powers, due to God keeping *them in being* having those specific properties (Swinburne, 2016). And as God exists eternally (i.e. everlastingly), then it follows that he causes the existence of all substances at each moment of their existence. ³⁶

This “causation” would have within its purview, not merely all “substances”, but also *all things that happen* to a substance that is, as Swinburne further notes, 'the occurrences of all logically contingent events' (Swinburne, 2016, 128). All the events that occur within "the world" or "the

³⁴ This sovereign ruler of the Father solely creates a relational distinction between the persons within the Trinity, rather than an ontological distinction. In that the Father, as the sustaining cause of all things, is relationally superior to the other Persons of the Trinity (as their cause) without there being any difference in their nature. Furthermore, the exercise of the Father’s rule is dependent upon the other Persons, as this rule is manifested *through* the Son and *in* the Spirit. Thus, through their possession of a numerically singular divine nature (more on this in Chapter 5), there is no ontological differentiation between the Persons, but instead there is an ontological equality that inevitably ties them together. Therefore, there is no commitment made by the Model to any type of ontological subordination within the Trinitarian life.

³⁵ After this, I will not further make the qualification that God the Father is the one, strictly speaking, who, mediated through the Son and the Spirit, is the creator and sustainer of everything outside of himself. Rather the term will assume that the extension of activity of the Father can be correctly applied to the God the collective, and thus the term God will be in reference to the latter.

³⁶ Furthermore, as the Father is the sustaining cause of the other persons of the Trinity as well, he would also sustain in the Son and the Spirit their possession of the property (and power) of omnipotence. As this property is an essential property of Son and the Spirit we thus need to take this essentiality to be tied to the Father’s inevitable sustaining action. In that if the Father was not to exist then the Son and the Spirit would each not possess the property of omnipotence and thus would not exist as well. The Father’s existence thus (in some manner) grounds that the Son and the Spirit’s existence. For more on the nature of this grounding relation, see: Chapter 4.

universe" are caused by God, including, as Swinburne writes, 'the beginnings and endings of substances, and also their acquiring and losing properties (including relations to other substances)' (Swinburne, 2016, 128). And as he further writes, for example, 'God not merely creates the planets, but creates their motions around the sun, their changes of temperature, their collisions with comets, and so on. So, God causes substances to behave in the ways codified by "laws of nature", such as the law of gravitational attraction, and also causes substances to behave in ways not determined by laws of nature (if they do ever so behave)' (Swinburne, 2016, 128-129). These laws of nature, which Swinburne interprets as substances having the causal powers and liabilities that they do,³⁷ would operate simply because God causes them to operate.

Moreover, God does not just cause the occurrence of physical events, but also the occurrence of the pure mental events experienced by substances, such as the sensations and thoughts of humans and the higher animals (Swinburne, 2016). Thus, we can see that God causes the occurrence of all logically contingent events (which includes the existence of substances) apart from his own existence and also all logically contingent events entailed by his own existence (Swinburne, 2016) at each and every moment of passing time. God thus *rules* or *governs* over all events outside of himself. Though couldn't one say that God does rule or govern all events outside of himself, but He is not the *sole* ruler of these things? As it seems that agents other than God cause (i.e. initially bring about and sustain in existence) a large number of things. Humans, rather than God, are the ones who bring about the existence of substances such as tables, and chairs. And it is the Sun and the weather cycle, not God, that causes the growth of plants (Swinburne, 2016). That substances outside of God cause these types of events is true.

However, this only leads us to qualify the claim that God is the creator, sustainer, and thus ruler, of all things, as the claim that, as Swinburne helpfully clarifies, 'God either himself causes, or causes or permits some other being to cause (or permits to exist or occur uncaused), the occurrence of all logically contingent events (apart from his own existence and logically contingent events entailed thereby)' (Swinburne, 2016, 129, parenthesis in text). Other entities that often cause the existence and occurrence of other things do so *simply*, according to Swinburne, because either God causes or *permits* them to do so. God, and no other substance, thus acts as the stopping point for explanation, in that it is God's existence and action over all

³⁷ For Swinburne's explanation and defence of this view of laws of nature, see (Swinburne, 2004).

of the universe's history that provides an *ultimate explanation*,³⁸ at each moment in time, of the existence of the universe and all of its features (i.e. the substances within it).

Thus, as Swinburne writes, 'everything else that exists only because he [God] knowingly causes or allows someone else to cause it to exist. Hence, he could have prevented the universe from ever existing and he could annihilate it at any moment. So its existence from moment to moment depends entirely on him' (Swinburne, 2008, 12, parenthesis in text). God governs over things at all times and is thus again rightly deemed to be the *sole ruler of all things* outside of itself, in that either it causes or permits other beings to cause or permit the occurrence of all logically contingent events apart from any, the occurrence of which, are entailed by its own existence (Swinburne, 2016).

The Model thus affirms the second element (ii) of the statement of DIVINE IDENTITY. We will now see how the Model affirms the third, and final, element of the conception of monotheism expressed by the statement; God being the only being worthy of worship.

The Affirmation of Sole Worship Worthiness

The Model maintains that God is worship-worthy, with the only being that is worthy of worship is the one who is the sole creator and ruler of all things. The Model thus takes it to be the case that God is the *only* being worthy of worship and recognised for his unique identity. To worship a being of this kind is to show the greatest possible explicit respect towards this being (Swinburne, 2018). And we take it to be the case that this being is *worthy* of this type of worship because this being is our *supreme benefactor* (i.e. our initial creator and sustainer). Thus, as Swinburne writes 'God is not our creator because he is worthy of worship: he is worthy of worship *because he is our creator*' (Swinburne, 1994, 158, emphasis added). Moreover, Swinburne takes it to be the case that worship is in fact 'obligatory – it is the proper response of respect by man to his creator' (Swinburne, 1981, 126). We see this obligation as such:³⁹ as an omnipotent "personal being", who is the creator (and governor) of all reality, this being gives life to all things, and all the good things that their lives contain has come from this being. This being would thus be a benefactor of all things.

³⁸ Defined as an explanatory stopping point due to it having a significantly high prior probability (i.e. is simple) and explanatory power (i.e. leads us to expect the phenomena that we observe, when otherwise we would not expect to find it). Cf. (Swinburne, 2004).

³⁹ In this section I am not defending the plausibility of Swinburne's arguments for the obligatoriness of worship, but simply explicating his position here to demonstrate that the Model affirms the third element of the conception of "monotheism" held by the Second Temple Jews.

Now, plausibly, as Swinburne notes, there is a strong duty of respect that is to be given to those whom we ‘depend much for our existence, our growth, and flourishing, above all to our parents but also to those who govern our countries—kings and presidents, prime ministers and executive officials—so long as they are good people and govern well’ (Swinburne, 2016, 287). Beneficiaries have some obligation to please their benefactors, such as children having some obligation to please their parents due to these parents, at any rate, not being mere biological parents, but ones who *nurture* and *educate* them (Swinburne, 1994). *A fortiori*, if God has created, and sustains all of reality in existence at every moment, and so all the good things of life that are given to us come solely through his creative agency or permission, then, as Swinburne writes, ‘we have some obligation to please him and so conform to his commands and forbidding’ (Swinburne, 1994, 137).⁴⁰

That is, it is ultimately God, the sole creator and ruler (governor) of all things, rather than our parents or societies, who has given us the gift of life itself. And, through the operation of the laws of nature, is responsible for us having all the good things that life contains (Swinburne, 2016). This type of benefactor would thus be entitled to a special degree of respect. This "special degree of respect" (plausibly) becomes a duty to thank God abundantly, but, as Swinburne writes, to thank someone properly 'involves showing that you know who he is and what is his relation to you. You must take him seriously. So thanking God will involve rendering the kind of thanks appropriate to the all-good all-wise creator of the universe and all that it contains, including ourselves' (Swinburne, 2016, 222). Given this, it is plausible that we would have an obligation to express great gratitude to God and fulfil any commands that he issues (Swinburne, 2016).

Moreover, the degree of respect would be incomparably greater than that which is due to any human. Indeed this would be the greatest possible respect that could be shown to anyone; we should regard God with "awe" (Swinburne, 2016). Thus, as Swinburne notes, to 'show to God that kind and degree of respect is, I suggest, what it is to worship God' (Swinburne, 2016, 289). One thus sees that God, being the sole creator and ruler of all things, and thus the supreme benefactor

⁴⁰ One may raise the question of if the Son and the Spirit are also required to worship the Father, as he is their cause and thus (in some manner) is their benefactor. However, the answer would be clearly in the negative, due to the *inevitability* of this causal action. As the Father causes the Son and the Spirit as an *act of essence* (rather than as an act of will), and thus has no choice concerning the matter. Why we are required to praise and worship God as our greatest benefactor is primarily because he chose, as an *act of will* (rather than an act of essence), to bring us into/sustain us in existence, and provide us with all the good things of life when he was/is not in any manner required to.

of all things, is not *merely* an object that would be worthy of worship, but plausible, is the *only* type of being ‘whom all humans ought to worship’ (Swinburne, 2016, 292).

Worship is the only appropriate response to God, and a recognition of his unique character as the "source of all being" (i.e. the sole ruler and creator of all things, as defined previously). The Model thus affirms the third, and final, element (iii) of DIVINE IDENTITY and, with this affirmation, the “transcendent uniqueness” that is central to the Second Temple Jewish conception of Monotheism.

Taking this all into account, we can see that the Model posits:

- God, the “collective”, is identifiably unique through being the sole creator (i.e. being the sole creative agent of all things), the sole ruler (i.e. being the sole sustainer of all things) and the only being worthy of worship (i.e. being the source of all being, who we owe our worship to).

And thus, from this, we have a positive answer for (Q)

(A) Yes, the Model does affirm the identifiable uniqueness of God.

The Model thus successfully affirms the three central elements (i) – (iii) of the statement of DIVINE IDENTITY, that expresses the notion of “species” or “transcendent” uniqueness, which was assumed as our historical conception, and standard, for Second Temple Jewish monotheism. And thus these elements, serving as criteria for the acceptance of the model as monotheistic, allow us to take the Model to be a model which is in line with the “strict” monotheism in which the Christian religion developed out of.

That is, despite the Model taking the Trinitarian persons to each be God, and the collective composed of the persons to also be God,⁴¹ it is because of the “species” and “transcendent” uniqueness of the latter (that is God, the collective, who is uniquely identifiable *as* the sole creator, ruler and being worthy of worship) that allows the Model to *be* monotheistic. God, the collective, is species and transcendentally unique, through exhibiting the identifiable features of DIVINE IDENTITY, and is thus *one* God, in *that* specific sense. The Model is thus not out of

⁴¹ These uses of the term God will be further defined and explicated in the subsequent chapters.

line with “strict” Jewish monotheism, as the proponents of the Tri-Theism Objection (through the Scriptural Objection) have asserted, but is, in fact, clearly a monotheistic model in line with Second Temple Jewish (and thus scriptural) monotheism.

Chapter Conclusion

In this chapter, I focused on addressing the Scriptural Objection, which is the first component of the Tri-Theism Objection (i.e. T-OBJECTION (i)). How I sought to address this problem, in the first sub-section of this chapter, was through focusing on identifying and detailing the historical construal of the type of monotheism that was relevant to Trinitarian theorising, Second Temple Jewish monotheism, leading to a concise statement of this conception (i.e. DIVINE IDENTITY).

In the second sub-section of this chapter, I then focused on assessing the monotheistic credentials of the Model according to this conception (expressed through DIVINE IDENTITY) and demonstrated that the Model affirms the central elements of this conception and thus fits in with “strict” Second Temple Jewish monotheism. The Model *is* thus in line with central tenets of Second Temple Jewish monotheism, and the Scriptural Objection (i.e. (i) of T-OBJECTION) will need to find its target elsewhere. With this conclusion, that (i) of the T-OBJECTION is disaffirmed, the first element for the Tri-Theism Objection has been found to be ungrounded.

I will now focus over next four chapters on dealing with the Historical Objection (i.e. (ii) of T-OBJECTION), this will, however, be more challenging as various philosophical clarifications (of the notion of "tri-theism") and modifications (of the Model) will need to be made. Nevertheless, a full disaffirmation of T-OBJECTION will be made, leading to the final conclusion that the Model (once modified) is not tri-theistic, but rather is squarely in line with, that is, is a model of, pro-Nicene Trinitarianism.

Chapter 3: Historical Objection (A): Identifying Tri-Theism

Chapter Introduction

In this chapter, I demonstrate that the Model does not fit with the conception of Trinitarianism, found within the Classical Tri-Theist theological trajectory (i.e. there existing three substances and natures within the Trinity and the one God being a conceptual abstraction). To achieve this end, I firstly unpack the classical meaning of the term "tri-theism", and then proceed to detail the historical context for the usage of this term within the trajectory. From this, I then provide a clear statement that expresses this conception of Trinitarianism, termed: TRI-THEISM, and examine whether the Model affirms this statement. This allowing me to reach the position of the Model disaffirming the first part of the statement, but (prima facie) affirming the second part of it. The Model, as it stands, is thus tri-theistic in *this* specific sense. However, in light of this, I then focus on further clarifying the conceptual underpinnings of the tri-theism featured in this statement, by utilising two prominent metaphysical concepts within classical and contemporary metaphysics; substance and modes. The further clarification made here will ultimately enable me to sufficiently deal with the objection of this chapter. Therefore, on the basis of this, allowing me to conclude that the Model is not in line with the concept of Trinitarianism found within the Classical Tri-Theist trajectory, and thus (the first construal of) the Historical Objection is ineffective against the Model.

Section 1: The Tri-Theistic Perspective and Assessment

Section Introduction

In this section, I focus on unpacking the construal of Trinitarianism, found within the Classical Tri-Theistic Trajectory, focused on the notion of there being three particular substances and natures within the Trinity and the "one God", that is the common nature, being a conceptual abstraction. In doing this, I focus firstly on (briefly) detailing the etymological roots of the term "tri-theism". Subsequent to this, I then turn my attention towards identifying the historical position of the trajectory, through an exploration of the conception of Trinitarianism found within it. During this exploration, I will then provide a clear statement that expresses this conception of Trinitarianism, termed: TRI-THEISM. After this, I will then show that the Model, as it stands, does affirm TRI-THEISM, but due to a lack of clarity surrounding the concepts used by the statement, the affirmation of this statement cannot be firmly asserted. Thus, because of this, I will then state how I will deal

with this problem in the next section so that the Model can be clearly taken to *not* be tri-theistic in *this* specific sense.

1.1 The Tri-Theistic Trajectory: The Central Components of Tri-Theism

1.1.1 Historical Objection (A): Central Focus

The central focus of this chapter is on countering the Historical Objection, which underpins the Tri-Theism Objection. This objection asserts that the Model is outside of the "boundaries" of orthodox Trinitarianism (through being within the "boundaries of tri-theism"). In assessing this objection, this chapter will focus on a possible conception of tri-theism, that is found within the Classical Tri-Theism trajectory, and grounded upon a historical (conciliar) foundation. The Historical Objection, in this chapter, is thus re-construed as asserting that the Model is in line with Classical Tri-Theism.

Thus, the correspondence between the Model and this conception will be assessed, leading to the conclusion, as a first approximation, that the Model (once necessary clarifications are made) does not correspond with this conception, and thus is not within the "boundaries" of (Classical) Tri-Theism. The Model is thus not tri-theistic in this specific sense, and the Historical Objection, as construed in this manner, does not apply to the Model.

1.1.2 The Tri-Theistic Trajectory: The Etymological Roots of Tri-Theism

The term "tri-theism" finds its etymological roots in the theological work of the opponents of the 6th century Classical Tri-Theists (Ebied, van Roey and Wickham, 1981).⁴² These opponents believed that the teaching by the theologians of this trajectory had implications for there being three "Gods" within the Trinity (Ebied, van Roey and Wickham, 1981). In the initial phase of the controversy, the Tri-Theists appear not to have directly spoken of "three Gods" or "three Godheads". However, as the issue proceeded over time, the Tri-Theists gradually shifted

⁴² I distinguish "Classical Tri-Theism" from tri-theism *simpliciter*. The former type was prevalent in the 6th century and originated in the Syrian Miaphysite community—more on this below. While the latter form of tri-theism also adds to this the conceptual developments made by the Medieval theologians Roscelin of Compiègne, Gilbert of Poitiers and Joachim of Fiore. The argument of this chapter, as noted in the thesis introduction and above, is thus focused on assessing whether the Model is rightly classified as tri-theistic in the former sense. I thus leave it open for one to argue that the Model, even if it is not Tri-Theistic in the Classical sense, is in a sense prevalent in the Medieval period (or in another sense not mentioned). Nevertheless, I do not see this as problematic, as the latter senses of Tri-Theism were *not* rejected by an Ecumenical Council, which, plausibly, provides a standard for us.

towards directly using the terms "three Gods" or "three Godheads" in the Trinity (Ebied, van Roey and Wickham, 1981). Nevertheless, the primary linguistic focus of the proponents of Tri-Theism was on that of use of the terms "three substances" or "three natures" to express their Trinitarian position. Thus, these terms were central to the historical conceptualisation of tri-theism.

Therefore, to identifying the meaning of the term tri-theism, it will be important to now turn to an exposition of this historical conceptualisation of this term, as interpreted by the central theologians of the Classical Tri-Theistic Trajectory.⁴³

1.1.3 The Classical Tri-Theistic Trajectory: The Historical Conception of Tri-Theism

Roots and Conciliar Condemnation

The historical conception of Tri-Theism, within Classical Tri-Theism, finds its basis within the second half of the 6th century in the Jacobite Church in Syria, specifically starting in the year 556/7 CE, in a dispute between Chalcedonians and anti-Chalcedonians regarding the correct interpretation of Trinitarian doctrine (Grillmeier, 1996). This dispute, known as the "Tri-Theist controversy", led to a split among the Severan Miaphysites, and has as its source, firstly the teaching of the Syrian Miaphysite John Ascoutzanges, and most prominently after him, John Philoponus.⁴⁴

Now, this specific conception of tri-theism, Classical Tri-Theism, was ultimately rejected by the Third Council of Constantinople (680 CE) (the Sixth Ecumenical Council).⁴⁵ The Council, in assessing the issues raised by Ascoutzanges, and most importantly Philoponus, asked the following question against these theologians 'where is the unity, O the craziest, if the unity is

⁴³ Concerning the conceptual starting point of Tri-Theism, many commentators on the "Tri-Theist controversy" have seen in Tri-Theism, as U.M. Lang writes, a 'rationalistic attempt to account for the doctrine of the Trinity by means of concepts derived from a particular philosophical system' (Lang, 2007, 86).

⁴⁴ Traditionally, within the Christian Greek literature of the time, Tri-Theism had been seen to have originated in the work of John Philoponus. This is that, due to the disappearance of a vast amount of the original Greek texts concerning the early development of Tri-Theism, the doctrine tended to be identified with John Philoponus who began promulgating this teaching later. However, this attribution of the origination of Tri-Theism with John Philoponus was shown to be mistaken through the discovery and publication of various Syriac literature in the West (van Roey and Allen, 1994). It was first through the publication of Barhebraus' fragment by J.S. Assemani in 1721, and secondly through the publication of the Church History of John of Ephesus, by W. Cureton in 1853, which recorded the role of John Ascoutzanges in originating the teaching (van Roey and Allen, 1994).

⁴⁵ The following paragraph is heavily dependent upon the historical and translation work of (Byunghoon, 2002).

carried away into three essences, is expanded into three natures, is multiplied into three deities?' (Byunghoon, 2002, 50).

This question was based on the issue of Ascoutzanges and Philoponus' position of positing three natures and three substantial hypostases within the Trinity and, specifically with Philoponus, leaving the common nature as purely a conceptual abstraction. This position ultimately necessitating tri-theism and the condemnation of Philoponus, and his subsequent followers (i.e. Conon of Tarsus and Eugenius of Selucia) by the Council. The Council confirming that substances or natures should not be counted in God in the manner that the Tri-Theists had done. Understanding the tri-theist conception of the Trinity that led to this condemnation will now be our primary task.

John Ascoutzanges

John Ascoutzanges (the sobriquet literally meaning “with bottle-shaped boots”) studied Greek philosophy in Constantinople under Samuel (also named Peter) of Resaina (Lang, 1999). Ascoutzanges’ study of philosophy at Constantinople led him, contrary to his teacher’s intention, into advocating a specific theologically contentious position concerning the doctrine of the Trinity. This doctrinal position, as asserted by Ascoutzanges opponents, was taken to be one that implied the existence of *three gods* (Grillmeier, 2013). After Samuel's death, Ascoutzanges began to boldly proclaim that there were 'as many natures, substances and godheads as hypostases in the Trinity' (Lang, 1999, 78).

Michael the Syrian further fills out this description of Ascoutzanges’ teaching in detailing a meeting that Ascoutzanges had with the emperor concerning his teaching:

He went to see the emperor, and when the emperor asked him about his doctrine, he answered that he confessed *as many natures, substances...and godheads as hypostases*. The emperor was furious and said, "By Christ, this man is a pagan; take him away and expel him". John of Asia says that we were despised on account of him and that we reprovved him. But immediately, out of shame, he started composing a book of extracts (to show) that the Fathers taught a *plurality of natures and godheads* in the Trinity. And when everyone reprovved him and said to him: “If your affirmation is correct, the Son is no longer consubstantial with the Father, but you proclaim that

each of the Gods is alien to one another" (II. 251-253; IV. 313-314, quoted in: van Roey and Allen, 1994, 124, emphasis added).

Thus, we see that Tri-Theism finds its origination in Constantinople and that through Ascoutzanges' study of Greek Philosophy, with Samuel of Resăina, there is an insinuation from Michael, that his teaching had a philosophical basis. We also see, however, that for Ascoutzanges to defend himself against this charge, he attempted to ground his teaching on the Fathers (van Roey and Allen, 1994).⁴⁶

Nevertheless, Michael does not detail the exact nature of Ascoutzanges' philosophical and Patristic arguments. What we do know, however, is that the doctrine is consistent in accepting that there is not one nature in the Trinity, but as many natures, as there are hypostases (i.e. three). However, as Van Roey and Allen write, in 'what sense Askotzanges' understood three natures and substances as an expansion of the Trinity is not clear' (van Roey and Allen, 1994, 125). The objection levelled against this teaching, however, in some quarters, was that of an apparent ("pro-Arian") negation of the consubstantiality of the three persons.

Now, despite its heavy condemnation at the time, Ascoutzanges' teaching certainly gained great precedence and grew in adherents up until the intervention of Patriarch Theodosius in 557 CE who wrote against Ascoutzanges (van Roey, 1980). Ascoutzanges was thus not the sole expositor of his ideas and that, in fact, around 560 CE a wider movement of theologians held and promulgated the same (or similar) Trinitarian theology as him (van Roey and Allen, 1994). With one of the most prominent followers of Ascoutzanges being that of John Philoponus, who we now turn our attention to.

John Philoponus

John Philoponus was an Alexandrian philosopher (from the Neo-Platonic school of Ammonius) and a Christian theologian. Philoponus, as U.M. Lang notes, was 'most likely a prominent figure in the Miaphysite community of Alexandria' (Lang, 1999, 80). Now, due to

⁴⁶ van Roey and Allen (1994) note that nothing remains of Ascoutzanges' Patristic florilegium, although they further note that Michael the Syrian writes that after his death it was passed onto Athanasius who then sent it to John Philoponus in Alexandria.

his prominence, Philoponus was asked by those within the community to give a defence of their doctrine⁴⁷

Prior to this period, in 567 CE, Philoponus had published his influential treatise on the Trinity, *De Trinitate*. However, it was in 574 CE, that another schism appeared, which this time was at the heart of the Tri-Theist Church. This schism occurred due to Athanasius accepting Philoponus' views defended in his work on the Resurrection and an individual named Conon who rejected it. The Tri-Theists were now divided between the Athanasians and the Cononites, with little being known of the subsequent course of Tri-theism up to 586 CE (Ebied, van Roey and Wickham, 1981).

Now, focusing on Philoponus' Trinitarian theology, we see a specific *development* of the Tri-Theist thesis as expressed by Ascoutzanges. In that, for Philoponus, the three Trinitarian persons are hypostases that are (or have) a particular substance or nature, *and* the common divine nature (that is the one "God") is a *conceptual abstraction*. At the heart of this development is the philosophical background that grounds Philoponus' reconstruction of the doctrine of the Trinity, namely his *particularist ontology*.

Central to this ontology is the supposition that only particular entities exist. That is, for Philoponus, to exist is to be particular, as he writes 'it is impossible for a nature to subsist by itself without being considered in some individual' (Philoponus, *Arb*, 55.168 translated in: (Erismann, 2008, 290). Thus, universal existence is to be negated, and, instead, particularity is to be affirmed. That is, for Philoponus the terms *substance* (Greek: *hypostasis*; *ὑπόστασις*) and *nature* (Greek: *physis*; φύσις) are solely to be construed in a particular sense; in that each individual is a particular substance (*ὑπόστασις*) and has a particular nature (*φύσις*) (Erismann, 2008).⁴⁸ Anything that subsists is a *particular* thing, and thus the common nature (*φύσις*) does not exist in reality, but is simply a product of one's mind. That is, particular substances (*ὑπόστασις*) and natures (*φύσις*) are the only type of extra-mental entities that exist in reality.

⁴⁷ Specifically by an individual named Athanasius, who was an admirer of Ascoutzanges (Grillmeier, 1994).

⁴⁸ The term substance (in Latin: *substantia*) is ambiguous (Stead, 1997) and can either be interpreted as a common substance (and thus in Greek: *ousia*; οὐσία) or as a particular substance (and thus in Greek: *hypostasis*; ὑπόστασις). Despite this ambiguity however, as Philoponus negates the existence of common substances, the correct interpretation that captures the position of the Tri-theists is that of there existing a multiplicity of particular substances (*ὑπόστασις*), who possess a multiplicity of particular natures (Greek: *physis*; φύσις). Furthermore, οὐσία and φύσις appear to be closely related in the Trinitarian debates, however, for clarities sake I will refer to there being a multiplicity of natures (φύσις) and use the notion of substance (οὐσία) solely in reference to the Persons themselves (i.e. the Trinitarian hypostases).

For Philoponus particular substances (*ὑπόστασις*), are understood to be Aristotelian substances (i.e. primary/independent beings), as he writes:

This is why the important physicist, Aristotle, says: the universal either is nothing or is posterior. Nothing, because no universal has a proper existence, and our idea about them is not, correctly speaking, a substance. Particulars are called principal and first substances, whereas that which is said of many, i.e. genera and species, is called substance only in a secondary way. And this is why, when we speak not metaphorically, but properly, we call hypostases 'substances' (Philoponus, *Frag 1*, translated in: van Roey, 1980, 148).

Whilst natures are properties that are particular to the individual. As Philoponus writes:

Now, this common nature of man, in which no one man differs from any other, when it is realised in any one of the individuals, then is particular to that one and is not common to any other individual, as we set forth in Chapter 4. Thus that rational mortal animal which is in me is common to no other animal (Philoponus, *Arb*, 5.52, 5, translated in: Erismann, 2014, 147).

For Philoponus, existing entities are thus particular substances (*ὑπόστασις*), that is Aristotelian substances and particular natures (*φύσις*), that is particular properties possessed by these particular substances (*ὑπόστασις*).⁴⁹

Now, with this distinction in hand, we see that, for Philoponus, the Trinitarian persons, as "hypostases", are Aristotelian substances, and are thus *ontologically independent* entities (Wildberg, 2018). Respectively, each of these substances is different from the other. Furthermore, in application of a "principle of parity" with humanity, as Ebied, Van Roey and Wickham further note, just 'as each man is different from other men, so each divine person is "God in a different way"' (Ebied, van Roey and Wickham, 1989, 29). Philoponus states this as such:

The divine substance is constituted in three-fold fashion in the Father, Son and Spirit. This substance is divided not only by number but by the properties themselves. And therefore they

⁴⁹ For ease of writing I will now drop the Greek translation of substance and nature.

are entirely different from one another in species (Philoponus, *De Theo*, fr. 13:153 [160] translated in: Lang, 1999, 96).

And as Philoponus further writes:

when the property of each of the hypostases is added to God, this makes each of them completely different in species from the rest. Likewise, when "rational" or "irrational" is added to "animal" (which is used generally of all the animals of different species), this makes them different in species, namely rational animal and irrational animal. In the same way, when "Father, "Son" or "Spirit" is added to the Godhead, this makes God the Father different from God the Son or the divine Spirit. Thus each of them is different from God the Son or the divine Spirit. Thus each of them is different from the two others related to him (Philoponus, *De Theo*, fr. 13:153 [160] translated in: Lang, 1999, 96).

Philoponus thus sees the Father, Son and Spirit to be *different species* of the generic Godhead (Lang, 1999). In the sense that each of the persons of the Trinity is "substantially different" from each other. And thus, within the Trinity, there are as many *different* substance or natures, as there are hypostases (Grillmeier, 1994). However, even though they fall under the same genus (i.e. deity), they cannot be subsumed under the same species. Thus, the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, as three different hypostases *are* different, individual (i.e. Aristotelian) substances, and thus are different "Gods". Therefore, within the Trinity, there are three particular distinct substances, that is primary substances, with distinct, that is particular, natures, which for many amounts to there being three "Gods" (Wildberg, 2018).⁵⁰

Turning now to the common nature shared between the Persons. At a general level, for Philoponus, the common nature is *unique* for each species. Each of the species possesses their nature in such a way that the species necessarily comprises a plurality of natures. The common nature, taken as a universal, however, lacks "proper existence" according to Philoponus. More fully, Philoponus asserted that universals are to be taken as conceptual notions that exist solely in the mind, due to their secondary, that is, posterior, status:

⁵⁰ Interestingly, however, despite this strong assertion in favour of the particularity of the substances and natures of the Trinitarian persons, Philoponus and his fellow Tri-Theists believed that they did not deny the consubstantiality of the divine persons. Rather that their position simply interprets it differently from their opponents. That is, according to them, the Persons must thus not share a substance (or nature) but be of a different substance (or nature), if consubstantiality is to hold. For a further explanation of this, see: (Ebied, Van Roey and Wickham, 1981).

However, species and genera are posterior to particular individuals, and - to say it simply - each common thing is constructed by our intellect from particulars. For this reason, the ancients called such things posterior and intellectual (ἐννοηματικά). For, correctly speaking, Peter, John and every individual man are animal and substance, and the same goes for this horse or that ox. However, these names passed from these (particulars) to what is called genera and species, that is, from things which subsist in substance to those which are inferred by our intellect (Philoponus, *Frag 1*, in: van Roey, 1980, 148).

Thus, we see that in an Aristotelian fashion, Philoponus takes the particular to be ontologically prior to the common, and, in a certain way is more real than it, in that the common is nothing more than a mental construction. Damian of Alexandria helps provide a quote of Philoponus in further support of this thesis of the conceptual nature of the common nature being applicable in a Trinitarian context:

The Godhead and substance that is in the adorable Trinity is one not in reality but only in mind and abstraction. In this way God is understood as one, but there are three substances of God, with the substances and natures being divided in the hypostases. Thus the Father is another God, the Son another God, and the Holy Ghost another God. Just as all of us are one only when understood in the common intelligible content of substance whereas, however, we see that in reality and truth we are many me; so there is a single God solely in our thought by virtue their having the substance in common. In reality and truth there are three of them, while the Godhead being divided in the hypostases; regarding what they have in common, however, it is the same (Philoponus, *Frag 29*, translated in: van Roey, 1980, 148).

The common, universal divine nature is thus taken by Philoponus, in accord with his particularist ontology detailed above, to be a conceptual notion, that is an *abstraction*. Since if one *were* to reify the nature, it would lead to the postulation of a fourth divine nature which Philoponus does not allow (Lang, 1999). That is, as Philoponus states: 'there is not another fourth God apart from the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit having, his own hypostases' (Philoponus, *C. Them*, fr. 25:156 [162] translated in: Lang, 1999, 96). Philoponus thus took the common nature within the Trinity as one which cannot exist alone, but instead, as previously noted, it needs to be rooted in an individual. From this, we see that the unity of God is, as Erismann writes, therefore 'only to be found at the level of the *ousia deuteria*, which does not, as such, have existence' (Erismann, 2008, 292). This divine nature, acknowledged as a unity, is only the result of the process of abstraction.

That is, the one, common nature, usually referred to *as* the one God, does not possess a real (or proper) existence of its own. Instead, it solely has reality in the individual, there is thus no common and unique divine substance or nature, but only the three particular natures of the Persons, in reality. Thus, the oneness of God does not take the form of a substantial reality. But, instead, this oneness is attached to a concept, it is an abstraction. There are thus three distinct and separate divinities within Trinity, who, however, are the same solely in the sense of being members of the same genus.

Taking this all into account, we can see that on the foundation of his ontological particularism and the position of Ascoutzanges, Philoponus formulated the doctrine of the Trinity in a manner that took there to be three particular substances and natures, within the Trinity. With the Father, the Son, and Spirit being discrete individuals, that is Aristotelian substances; thus, there being three particular substances in the Trinity. These particular substances, however, do not possess a common, universal nature (which is a conceptual abstraction), but instead, each possesses a particular nature; thus, there being three particular natures within the Trinity.

1.1.4 Summary Statement: TRI-THEISM

Now from this conclusion, we can succinctly state the conception of Trinitarianism found within the Classical Tri-Theist trajectory as such:

TRI-THEISM: Within the Trinity, there are (i) three particular substances and natures, and (ii) the common nature between the Father, the Son and the Spirit is purely conceptual, it is an abstraction.

The three *particular* divine substances and natures thus have a substantial, *mind-independent* existence. Whereas the one, *common* divine nature, which is shared by the Trinitarian persons, is ultimately reducible to a conceptual notion that can solely be distinguished *in the mind alone*, through a process of abstraction. Thus, for Tri-Theism there are the three substances and natures, that is three "Gods" within the Trinity, and the unity (i.e. oneness) of nature within the Trinity is a purely an intellectual unity; a conceptual abstraction.

Now that the Tri-Theistic conception of Trinitarianism has been unpacked, I will now assess whether the Model affirms, or disaffirms, the central tenets of this view.

1.2 The Functional Monotheism Model: (Dis)affirmation of Statement

1.2.1 Central Target Questions

To accurately assess the position of Tri-Theism, and the Model's affirmation of the central tenets of this position, captured by the statement of TRI-THEISM, it will be helpful to ask ourselves two target questions, corresponding to the central components of the statement:

(Q₁) Does the Model affirm the existence of three particular substances and natures within Trinity?

(Q₂) Does the Model affirm that the common nature, shared by the Trinitarian persons, is merely an abstraction?

Positive answers to (Q₁) and (Q₂), by the Model, would indicate an affirmation of TRI-THEISM, resulting in the Model being rightly classified as tri-theistic, in accord with the statement of the trajectory. I will now proceed onto an assessment of the Model's answer to (Q₁) and (Q₂). However, as (Q₂) can be dealt with quite quickly, I will turn to address this first and then proceed onto the issues raised by (Q₁).

1.2.2 Assessment of (Dis)affirmation of TRI-THEISM

The Disaffirmation of the Common Nature as an Abstraction

The Model maintains that the common nature, shared by the Trinitarian persons, is not merely an abstraction, but is a concrete reality. The Model assumes an "*in-rem*" view of universals (i.e. extra-mental, concrete existence), rather than an "*ante-rem*" (i.e. extra-mental, transcendent existence) or "*post-rem*" (i.e. mental, abstract existence) view. It then extends this view to the Trinitarian case. That is, assuming the traditional categorisation of universals within an ante/in/post rem schema, we see that Swinburne makes it quite clear that the Model firstly rejects an ante-rem view (i.e. universals that are independent of the particulars that instantiate them). As Swinburne takes universals, in the ante-rem sense, to solely possess a "fictional

existence". This fictionalist position is firstly highlighted by Swinburne in the case of mathematical entities, where he writes that

The number 5 is also an individual...it is an abstract individual, created by an arbitrary act of language users. Abstract individuals are fictional individuals; they do not really exist at all...It is, however, an arbitrary fiction, though in view of what we can do with mathematics a convenient fiction to say so (Swinburne, 1994, 8).

Abstract individuals do not exist in the real world in the manner that *concrete* individuals do, such as a table, which Swinburne writes, is 'no fiction; it *really does exist*, whether or not recognised and described as a table. And hence it counts as a concrete thing' (Swinburne, 1994, 8, emphasis added).⁵¹ From this, we then see that Swinburne extends this ascription of fictional existence to universals, in an *ante-rem* sense:

One could say that the property of redness exists, whether or not there are red things; it exists waiting to be instantiated in things. But to talk in this way, as Plato did, is to create by linguistic fiat a fictional existence like that of the number 5; a misleading way of talking which I shall not endorse (Swinburne, 1994, 8).

Universals are thus fictional, conceptual (and/or abstract) entities *if* they are conceived as entities that can exist independently of their bearers. There is thus a "de-ontologisation" of *ante-rem* universals. However, does this nominalism, concerning *ante-rem* universals, mean that the Model thus affirms the *post-rem* view posited by the Tri-Theists? I believe not, as in fact, for Swinburne, universals do indeed really exist *in* their bearers, when *they* manifest them. As Swinburne writes:

Properties are only manifested in the *concrete* way and then be said to *exist*, when and only when they are instantiated *in* substances. Redness only exists when there are red things (Swinburne, 1994, 8, emphasis added).

Swinburne is thus a metaphysical, immanent *realist* who takes properties to be universals that have an *in rem* ontological status, in that each universal possess a *concrete*, and thus spatio-temporal existence, within their bearers, when they instantiate them. They are thus not mere

⁵¹ Plausibly, we can take the term "concrete", to mean "existing in a spatio-temporal manner", and thus for an entity to be "abstract", as mathematical entities are, is to exist in a "non-spatio-temporal manner".

conceptual abstractions, which are fictional entities. Rather they have a real (substantial and concrete) existence, in their manifestation by the real (substantial and concrete) entities, that are their bearers.

Now, in the Trinitarian context, this general ontological perspective is also carried over by Swinburne in formulating the Model. As we also see Swinburne emphasise the fact that the ontological status of the universal, that is the common nature, instantiated by the Trinitarian persons, is not conceptual, but rather, as he notes, in commenting on the East and West's interpretation of the proceedings of the Fourth Lateran Council, that.

the essence of divinity was not divisible. Hence it was *una res* fully instantiated in each of the three persons....Lateran IV was not making any theological point with which the East might disagree; it was merely expressing an agreed point in terms of a philosophical category, "*concrete* universal", which Easterners did not use although they would have agreed with the point made in terms of that category (Swinburne, 2018, 423, emphasis added).

This interpretation of the Fourth Lateran Councils' assessment of the "orthodoxy" of Joachim of Fiore's Trinitarian theology, is posited as the shared understanding between the East and West in regards to the one, common divine nature. And, most importantly, Swinburne posits this shared understanding as being *the* interpretation that is captured by his Model.⁵² Therefore, we see that, within the Model, the common divine nature is a *concrete* universal. As noted before, it *really* exists *within* the "concrete" individuals, that is the Trinitarian persons, who each bear it.

Taking this all into account, we reach the position that the Model posits the common divine nature to be a *substantial reality*, in that it is a universal (i.e. a property) that does not have a separate, independent existence from its instantiation by particulars (thus it not being *ante-rem*), but that it instead exists, in, and when, manifested by the three divine persons (thus it being *in-rem*).⁵³ Which, given that the Trinitarian persons are concrete individuals, the divine nature is a concrete universal, that *really*, and not abstractly, exists, as manifested within the

⁵² One of the aims of Swinburne's (2018) paper is to demonstrate that there is a shared understanding between East and West concerning various elements of the doctrine of the Trinity. With the Model (i.e. the "Social Theory") expounding this understanding. Thus, the historical interpretation of the doctrine of the Trinity *is* the Model's interpretation of the doctrine.

⁵³ This position of Swinburne and the Model concerning the one divine nature as a universal will be further detailed in Chapter 5.

persons of the Trinity. Therefore, we can succinctly state the position of the Model here as such:

- The common divine nature in the Trinity is concrete; it exists in reality.

And, from this, we have a negative answer to (Q₂):

(A₂) No, the Model does not affirm that the common nature, shared by the Trinitarian persons, is merely an abstraction.

Thus, through the position posited by the Model, and the negative answer provided for (Q₂), the Model fails to be tri-theistic on this account. Thus, we must now turn our attention to (Q₁) and see if we also have a similar disaffirmation made as well.

The (Prima Facie) Affirmation of Three Particular Substances and Natures

The Model (seems) to posit a multiplicity of particular substances and natures within the Trinity. Firstly, the Model seems to maintain that there is a multiplicity of *particular substances* within the Trinity, in the sense, as stated by Swinburne, that to be a substance, is simply to be an ‘individual, concrete (i.e. real, non-abstract) thing’ (Swinburne, 1994, 7). And thus, many entities exist *as* substances, as Swinburne further notes ‘The world consists of substances. Examples of substances, in the sense which I shall shortly begin to elucidate, are such individual things as this table and that chair, the tree over there, you and I’. (Swinburne, 1994, 7).

This substantiality is thus plausibly extendable to the Trinitarian persons (and the Trinity itself), as Swinburne writes ‘there is one logically indivisible substance, God; but I am not claiming that it is the only substance--*the persons which form it are also substances*’ (Swinburne, 1994, 187, *n*20, emphasis added). The persons of the Trinity are not logically indivisible like the divine community that they form (i.e. the Trinity). Nevertheless, they are, according to Swinburne, substances *in the same way* as the one substance of the Godhead (i.e. the Trinity). That is, they, and the Trinity, are individual, concrete things. There are thus three substances

within the Trinity, according to the Model (with the Trinity being an additional substance as well).⁵⁴

However, one could ask, is the use of the term "substance" here simply a terminological mix-up? That is, are the substances postulated by the Model Aristotelian substances in the sense taken by Tri-Theism? The above quote seems to indicate that the Model intends the substantiality here to be interpreted in the sense of a "*mere*" substance (i.e. a "particular object"). However, more needs to be said to rule out taking each of the Persons as being, in some sense, ontologically independent, in a manner required for substantiality in the more robust (Aristotelian) sense. That is an analysis needs to be made of the nature of an "Aristotelian substance" for one to decide whether, or not, the Model does, in fact, also take there to be three substances within the Trinity in the fuller sense of the word. We can thus assume a position of agnosticism, concerning the *ultima facie* affirmation of TRI-THEISM on this account, and tentatively hold to a *prima facie* affirmation of it based on the lack of further clarification of the term substance.

Concerning the second issue, the Model seems to posit a multiplicity of particular natures within the Trinity. This is due to the fact that even though the Model takes the natures of the divine persons to be the *same* nature (i.e. the divine persons possessing the same property of essential, everlasting omnipotence), one can ask why this "sameness" is not that of each of the persons possessing a particular nature of the *same type*? Which seems to be the Tri-Theistic position sketched out above. That is, within the Model, the Father, the Son and the Spirit, do not possess the single-same nature, but simply the same type of nature. As Swinburne writes:

there is nothing more to a divine individual than the *instantiation of the divine essence* and any further individuating relational properties (e.g. "being begotten") (Swinburne, 1994, 188, parenthesis in text).

This instantiation of the divine essence by the Trinitarian persons seems to, in fact, imply that they each possess a particular nature, that makes that divine person, in addition to its relational

⁵⁴ To ward off the issue of a quaternity of substances here we can take the Model as taking the persons to be *intrinsic* substances (i.e. they are (mere) substances because of what they *intrinsically are*, irrespective of any other existing entity). Whilst the Trinity is a *functional* substance (i.e. it is a (mere) substance because of how it *functions*). And thus in counting substances we count by how many intrinsic substances there are and how many functional substances there are. Thus, in the Model, instead of there being a quaternity of substances, there are three substances of one kind and one substance of another kind. That is, we can count three (intrinsic) substances; the Father, the Son and the Spirit, yet there solely being one (functional) substance; the Trinity.

properties, *that* particular divine person. The three divine persons thus falling under the same kind, but each *individually* instantiating (or exemplifying) essential omnipotence. This position seems not to be far off from that of Ascoutzanges', and more importantly, Philoponus' position, of the three divine persons each being God, thus falling under the same genus. Yet, each possessing a particular species of "godhead" (or divinity).

The Model, through taking each of the persons to individually be an "instantiation of the divine essence", it is plausible, one might say, to take there to be three particular natures within the Trinity (i.e. three particular instances of the property of essential, everlasting omnipotence).⁵⁵ Which, in a similar manner to the Tri-Theistic position of Philoponus, entails the fact of there being three "gods". However, one can ask again, does the Model, in fact, posit the existence of three particular instances of the property of everlasting omnipotence (i.e. the property of divinity), in the required sense of a "particular property"? I, again, believe, that more needs to be said, and an analysis of the nature of a particular property or essence, needs to be further elucidated for this judgment to be made. We thus, again, can assume an agnostic position concerning the *ultima facie* affirmation of (ii) TRI-THEISM on this account, and assert solely a *prima facie* affirmation of it. A further assessment of this, and the previous conception of (ii), needs to be made.

Now, as a first approximation, once the needed elucidation and assessment has been made, the answer to (Q₂) will be found to be in the negative. And thus, the Model (once further modification to it is also made) will not be taken to be tri-theistic on account of it positing (a) that there are three particular substances within the Trinity and (b) that there are three particular natures within the Trinity. This thus allowing us to conclude that the Model does not, in fact, affirm any of the components of TRI-THEISM, and thus, because of this, the Model will be taken to not be correctly classified as Tri-Theistic in the Classical sense of the word.

Therefore, in the next section of this chapter, I will turn my attention to further elucidating the nature of a "particular substance" and a "particular nature". After this, I will proceed onto an assessment of the Model's correspondence with these notions, and thus its overall correspondence with Tri-Theism.

⁵⁵ More on this implication in Chapter 5.

Section Conclusion

In this section, I focused on unpacking a construal of tri-theism found within the Classical Tri-Theist trajectory; that of there being, within the Trinity, three particular substances and natures, and one common nature, that is purely a conceptual abstraction. During this unpacking, I provided a concise statement, termed TRI-THEISM, which captured the Classical Tri-Theist position on the Trinity. The Model was seen to provide a disaffirmation of the first component of TRI-THEISM, and a *prima facie* affirmation of the second component, leading to a position of agnosticism concerning its overall affirmation of the statement. I will now focus, in the subsequent section, on utilising a method to clarify the second component of TRI-THEISM, which will enable a correct assessment of the Model to be made. This all leading to a demonstration of its disaffirmation of TRI-THEISM, and the incorrectness of its classification as a Tri-Theistic model of the Trinity.

Section 2: Philosophical Troubleshooting: De-Classifying Functional Monotheism

Section Introduction

In this section, I focus on showing how, once a clarification of the central notions of a "particular substance" and a "particular nature" is made, the Model clearly disaffirms the second component of TRI-THEISM. Ultimately, enabling the conclusion to be reached that the Model is not tri-theistic, in the sense mapped out in this chapter.

2.1 The Nature of an Aristotelian Substance

2.1.1 Substance: Central Focus

The first element of the Tri-Theistic conception of the Trinity, captured by TRI-THEISM (ii), was the following:

- (a) there are three particular substances within the Trinity

An interpretation of the terms “particular substances”, as noted above, takes them to refer to particular Aristotelian substances. Thus, (a) positing that:

(a*) there are three Aristotelian substances within the Trinity.

Traditionally, an Aristotelian substance is construed as an ontologically independent particular object. That is, a substance is a particular object that does not depend for its existence upon any other entity. In contemporary metaphysics, a clarification of the nature of an Aristotelian substance has been made in the context of *ontological independence* accounts. We can thus further clarify the notion of a "particular substance" in (a), that is an "Aristotelian substance" in (a*), through exploring an influential ontological independence account proposed within the literature. I will now detail this account and apply it, in turn, to the issue at hand.⁵⁶

2.1.2 The Category Account: Central Features

System of Classification

Joshua Hoffman and Gary S. Rosenkrantz (1991), (1994) and (1997) have proposed an ontological independence account, or analysis, of substance (hereafter, the Category Account). This specific account of substance is ontologically neutral, in that it is compatible with the existence of entities belonging to any intelligible category (Hoffman and Rosenkrantz, 1997). An entity that is a substance-candidate is conceived as being of a certain category. Thus, in assuming this position, the Category Account provides an analysis of the nature of a substance, within a broader ontological categorical scheme.

Now, within this analysis, Hoffman and Rosenkrantz take the concept of an ontological category to be undefined but note that any comprehensive understanding of the world presupposes the use of such categories (Hoffman and Rosenkrantz, 2002). Where paradigm cases of ontological categories, for Hoffman and Rosenkrantz (1997), are plausibly such categories as:

⁵⁶ The specific conception of a substance, featured below, was chosen because of its plausibility, but also because of its fit with Philoponus' position concerning the "species" difference between the Trinitarian persons. However, an alternative ontological independence account is included within Appendix, with the Model being assessed according to this account as well. The results reached in Appendix will thus support the result featured in the subsequent section here.

Paradigm P: Property, Substance, Event, Time, Place, Collection.

A system of classification, which includes *P*, and which is extendable to other possible kinds of beings, helps clarify the nature of reality. These are plausibly the more general kinds of categories, including the more fundamental types of entities as instances. That is, within this system of classification, resides the intuitive notion of a hierarchy of levels of generality among the various ontological categories (Hoffman and Rosenkrantz, 1997). There is thus a hierarchy of *epistemically possible* ontological categories that proceeds through a certain level of generality (Hoffman, 2012). Such as that depicted by the following illustration:

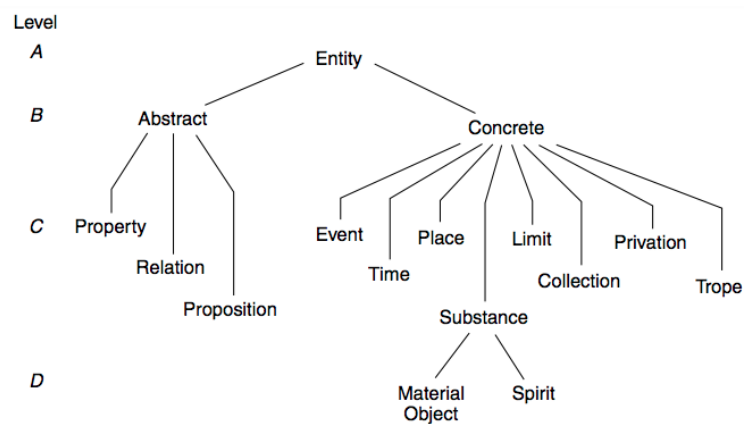


Figure 1.2 Ontological Categories

(Hoffman and Rosenkrantz, 2002).

At the highest level of generality, termed Level A, is the ontological category of *Entity*, which everything instantiates (Hoffman and Rosenkrantz, 1997). Proceeding down, at the next level, termed Level B, are the ontological categories of *Concreteness* and *Abstractness*. There is an exhaustive and exclusive distinction between these categories, in that every entity either belongs to the category of concreteness or the category of abstractness. At the next level of generality below, termed Level C, reside the sub-categories of concreteness and abstractness, where under concreteness, are the further categories of *Substance*, *Time*, *Place*, *Collection*, *Trope*, *Boundary*, *Event*, and *Privation* or *Absence*. Moreover, under abstractness are the categories of *Property*, *Relation*, and *Proposition* (Hoffman, 2012).

Intuitively, as Hoffman and Rosenkrantz (2002, 26) note, the ontological categories on the following list, *L*, appear to be of the same level of generality, and function as paradigm cases of Level C:

List L: Event, Place, Time, Trope, Boundary, Collection, Absence, Property, Relation and Proposition.⁵⁷

Continuing with our descent in generality, there is a further level, termed Level D, which is a subdivision of Level C ontological categories. This category includes such sub-categories as *Physical Objects*, and *Non-Physical Spirits* (or *Souls*), which, specifically, would be subdivisions of the category of Substance (with the category of *Surfaces*, *Edges*, and *Corners* being sub-divisions of Boundary and *Shadows* and *Holes* as sub-divisions of Absence etc.) (Hoffman and Rosenkrantz, 2002). This system of categorisation provides a basis for forming criteria of substantiality, which we can assess potential substance candidates by. To this task, we now turn.

Substance as Categorical Independence

For Hoffman and Rosenkrantz, the notion of a substance is best formulated in reference to this system of categories just detailed. That is, the ontological category of Substance is a particular Level C ontological category, and according to Hoffman and Rosenkrantz's (1997) analysis, the instances of the category of Substance must meet certain independence conditions *qua* being instances of that category. In other words, as Hoffman and Rosenkrantz write, the 'concept substance can be analysed in terms of independence conditions derived from an entity's belonging to a Level C ontological category' (Hoffman and Rosenkrantz, 2002, 29). Within this analysis, a definition of substance, which serves as criteria of substantiality, can be stated as such

(SUB) x is a substance =_{df} x instantiates a Level C category, C1, such that: (i) C1 could have a single instance throughout an interval of time, (ii) C1's instantiation does not entail the instantiation of another Level C category which satisfies (i), and (iii) it is impossible that something belonging to C1 has a part belonging to another Level C category (other than the categories of Concrete Proper Part and Abstract Proper Part) (Hoffman and Rosenkrantz, 2002, 29).

The central idea behind this definition is that of the ontological category of Substance possessing a unique characteristic; that of being possibly instantiated by a single instance

⁵⁷ The categories of Substance and Set, which are not on *L*, are, however, still at Level C.

throughout a certain interval of time, without that instantiation also entailing the notion of any other ontological category, that *itself* could be instantiated by a single instance throughout a certain interval of time (Hoffman, 2012). Thus, being a substance is analysable in terms of instantiating a Level C category that, among all Level C categories, uniquely possesses the characteristics in question (Hoffman, 2012).⁵⁸

More fully, we see that condition (i) of (SUB) implies that an entity is a substance if its instantiation of a Level C category and is independent of any other entity. A substance is what Hoffman and Rosenkrantz, term “independent-within-its-kind”.⁵⁹ Hence, according to condition (i) of (SUB), an entity (simple or compound), is indeed a substance *in virtue* of it belonging to a Level C category which could have a single instance throughout a certain interval of time (Hoffman and Rosenkrantz, 2002). Condition (i) of (SUB) thus characterises a substance in terms of an independence condition that is implied by instantiability of a certain Level C category (Hoffman and Rosenkrantz, 2002). That is the category of substance, among all the other Level C categories, is unique in that it possesses the potential to have an instance, which has entities that are capable of being independent-within-their-kind, which is not shared by any other category. The independence of a candidate substance is thus that of a *categorical* independence.

Now, conditions (ii) and (iii) of (SUB) serve as implications of the independence ascribed to an entity that fulfils condition (i). That is, condition (ii) implies that an entity is a substance if its instantiation of a Level C category is independent of the instantiation of any other Level C category that could also itself have a single instance throughout a certain interval of time (Hoffman and Rosenkrantz, 1997). Although the existence of a substance is related to the existence of entities of some other Level C categories, such as the category of Properties, in that a substance must be propertied.⁶⁰ It is not as if this *other* category is such that *it* could have a single instance throughout an interval of time (Hoffman and Rosenkrantz, 2002). In that, the existence of a property (e.g. being red) entails the existence of another property (e.g. being coloured, or the higher-order property of being a property). The category of Property, and

⁵⁸ Hoffman and Rosenkrantz see the only other Level C category, alongside that of the category of Substance, that plausibly could be instantiated by only one instance throughout an interval of time, is the category of being a privation (Hoffman and Rosenkrantz 1997). This category, however, fails to fulfil (ii) and (iii) of (SUB), and thus does not serve as a counterexample to the uniqueness of the category of substance.

⁵⁹ However, this condition does not also imply that *every* substance within this kind must be independent of every other substance (Hoffman and Rosenkrantz, 2002). For example, as Hoffman and Rosenkrantz note: condition (i) of (SUB) is logically consistent with the existence of a compound substance that is dependent upon its substantial parts (Hoffman and Rosenkrantz, 2002)

⁶⁰ Leaving aside the controversial notion of a bare particular, which is a substance that lacks any properties.

plausibly the other categories of *L* as well, cannot be instantiated without the entailment of another Level C category. Hoffman and Rosenkrantz, thus see that the category of Substance uniquely satisfies condition (ii) of (SUB). With the existence of any candidate substance thus not entailing the existence of any other entity (of Level C), that is also categorially-independent.

Finally, condition (iii) of (SUB) implies that an entity is a substance only if it is part of a Level C category whose instantiation is independent of any other Level C category that a *part* of that entity instantiates (Hoffman and Rosenkrantz, 1997). That is, according to this condition, a substance can't have a part that belongs to another Level C category, such as an event, a time or a place for example, as for it to have this part, would require that the substance is reducible or identifiable as an entity that instantiates this ontological category (Hoffman and Rosenkrantz, 1997). However, as Hoffman and Rosenkrantz, following Aristotle, take a substance to be non-reducible and non-identifiable with an entity that instantiates any other ontological category, this cannot be so (Hoffman and Rosenkrantz, 1997). A substance must thus have parts which are of the same category (e.g. a physical substance must only possess physical parts), or possesses no parts (e.g. a non-physical soul, that is simple, having no parts) (Hoffman and Rosenkrantz, 2002). A substance candidate must be such as to not possess any parts that are of any other category. Thus, according to Hoffman and Rosenkrantz, the category of Substance seems to uniquely satisfy condition (iii) of (SUB), and, thus, given this, this category meets all three conditions (i) – (iii).⁶¹

We thus have a concept of substantiality which takes a given entity to be a substance if it falls into the ontological *category* of substance, (through falling into a Level D category that is part of the Level C category of Substance). Thus, this entity possesses categorial independence, that is it is independent-within-its-kind, and its instantiation of this category does not entail the instantiation of another entity that is categorially-independent, nor does it possess a part that is of any other (Level C) category. To make this assessment of a potential substance candidate, one can follow what Hoffman and Rosenkrantz term a "bottom-up" strategy which is that of

- (i) positing a given entity and then assessing whether this entity satisfies the necessary and sufficient conditions for the category of Substance (i.e. conditions (i) – (iii) of (SUB)) and then

⁶¹ For an extensive demonstration of how the other categories fail to fulfil conditions (i) – (iii), see: (Hoffman and Rosenkrantz 1997)

- (ii) infer from this that this entity is an instance of the Level C category of Substance, and thus is itself a substance.⁶²

Utilising this procedure, we can assess the substantiality of the Trinitarian persons within the Model. The Trinitarian persons would thus each be a substance if they are instances of a Level C category (more specifically, them being part of a Level D category that is itself part of the Level C category) which is capable of having an independent instance. Furthermore, their instantiation of this category not entailing the instantiation of another entity that is an instance of a Level C category that can have a single instance, nor them possessing any parts that are part of another Level C category. We can now proceed to make this assessment.

2.1.3 The Category Account: Trinitarian Analysis

From the perspective of the Category Account, we can utilise this conception of the nature of an Aristotelian substance to re-construe (a*) in the following way:

- (a') there are three ontologically categorially-independent particular objects within the Trinity.⁶³

Within the Category Account, as noted above, the notion of an ontologically categorially-independent particular object is determined by conditions (i) – (iii) (SUB). We can now assess, in turn, the conception of the persons of the Trinity firstly expressed from the Tri-Theistic perspective and secondly from the Model's perspective, which will allow us to see whether the latter does posit the existence of three Aristotelian substances, in the specific sense in question. That is, we can see if the Trinitarian persons, as conceived by Tri-Theism and the Model, are each part of a Level D category that has instances that meet the three conditions for the category of Substance at Level C.

So, turning to condition (i) of (SUB), for Tri-Theism, it is quite clear that this condition is met, as it is possible (that is logically possible) that each of the Trinitarian persons exist throughout some interval of time, t , without any of the other Persons existing (or any other entity existing

⁶² This methodology is proposed by Hoffman and Rosenkrantz (2007) in response to a critique levelled by (Schnieder, 2005) in regards to a lack of clarity for assessing potential substance candidates.

⁶³ I am assuming here that the Trinitarian persons are particular objects, in the sense of them being property bearers that have identity and existence conditions and are countable entities. More on the conditions of objecthood in Chapter 5 and in Appendix.

as well). This is logically possible due to there being no necessary *dependence* relation between the Trinitarian persons within Tri-Theism. That is, each of the Persons do not require any of the other Persons to exist. Rather, throughout t , taking the Father as a representative of the Trinitarian persons,⁶⁴ who, like the other Persons, possesses his own “Godhead” and is of a different “species” from the other Persons, could exist when none of the other Trinitarian persons exist in t . The Father would thus be a single instance (of a Level D category that is an instance of) a Level C category. Hence, there is a Level C category, such that the Father instantiates that category and that could have a single instance (i.e. the Father) throughout an interval of time. This all leading us to infer that condition (i) of (SUB) is met by Tri-Theism.

However, within the Model, this is not so. As in taking the Trinitarian persons to be an instance of (a Level D category that is an instance of)⁶⁵ the category of Substance, it is not possible that this category could have a single instance throughout an interval of time, as instead it would, necessarily, have at least three instances. That is, for every time t , the three divine persons exist at t , due to the Model postulating that it is metaphysically necessary that the Father, who is essentially perfectly good, *must* inevitably bring about the Son and the Spirit. Which, because of this necessitation, results in each of the Persons being dependent on the other for their existence. It is thus not metaphysically possible that there is an interval of time where only one of the persons exists without the other persons.⁶⁶

That is, there cannot be just one substance (i.e. one single instance of the category of Substance) throughout some interval of time. Thus, there is *not* a Level C category, such that the Father instantiates that category and which could have a single instance throughout an interval of time. Condition (i) of (SUB) is thus not met by the Model. And, as this condition is not met, the Trinitarian persons, as postulated by the Model, are not substances. Whereas, for the Persons, as postulated by Tri-Theism, condition (i) is met for them. Tri-Theism and the Model thus part ways, on even this condition alone.

⁶⁴ That is, the following applies to the Son and the Spirit as well.

⁶⁵ From now on I will drop this further qualification. However, it is important to remember that a specific substance candidate must itself be part of a category that fulfils the certain requirements for substancehood.

⁶⁶ More specifically, assuming Swinburne’s (2016) nominalist theory of logic, the sentence “there exists one divine person” is metaphysically impossible due to it entailing a contradiction, given the perfect goodness of a divine person requiring him to inevitably bring about two other divine persons as an “act of essence”. And thus, the sentence “there exists one divine person” entails the further sentence “there is an x such that x is G and not G ” (where x stands for a divine person and G stands for perfectly good).

However, an entity posited by the Model that does meet this condition is that of the Trinity *itself*. As the Trinity, which I am firstly taking to be a *composite* object, due to Swinburne stating that the Trinity is ‘the composite whole of which the Persons are its unique proper parts’ (Swinburne, 1994, 186).⁶⁷ Thus, as a unique composite object, the Trinity, is an entity which could exist as a single instance throughout some interval of time, *t*, without any other substance (i.e. composite object) existing as well. As its “parts”, are not substances, and, prior to creating anything, there are no other substances through *t* that exists alongside the Trinity. Thus, the Trinity, rather than the Trinitarian persons, can be taken to have met condition (i) of (SUB).

From this, turning again to Tri-Theism, we can see that it also appears that the instantiation of the Level C category that the Father is an instance of, does not entail the instantiation of any other Level C categories that could have a single instance throughout a specific interval of time.

Similarly, the Level C category that the Trinity is an instance of also does not entail the instantiation of another Level C category that could have a single instance, as there is no such Level C category, outside of the category of Substance. And since the Father (for Tri-Theism) and the Trinity (for the Model) both instantiate a Level C category, we can infer that they each satisfy condition (ii) of (SUB).

Lastly, we can then see that the Father within Tri-Theism, being a soul, would not, according to Hoffman and Rosenkrantz, have any parts at all. Thus, the Father would lack any parts instantiating another Level C category. However, the Trinity, being a composite object, would have parts, but, as will be argued for in Chapter 6, these parts are not *proper* parts, and thus the Trinity can also be taken to be mereologically simple as well (i.e. lacking (proper) parts).⁶⁸ So, the Father, within Tri-Theism, and the Trinity, within the Model, would thus satisfy condition (iii) of (SUB).

Therefore, it is clear to see that the Father, as construed by Tri-Theism, satisfies the defining conditions of (SUB), and thus, as a consequence, the Father, and the other Trinitarian persons whom he was representing, are substances. However, the Father, as construed by the Model, through failing to fulfil condition (i) of (SUB), which is a necessary condition within the view

⁶⁷ I will be contesting this specific construal of composition in Chapter 6, where the Trinity as a composite whole is composed by the Persons who are its improper, rather than proper, parts.

⁶⁸ Thus, I am using the term “composite” in a stretched sense of the word to include not just proper parts, but improper parts as well.

assumed for substantiality, stops us from inferring that he (and the other Trinitarian persons) are indeed substances. Rather, it is instead the Trinity, as posited by the Model, that satisfies the necessary and defining conditions of (SUB) and thus is a substance, in the fullest sense of the word. There is thus a disaffirmation of (a') of TRI-THEISM (ii):

(a') there are three categorially-independent particular objects within the Trinity.

And an affirmation of the following:

(a'') there is one categorially-independent particular object, that of the Trinity.

Taking this all into account, the Model through postulating (A''), rather than (A'), does not posit the existence of three particular substances within the Trinity and is thus not tri-theistic in *this* specific sense. We will now turn our attention onto an assessment of whether the Model also fails to posit the existence of three particular natures within the Trinity as well.

2.2 The Character of Particular Properties

2.2.1 Particular Properties: Central Focus

The second element of the Tri-Theistic conception of the Trinity, captured by TRI-THEISM (ii), was the following:

(b) there are three particular natures within the Trinity

An interpretation of the terms “particular natures”, as noted above, takes these terms to be referring to particular properties. Thus, (ii) positing that:

(b*) there are three particular properties within the Trinity.

In traditional, and to a lesser extent, contemporary philosophical discourse, particular properties are "modes" or “modifications” of a particular object.⁶⁹ I will now further detail the

⁶⁹ In contemporary discourse, the majority position is on the conception of a particular property as a "trope". The reason that the conception of a particular property as a mode has been chosen is again based on its plausibility and fit with Philoponus' rejection of independently existing particular properties (which a trope is). However, the

character of a mode through unpacking a specific account of it. After this, I will then apply it to the issue at hand.

2.2.2 The Mode Account: Central Features

Charlie B. Martin (2008) and John Heil (2003) and (2012), have proposed a specific account of a mode (from the Latin *modus*, way) as a *particular way* that an object is.⁷⁰ We can term this account, the Mode Account. That is, for Martin and Heil, a property is a *way* that some object is, rather than being a constitutive part of an object. As Martin writes:

Objects can have parts, but an object's properties are not its parts, they are particular ways the object is. A tomato's redness and sphericity are not parts of the tomato in the way the tomato's skin, seeds, and stem are parts of it. The tomato is not made up of its properties in the way it is made up of its parts (Martin, 2008, 44).

Thus, as a property, a mode is taken to be a particular way that an object is characterized. That is a mode is a *particular characteristic* of an object. As ways, modes are non-transferable in that, as Martin further writes 'properties are particular ways things are. The identity of a property—its being the property it is—is bound up with the identity of its possessor' (Martin, 2008, 44).

Thus, a distinctive characteristic of a mode, under this conception,⁷¹ is that of its dependence profile which expresses that a given mode does not only depend for its *existence* on the object that it characterises, in the manner of rigid existential dependence,⁷² but it also depends on the object for its *identity*. A mode, as the way that a particular object is, is thus an ontologically dependent entity that essentially depends for its existence *and* identity upon the object that it characterises.

former type of property will be further detailed in Appendix, with the Model being assessed according to this conception as well. The results reached in Appendix will thus support the result reached in the subsequent section below.

⁷⁰ This account is very similar to that of Jonathan Lowe's (2006). This account, however, also includes the additional condition that a mode is an instance of an attribute (i.e. a non-substantial universal). This conception, however, would plausibly not be acceptable to the theologians of the Tri-Theistic trajectory who reject in-rem universals for post-rem universals. Thus, Heil's account, which does not include this additional condition, is preferable here. However, elements of Lowe's account which are similar to Martin and Heil's account, and are, at times, more clearly elucidated, will feature in this section and be further explained in Chapter 5.

⁷¹ The following is also true under other, similar, conceptions of modes, such as Lowe's (2006).

⁷² This will be further defined in Chapter 5.

It is a modification of that entity, and thus it is *part of the essence* of a particular mode that it *exists* and is *identified* as the particular mode that it is, only in reference to the particular object that it characterises (Lowe, 2006). That is, Modes, as ways that an object is, cannot exist independently of objects. Rather Modes exist, as realised by the object that bears them (Heil, 2003). Thus, as Heil further writes 'if a mode exists, it must be a mode of something' (Heil, 2003, 171). Modes are thus *essentially identity-dependent* on their bearers, in that any given mode's identity, at each time at which it exists, is fixed by a relation that it essentially bears to the particular object that is characterised by it (Lowe, 2006).⁷³ Thus, modes are entities that depend for their identity on the identity of the particular object that possesses them.

The identity of an object *fixes* the identity of the specific mode, where *which* entity of its kind the particular object that it characterises is, metaphysically determines *which* entity of its kind a specific mode is. The particular object thus acts as an *individuator* of the specific mode that characterises it. It is part of the essence of a mode that *it* is the mode of a specific object and not of any other object in virtue of it being the mode that is possessed by *that* specific object. (Lowe, 2006). Thus, as Heil writes 'The mode's very *identity* depends on the substance [object] it modifies' (Heil, 2014, 338, emphasis and square parenthesis added). The particular object thus determines the identity and existence conditions of its modes.

Taking this all into account, we can construe a mode of a particular object, in a similar manner to (SUB), as such:

(MODE): x is a mode of y if and only if x is (i) a particular way that y is and (ii) the identity of x depends on the identity of y.

Similar to our construal of the nature of a substance, we have a helpful characterisation of a particular property through (MODE), which help us to assess the particular nature that is possessed by the divine persons within a Tri-Theistic context. Now onto another application of this within that context.

⁷³ More on this below.

2.2.3 The Mode Account: Trinitarian Analysis

From the perspective of the Mode Account, we can utilise its conception of the nature of a particular property, as a mode, to re-construe (b*) in the following way:

(b') there are three divinity-modes within the Trinity.

Within the Mode Account, the notion of a mode is determined by conditions (i) – (ii) of (MODE). We can now also assess, in turn, the conception of the particular properties possessed by the Trinitarian persons, firstly expressed from the Tri-Theistic perspective and secondly from the Model's perspective. This will allow us to assess whether the latter does, in fact, posit the existence of three particular properties, in the specific sense in question.

Within Tri-Theism, the Father, the Son and the Spirit will be charactered in a particular *way*. And how they will be charactered will be determined by a mode, which we can term a divinity-mode. A divinity-mode will be a *particular way of being* for the Father, the Son and the Spirit. Specifically, it is a particular way in which they would be "characterised" or "modified" *as divine*. That is, a divinity-mode would be a particular property of the Trinitarian persons, the possession of which is necessary and sufficient for them each "being a particular divine object". Thus, a divinity-mode would each exist as an entity that characterises its bearer through bestowing upon it a certain character—the character of being divine.

Now, assuming the existence of a divinity-mode, Tri-Theism takes it to be the case that the Father, the Son and the Spirit, as particular objects, are *each* characterised by a particular divinity-mode. That is each of these divinity-modes exist as an essential property, feature or characteristic of the Father, the Son and the Spirit. They directly bestow the character of divinity onto each of the Trinitarian persons, resulting in the each of the Trinitarian person being a particular divine person.

Moreover, each of these divinity-modes would be identity-dependent on their bearer, in that it is part of the essence of a given divinity-mode to be the mode that it is (i.e. the mode of *that* specific bearer) in virtue of its relation to each of the Trinitarian persons. Thus, in Tri-Theism, we have the case that:

(a) The Father is *characterised by* divinity-mode d_1 ,

- (b) The Son is *characterised by* divinity-mode d₂,
- (c) The Spirit is *characterised by* divinity-mode d₃.

There are thus three modes of divinity within the Trinity, according to Tri-Theism. This is due to a divinity-mode, within Tri-Theism, being a property of each of the Trinitarian persons, in accord with the definition of (MODE). It is a particular way the Trinitarian persons are, thus (i) being met. And its identity, that of it being the specific divinity-mode that it is (i.e. that of the Father's, the Son's or the Spirit's) would thus be dependent upon the identity of the each of the Trinitarian persons, thus (ii) being met.

Turning now to the Model, we can also see here that it diverges from Tri-Theism, not just concerning the question of substantiality within the Trinity, but also that of the possession of divinity-modes by the Trinitarian persons. Even though the Model takes the properties of the Trinitarian persons to be *particular ways* that they are determined (i.e. as divine, or more specifically as essentially, everlastingly omnipotent), thus (i) of (MODE) being met. The problem and divergence lie with (ii) of (MODE), the identity-dependence of a mode on its bearers. That is, in the case of the Model, a divinity-mode fails to be identity-dependent upon the persons of the Trinity, and thus cannot be possessed by them (i.e. there are no divinity-modes existing within the Trinity).

Functional Monotheism Model: Trinitarian Dependence

We can understand this issue more clearly by briefly turning our attention to the identity-dependence of the Persons on each other. Now, in elucidating the identity of the Trinitarian persons, we take the type of identity featured in this case to *not* be the *relation* of identity (symbolised by the equals sign “=”), which everything necessarily bears to itself and nothing else, but rather identity in the sense of *essence*. The identity of the Trinitarian persons is thus taken to be their essence. Where an essence, according to Jonathan Lowe's (2008) conception of it (termed by him *serious essentialism*) is best captured by John Locke's statement that essence is ‘the very being of anything, whereby it is, what it is’ (Locke, 1975: III, III, 15, quoted in: (Lowe, 2008, 34)).⁷⁴ In other words, what the essence of some entity X is, is what X is, or

⁷⁴ I am assuming Lowe (2008)'s view of essence here, where an essence (what it is to be an entity) is *revealed* by a real definition (rather than a real definition being identical *to* an entity's essence). For another construal of essence, which *identifies* essence with real definition, see: (Fine, 1994a).

what it is to be X (Lowe, 2008). An essence is the *whatness* of an entity and thus constitutes a thing's identity.

In further clarifying the different types of "essence" or "whatness" in play here, a distinction is drawn by Lowe between an entity's general and individual essence. Central to this distinction here is the fact that an individual entity x, must be a thing of some general kind (i.e. an instance of some general kind) because, at the very least, as Lowe notes, 'it must belong to some ontological category (Lowe, 2008, 35). And thus, as Lowe further writes, if 'X is something of kind K, then we may say that X's general essence is what it is to be a K, while X's individual essence is what it is to be the individual of kind K that X is, as opposed to any other individual of that kind' (Lowe, 2008, 35, emphasis in text). In illustrating this, we see that Socrates is a thing (i.e. instance) of the general kind human. And taking this distinction into account Socrates' general essence is thus taken to be *what it is to be human*, and his individual essence is *what it is to be Socrates*, as opposed to any other human.

Importantly, however, is the fact that this specific approach to essence, provided by serious essentialism, does not make the further move of reifying essences and thus taking an essence to be a further entity in addition to the entities that possess them. Rather, entities have essences, but essences are not entities (where the term entity is simply taken to mean something that does or could exist). And by an essence not being an entity, as Lowe notes, that entity's essence 'does not literally contain any entities as parts or constituents, since only entities can have other entities as parts' (Lowe, 2013, 195). The "parts" that feature in an essence should rather be taken to be parts of the real definition which express that essence. That is, the notion of a real definition plays a central role in the approach to essence proposed by Lowe's serious essentialism, where he takes a real definition to be the 'definition of a thing (res, or entity) in contradistinction to a verbal definition' (Lowe, 2012b, 935). That is, a statement of essence is a real definition, through it specifying what it is to be that certain object. Thus, as Lowe further writes that

a real definition of an Entity, E, is to be understood as a proposition which tells us, in the most perspicuous fashion, what E is, or, more broadly, since we do not want to restrict ourselves solely to the essences of actually existing things, what E is or would be (Lowe, 2012b, 935).

Real definitions thus act in a manner as explanatory principles, and are (usually) formulated through a "<To be ___>" construction, such as "<To be X is to be Y>". Thus, for example, an

accurate real definition of Gold would be the following: “<To be Gold is to be a metal whose atomic constituents have the atomic number 79>”.⁷⁵ Where the *definiendum*, that is the entity that appears on the left side of the “<To be ___>” construction, is the entity to be defined, which in this case is the phrase “Gold”. And the *definiens*, that is the entity that appears on the right side of the “<To be ___>” construction, performs the function of *uniquely identifying* and explaining the essential nature of the *definiendum*, which, in this example, is the phrase “a metal whose atomic constituents have atomic number 79”.

A statement that purports to express a real definition, in the sense delineated above, is indeed successful if, as Katherin Koslicki helpfully writes, it ‘not only uniquely identifies and delineates the entity to be defined, but also states what it is to be the entity in question i.e. if it is explanatory of the essential nature of the definiendum’ (Koslicki, 2012, 200). Thus, a real definition enables one to further understand *what it is* to be a certain kind of entity. Where if the definition is successful, it will then express the *identity* of the specific object, the defining entity thus provides a *distinct way* of referring to the essence of the entity to be defined, which it is related to. With the entity on the right side of the “<To be ___>” construction being definitionally related to, the entity on the left side of the “<To be ___>” construction. And thus the definiens provides one with further illumination about the definiendum.

Now, taking into account this “<To be ___>” construction, and the notion of essence, and specifically a real definition that utilises it, the identity conditions of the Trinitarian persons, that is the real definition, expressing the (general and individual) essence of the Trinitarian Persons (i.e. what they are), within a Tri-Theistic context (below, left) and an FM (Functional Monotheism) context (below, right) can be construed as such:

Tri-Theism Real Definitions	FM Real Definitions
(FATHER _T) <To be the Father, is to be an uncaused divine person>	(FATHER _F) <To be the Father, is to be the uncaused divine person who is the cause of <i>the Son</i> and an (indirect) co-cause of <i>the Spirit</i> >.
(SON _T) <To be the Son, is to be an uncaused divine person>	(SON _F) <To be the Son, is to be the divine person who is caused by <i>the Father</i> and is a (direct) co-cause of <i>the Spirit</i> >.

⁷⁵ This examples comes from (Oderberg, 2011).

(SPIRIT _T) <To be the Son, is to be an uncaused divine person>	(SPIRIT _F) <To be the Spirit, is to be the divine person who is co-caused by <i>the Father</i> and <i>the Son</i> >.
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Table 1.1 Tri-Theism and FM Real Definitions

In the Model’s Trinitarian real definitions (unlike that of the Tri-Theism Real Definitions), the identities (in this case the individual essences) of the Trinitarian persons, include that of each of the other Trinitarian persons. The Model thus takes it to be the case that where *what-questions* are asked,⁷⁶ such as: “what it is *to be* the Father?”, “what it is *to be* the Son?” or “what it is *to be* the Spirit?”, it would thus be the specific definitions featured above that supply the proper answers to these questions.⁷⁷ That is, the correct answers for Trinitarian *what-questions* would thus include that of each of the other Persons. Thus, by the Trinitarian persons being part of the essence of each other in this way, then each of the Persons would be included within the *identity and existence conditions* of one another, that is the conditions for an entity *to be identified as* the Father, the Son or the Spirit.

Essentially, the Father would *not* be identified, and thus exist *as*, the Father, without the Son and the Spirit. The Son would *not* be identified, and thus exist *as*, the Son, without the Father and the Spirit. And the Spirit would *not* be identified, and thus exist *as*, the Spirit, without the Father and the Son. Each Trinitarian person is *part of the essence* (revealed by the above definitions) of each of the other Trinitarian persons, and function in a way to *individuate* the specific Trinitarian person’s essence that they are part of.⁷⁸ One can ask however what this *part of* relation within the Trinity (and generally) is?

We can take this relation to be that of a relation of *essential dependence*.⁷⁹ That is, the position detailed above concerning the real definitions of the persons, reveals there to be an essential

⁷⁶ Which are questions, as Sam Cowling notes, that asks ‘for the metaphysically significant features of an individual and are answered only if they explain that some individual really is’ (Cowling, 2013, 4))

⁷⁷ Swinburne does not make the connection between the Model and the notions of essence and real definition. However, I believe that elements of the Model allow this connection to be made.

⁷⁸ One wonders what the individuating factor of the Persons within Tri-Theism is. The Persons are not individuated by their relations, as with the Model, and thus it must be that of them possessing a *thisness*. This is thus another way in which the Model and Tri-Theism diverge, as Swinburne (1994) makes it quite explicit that the Persons within the Model do not possess a thisness. For a further explanation of this, see: (Swinburne, 1994, and 2018).

⁷⁹ It’s important to note that the Model, as I will be construing it below, takes the persons of the Trinity to be essentially dependent entities. However, despite this, the Model still takes the Father to be ontologically independent (and the other persons of the Trinity to be ontologically dependent) in the specific sense that the Father is an *ontologically necessary being* (and the other persons of the Trinity thus being *causally necessary beings*) . This notion of ontological necessity will be further unpacked in Chapter 4.

dependence relation between the Persons. This notion of essential dependence, and more generally ontological dependence, comes in many varieties in the literature.⁸⁰ The specific variety under focus here, however, is that of the notion, which previously featured above, of *identity-dependence*, which, following (Tahko and Lowe, 2015, §4.2) can be construed as such:

(ID) x depends for its identity upon y = There is a two-place predicate “F” such that it is part of the essence of y that y is related by F to x .⁸¹

This specific account of identity-dependence (ID) centres around that of it being *part of the essence* of x that x depends for its identity upon y , in such a manner, that which thing of its kind y is fixes (or at least helps to fix) which thing of its kind x is (Lowe, 1998). Where the term “fixes”, in this context, is construed as metaphysical determination (Lowe, 1998). Thus, it is part of the essence of a given entity that it is the entity that it is in virtue of standing in the unique relationship, through F (a function) that relates it to y , such that y fixes, or metaphysically determines, which entity x in fact is.⁸²

In further clarifying the notion of “function” here, Katherin Koslicki has highlighted the fact that this notion, as it occurs in (ID), should be understood with a *criterion of identity*. That is this relation of identity-dependence is a direct consequence of the identity criteria that govern the kind of which the item is related as an instance (Lowe, 1998). Thus, taking “ Φ ” as standing for a sortal term, such as a set, and “R” standing for a specific relation in terms of which the criterion of identity is formulated:

(CI) $(\forall x)(\forall y) ((\Phi x \ \& \ \Phi y) \rightarrow (x = y \leftrightarrow Rxy))$ (Koslicki, 2013, 171).

⁸⁰ Cf. (Koslicki, 2012).

⁸¹ Identity-dependence, as formulated by Lowe, is regularly taken to be asymmetric. However, against this assumption, and thus an argument for the possibility of symmetrical dependence at a more general level, see: (Barnes, 2018). And, for an explanation of the potential reciprocal identity-dependence of quarks, see: (Tahko, 2018).

⁸² Lowe (1998) further elucidates (ID) through examples from set-theory, where a set is identity dependent upon its members. However, it is important to note that an entity, such as a set, may, in fact, depend for its identity upon, and thus be individuated by, another entity even in cases in which the identity of that entity *alone* does not suffice to fix, or determine, the identity of it. In this case, the latter entity thus would be taken to be a partial individuator of the former entity. That is the former entity would be taken to be one that partially fixes the identity of the latter entity, for example, a set with more than one member would depend partially for its identity upon each of its members, in that each of its members partially fixes the identity of the set. However, its *identity* would only be completely *fixed* by the identities of *all* of the members together (Tahko and Lowe, 2015). Thus, we have here an important distinction between partial and complete identity-dependence (i.e. metaphysically determination or individuation). This partial/complete distinction I will play a part in the Trinitarian context below.

Thus, for example, one instance of (CI) is provided by the Axiom of Extensionality, which functions as a criterion of identity for sets (Lowe, 1998). Thus, if x and y are sets, then x and y are the same set if, and only if, x and y have the same members. The set's members determine the individuality of the set, which is to say that they individuate the set (Tahko and Lowe, 2015). Or, in other words, *which* set a specific set, in fact, is, is *fixed* by which members the set has (Koslicki, 2013). Thus, as Koslicki helpfully notes,

for entities that exist in time, we are to construe (CI) for present purposes as yielding a synchronic criterion of identity or what may also be called a *principle of individuation*, i.e. a criterion that species what it takes for an entity to be the very entity that it is at a time, rather than a diachronic criterion of identity, i.e. a criterion that species what it takes for an entity to persist over time (Koslicki, 2013, 53, emphasis in text).

Taking all of the above into account, in the Trinitarian case, the Persons are not simply identity-dependent beings, but are included in the identity conditions of each other and are thus in fact “reciprocally” identity-dependent in the way detailed in the following table:

Trinitarian Person Synchronic Identity Conditions⁸³	Trinitarian Person Reciprocal Identity-Dependence
(FATHER _{IC}) If x is the Father, then y is the same person as x iff y is (i) the uncaused divine person, (ii) the cause of the Son, (iii) the (indirect) active co-cause of the Spirit.	(FATHER _{ID}) The Father is identity-dependent on the Son and the Spirit. (The identities of the Son and the Spirit each partially <i>fix</i> (metaphysically determine) the identity of the Father).
(SON _{IC}) If x is the Son, then y is the same person as the x iff y is (i) the divine person caused to exist by the Father (ii) the (direct) co-cause of the Spirit.	(SON _{ID}) The Son is identity-dependent on the Father and the Spirit. (The identities of the Father and the Spirit each partially <i>fix</i> (metaphysically determine) the identity of the Son).

⁸³ These conditions correspond to the real definitions detailed above.

<p>(SPIRIT_C) If x is the Spirit, then y is the same person as x iff y is</p> <p>(i) the divine person (indirectly) co-caused to exist by the Father</p> <p>(ii) the divine person (directly) co-caused to exist by the Son.</p>	<p>(SPIRIT_{ID}) The Spirit is identity-dependent on the Father and the Son.</p> <p>(The identities of the Father and the Son each partially <i>fix</i> (metaphysically determine) the identity of the Spirit).</p>
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Table 1.2 Trinitarian Identity Conditions and Dependence

What we have here, is that the Model, once construed in the particular way that I have, postulates that the Father, the Son and the Spirit are each *reciprocally* identity-dependent upon each other. That is firstly for the Father, the identity of the Son and the Spirit (i.e. what the Son and the Spirit are), each partly fix the Father’s identity (i.e. the Son and the Spirit each partly being individuators of the Father). Secondly, for the Son, the identity of the Father and the Spirit (i.e. what the Father and the Spirit are), each partly fix the Son’s identity (i.e. Father and the Spirit each partly being individuators of the Son). Thirdly, for the Spirit, the identity of the Father and the Son (i.e. what the Father and the Son are), each partly fix the Spirit’s identity (i.e. Father and the Son each partly being individuators of the Spirit).

More fully, and taking the Father as a representative of each of the Persons,⁸⁴ the Father is identity-dependent upon the Son and the Spirit, in that the Son and the Spirit are in some relation such that they, and only they, have that relation to the Father, which is that of both of them being *divine persons actively caused to exist by the Father*. Thus, within this relationship, the identities of the Son of the Spirit each (partly) fix the identity of the Father. Which entities of their kinds the Son and the Spirit are (partly) metaphysically determines which entity of his kind the Father is, that is, *a particular divine object that (inevitably) causes two other particular divine objects*; the Son and the Spirit. The *synchronic* identity (and existence) conditions of the Father are determined by the Son and the Spirit, who are the individuators of the Father.⁸⁵ The Father, as with the Son and the Spirit, is essentially an identity-dependent particular object.⁸⁶

⁸⁴ The following explanation of the identity-dependence relationship between the Trinitarian persons will also be further detailed (with an explanation of the Son and the Spirit’s relationship) in Appendix.

⁸⁵ A synchronic identity condition (or criterion) states what it takes for a given entity to be the very entity that it is at *a time*, whilst a diachronic criterion condition (or criterion) states what it takes for a given entity to persist over time (Koslicki, 2013).

⁸⁶ It is important to remember (as noted above) that despite the Father’s identity-dependence on the Son and the Spirit, the Father still remains ontologically independent in the sense of him being an ontologically necessary being. More on this below.

Taking this into account, we can illustrate the modification made to the Model here through a diagram that captures this relation of essential dependence (where the other terms and symbols are as before, with the addition now of “ID” standing for “identity-dependence” (which replaces the previously undefined dependence relation):

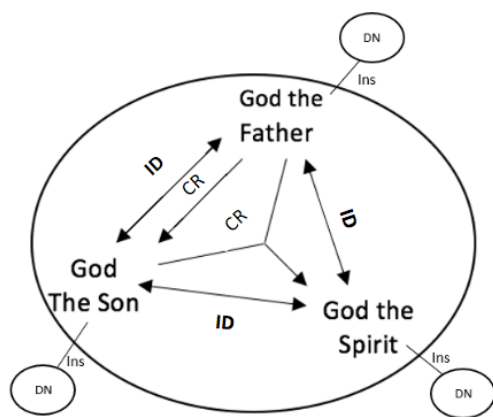


Figure 1.3 The Functional Monotheism model (Modification 1)

Thus, through the position sketched out here, we see that one cannot understand what it is to *be* the Father (or any of the other Trinitarian persons) without taking into account the entities that he is identity-dependent upon, and which determine what, or which, type of person that he is (which, in this case, is that of him being *the Father of* the Son (and *the source of* the Spirit)). Thus, him being the Father is *because* of his essential (identity) dependence relation upon the Son and the Spirit who, in turn, play a part in *defining* him (that is his essence or identity), as he is.

Functional Monotheism: Lack of Modes

Taking this all into account, and returning to the topic at hand, *if* we were in fact to posit the existence of a divinity-mode that characterises each of the Trinitarian persons, as in Tri-Theism, then it seems to be the case that the Father, the Son and the Spirit’s divinity-modes would also be identity-dependent on them *and* each of the other Trinitarian persons who are part of the identity of them. That is each of the Persons would not just reciprocally “fix” (or metaphysically determine) the identity of each of the other Persons, but also that of the identity of divinity-modes of themselves, and each other. And the divinity-mode, would, in turn, characterise of each of them *and* the other Trinitarian persons who are part of the identity of them.

One could try and go along with this, but they will be faced with an issue. As if it is, in fact, the case that the Trinitarian persons' divinity-modes are identity-dependent on each of them, such that the following table is true:

Trinitarian Divinity-Mode Characterisation	Trinitarian Reciprocal Divinity-Mode Identity-Dependence
(F-Modec) The Father is characterised by a divinity-mode.	(F-Modet) The identity of the Father's divinity-mode is identity-dependent on the Father <i>and the Son and the Spirit</i> .
(S-Modec) The Son is characterised by a divinity-mode.	(S-Modet) The identity of the Son's divinity-mode is identity-dependent on the Son <i>and the Father and the Spirit</i> .
(SP-Modec) The Spirit is characterised by a divinity-mode.	(SP-Modet) The identity of the Spirit's divinity-mode is identity-dependent on the Spirit <i>and the Father and the Son</i> .

Table 1.3 Divinity-Mode Characterisation

However, if this case is in fact true, then we would have a case of each of the divinity-mode's identity conditions being indeterminate. That is the question would stand concerning *which* of the Persons' divinity-modes are each of the modes characteristics of? Is a given divinity-mode the Father's, the Son's or the Spirit's? We would thus not have good grounds to say that the identities of the modes *are* in fact *fixed*, and *determined* in a certain or specific way (i.e. as the Father's modes, the Son's modes or the Spirit's modes). And, because of this, we would thus lack further grounds to assert an identity-dependence between the divinity-mode, and the identity of the particular object that, if they are to exist, they must, in fact, depend upon.

Given this, the divinity-modes would lack, what Lowe terms a 'principle of individuation'. Where a principle of individuation, as Lowe writes, 'is a principle which tells us what is to count as one instance of a given kind' (Lowe, 1998, 74). Implored by the need to hold to the identity-dependence of a mode, given the definition of (MODE), one could continue to "bite the bullet" however and take the Father, the Son and the Spirit to collectively be the individuators of their divinity-mode *and* each other's.

However, a further problem would need to be faced here, which is that of the fact that a mode is identity-dependent upon the particular object that it *characterises*. Thus, if the Trinitarian

persons are collectively the individuators of each other's divinity-modes, and thus each of their divinity-modes being identity-dependent upon them, then each of these modes would have to also not just be dependent upon them collectively, but also characterise them collectively, as such:

- (i*) The Father and the Son and the Spirit are *characterised by* divinity-mode d_1
- (ii*) The Son and the Father and the Spirit are *characterised by* divinity-mode d_2 and
- (iii*) The Spirit and the Father and the Son are *characterised by* divinity-mode d_3

This, however, seems to transform a mode, a non-shareable, *particular* way, that characterises a single object, into a universal, that is a shareable, universal way, which can characterise more than one particular object. Therefore, we are faced with the option of either taking the divinity-modes in question to exist, and thus these modes will lack determinate identity conditions and be transformed into universal-like entities. Or, we can negate the existence of any divinity-mode in the Trinity, and thus not be presented with these problems.

However, to ward off bridging clear conceptual lines, one is discouraged from enacting this transformation. I believe that we should take the latter option and negate the existence of any divinity-mode within the Trinity. That is only in the case of *essentially identity-independent* entities,⁸⁷ as in Tri-Theism, can there, in fact, be divinity-modes (or any mode in particular) that characterise the Persons. Thus, taking this all into account, there is thus a disaffirmation of (b') of TRI-THEISM (ii)

(b') there are three divinity-modes within the Trinity.

And an affirmation of the following:

(b'') there are no divinity-modes that characterise the Father, the Son and the Spirit, within the Trinity.

Thus, in answer to our target question (Q₂) we, finally, have the following answer (with a substance being that of a categorially-independent particular object, and a particular nature being that of a mode):

⁸⁷ As we saw previously, the Persons within Tri-Theism lack any type of dependence relation between each other and thus cannot be identity-dependent upon each other.

(A₂) No, the (modified) Model does not take there to be (i) three substances and (ii) three particular natures within the Trinity.

The (modified) Model thus successfully disaffirms the two central elements ((i) – (ii)) of the statement of TRI-THEISM, that expresses the notion of there being three particular substances and natures within the Trinity, with the common nature between the Persons being a conceptual abstraction. Classical Tri-Theism was assumed as our historical conception, and standard, for tri-theism. And thus, these elements of the statement of the position, serving as criteria for the acceptance of the model as tri-theistic, allow us to take the Model to be a model which is not in line Classical Tri-Theism.

Taking this position into account, we can illustrate this further precisification of the main tenets of Classical Tri-Theism (with the “outer circle” representing the Trinity,⁸⁸ the three "squares" each representing the categorial-independence or "independence-within-their-kind" (i.e. substantiality) of that specific Person. "D1", "D2" and "D3" representing “the particular divinity-modes that characterise each of the Persons”, and "DN" representing “the common nature between the Trinitarian persons”, with the line connecting them to this nature representing the “process of abstraction” emphasising the mind dependency of the common nature (i.e. DN)):

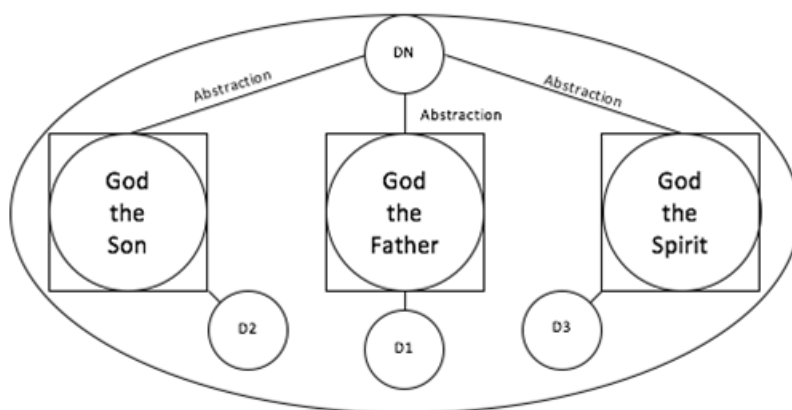


Figure 1.4 The Classical Tri-Theism model

The Model rejects *this* model of the Trinity (i.e. Tri-Theism) and instead posits that the common nature between the Persons is indeed *in-rem* (i.e. a concrete reality) and that there exists one categorially-independent particular object. That is, more fully, we have seen that the

⁸⁸ This is that the theologians within Tri-Theism do not state what the Trinity is.

Model diverges from this model on not taking the Trinitarian persons to be substances (i.e. categorially-independent; independent-within-their-kind), but solely the Trinity itself being the one substance. Furthermore, we have seen that the Model does not posit the existence of divinity-modes (i.e. no particular natures) within the Trinity. The Model thus does not exhibit the conditions of TRI-THEISM, and therefore, unlike that of Ascoutzanges and Philoponus, there is no postulation of three "Gods" made by the Model. The Model, *contra* the proponents of the Tri-Theism Objection (through the Historical Objection), is indeed out of line with Classical Tri-Theism.

Chapter Conclusion

In this chapter, I focused on addressing the Historical Objection, which is the second component of the Tri-Theism Objection (i.e. T-OBJECTION (ii)). How I sought to address this problem, in the first sub-section of this chapter, was through focusing on identifying and detailing the historical construal of Trinitarianism in the Tri-Theism trajectory, leading to a concise statement of this conception (i.e. TRI-THEISM).

In the second sub-section of this chapter, I then focused on assessing the tri-theistic credentials of the Model according to TRI-THEISM, and a clarification of the central notions that underpin this statement was made. This clarification enabled me to demonstrate that the Model disaffirms the central elements of this statement and thus fails to fit within the boundaries of Classical Tri-Theism. The Model is thus *not* tri-theistic and (the first construal of) the Historical Objection (i.e. (ii) of T-OBJECTION), fails to achieve its end. I will now proceed to show, over the next three chapters, that this conclusion can be reached within a pro-Nicene context as well.

Chapter 4: Historical Objection (B): Identifying Pro-Nicene Trinitarianism (i)

Chapter Introduction

In this chapter, I demonstrate that the Model fits with the first conception of Trinitarianism, found within the pro-Nicene theological trajectory (i.e. the one God as the Father). To achieve this end, I firstly unpack the grammatical usage of the word God to express this conception of Trinitarianism. I then proceed to detail the historical context for the usage of this term within the trajectory. From this, I then provide a clear statement that expresses this conception of Trinitarianism, termed: MONARCHY, and then examine whether the Model affirms this statement. This allowing me to reach the position of the Model affirming the first and second part of the statement. However, the latter affirmation requiring a contestable assumption (i.e. time being beginningless). And thus to ward off one needing to make this assumption I provide a modification of the Model through a utilisation of two prominent metaphysical concepts within contemporary metaphysics; metaphysical grounding and causation. This enabling me to demonstrate that, once the Model is modified in light of these concepts, the objection of this chapter can be sufficiently dealt with. This all, allowing the conclusion to be reached that the Model is in line with the first concept of monotheism found within the pro-Nicene trajectory, and thus (the second construal of) the Historical Objection is ineffective against the Model.

Section 1: The Pro-Nicene Perspective and Assessment (A)

Section Introduction

In this section, I focus on unpacking the first construal of Trinitarianism within the pro-Nicene trajectory, focused on the notion of the "one God" being the Father. In doing this, I focus, firstly, on detailing the pro-Nicene grammatical use of the term God in reference to the Father (that is the monarchy of God the Father). After this, I then turn my attention towards identifying the historical position of the trajectory, through an exploration of the conception of Trinitarianism found within it. During this exploration, I will provide a clear statement that expresses this conception of Trinitarianism, termed: MONARCHY. After this, I will then show that the Model, as it stands, does, in fact, affirm MONARCHY, but due to a contestable assumption made by the Model, the

affirmation of this statement cannot be firmly asserted. Thus, because of this, I will then state how I will deal with this problem in the next section so that the Model can clearly be taken to be monotheistic in *this* specific sense.

1.1 Pro-Nicene Trinitarianism (i): The Father as God

1.1.1 Historical Objection (B): Central Focus

The central focus of this chapter is on countering the Historical Objection, which underpins the Tri-Theism Objection. This objection asserts that the Model is outside of the "boundaries" of orthodox Trinitarianism. In assessing this objection, this chapter will focus on a first possible conception of Trinitarianism, that is found within the "orthodox" (pro-Nicene) trajectory, and grounded upon a scriptural and historical (creedal and theological) foundation. The Historical Objection, in this chapter, is thus re-construed as asserting that the Model is not in line with pro-Nicene Trinitarianism, in this first conception of it.

Thus, the correspondence between the Model and this conception will be assessed, leading to the conclusion, as a first approximation, that the Model (once necessary modifications are made) corresponds with this conception, and thus is within the "boundaries" of orthodox (pro-Nicene) Trinitarianism. The Model is thus monotheistic and the Historical Objection, as construed in this manner, does not apply to the Model.

1.1.2 Scriptural Foundation: New Testament Basis

The first component of the pro-Nicene grammatical interpretation of Trinitarianism centres on the usage of the word God in a *nominal* sense. That is, God, in this specific context, is used as a *proper name*, in reference to the Father. This position, known as the monarchy (*monarchia*) of the Father, emphasises the fact that the Father *alone* is the single source within the Trinity, and thus has *this* specific name. That is, God is *numerically* identical to the Father, and thus the Father is the *one true God*.

Now, this specific use of the word God, as a name for the Father, forwarded, the structure of the New Testament's language about the one God, as found in various biblical passages,⁸⁹ such as the following:

- (i) 'For us there is *one God, the Father*... and one Lord Jesus Christ' (1 Corinthians 8.6).
- (ii) 'And this is eternal life, that they know you, *the only true God*, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.' (John 17:3).
- (iii) 'I am ascending to *my Father and your Father, to my God and your God*' (John 20:17).
- (iv) '*The God and Father of the Lord Jesus*, he who is blessed forever,' (2 Corinthians 11:31).

These types of verses provided a basis for the development of the view that the one God, was simply the Father, as Catherine LaCugna helpfully notes that "'Father" was nearly universally a synonym for God in the New Testament' (LaCugna, 1991, 33). Now, this same position that we see within the scriptural texts is expressed within the central creeds and theologians of the pro-Nicene tradition.

1.1.3 Historical Foundation: Central Creeds

The monarchy of God the Father is central to the historical creeds of Nicaea (325CE) and Constantinople (381CE), as they unmistakably express this position in stating the correct referring expression of the members of the Trinity: 'I believe in one *God*, the Father...and in one *Lord*, Jesus Christ...and in one *Spirit*' (Tanner, 1990, 5, emphasis added). In these important creeds is, again, an identification of the one God with *the Father*. That is the referring expression for the Father is God, whilst the Son and the Spirit are designated with different expressions, based on the fact that the one God is *not* the nature (substance or essence) shared between them, but *is* identified as a person; the Father.

Now, in further explaining the position expressed by the central creeds and the scriptural texts, John Behr notes that 'the word God (*theos*) with an article (and so being used, in Greek, as a proper noun) is only applied to the one whom Jesus calls Father, the God spoken of in the scriptures' (Behr, 1999, 23, parenthesis in text). Thus, in a similar vein to its biblical and creedal usage, the pro-Nicenes emphasised the linguistic fact that when the referring

⁸⁹ All verses in this chapter, and the next chapter, are from the ESV translation.

expression; God, is used with an article it is in reference to the one God, *the Father of Jesus Christ*. And thus, linguistically and conceptually for the pro-Nicenes, Jesus Christ is to be asserted as the *Son of God*, and, therefore, is other than the only true God (Behr, 1999).

Thus, in assuming the position concerning the monarchy of the Father, the central question facing the creedal formulators was thus whether the Son could be affirmed to be as divine as the Father (*ho theos*), and so also be referred to as *theos* (Behr, 1999). The answer for the pro-Nicene's was clearly in the affirmative. As, for them, the divinity and consubstantiality of the Son and the Spirit with the Father did not transgress the boundary of the *monarchia*, through the Son and the Spirit, as stated by the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed (381), being "of the essence of *the Father*". It was the essence (or nature) of the Father that was possessed by the Son and the Spirit. Thus, as John Zizioulas, in further highlighting this position within the pro-Nicene trajectory, writes that:

Among the Greek Fathers the unity of God, the one God, and the ontological "principle" or "cause" of the being and life of God does not consist in the one substance of God but in the hypostasis, that is, the person of the Father. The one God is not the one substance but the Father, who is the "cause" both of the generation of the Son and the procession of the Spirit (Zizioulas, 1985, 40-41).

There is thus an essential asymmetry in relation between the Trinitarian persons, in the pro-Nicene trajectory: the Son and Spirit, derive their being *from* the Father; they [the Father, Son and Spirit] do not, as Behr notes, all 'derive from one common source' (Behr, 1999, 23). The one God, the Father, is the ground of being within the Trinity. For the pro-Nicenes, the *monarchia* thus did not negate the equality of the Persons within the Trinity, due to this equality finding its basis in the Father.

1.1.4 Historical Foundation: Greek Theologians

Basil of Caesarea and Gregory of Nyssa

In turning now to the Greek-speaking theologians of the pro-Nicene trajectory, specifically the Cappadocian Fathers; Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nyssa and Gregory of Nazianzus, we see

a further elucidation of the scriptural and creedal position.⁹⁰ That is, we firstly see Basil writing that ‘There is one *God and Father*, one Only-Begotten Son, and one Spirit We proclaim each of the *hypostases* singly...We have never to this present day heard of a second God’ (Basil, *Spir.*, 18.44-5 (NPF₂ 8:28)). Here we see that Basil holds to the one God as the being the Father, and thus there is no second God (be it the Son or the Spirit) that exists beside him.. That is, for Basil, the one God is not the one divine substance, as Behr writes, or ‘a notion of “divinity” which is ascribed to each person of the Trinity, nor is it some kind of unity or communion in which they all exist; the one God is the Father’ (Behr, 2004, 307).

Moreover, we then see Gregory of Nyssa as standing clearly in line with the monarchical position of his brother Basil, as he writes that ‘the God overall alone has as a special property of his *hypostasis* that is the Father and subsists from no cause, and again by this sign, he is recognised particularly’ (Gregory, *Ep.* 4., translated in: (Behr, 2004, 420)). Thus, for Gregory, in a similar vein to Basil, the “God overall” is identified as the Father, or even more poignantly, it is *God* who is identified (and individuated) as *the Father* (rather than vice-versa), with the characteristic marks of the Son and the Spirit relating directly to him (Behr, 2018). For Gregory and Basil, the identity of the one God is tied to no other entity, but the Father.

*Gregory of Nazianzus*⁹¹

Now, turning to the paradigm historical representative of this position, Gregory of Nazianzus. That is, in Gregory we see a further expression of the monarchical position of the other Cappadocians, in that the monarchy of God the Father is also central to Gregory’s trinitarian theorising. The notion of the monarchy of God the Father, for Gregory, is that of the one God being the Father who is the sole principle (*arche*), cause (*aitia*), and source (*peghe*) of the Son and the Spirit, and thus God in the *primary* sense. We see an extensive expression of this position by Gregory in *Oration* 25.15-16, which bears quoting at length:

⁹⁰ Ayres (2010) however sees some of the Latin-speaking theologians, such as Augustine as also holding to this view, where he moved between the two views of the term referring to God as the Father and the Trinity as a whole.
⁹¹ Over the past four decades, stemming from the work of E. P. Meijering (1973), there has been an interesting debate concerning the correct interpretation of Gregory’s position on the monarchy of God. Some have favoured an interpretation of the monarchy as referring to the Father alone. This has been argued for by Christopher Beeley (2007, 2008), John Behr (2004) and John Egan (1993). Whilst others have favoured an interpretation of the monarchy as referring to the indivisible being, essence or nature, of the Trinitarian persons, rather than one of the Persons alone (i.e. the Father). This has been argued for by Richard Cross (2006), John McGuckin (1994), Lewis Ayres (2004) and Thomas Torrance (1988). Though both sides of the debate have very interesting arguments and evidence in favour of their respective interpretations, in the subsequent passages, however, I will assume the correctness of the former interpretation; that the monarchy is of the Father *alone*, without further argument, and refer one to the arguments adduced by the listed theologians above.

One God, unbegotten, the Father; and one begotten Lord, his Son, referred to as God when he is mentioned separately, but Lord when he is named in conjunction with the Father, the one term on account of his nature, the other on account of his monarchy; and one Spirit proceeding, or, if you will, going forth from the Father, God to those with the capacity to apprehend things that are interrelated, but in fact resisted by the impious though so recognised by their betters and actually so predicated by the more spiritual. Neither should we place the Father beneath first principle, so as to avoid positing a first of the first, thus necessarily destroying primary existence; nor say that the Son or the Spirit is without beginning. Thus we shall avoid depriving the Father of his special characteristic. (*Gregory, Or, 25.15-16*).

Frequently in his writings, Gregory identifies God the Father as the source and cause of the other two divine individuals within the Trinity. And he sees the Father as correctly being referred to as God in the *primary* sense (i.e. is the one *true* God). As noted by Christopher Beeley, God is ‘first and foremost the Father of Jesus Christ, the Son of God; yet by virtue of their timeless generation from the Father the Son and the Spirit fully share the Father’s divine nature and are therefore also God’ (Beeley, 2007, 204-205). Gregory thus characterises the three persons of the Trinity in light of their relations of origin, where the one God is the unbegotten Father, the Lord Jesus the Son *of God*, who is *begotten by the Father*, and the Spirit *proceeds from the Father* (Beeley, 2007).

These causal relations, between the Trinitarian persons, are directed to, and derived from, the one God, the Father. Gregory is clear in distinguishing the correct usage of the referral of God within an *intra* and *extra*-Trinitarian context. In an *extra*-Trinitarian context (i.e. in respect of creation), when the Son (and the Spirit) is “mentioned separately”, the Son (and the Spirit) are also God (in a secondary sense), due to them fully possessing the divine nature, which they receive in their entirety from the Father (Beeley, 2008).

However, in an *intra*-Trinitarian context (i.e. in the eternal relations among the three divine persons of the Trinity), as Beeley notes, 'the Father is God in the primary sense, and the Son is "Lord" on account of the monarchy of God the Father (again, as they are typically proclaimed in the New Testament)' (Beeley, 2007, 206, parenthesis in text). Each of the persons can indeed be spoken of as God, due to them possessing the one divine nature (which is derived from the Father, and thus each being divine, that is God).⁹² However, when we speak of the three

⁹² More on this in Chapter 5.

together, the one God is the un-originated source, from whom the other persons derive their being. That is, the one unoriginated God the Father (Behr, 2004).

For Gregory, it is the particular characteristic (or property) of the Father to *be* the cause and source of himself (in that he is unbegotten and is thus self-existent deity) and of the Son and the Spirit (which is to say that the Father is the cause and source of the Trinity as a whole). This causal role thus grounds the linguistic claim of the Father being God in the primary sense (Beeley, 2007). That is, Gregory takes God the Father firstly to be uncaused and, secondly, to be the origin and cause of the Son and the Spirit. God the Father is the cause of the other two members of the Trinity and can rightly be held as the *sole principle* within the Godhead. The monarchy of God the Father, which, for Gregory, is his unique identifier as the “only source” and “sole principle” within the Trinity ‘proves to be the most fundamental element of his theological system’ (Beeley, 2007, 206-207). This characterisation of the three persons, for Gregory, is the primary means in which God the Father is defined and distinguished from the Son and the Spirit.

Furthermore, this means of distinguishing the Father, from the Son and the Spirit, as the sole principle, unpins a hesitancy that Gregory has for calling the Father "greater" than the other divine individuals, as he states that

I should like to call the Father the greater, because from him flows both the equality and the being of the equals (this will be granted on all hands), but I am afraid to use the word origin, lest I should make him the origin of inferiors, and thus insult him by precedence of honours. For the lowering of those who are from him is no glory to the source (*Gregory, Bap*, 40.43 (NPNF₂ 7:376)).

Gregory thus explains here, again, that the Father is identified as the origin and source within the Trinity. However, he notes that the Father is not the originator of the essence of individuals who are *inferior* to him. Rather, the Father is the source of equality within the Trinity by him generating two coequal beings who, along with all of creation, “return to him”. This “returning” of all things (i.e. creation and the other members of the Trinity) to God the Father is a dynamic expression of unity which is grounded *in* the Father (Beeley, 2007). As Gregory writes in *Oration* 42.15 ‘the union [of the Holy Trinity] is the Father from whom and to whom the order

of persons runs its course' (*Gregory, Or 42.15* (NPNF₂ 7:390) square parenthesis in the translated text).

There is an inherent order, and thus unity within the Trinity, as Gregory associates God the Father with this unifying factor. That is, the dynamic life of the Trinity constantly arises from God the Father and returns to him. There is thus unity in the Trinity because, as Beeley notes, the Son and the Spirit 'refer back to the Father as a single cause and the origin of everything that they are and do' (Beeley, 2007, 207). The scriptural allusion to the Son and the Spirit possessing the divine attributes, or being generated by the Father (in the *intra*-Trinitarian life) or sent by the Father (in the *extra*-Trinitarian missions) is referring ultimately to the Son and Spirit's derivation in the unifying source of the Father (Beeley, 2007). The monarchy of God the Father, as Beeley notes, is thus 'the foundational principle of Trinitarian logic and the fundamental dynamic that contains and gives meaning to the grammatical aspects of consubstantial unity' (Beeley, 2007, 209).

Thus, taking this all into account and in summary, the Father is the one God, that is God in the "primary sense" through the him being the sole principle (*arche*), cause (*aitia*), and source (*peghe*) of the other Trinitarian persons. That is, the position sketched out in the pro-Nicene trajectory is that of there being a distinct ordering within the Trinity; where primacy is associated with the one God the Father, who is the *primal cause* of the Son and Spirit's existence. The Son and the Spirit have their existence and essence *because* of the Father, who is the ground of unity and their cause. The monarchy of the Father is thus at the foundation of pro-Nicene Trinitarianism.

1.1.5 Summary Statement: MONARCHY

Now from this conclusion, we can succinctly state the first component of the pro-Nicene conception of Trinitarianism as such:

MONARCHY The Father is the one God. He is (i) God in the primary sense and (ii) is the sole principle within the Trinity.⁹³

⁹³ This statement embodies what Beau Branson calls the "Strong-Monarchy View", where the one God is just the Father, which entails his sole principality. For a helpful categorisation of various types of Monarchical views, see: (Branson, n.d.).

God the Father, being the sole principle within the Trinity, that is the cause of the Son and the Spirit, is thus rightly designated with the proper name God, which is the primary sense of the word (i.e. as a name). This designation of God being rightly applicable to the Son and the Spirit as well, however, this due to their relation to the Father, as their cause, and the individual in whom they receive their divinity. The Son and the Spirit are thus God in a secondary sense (i.e. as a predicate), and, therefore, in the Trinity, there is only one individual who is God, in the primary sense, the Father. Now that the first component of the pro-Nicene conception of Trinitarianism has been unpacked, I will now assess whether the Model affirms, or disaffirms, the central tenets of this view.

1.2 The Functional Monotheism Model: (Dis)affirmation of Statement

1.2.1 Central Target Questions

To accurately assess the first component of the pro-Nicene conception of Trinitarianism, and the Model's affirmation of this component, as captured by the statement of MONARCHY, it will be helpful to ask ourselves two target questions, corresponding to the central components of the statement:

(Q₁) Does the Model affirm the fact that the Father is God in the "primary sense"?

(Q₂) Does the Model affirm the fact that the Father is the sole principle within the Trinity?

Positive answers to (Q₁) and (Q₂) by the Model, would indicate an affirmation of MONARCHY, resulting in the Model being rightly classified as monotheistic, in accord with the statement of the trajectory. I will now proceed onto an assessment of the Model's answer to (Q₁) and (Q₂).

1.2.2 Assessment of (Dis)affirmation of MONARCHY⁹⁴

The Affirmation of God in the "Primary Sense"

⁹⁴ In the following, we will see that the Model does not *explicitly* and *directly* posit that the Father is God, in the primary sense and the Son and the Spirit are God in a secondary sense. However, various aspects of the Model imply that this is so. This section thus focuses on bringing this to light.

The Model maintains that the Father is God in the primary sense. The Model posits that God, specifically in Judaeo-Christian thought, can either be a proper name, that is a referring expression for a particular individual who is the unique and supremely perfect being, or it can be a common name for a kind of being who belongs to the kind deity (Swinburne, 2008). That is, firstly, a being who is uniquely identified with the referent (i.e. the proper name) God, in the first, and "primary sense", is one who fulfils the description of being the *unique* supremely perfect being. And secondly, an individual who is God (hereafter, God*) in a "secondary" sense (i.e. having a predicate/common name ascribed to them) is simply one who possess all perfections,⁹⁵ that is a supremely perfect being. An individual who is God* we can thus refer to as a divine individual (i.e. an individual who belongs to the category of deity).

Now, as the "uniqueness" of a divine individual is the primary differentiating factor between the two uses and senses of God; God and God*, one can ask what the specific meaning behind the term *unique* is? Plausibly, we can take the Model to take the notion of uniqueness in play here to be best captured by the concept of *ontological necessity*.

An ontologically necessary being, at its most basic level, would be an entity that possesses an *inexplicable intrinsic causal necessity*. As Swinburne writes that an ontologically necessary being 'is caused to exist by himself in virtue of his essence for the whole time that he exists and so for ever, and all other substances are either caused or permitted to exist by God' (Swinburne, 2016, 275). An ontologically necessary being is a divine being (i.e. God*) who has the cause of His everlasting existence within himself and is thus not dependent on any other being for his existence.

Furthermore, there can only be one ontologically necessary divine being, as one of the beings would have to be caused by the other. Given that an ontologically necessary divine being is the (direct or permitting) source of the existence of everything else, and thus this divine being would be unique, that is the *ultimate* perfect being; he is the one God. Thus, any divine being that is causally produced by this divine being would not be God (i.e. God in the first and "primary" sense) by not being ontologically necessary. However, this being would be God* (i.e. God in the sense of having the predicate of divinity ascribed to them).

⁹⁵ Which, along with Swinburne, we can reduce to this individual possessing the property of essential everlasting omnipotence (or pure, limitless, intentional power). More on this reduction in Chapter 5.

These further divine individuals would be supremely perfect, and thus possess the divine property of essential, everlasting omnipotence, like the unique supremely perfect being, but would be necessary in a different and dependent sense. This would be that each of these individuals being *causally necessary* in that the cause of their everlasting existence lying in the (inevitable) action of another; the one ontologically necessary divine being.⁹⁶

The Model identifies the Father as the one ontologically necessary divine being and the Son and the Spirit are both causally necessary divine beings. That is, the Father is God in the "primary" sense and is thus the one God, as the Model affirms that the particular characteristic of the Father is to be the *cause* and the source of *himself* (and thus be an unbegotten and self-existent deity), due to him being ontologically necessary (Swinburne, 2016). And the two other members of the Trinity; the Son and the Spirit, are not uniquely identified by this proper name, as they are not the unique supremely perfect being, but instead inevitably derive from the Father, and thus are not ontologically necessary. Thus, they are more correctly termed God* in the sense of each of them possessing the divine perfections. That is, they are God, in a secondary sense. The Model, as unpacked in my way, thus makes the distinction between the naming expression of God (in a primary sense and usage) having as its referent the Father (due to him being the unique, supremely perfect being, that is an ontologically necessary being). So, plausibly, we do have, to some extent, an affirmation of the distinction in the application of the term God (as a proper name) amongst the Trinitarian persons.

Thus, taking this into account, we can state the position of the Model as such:

- the Father is ontologically necessary and thus is God in the "primary sense."

And thus, from this, we have a positive answer to (Q₁):

(A₁) Yes, the Model does affirm the fact of the Father being God in the "primary sense".

⁹⁶ Someone might raise an objection concerning the sole principality of the Father within the Trinity and the cooperation between Him and the Son in bringing about the Spirit. However, it is clear that whatever the Son has, including the power to bring about the Spirit, is ultimately *from* the Father so any contribution that the Son makes in everlastingly bringing about the Son has as its *ultimate source* and principle; the Father. The Father is still the (ultimate) source and sole principle within the Trinity.

Therefore, with this positive answer, we see that the Model affirms the first component (i) of the statement of MONARCHY. We can now turn our attention onto an assessment of the Model's answer to (Q₂) and see if it can provide a positive answer for this as well.

The Affirmation of God as the Sole Principle

The Model (*prima facie*) maintains that the Father is the sole principle within the Trinity. The Model conceives of the Father, by also being God*, is an essentially perfectly good individual. Now, a perfectly good individual, according to the Model would inevitably perform the overall best action, if there is one, (and the overall best kind of action or a good action if there is not one). It is the overall best action to everlastingly bring about the existence of two other divine individuals (in order to instantiate the state of affairs of perfect love) and thus the Father would be the *cause* of the existence of these two individuals. The Father as an “act of essence” (i.e. an inevitable action stemming from his nature) would thus bring about the existence of a second divine individual; the Son (in order to share his love with him). And in co-operation with/through the Son, a third divine individual; the Spirit (in order for the Son and the Father to unselfishly cooperate in sharing their love with another person). Thus, as Swinburne notes in reference to the Father's causation of the Son, ‘at each moment of everlasting time *the Father* must always *cause* the Son [Spirit] to exist, and so always keep the Son [and Spirit] in being’ (Swinburne, 2008, 29, square parenthesis and emphasis added). It is the Father who, through all everlasting time, is the cause of the existence of the Son.

One can ask, however, what exactly does it *mean* for the Father to be the cause of the Son and the Spirit? As, firstly, causation is regularly taken to be diachronic, which is to say that a cause always precedes the effect in time. Swinburne himself holds to this view of causation, in stating that ‘all causal processes must operate in the *same temporal direction*, and since some causes are *earlier* than their effects, all must be’ (Swinburne, 1994, 90, emphasis added). He also writes that ‘any period of causing is always *earlier* than any effect caused, there is no simultaneous causation and no causation in a circle’ (Swinburne, 1994, 147, emphasis added).

Thus, taking this position into account, if the Father causes the Son and the Spirit to exist, then it seems to be the case that there was a time when the Son and the Holy *were not*. That is that there was a time when the Son and the Spirit did not exist. With the Father existing alone, and then, subsequently, causing the Son and the Spirit to exist. This is a position that an individual wanting to uphold pro-Nicene orthodoxy cannot hold to.

Thus, in dealing with this issue, Swinburne posits that to say that the Father (inevitably) *caused* the Son and the Spirit to exist is to say that the Father caused the Son and the Spirit to exist through a *beginningless* period of time. That is, any period, in which the Son and the Spirit exist, the Father, would have acted at an *earlier instant* to bring them about (Swinburne, 1994). There was thus not a time in which the Son and the Spirit did not exist. As for every period of beginningless time that one proceeds back to, there is an earlier moment in which the Father caused the Son and the Spirit to exist. According to Swinburne, there is thus never an instant in which the Son and the Spirit do not exist. Thus, the Model posits that the Son and the Spirit are dependent upon the causal necessitation of their existence from the Father such that if there were no Father, then there would be no Son and Spirit. The Father is the "fountainhead" "sole principle" and "source of the Trinity". The Model clearly affirms MONARCHY (and thus provides a positive answer to (Q₂)), however, in reaching this position one needs to, along with Swinburne (2016), assert also that time did not have a beginning.⁹⁷ Which is indeed a contestable position and thus one can ask if there is an alternative approach which can be provided that does not require one to take sides on this highly contested issue and can thus provide us with *firm* grounds for affirming MONARCHY?

I believe so. That is, as a first approximation, I believe that this can be done by providing an alternative conception of the sole principality of the Father. With this alternative, and the modification made to the Model by it, enabling it to fully affirm MONARCHY, without requiring one to assume a position concerning the beginning of time. The Model would thus be monotheistic in the sense developed in this chapter.

Section Conclusion

In this section, I focused on unpacking the first construal of Trinitarianism, that of the monarchy of God the Father. During this unpacking, I provided a concise statement, termed MONARCHY, which captured the pro-Nicene position concerning the first conception of Trinitarianism in the trajectory. The Model was shown to provide an affirmation of the first and second component of MONARCHY. With the latter affirmation requiring a contestable assumption to be made. I will now focus in the subsequent section on utilising a method to modify the Model, so as to enable it to

⁹⁷ I am not here arguing here that Swinburne's position is incorrect concerning time not having a beginning. However, I believe that one's position concerning a conceptually complex issue (i.e. the causation of the Son and the Spirit) should (hopefully) not require one to also assume a position concerning another conceptually complex issue (i.e. time having (or not having) a beginning).

fully affirm MONARCHY, without one needing to make this assumption. This all ultimately allowing the Model to have rightly earned its monotheistic credentials, in the first sense of the word.

Section 2: Philosophical Troubleshooting - Grounding the Monarchy of God the Father

Section Introduction

In this section, I focus on performing some troubleshooting through demonstrating that the Model, once modified, affirms the second component of the pro-Nicene conception of Trinitarianism: MONARCHY. I do this by utilising the philosophical notion of metaphysical grounding. I then, apply this notion to the issue identified in the previous section, resulting in a potential solution that brings the Model in line with the first conception of pro-Nicene Trinitarianism detailed in this chapter. This, ultimately, allowing me to conclude that the Model fits this first conception of monotheism, and thus is monotheistic in this specific sense.

2.1 Grounding as Directed-Dependency

2.1.1 Grounding: Preliminary Characterisation

Metaphysical Grounding (hereafter, grounding or ground) is regularly characterised as a primitive expression of dependence, determination or explanation.⁹⁸ This expression has been championed by "grounders" (i.e. grounding theorists) such as Kit Fine (2001 and 2012), Jonathan Schaffer (2009 and 2016a), Gideon Rosen (2010), Fabrice Correia (2010 and 2013), Benjamin Schnieder (2006), Paul Audi (2012) and Michael J. Raven (2012 and 2015) amongst others,⁹⁹ and is typically introduced by paradigm examples such as those provided by Correia and Schnieder (2012, 1):

- (1) Mental facts obtain *because of* neurophysiological facts.
- (2) Legal facts are *grounded in* non-legal, e.g. social, facts.
- (3) Normative facts are *based on* natural facts.

⁹⁸ I use the term "expression" here not to take sides on the relational/operational debate in this preliminary characterisation, which will be done below.

⁹⁹ I have not here referenced all of the works on grounding by these philosophers, but only their most influential works in the literature.

- (4) Meaning is *due to* non-semantic facts.
- (5) Dispositional properties are possessed *in virtue of* categorical properties.
- (6) What *makes* something beautiful are certain facts about the reception of its beholders.¹⁰⁰

What is of concern in these examples for grounders, is not so much the truth-value of the claims, but rather what is shared between the examples. Which is that of them jointly expressing some form of ontological priority that is related to “determination”, “dependence” or “explanation”. That is, there is a common structure in the paradigm examples above, in that they each contain a connective that divides the sentences into an antecedent (i.e. what comes before the connective), and a consequent (i.e. what comes after the connective). Where, in each case, we can say that, as Francesca Poggiolesi notes, ‘the consequent is determined, or explained or accounted by the antecedent’ (Poggiolesi, 2016, 292). That is, in other words, in each of the examples above, the antecedent provides some form of explanation for *why* the consequent obtains. The antecedent clauses seem to be *explained* by the consequent clauses, which are both connected by expressions which enable the consequent clauses to provide a *reason for*, or an *account of*, the antecedent, based on the dependence or determination of them on the consequents.

In sum, grounding is thus typically conveyed by the linguistic expressions stated above and is regularly taken as a special form of ontological priority, associated with the notions of dependence, determination or explanation. In further understanding grounding, grounders usually next focus on detailing the specific formal principles, modal entailments and the explanatory nature of the notion which helps one in further grasping the nature of it.

2.1.2 Formal Principles

Grounding is regularly taken to be governed by the following principles:

- (1) Irreflexivity: Nothing is grounded in itself.
- (2) Asymmetry: If x is grounded in y, then y is not grounded in x.
- (3) Transitivity: If x is grounded in y, and y is grounded in z, then x is grounded in z.¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰ I am not assuming here and in the rest of this chapter a unitary view of grounding, but, following (Fine, 2012), (Wilson, 2014) and (Bennett, 2017) I take grounding to not be unitary. There are many different types of “grounding” relations.

¹⁰¹ All of these formal principles have, in some way, been contested in the literature. Firstly, for issues with asymmetry see: (Rodriguez-Pereyra, 2005). Secondly, for issues with irreflexivity, see: (Jenkins, 2011). Thirdly, for issues with transitivity see (Schaffer, 2012) and (Litland, 2013).

Given these principles, grounding thus induces a “*strict*” partial order over the entities that are in its domain (Trogon, 2013).¹⁰² That is grounding gives rise to a *hierarchy of grounds*, in which the grounds of a fact (or entity), as Johannes Korbmacher notes, ‘rank strictly below the fact (or entity) itself’ (Korbmacher, 2018, 161, parenthesis added). Furthermore, one of grounds’ “founding exponents”, Jonathan Schaffer, whose thought will be further explored below,¹⁰³ specifically sees the grounding expression as a primitive *relation* that *links a more fundamental input to a less fundamental output* (Schaffer, 2017). More specifically, as Schaffer states, ground is:

a relation of directed-dependency among entities, answering to the idea that there is not just a distinction between the more and the less fundamental, but moreover a *connection* from the more to the less fundamental (Schaffer, 2017, 11, emphasis in text).

For Schaffer, there is thus an ontological ordering within reality, in that some entities are *derivative* of other, more fundamental entities. The fundamental entities of reality thus *ontologically undergird* the derivative entities and grounding is the relation which *connects* the undergirding entity to entities that are at a higher level in the structure of reality. Thus, again, within this perspective, there is a *hierarchical view of reality* that is ordered by priority in nature (Schaffer, 2009).¹⁰⁴ By grounding thus connecting more to less fundamental entities, it thereby imposes direction and structure over what there is (Schaffer, 2016a).¹⁰⁵ Grounding, within this specific conception of it, is thus a directed relation.

2.1.3 Modal Pattern

Grounding is also taken to be governed by the following principles that express a modal pattern:

¹⁰² For arguments against ground being a “strict” order, see: (Rodriguez-Pereyra, 2015). For a defence of ground as a “strict” order, see: (Raven, 2013). Furthermore, in further characterising grounding, grounders also distinguish between the full/partial and mediate/immediate ground. For an explanation of this distinction, see: (Fine, 2012). For a similar, but slightly different distinction provided by Schaffer (2016a), see: below.

¹⁰³ For a historical explanation of Schaffer’s role (with Fine and Rosen) in developing (or re-discovering) the notion of ground, see: (Raven, 2020).

¹⁰⁴ I have assumed, along with (Schaffer, 2009), that ground is a relation that connects entities from any ontological category. For a different, but highly influential conception of ground, that does not take it to be a relation, but a sentential operator that has facts within its purview, see: (Fine, 2012).

¹⁰⁵ This notion of “undergirding” and “structure” will be further detailed in a fundamentality context in Appendix 3.

- (1) Non-monotonicity: if x is grounded by y it does not follow that x is grounded by y and any other fact r.¹⁰⁶
- (2) Hyperintensionality: If x is grounded by y it does not follow that x is grounded by any fact that is intensionally equivalent to x.¹⁰⁷
- (3) Necessitarianism: if x grounds y then x necessitates y.¹⁰⁸

Grounding, as a relation of dependence, is thus one that entails a necessary dependence of the grounded on the grounds. That is, grounding is a *necessitation* relation, in that it carries modal entailment (Trogon, 2013). Grounders guarantee what they ground. However, they do it, through this relation, in a fine-grained, rather than a coarse-grained manner.

2.1.4 Explanatory Pattern

The phrases “in virtue of”, “because”, ‘make’, etc., all centre around the idea that grounds *explain* the grounded. Grounding, as noted above, utilises these types of locutions, and thus has an intimate relation to (metaphysical) explanation. Grounders, as highlighted by Raven (2015) and Anna-Sofia Maurin (2019), see this relation to explanation as coming in the following two forms:

- (4) Separatism: grounding and explanation are distinct.
- (5) Unionism: grounding and explanation are united.

For, one who holds to separatism, explanation *tracks* grounding, or, conversely, grounding, in some sense, *backs* explanation, but is not identical to explanation. However, for one who holds to unionism, grounding is, by nature, an explanatory relation, that is grounding and explanation, are in, some sense, identifiable. On both views grounding *entails* the explicability of the grounded on the basis of its grounds (Schaffer, 2016a). Thus, Grounding has, under both views, an intimate relationship with explanation.

2.1.5 Summary: Directed-dependency Relation

¹⁰⁶ For an explanation of the non-monotonicity of ground, see: (Audi, 2012), (Rosen, 2010) and (Raven, 2015).

¹⁰⁷ For an explanation of the hyperintensionality of ground, see: (Jenkins, 2011) and (Schaffer 2009 and 2016a).

¹⁰⁸ For an extended explanation of necessitarianism, see: (Trogon, 2013). And for issues with it, see: (Leuenberger, 2014) and (deRosset, 2010). For defences of it, see: (Audi, 2012), (Cameron, 2008), (Correia, 2011), (Rosen, 2010), (Witmer, Butchard and Trogon, 2005), (Dancy, 2004), (Schaffer, 2010) and (Schnieder, 2006).

Taking this all into account, we thus best capture the nature of grounding, following Schaffer, by terming it a *directed-dependency* relation (i), in that it induces a partial order over the entities that it relates, and thus is directive. Furthermore, within this partial order, the grounding relation *necessitate* the dependent grounded relatum (ii), and, by this, the relation explains, or at least back a certain kind of metaphysical *explanation* (iii). Grounding is thus a directed, necessitating and explanatory relation. Taking this construal of the relation into account, we can now apply it to the task at hand.

2.1.6 Grounding Phase-One: Trinitarian Analysis

Taking into account the notion of grounding elucidated above, we thus can posit that for the Father to be the sole principle of the Son and the Spirit, is for the Father to *ground* the Son and the Spirit. That is:

(SP₁) The Father is the sole principle of the Son and the Spirit =_{df} The Father grounds the Son and the Spirit's existence.

Now, as grounding is conceived here as a directed-dependency relation, which is that of it being a directed, necessitating and explanatory relation, we can thus understand the nature of the processional relation (i.e. the grounding relation) between the Father, the Son and the Spirit as thus:

- (1) Directed: the processional relation is (i) irreflexive; the Son and the Spirit do not ground themselves, (ii) asymmetric; the Son and the Spirit do not mutually ground the Father, and (iii) transitive; if the Father grounds the Son, and the Son grounds the Spirit, then the Father grounds the Spirit, this all inducing a partial order within the Trinity, ordered from the Father to the Son and the Spirit.
- (2) Necessitated: the Father's existence necessitates the Son and the Spirit's existence; if the Father exists the Son and the Spirit exists as well, without any other entities necessarily existing alongside them
- (3) Explanatory: the Son and the Spirit exist in virtue of the Father's existence, which ultimately backs an explanation for their existing as they do.

The grounding relation between Father, Son and the Spirit, through being directed, necessitating and explanatory (with the formal principles, modal and explanatory pattern

governing it), results in there being a directed-dependency between the Son and the Spirit on the Father, who as their sole grounds, is thus the sole principle within the Trinity. Thus, to say that the Father grounds the Son and the Spirit, is to say that there is a specific structure within the Trinity that stems *from* the Father *to* the other Persons. The Father as sole principle undergirds the existence of the Son and the Spirit, as their ground. We thus have a better grasp of the nature of the asymmetrical relation between the Father, the Son and the Spirit, through re-construing it as a grounding relation. We do not face any diachronic issues, as grounding is synchronic.¹⁰⁹ Furthermore, we do not have to analogise the relation (i.e. there is no “stretching” going on), as the Father is the *literal* grounds of the other Trinitarian persons. Grounding thus provides a clear way forward. However, aside from these issues, one can ask, if much has actually been achieved by re-construing the Trinitarian relation as a grounding relation?

That is, in utilising the method of adducing examples, detailing the formal properties/patterns of grounding and applying it within a Trinitarian context, we have indeed gone a long way towards further elucidating the nature of the grounding, and thus the Trinitarian relation. However, as it stands, it still seems as if a fuller explication needs to be made before a successful modification of the Model has been made.

That is, as it stands, it still seems as if we are utilising a coarse-grained notion that is not fit to help us in our task of elucidating the nature of the asymmetric relation between the Trinitarian persons, which a more fine-grained one will be needed to do. The notion of grounding, that has been explored in this section, as Jessica Wilson (2014) and, more importantly, Schaffer (2016b) himself has noted, is that one has merely highlighted the fact of there being a simple on/off grounding connection, in the examples above, without providing any natural connection to follow-up *how* questions.

That is, the various theories of ground, explicated through paradigm examples and the formal principles, modal and explanatory patterns, stop short of precisely stating exactly *how* the grounding connection works. Instead, simply settling for a statement that there is a relation and connection between the entities (as is seen in Schaffer (2009)'s theory) or facts (as is seen in Fine (2012), Rosen (2010) and Audi's (2012) theories) under question. Thus, in our context, we can take there to be a relation and connection between the fundamental reality within the

¹⁰⁹ This is specifically due to its connection to explanation and metaphysical laws. More on this below.

Trinity; the Father, and the derivative entities of the Son and the Spirit. However, we have not truly found a means to fully make sense of the notion of the sole principality of the Father. As the approach thus far, enables us to discover what entities are grounded by what (i.e. the Son and the Spirit are grounded by the Father), but it does not enable us to answer the more interesting question of *how* this is so.

To do this, one must find a means to precisely state the underlying pattern of association between the members of the Trinity. The task that is left is thus that of precisely stating *how exactly the grounding relation works*. Schaffer (2016) and Alastair Wilson (2018a, 2018b) have both provided a plausible way to do this by explicating the notion of grounding in the *image of causation*. And thus, through an employment of this, we can also detail the nature of the grounding relation between the Father and the other members of the Trinity, in this image of causation. This ultimately allowing MONARCHY to be fully affirmed in a manner that is also very close to the original causal approach provided by the pro-Nicene trajectory. To this task, we now turn.

2.2. Grounding as Metaphysical Causation (i)

2.2.1 Metaphysical Causation: Preliminary Characterisation

According to Alastair Wilson (2018a), grounding is a type of causation; metaphysical causation. With the grounding relation thus being a special case of the causal relation, where, as Wilson notes, 'whenever A grounds B, A is a (metaphysical) cause of B and B is a (metaphysical) effect of A' (Wilson, 2018a, 724, parenthesis in text). Taking grounding to be metaphysical causation, thus requires one to establish a distinction between two types causation:

- (i) metaphysical causation and
- (ii) nomological causation

The distinction between these two forms of causation is based upon the manner in which the *causal sufficiency relation* is mediated (Wilson, 2018a). That is if a specific instance of the causal sufficiency relation is mediated by a law of nature, then it is to be taken as an instance of nomological causation. However, if it is not mediated by a law of nature, (but instead by a law of metaphysics), then it is to be taken as an instance of metaphysical causation (Wilson, 2018a). Thus, Wilson, in illustrating this distinction, writes:

That the throwing of the stone is a sufficient cause of the breaking of the window is mediated by the laws of nature; but that the existence of Socrates is a sufficient cause of the existence of Singleton Socrates is not mediated by any law of nature (Wilson, 2018, 724).

Metaphysical causation and nomological causation are thus different species of the same genus, causation, with the distinction between them being based solely on their mediation by a law of nature, or the lack thereof. Now, it is important to note that taking grounding to simply *be* a form of causation is in contradistinction to that of Schaffer who takes grounding and causation to be solely analogous relations, in that they are separate species within the genus of *directed-dependency relations* (Schaffer, 2016a).¹¹⁰ In Schaffer's approach, which we will draw from below, grounding and causation are closely aligned but are frankly two different relations. Thus, one might ask why should we, along with Wilson, take grounding to be a type of causation, that is, metaphysical causation?

The first benefit for taking grounding to be metaphysical causation (henceforth, G=MC)¹¹¹ is specifically for its helpfulness for the theological task at hand. In that it allows us to provide an accurate model and interpretation of the pro-Nicenes' position concerning the relation between the Trinitarian persons. That is, we can posit that the relation between the Father and the other Persons is a causal relation, as the pro-Nicenes had done, rather than positing a different relation. However, as this is a specific type of causal relation (i.e. a metaphysical/grounding relation), we can do this without incurring the (diachronic and clarity) issues faced by the original interpretation of this relation provided by the Model. We thus do not need to re-interpret the processional relation within the Trinity in a non-causal way to make the necessary modifications to the Model.

The second benefit, for taking G=MC, is that of its theoretical benefits. Where firstly, G=MC is an ideologically parsimonious thesis, in that one primitive notion is in play here; that of causation, rather than two as in the case of Schaffer (Wilson, 2018a). Furthermore, on this point, we can also conceptually grasp the grounding relation better, as will be shown below, through simply conceptualising it according to the best causal theories that are on offer (Wilson, 2018a). Secondly,

¹¹⁰ It is also in contradistinction to the influential work of Karen Bennett (2017) who takes grounding and causation to be closely aligned, in that they share a family resemblance, that enables them to be counted amongst the resemblance class of building relations. For a further explanation of the nature of this “family resemblance” in Bennett’s “building framework”, see: Appendix 3.

¹¹¹ This expression was proposed by (Wilson, 2018a)

G=MC allows for a unified theory of explanation to be developed between explanations within the scientific realm metaphysical realms, as the latter type of explanation is simply a *type* of causal explanation that focuses on identifying metaphysical causes (Wilson, 2018a). All explanations can thus be taken to be causal explanations (Wilson, 2018a).

However, though these reasons are interesting, if we put these theological and theoretical benefits to the side, one can ask what *independent reasons* do we have for taking G=MC? Such reasons can be found in what Wilson, (and Schaffer himself), term the *systematic analogy* between grounding and nomological causation.¹¹² That is, grounding and nomological causation have many important features in common that lead one to infer the explanation of this striking similarity to be that of G=MC. Grounding and nomological causation are simply different ways for the causal relation to be mediated and thus obtain (Wilson, 2018a). These points of analogy, centre around four areas:

- (i) Content
- (ii) Internal Structure
- (iii) External Connection
- (iv) Formal Structure

These four areas will now be unpacked, which establish a basis to take G=MC and the relation within the Trinity to be a (metaphysical) causal relation. This in all, allowing us to clarify the sole principality of the Father, as interpreted by the (modified) Model.

2.2.2 Systematic Analogy – General Structure

2.2.2.1 Systematic Analogy (i): Content

The first support from analogy for the identification of grounding with causation, comes through the similarity between the type of relations that grounding and causation are and the similarity of the methodological status between the two relations. This similarity in content is thus the following:

¹¹² Though Schaffer affirms the following systematic analogy, he does not draw from it, as Wilson does, the further conclusion of G=MC. Nevertheless, Schaffer's identification of this systematic analogy will play a large part below in providing the evidential basis for Wilson's thesis, and the position of this section, that G=MC.

(i) Type of Relation and Methodological Status

Type of Relation and Methodological Status

The similarity between grounding and causation, in regards to content, is that of the two relations, as noted above, *intuitively feeling* like “directed-dependency relations”. Furthermore, some philosophers have contested the methodological status of grounding and causation, which, in itself, provides some evidence for the analogical link between both relations (Wilson, 2018a).

That is, firstly grounding and causation have both historically been highly contested notions, in that causation has attracted suspicion from certain philosophers who, having assumed an empiricist view of reality, have thus been sceptical concerning the reality of certain forms of causation (Wilson, 2018a).¹¹³ Grounding has also attracted suspicion from certain philosophers who have seen the notion as being an ultimately unintelligible or esoteric notion (Wilson, 2018a).¹¹⁴ The contestability of both relations on these fronts thus provides, at least, an initial pointer towards a potentially deeper analogical link. This deeper link will now be highlighted.

2.2.2.2 Systematic Analogy: Internal Structure (A) – Logical Structure

The second support from analogy for the identification of grounding with causation, comes from the possession of the same logical properties by the relations, the challenges raised by philosophers against the relations possessing these properties, and the logical relationship between the relations, which ultimately emphasises an analogous structure between the relations. These points of similarity come in two forms:

- (ii) Logical Properties and Challenges
- (iii) Logical Relationship

Logical Properties and Challenges

The first similarity between grounding and causation, in regards to internal structure, is that of grounding and causation both being partial orders. As the grounding relation, within its

¹¹³ For an argument in favour of scepticism concerning the reality of counterfactual causation, see: (Hume, 1748).

¹¹⁴ For an argument against the intelligibility of grounding, see: (Daly, 2012).

incomplete and complete/total forms, and the causal relation, within its incomplete and complete/total forms, are regimented and taken to be, irreflexive, asymmetric, and transitive relations (Wilson, 2018a).¹¹⁵ Thus, the logical properties reveal an *identity* between the logical structure of the relations. In addition to this, grounding and causation's logical properties have both been challenged in structurally similar ways, which further reveals the deep analogy between them. That is, firstly, the logical property of transitivity has been challenged within a causal and grounding context through early pre-emption cases (Wilson, 2018a).¹¹⁶ Secondly, the logical property of asymmetry has been challenged within a causal and grounding context through the apparent possibility of causal and grounding loops.¹¹⁷ Thirdly, the logical property of irreflexivity has been challenged within a causal context, through the apparent possibility of time-travelling bootstrapping cases, and in a grounding context through the apparent possibility of the obtaining of an identity relation between physical and mental states (Wilson, 2018a).¹¹⁸ Both relations have thus faced the *same* type of challenges concerning the possession of their various logical properties.

Furthermore, the challenges to grounding and causation's possession of their logical properties can also both be responded to in structurally similar ways (Wilson, 2018a). As, firstly for the transitivity failures, these challenges can be responded to, within both contexts, by either: (a) rejecting the premises, that is rejecting that existence of putative cases of non-transitive causation and grounding, (b) embracing the counterintuitive conclusions, that is embracing the transitivity of both relations only in a restricted context, (c) adopting a contrastive construal of both relations, or (d) adopting an interventionist theory of causation and grounding, which allows there to be transitivity failures for both relations, and enables one to specify when the relations *will* be transitive (Wilson, 2018a).¹¹⁹

Secondly, for the asymmetry and irreflexivity failures, these challenges can also be responded to, within both contexts, in a similar way to the above challenge, by either: (a) rejecting the premises, that is the existence of putative cases of symmetrical and reflexive causation and grounding, or (b) embracing the asymmetry and irreflexivity of both relations solely within a

¹¹⁵ More on these forms below. Furthermore, Schaffer (2005) also sees both relations being able to be given a contrastive regimentation.

¹¹⁶ See: (Hall, 2004) for an explanation of these cases.

¹¹⁷ For an explanation of causal loops, see: (Lewis, 1979) For an explanation of grounding loops, see: (Thompson, 2016) and (Barnes, 2018).

¹¹⁸ For an explanation of how mind/brain identity theory, supports irreflexivity failures in a grounding context, see: (Jenkins, 2011).

¹¹⁹ For (a) see: (Paul, 2000), for (b), see: (Lewis, 2000), for (c), see: (Schaffer, 2005) and (Schaffer, 2012) and for (d), see (Woodward, 2003).

restricted context (Wilson, 2018a). Thus, that these challenges can be responded to in structurally similar ways, again provides evidence for their deep correlation.

Logical Relationship

The second similarity between grounding and causation, in regards to their internal structure, is that of the evidential support for their being a logical relationship between both relations. That is, the evidence concerning the logical relationship between grounding and causation that we possess is to be as expected *if G=MC* (Wilson, 2018a). That is, assuming, firstly, that grounding and (nomological) causation are simply different ways for the causal relation to hold. Secondly, that the genus-level notion of causation is asymmetric, and, thirdly that time-travel cases are indeed logically impossible, then, the evidence that we possess supports a logical correlation between both relations, in that, plausibly if one of the relations holds in one direction, then the other cannot hold in the other direction (Wilson, 2018a). Thus, it seems to be the case that there cannot be mutual causes and grounds of a collection of entities, with the reason for this being, again, the deep analogical link and correlation between the two relations.

2.2.2.3 Systematic Analogy: Internal Structure (B) – Application to Cases

The second support from analogy for the identification of grounding with causation, comes from an application of the relations to specific cases which further emphasises an analogous structure between the relations. These points of similarity come in three forms:

- (i) Type/Token Distinction and Component/Net Distinction
- (ii) Contributing Factors Distinction
- (iii) Screening Off and Path-Analysis

Type/Token Distinction and Component/Net Distinction

The first similarity between grounding and causation, in regards to its applicability to cases, is that of the possibility of a type/token and component vs net distinction being identifiable in the cases in which the relations are applied to. Thus, in applying grounding and causation relations to a given case, one can firstly distinguish between a *type and token level distinction*. As, for causation, in the type level context, for example, one can state that *generally* short circuits cause fires, and in the grounding context, one can state that *generally* the chemical elements of H, H, and O, when

arranged correctly, ground water (Schaffer, 2016a). And, for causation, in the token level context, one can state, for example, that the short circuit *in my kitchen* caused the fire, and, for grounding, in the token level context, these chemical elements of H, H, and O molecules, arranged correctly, collectively ground *that drop of water under my microscope* (Schaffer, 2016a).

Furthermore, in applying grounding and causation relations to a given case, one can also distinguish a further distinction between a *component vs net distinction*. Where, for causation, one can identify that birth control pills, for example, are a mixed cause of thrombosis where, one the one hand, it increases the chances of contracting thrombosis, by possessing chemical components that increase estrogen levels (Schaffer, 2016a). However, on the other hand, one can see that it also reduces the chances of contracting thrombosis, through possessing chemical components that prevent pregnancy. The interaction of these components, and their effects within a causal context, can be illustrated as such:

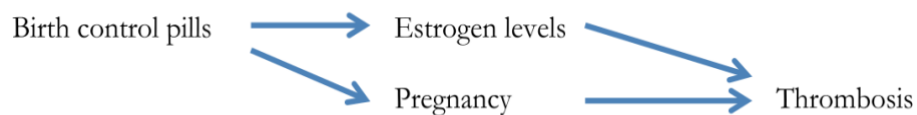


Figure 2.1 Type/Token (C) (Schaffer, 2016a, 55)

Taking into account these components of the pills, the overall net effect of the interaction of the components, ultimately having a preventative effect on the individual (Schaffer, 2016a). Similarly, for the grounding relation, one can identify that alcohol, for example, can be a *mixed ground* of a person’s mood, where, on the one hand, it possesses chemical constituents that, when ingested, ground some neural states within a person that can lead to a person feeling happy (Schaffer, 2016a). However, on the other hand, through it possessing these chemical components, it also grounds some other neural states, that leads to a person feeling depressed. The interaction of these components, and their effects within a grounding context, can also be illustrated as such:



Figure 2.2 Type/Token (G) (Schaffer, 2016a, 55)

Taking into account these components of alcohol, the overall net effect of the interaction of the components, in most cases, ultimately having a depressive effect on the individual (Schaffer, 2016a).

Contributing Factors Distinction

The second similarity between grounding and causation, in regards to its applicability to cases, is that of the possibility of a contributing factors distinction being identified in the cases in which the relations are applied to. That is, in applying grounding and causation relations to a given case, one can make a tri-partite distinction between incomplete/partial factors, complete/full factors, and total factors, when both relations are identified (Schaffer, 2016a). Where, for the causal relation, in a case for example, in which four individuals are in a team of two and are having boat race, let's, following Schaffer (2016a), name these four individuals, who are each in a pair: Ann and Ben and Clare and Dave. And let's say that both of the pairs cross the finish line at the same time, causing an overdetermination of the breaking of the tape at the finish line. As illustrated below:

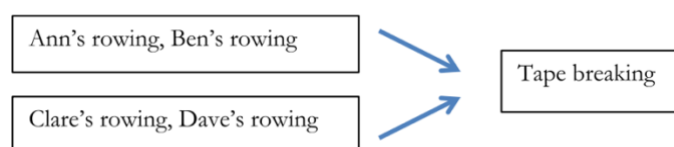


Figure 2.3 Contributing Factors (C)

(Schaffer, 2016a, 56)

Then, we can distinguish between three different types of causal contribution that led to the breaking of the tape. Where firstly, taking the first individuals; Ann and Ben, as examples, their rowing together forms a *complete cause* of the breaking of the tape (Schaffer, 2015). Secondly, if we take one of the individuals, Ann, by herself, her rowing is an *incomplete cause*. And, thirdly, if we take all of the individuals; Ann and Ben and Clare and Dave, then all of their rowings, together, would form the *total cause* of the tape breaking (Schaffer, 2016a).

Now, in a similar vein, for the grounding relation, in a less elaborate case for example, in which we have two molecules, where we take, following Schaffer (2016a) again, the first molecule to be a molecule of sulphuric acid (H₂SO₄) and the second molecule to be a molecule of hydrochloric acid (HCl) (Schaffer, 2015). And let's say that both of the molecules are paired together (non-temporally) resulting in an overdetermination of the acidity of a compound.

Illustrated as such:

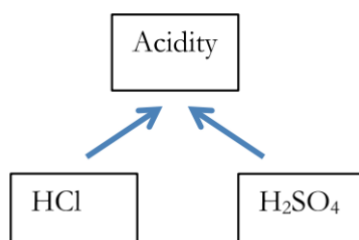


Figure 2.4 Contributing Factors (G)

(Schaffer, 2016a, 56)

Then, we can also distinguish between three different types of grounds that ground the acidity of the compound. Where firstly, taking the H₂SO₄ molecule as an example, its atoms; 2 H atoms, 1 S atom and 4 O atoms, would together form a *complete ground* of the acidity of the compound (Schaffer, 2016a). Secondly, if we take one of the atoms of the H₂SO₄ molecule, the S atom, it itself, would be an *incomplete ground* of the acidity of the compound. And, thirdly, if we take all of the individual atoms of each of the molecules; for the H₂SO₄ molecule, 2 H atoms, 1 S atom and 4 O atoms and, for the HCl molecule, one H atom and one Cl atom, then all of the molecules, together, would form the *total ground* of the acidity of the compound (Schaffer, 2016a).

We thus see in these cases here, a distinction being made between an incomplete, complete and total ground of a given entity, which is analogous to the distinction between the incomplete, complete and total cause of a given effect. With the complete and total ground/cause, being sufficient to ground an entity/bring about the effect, and the incomplete ground/cause contributing to the grounding the entity/bringing about of the effect, but lacking in sufficiency (Wilson, 2018a). Thus, we can identify some form of correlation here and take the notions of total and full ground to be best construed as the *sufficient* metaphysical cause of an entity and partial ground as being best construed as the *contributory* metaphysical cause of an entity (Wilson, 2018a).

Screening-off and Path-Analysis

The third similarity between grounding and causation, in regards to its applicability to cases, is that of the possibility of a type of “screening off” being identified in the cases, and the possibility of also performing a similar path analysis of the cases in which the relations are applied to. Thus, for causation, in a case for example, where there is a collision of air masses

that causes an updraft in the sky which then causes both lighting and thunder to occur (Schaffer, 2016a). Illustrated as such:

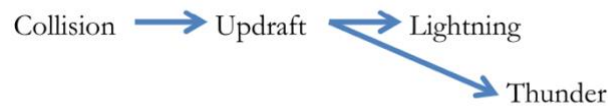


Figure 2.5 Screening-off (C)

(Schaffer, 2016a, 56)

We can plausibly take the lightening to be *independent* of some of its causes (i.e. the air collision) and its effects (i.e. the thunder). That is, as long as the updraft is present, then it would continue to exist, even if the thunder or collision ceases to exist. Similarly, for the grounding relation, in a case, for example, where a physical state grounds a neural state, which, in turn, grounds a given belief and desire. Illustrated as such:

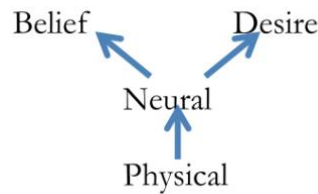


Figure 2.6 Screening-off (G)

(Schaffer, 2016a, 56)

We can also plausibly take the belief to be *independent* of some of its grounds (i.e. the physical state) and what it (plausibly) partly grounds (i.e. the desire). That is, as long as the neural state is present, then it would continue to exist, even if the physical state or the desire ceases to exist. Additionally, in both cases we can perform a path analysis of both relations where, in the causal context, we can analyse this state, mapping out the path leading to the occurrence of lighting, via the updraft which is caused by the collision of air masses. And, in the grounding context, we can also, analogously, analyse this state, mapping out the path leading to the existence of the belief, via the neural state which is grounded by the physical state. Thus, from all of these cases, and the shared distinctions highlighted by them, we can again take the grounding and causation link to be emphasised and a further establishment of a deep analogy between grounding and causation.

2.2.2.4 Systematic Analogy (iii): External Connection

The third point of support from analogy for the identification of grounding with causation, comes through the common external connections between the two relations. These connections come in two forms:

- (i) Connection to Laws and Explanation
- (ii) Connection to Necessity and Counterfactuals

Connection to Laws and Explanation

The first similarity between grounding and causation, in regards to their external connections, is that of both relations being mediated by laws and both relations importantly "backing" explanation. That is, for the causal relation, in a case of token causation, there is a mediation of this causal act by laws of nature that connect events of relevant types, across time, and are normally taken to be generalisations that act as formative principles. Similarly, the grounding relation, in cases of token grounding, the grounding act is also taken to be mediated by laws, but these laws are the laws of metaphysics that connect entities of various types, across ontological levels, and are also normally taken to be generalisations that act as formative principles (Wilson, 2018a).¹²⁰ That these two relations are governed in this way, provide further evidence of some form of correlation between both relations, with a distinction between them solely being locatable at the law level.

From this interaction of grounding and causation with their specific laws, we also see a further analogy, between them, in the way in which both relations figure in explanations, that is they "back" explanation, without being identified with those explanations (Wilson, 2018a).¹²¹ More fully, grounding entails the explicability of the grounded on the basis of its grounds, and causation entails the explicability of the effect on the basis of its cause. Thus, for example, if one wants to grasp the fact that an H₂O molecule is present, and one is seeking a *diachronic* causal explanation for this, then one would cite the relevant chemical laws, the previous events in which an H, another H and an O atom were combined and that these atoms were exposed to

¹²⁰ For arguments for the existence of metaphysical laws, see: (Rosen, 2010) and (Schaffer, 2018).

¹²¹ That is, assuming Separatism, as noted previously.

a spark (Schaffer, 2016a). Thus, the combination of the H, H and O atoms and the exposition of these atoms to a spark *caused* the H₂O molecule to form.

However, if one is seeking a *synchronic* metaphysical of this specific fact, then one would, firstly, cite the relevant metaphysical laws, secondly, the fact of an H, another H, and an O atom being present, and, thirdly, the fact that these atoms have been arranged and bonded in the right way (Schaffer, 2016a). In this case, the H, H and O atoms ground the H₂O molecule. Thus, we see here a diachronic causal explanation would thus cite the previous events, mediated through a law of nature, that played a part in *causing* the given event to happen. However, a synchronic metaphysical explanation would instead cite the more fundamental source, mediated through a law of metaphysics, which grounds the given entity at that specific time. Grounding thus serves to back a distinctive type of metaphysical explanation, and causation serves to back a distinctive type of physical explanation. That grounding and causation are related to explanation in this way further extend our understanding of the way that the two relations are seamlessly correlated.

Connection to Necessity and Counterfactuals

The second similarity between grounding and causation, in regards to their external connections, is that of both relations being related themselves to some type of necessity and that of certain counterfactuals being connected to them. Thus, as noted above, grounding and causation are both relations that are mediated by laws and are conceptualised as generalisations and formative principles. Given this, for causation, there seems to be a causal necessity associated with the casual relationship. This causal necessity is one that is established by the laws of nature, and govern what, and how, entities figure as causes and effects (Schaffer, 2016a). Similarly, for the grounding relation, there is also a form of necessity associated with it, that of metaphysical necessity, which is a necessity established by the laws of metaphysics, and governs what, and how, entities are grounded (Schaffer, 2016a). We thus have two different, but related forms of necessity for both relations.

Off of this basis, grounding and causation are both tightly connected to conditionals. Where, causation is intimately tied to counterfactuals, in a manner that this relation is firstly best elucidated through a counterfactual dependence theory.¹²² And, secondly, the laws of nature,

¹²² For this type of theory see, (Lewis, 1973) and (Woodward, 2003).

which provide the basis for the causal necessity of the causal relation, support counterfactuals in a causal context (Wilson, 2018a). Again, we have a similarity here for the grounding relation, as grounding is also intimately tied to counterfactuals, in a manner that firstly, it also is best elucidated through a counterfactual dependence theory, as will be shown below (Wilson, 2018a). And secondly, in a similar manner to causation, the metaphysical laws, which provide the basis for the metaphysical necessity of the grounding relation, supports counterfactuals in a grounding context. Taking this into account with the previous results, it seems to be quite clear that the analogical link between grounding and causation is very well evidenced.

One, however, could attempt to sever this link, which has been shown above to run deep, through highlighting the (apparent) fact of their being clear *disanalogies* between the notions. That is, as it is quite apparent that grounding, as noted previously, is taken to firstly be a synchronic relation, in that it relates entities at a given time. Secondly, it is a relation that links fundamental entities to non-fundamental entities, and thirdly it is a necessitating relation, in that the grounds necessitate the grounded. However, causation, on the other hand, is taken to firstly be a diachronic relation, in that it relates events across time. Secondly, it is a relation that does not link entities across ontological levels and, thirdly, it is a relation that is contingent, in that a cause does not *metaphysically* necessitate its effect, in the way that the grounding relation does. Thus, the question can be asked, do these clear dissimilarities outweigh the evidence for their similarity adduced above?

I believe not, as these disanalogies only apply, *if* grounding and causation are assumed to be separate relations from the onset. That is, if we instead take grounding, that is metaphysical causation, and nomological causation, to each *be a* form causation, that are distinguished *because* of the way in which they are mediated, then these dissimilarities and distinctions between the relations are in fact to be expected (Wilson, 2018a). As noted above, nomological causal dependencies are mediated by laws of nature, which are, usually, taken to, firstly, relate events across time, and thus these causal dependencies are expected to be diachronic (Wilson, 2018a). Secondly, nomological causal relations structure the world with respect to time, which again, is because of their mediation by laws of nature, which, as just noted, relate entities across time, and thus this temporal ordering is again to be expected. Thirdly, laws of nature are usually taken to be metaphysically contingent, so, as they mediate nomological causal dependencies, there is, again, an expectation that these dependencies should be contingent as well (Wilson, 2018a).

However, as laws of nature do not mediate the metaphysical causal dependencies of grounding, that is, they are instead mediated by laws of metaphysics, the metaphysical causal dependencies should then be expected to be different from the nomological causal dependencies in the ways that have been identified. That is, firstly they are expected to be synchronic rather than diachronic (Wilson, 2018a). Secondly, they are expected to structure the world according to fundamentality, rather than time. And, thirdly, a sufficient metaphysical cause, that is a complete/total ground, can indeed be expected to necessitate the entity that it grounds, rather than only contingently, as in a nomological causal context (Wilson, 2018a).

Therefore, the apparent disanalogies, detailed above, do not sever the link between grounding and causation, but, in fact, further confirm our expectations. That is the content, internal structure, application to cases, and external connections (and apparent disanalogies) provide a good basis for us to take the deep analogy between grounding and causation seriously. However, even more than this, once the last form of analogy has been provided, we will indeed have good "grounds" to take the depth of analogy as strong evidence in favour of grounding, simply being (metaphysical) causation (G=MC). Thus, onto the fifth, and final, strand of evidence for the systematic analogy between grounding and causation.

2.3 Grounding as Metaphysical Causation (ii)

2.3.1 Structural Equation Models: Preliminary Characterisation

As has been shown above, there is a *prima facie* case for their being a systematic analogy between grounding and causation. However, this systematic analogy between grounding and causation can be further extended in such a manner, as to provide, together with previously adduced evidence, an *ultima facie* case for this systematic analogy, and, because of this, there are "grounds" to in fact take grounding to be causation. Now, how we can complete this case is through developing a tractable grounding model within a formal causal framework, that will enable us to ascertain further evidence for the deep grounding and causation link. Providing further evidence for the general thesis grounding just is causation; metaphysical causation (G= MC).

Now, one of the most prominent formalisms in the contemporary literature on causation, and which will serve our task here well, is that of the formalism of Structural Equation Models (hereafter, SEM), significantly developed within a causal context by Judea Pearl (2009), Christopher

Hitchcock (2001) and James Woodward (2003). This formalism, as developed by these individuals, and developed within a grounding context by Schaffer (2016a) and Wilson (2018a), can serve as a template for causation and a framework for further understanding the internal and formal structure of *metaphysical* causation (Schaffer, 2016a).

The primary advantage of SEMs, according to Schaffer, is that of the models providing the most precise method for detailing causal relationships between entities, with the core aspects of the conceptual structure provided by SEMs include the following:

- (i) An identification of independent conditions (endogenous variables) and dependent conditions (exogenous variables) from the start.
- (ii) A placement of each condition (endogenous and exogenous variables) within a space of contrasts (contrasting values).
- (iii) An association of each dependent condition (endogenous variables) with a function evaluating it on the basis of the value of its parents (exogenous variables).
- (iv) An assignment of a value for each independent condition (exogenous variables) (Schaffer, 2016a).

At its most basic level, an SEM consists of a set of variables which represent features of reality, a set of structural equations that relate the variables in the model, according to the causal structure of reality, and an assignment of actual values to the variables within the model, representing what the values actually take in reality (Wilson, 2018a). The variables in an SEM can either be discrete (e.g. whether some entity exists) or continuous (e.g. how that entity is in a certain respect) (Wilson, 2018a). One may thus take each of the variables in the model as being a type of *question* (e.g. whether Socrates exists), and the values of each of the variables as being the *possible answers* to each specific question, (i.e., according to convention, with a value of 1 being assigned for a yes answer and a value of 0 for a no answer) (Wilson, 2018a).

Furthermore, the structural equations in an SEM are regularly written in the following form of $A = f(B, C, D\dots)$, where "=" does not denote an identity relation between the variables, but instead expresses a relation of counterfactual dependence (i.e. A counterfactually depending on a function of some other variables (B, C, D...)) (Wilson, 2018a). This approach is favoured by Wilson (2018a, 2018b). However, another notation provided by Schaffer (2016a), is the schema of " $\Phi \leftarrow \Psi$ s" which expresses the fact of the value of one variable (Φ) depending upon, and thus being determined by, the values of the plurality of parent variables (Ψ s) (Schaffer,

2016a). Now, as both of these notations are clear and helpful in different ways, they will each be utilised in constructing the models below.

Structural Equations & Counterfactual Dependencies

Notation aside, however, most importantly, SEMs allow one to understand precisely *how* the causal (or any directed-dependency relation such as grounding) works through including within the model the above structural equations, that codify specifically the causal dependencies between the independent conditions and the dependent conditions. That is within the causal framework in which SEMs are formed, each structural equation causal model expresses a set of counterfactual dependencies where, *if* certain variables (e.g. B, C, D/ Ψ s) were set to specific values by, what Woodward (2003) terms, an “intervention” within the model,¹²³ the dependent variable (e.g. A/ Φ) would also take a specific value (Wilson, 2018a). We thus use an SEM to understand *what* and *how* the causal relation operates, by focusing in on the structural equations themselves that, as just noted, encode the important counterfactual dependencies featured in the model.

Thus, for example, if we had a case where we wanted to know if an individual's smoking a 100 cigarettes per day caused them to have lung cancer, then we can utilise the framework for causation, provided by an SEM, to *infer* their actual cancer risk as the *output* of the relevant structural equation, given the *input* of 100 cigarettes per day (Schaffer, 2016a).

Furthermore, utilising the structural equations also allows one, in continuing with our above example, to counterfactually consider what their cancer risk *would have* been, had they say, for example, smoked 0 cigarettes per day. Therefore, one can ascertain the causal contribution made smoking a certain number of cigarettes to one contracting cancer by assessing these types of counterfactuals. Thus, if we take then counterfactual “If David had smoked 0 cigarettes, then he would not have contracted lung cancer”, we can then evaluate the counterfactuals, through performing an “intervention”, by replacing the original equation for the variable, representing the cause, with a new equation that stipulates a hypothetical value (e.g. 0), whilst keeping, at that time, all of the other equations unchanged, such as the variable representing the effect (Menzies and Beebe, 2019).

¹²³ Pearl (2009) terms this type of intervention a “surgical operation”.

One then proceeds to update the remaining variables, that is the variable representing the effect, to see whether the consequent of the counterfactual is made true. Taking into account our result, we can then utilise, what Schaffer terms, a counterfactual dependence test, to assess the level of *counterfactual co-variation* between the variables, that is:

Counterfactual dependence test for causation If X and Y are binary variables, there is a direct $X \rightarrow Y$ path, and no other distinct path to Y , then: $X = x$ is a token cause of $Y = y$ if and only if $X = x, Y = y$, and if $X \neq x$ then $Y \neq y$ (Schaffer, 2016a, 65).

Thus, off of this test, we can assess the contribution that the purported cause makes to the causal relationship, or, more specifically the difference that the nature (and/or existence) of the cause makes to that of the nature (and/or existence) of its effect, in terms of counterfactual co-variation, where if we *wiggle the cause, then the effect wiggles too* (Schaffer, 2016a). We can thus ascertain the nature of the asymmetrical counterfactual dependence between the variables, identify the cause, and the causal contribution made by it, and conclude, for our specific example, and others like it, that smoking, specifically in David's case, did causally contribute to him getting cancer.¹²⁴ This all, in our specific case, and others like it, underwriting an explanation as to *why* David contracted cancer; *because* of him smoking, and it provides a means to understand, at a more general level, *what* and *how* something is caused.

However, it is important to note that SEMs, even though they are regularly used as systems of mathematical representation of *causal structure*, can be extended *beyond* causal structure and utilised for any directed-dependency structure, as there is nothing in the mathematical structure that is particularly tied to causation (Schaffer, 2016a). That is, we can also use an SEM to understand *what* and *how* the grounding relation works, by focusing in on the structural equations themselves that encode the counterfactual dependencies.

Thus, for example again if we had a case where we wanted to know whether a certain conjunction was true, given its conjuncts, then we can utilise the framework, provided by an SEM, to *infer* the truth of the conjunction as the *output* of the relevant structural equation, given the actual truth of its conjuncts (Schaffer, 2016a). Or, even more specifically, if we wanted to know what the mass of the H₂O molecule was, then we can utilise the framework again and *infer* that the mass of the

¹²⁴ Interestingly, one can then further utilise the SEM to find out precisely *how* many cigarettes contribute towards someone contracting cancer.

H₂O molecule is 18 Da as the *output* of the relevant structural equation, given the actual masses of its atomic parts (Schaffer, 2016a).

Thus, in both cases, and other cases like this, we can utilise structural equations, to also counterfactually consider, for the first case, that the conjunction *would have been* false if a given conjunct had been false, and, for the second case, what mass the molecule *would have had* if the atomic parts had had different masses. Then, utilising the interventionist method sketched out above (that of focusing in on the specific counterfactual in question and intervening on the model variables), we can assess the level of *counterfactual co-variation* between the variables according to the counterfactual test detailed above, which seamlessly translates into the grounding case, with the only modification being that of changing “cause” to “ground”:

Counterfactual dependence test for grounding If X and Y are binary variables, there is a direct $X \rightarrow Y$ path, and no other distinct path to Y, then: $X = x$ is a token ground of $Y = y$ if and only if $X = x, Y = y$, and if $X \neq x$ then $Y \neq y$ (Schaffer, 2016a, 74).

Thus, again, based on this test, we can assess the contribution that the purported grounds make to their grounding relationships, or, more specifically, the difference that the nature (and/or existence) of the grounds makes to that of the nature (and/or existence) of the grounded, in terms of counterfactual co-variation, where, in the grounding context, if we *wiggle the ground, then the grounded wiggles too* (Schaffer, 2016a). We can thus, now also in the grounding context, ascertain the nature of the asymmetrical counterfactual dependence between the variables, identify the grounds, and the nature of the grounding relation between them. Allowing us to reach the necessary conclusion, in our specific case, and others like it, and underwrite an explanation as to *why* the H₂O molecule has a mass of 18 Da; *because of* each of its atomic parts, and why the conjunction is true; *because of* each of its conjuncts. This providing a means again to understand, at a more general level, *what* and *how* something is grounded.

SEMs thus permit a precise treatment of the notion of causation and grounding, with the model connecting causality and grounding to inference, counterfactuals and explanation and most importantly, enabling one to state *how* the causal pattern and grounding relation work.

Directed Graphs & Heuristic Usefulness

Lastly, in addition to the models themselves, proponents of SEM also use directed graphs to represent the structural equations and assignment functions within the models. How one does this is by drawing each variable as a vertex, and then for each case of “parenthood” one would draw a directed edge from the parent to the dependent (Schaffer, 2016a).¹²⁵ As illustrated below, in two different formats,¹²⁶ where Throw and C=1 representing the parent variable and Shatter and E=1 representing the dependent variable:



These directed graphs, as partial ordering structures, are indeed heuristically useful in expressing the sense in which an SEM induces a partial order over the variables within the model (Schaffer, 2016a). However, despite their heuristic usefulness, they are not overall of great value in understanding causal (and grounding) relations. Due to them omitting important information featured within an SEM such as the contrasts in the values allotted to each variable, the various dependency relations between the variable values, the various forms of the functions for evaluating the endogenous variables, and the values that one assigns to the exogenous variables (Schaffer, 2016a). Thus, again, though useful, they are, in a certain sense, as Schaffer writes 'impoverished visualizations' (Schaffer, 2016a, 63).

Therefore, through the formalism provided by the equations of an SEM (rather than the directed graphs themselves), we can chart a similarly systematic connection between causal claims and grounding claims and thus ultimately complete the last aspect of the systematic analogy, or more specifically the "identification", between grounding and causation (G=MC).

2.3.2 Systematic Analogy (iv) – Formal Structure

3.3.2.1 Tri-Partite Structure - Causal Modelling

There are numerous of ways of characterising SEMs formally, and within the grounding literature centred around the work of Schaffer (2016a) and Wilson (2018a, 2018b) there are two ways that they are characterised. For Schaffer (2016a) we have a more detailed "tri-partite" structure (i.e. a

¹²⁵ Proponents of interventionism regularly use family language to express the various relations within structural modelling.

¹²⁶ Schaffer (2016a) uses the left format and Wilson (2018a, 2018b) uses the right.

three-stage process),¹²⁷ and for Wilson (2018a, 2018b) we have a simplified structure that uses the standard notation of $A = f(B, C, D \dots)$ to represent the structural equation. I will now state the more detailed "tri-partite" structure provided by Schaffer and include the more simplified structure, provided by Wilson, once the stages are unpacked. I will now detail the nature of a causal model provided by an SEM by proceeding through the three stages in a stepwise manner.

Stage (i): Specifying Signature

In this stage, one is aiming to model some portion of reality. Thus to begin with, in order for one to mathematically represent the "system under study", and regiment causal influence between the features of the system, one firstly selects the relevant distinct variables to represent distinct features of this portion of reality. These variables are divided into two kinds; the "exogenous" variables, which represent independent conditions of the system, and the "endogenous" variables which represent the dependent conditions of the system. These variables are built-in and situated in a space of incompatible values representing contrasts, which is to say that they are allotted a *contrast space* of specific values that serve as the options under consideration (Schaffer, 2016a). Secondly, one introduces the *signature* for the variables, which is understood as a triple $S = \langle U, V, R \rangle$ where U is a finite set of exogenous variables, V is a finite set of endogenous variables, and R is a function which maps every variable $X \in U \cup V$ to a set of values with at least a minimum of two members.

So, in illustrating this through an example, we can take the question of whether a rock was thrown at a window, and in answering this through the model at this stage, we can utilise a very simple signature:

$SI = \langle UI = \{\text{Throw}\}, VI = \{\text{Shatter}\}, RI \rangle$, where RI maps Throw to $\{0, 1\}$ (which contrasts the rock being thrown with its being dropped) and maps Shatter to $\{0, 1\}$ (which contrasts the window's being shattered with its remaining intact) (Schaffer, 2016a).

So taking this into account, we can proceed onto stage (ii).

Stage (ii): Specifying Dependence Functions

¹²⁷ Schaffer (2016a) states that he derived this structure from the work of Joseph Y. Halpern (2000), however, he simplifies the presentation of Halpern by only focusing on models with finitely many variables, and by assuming determinism, due to the impossibility of indeterministic ground.

In this stage, one is aiming to specify the dependence functions which say for each of the endogenous variables, adduced in stage one, the value that they take as output given the input values for certain other variables (Schaffer, 2016a). Thus one proceeds in this stage to add the “dynamics” of the system, where one codifies functions to state how each endogenous variable is to be evaluated, relative to the values of the exogenous variables.

This is the “linkage” which is a pair $L = \langle S, E \rangle$ such that S is a signature detailed above, and E is a set of structural equations, which, as Schaffer (2016a, 62, emphasis in text) notes, ‘for every endogenous variable $V \in V$, E must include an equation $E \in E$ such that E outputs a value v to V on the basis of values allotted to certain other variables, which thereby count as V ’s *parents*’. E is subject to a “no loops” constraint (or what Schaffer terms a “global acyclicity” constraint) in that no variable can stand in the ancestral parenthood relation to itself (Schaffer, 2015).

So, with the example of the rock being thrown through the window, with the signature SI above, we can utilise the specific linkage:

$LI = \langle SI, EI \rangle$ where, EI is simply that of $\{Shatter \leftarrow Throw\}$ (where there is an output of a 0 for *Shatter* if there is a 0 for *Throw*, and a 1 for *Shatter* if there is 1 for *Throw*) (Schaffer, 2016a).

From this, we proceed to the final stage; stage (iii).

Stage (iii): Specifying the Assignment

Finally, in this stage, one proceeds to specify “what actually happened” concerning the causal occurrence being modelled (i.e. stating the actual states of the system under study) through one setting a function stipulating how each exogenous variable is to be evaluated. Thus one adds in “the assignment” which, in the deterministic case, specifies a unique value for each exogenous variable in the system (Schaffer, 2016a). The “assignment” is thus a pair $M = \langle L, A \rangle$ where, as Schaffer (2015, 62, emphasis in text) notes, ‘ L is a linkage as just characterized, and A is the smallest function mapping every exogenous variable $U \in U$ to exactly one value’.

Returning to the example of the rock being thrown through the window, let’s say that the rock *was in fact thrown*, in which case we get assignment:

$MI = \langle LI, AI \rangle$ AI being the smallest function that assigns $Throw$ with the value 1:
 $\{\langle Throw, 1 \rangle\}$ (Schaffer, 2016a).

Now that we have completed the three-stage process of the model, we can state the full model for our example in the tri-partite way provided by Schaffer (2016a) (below, left) and also in the more simplified way provided by Wilson (2018, 720) (below, right), with the conventional notation for the structural equation (i.e. $A = f(B, C, D\dots)$) and the two different formats for the directed acyclic graph:

Window

$SI = \langle \{Throw\}, \{Shatter\}, RI \rangle$, where RI

maps both *Socrates* and *Singleton* to $\{0, 1\}$

$LI = \langle SI, \{Shatter \leftarrow Throw\} \rangle$

$MI = \langle LI, \{\langle Throw, 1 \rangle\} \rangle$

Graphical Representation

$Throw \rightarrow Shatter$

Window

Variables

C: Whether Suzy throws the rock

E: Whether the window smashes

Structural Equations

$E = C$

Assignment

$C=1; E=1$

Graphical Representation



It is clear that the formalisation of SEMs enables one to precisely assess the causal influence between events (or states) of causation across time. As once one has specified the assignment of the independent variables (i.e. the exogenous variables) and the dynamics that represent the counterfactual dependencies between the variables within the models (i.e. the exogenous/parent variables and the endogenous/dependent variables), then the value of the dependent variables (i.e. the endogenous variable) is uniquely determined (Schaffer, 2016a).

The use of SEMs here, as noted above, provides us with a means to underwrite explanatory claims as to *why* this causal event happened as it did. Thus, if one is seeking an answer as to whether Suzy causally contributed to the window breaking, then we can provide an answer here, by, instead of focusing on the fact of the matter (i.e. Suzy throwing the rock and the window smashing), we consider the counterfactual; "if Suzy *had not* thrown the rock, the window *would not* have smashed" that the structural equation ($E=C$) encodes. This helping to reveal to us the potential counterfactual co-variation, and dependencies, between the purported cause (C) and its effect (E).

That is, what we need do to achieve this end is to perform an "intervention", which is, as noted previously, that of replacing the exogenous variable; $C=1$ with another variable; $C=0$, keeping all the other equations unchanged. After this intervention, we then "update" the value of E in

accordance with the structural equation, enabling us to conclude that: If $C=0$, then $E=0$. And this result shows, according to the counterfactual test noted previously, that there is indeed a counterfactual covariance with the cause and effect in our model, where if we wiggle the cause, then the effect wiggles too. This allowing us to understand *why* the window broke; *because* of Suzy (i.e. Suzy throwing the rock). We thus have a better understanding of the nature of the causal relation in this specific case and model.

2.3.2.2 Tri-Partite Structure: Ground Modelling

As previously noted, however, there is nothing that is *inherently causal* in the formalism. Instead, the formalism is of great value in modelling directed-dependency relations generally, and so can be utilised to detail states of a system, not just across time, as in the causal modelling, but also across the ontological "levels" of the hierarchical structure of reality through providing a *metaphysical* causal model. That is a model for grounding. And thus, in the same way that we were able to describe *how* one event is a sufficient cause for another event, we can also make a similar description for one entity being the full ground of another entity. All that needs to change are the variables that are involved, and, in the tri-partite format, the initial conditions are now taken to be conditions of relative fundamentality.

We can illustrate this through one prominent example that has featured in the grounding literature;¹²⁸ that of the existence of Socrates being taken to fully ground the existence of Singleton Socrates, that is singleton Socrates existing *because* of (*in virtue of*) Socrates (Wilson, 2018a). Thus the structural model for this, in both formats, would be (with Socrates representing Socrates existing (1) versus not existing (0), and Singleton representing his singleton's existing (1) versus not existing (0)):

Singleton

$S2 = \langle \{Socrates\}, \{Singleton\}, R2 \rangle$, where

$R2$ maps both *Socrates* and *Singleton* to $\{0,$

$1\}$

$L2 = \langle S2, \{Singleton \leftarrow Socrates\} \rangle$

$M2 = \langle L2, \{ \langle Socrates, 1 \rangle \} \rangle$

Graphical Representation

$Socrates \rightarrow Singleton$

Singleton

Variables

C: Whether Socrates exists

E: Whether Singleton exists

Structural Equations

$E=C$

Assignment

$C=1; E=1$

Graphical Representation



¹²⁸ Which was introduced in a different context by (Fine, 1994a).

A second example that is prominent within the grounding literature is that of the determinate and determinable relationship (Wilson, 2018a). Where a determinate colour of an entity, such as a red shirt, for example, fully grounds that of the shirt being a determinable colour, such as it being maroon. That is the shirt is red *because* (or *in virtue of*) it being maroon. Thus, the structural model for this, in both formats again, would be (with Determinate representing the shirt’s being maroon (1) versus it’s being navy (0), and Determinable representing the shirt’s being red (1) versus it’s being blue (0)):

Determinable

$S3 = \langle \{Determinate\}, \{Determinable\}, R3 \rangle$,

where $R3$ maps both *Determinate* and

Determinable to $\{0, 1\}$

$L3 = \langle S3, \{Determinable \leftarrow Determinate\} \rangle$

$M3 = \langle L3, \langle Determinate, 1 \rangle \rangle$

Graphical Representation

Determinate → *Determinable*

Determinable

Variables

C: Whether the shirt is maroon

E: Whether the shirt is red

Structural Equations

$E=C$

Assignment

$C=1; E=1$

Graphical Representation



In these cases, here as noted above, nothing has changed mathematically, beyond a change of the labels on the variables (and the terminology in the tri-partite format) for conditions.¹²⁹

And in both cases, we have reached the position of their being a counterfactual dependence between the ground and the grounded, where, for the first example, the existence of singleton Socrates *counterfactually depends* on the existence of Socrates, and, for the second example, the redness of the shirt *counterfactually depends* upon the maroonness of the shirt.

And, in underwriting explanatory claims as to *why* Singleton Socrates in fact exists and *why* the shirt is, in fact, red, and whether Socrates and the maroonness of the shirt play a part in grounding these facts, we can again ascertain an answer, by, instead of focusing on the fact of the matter (i.e. Singleton Socrates and Socrates existing and the shirt being maroon and red), we instead consider the counterfactuals: “If Socrates *did not* exist, then Singleton Socrates *would not* exist” and “If the shirt *was* navy, then it *would not* be red”, that the structural equations ($E=C$ in both cases) encode. Which can, again, reveal to us the potential counterfactual co-variation, and dependencies, between the purported grounds (C) and the grounded (E).

¹²⁹ Wilson (2018b) utilises the same simple model detailed above for the grounding cases, and, like Schaffer only sees the that one needs to change the variables without altering any of the mathematical structure of the models.

Thus, as before, to reveal this, we perform an "intervention", by replacing the exogenous variables in each model; $C=1$ for both, with other variables; $C=0$ for both, keeping all the other equations unchanged. After this intervention, we then again "update" the value of E , in both models, in accordance with the structural equations in the models, enabling us to conclude that, in both cases: If $C=0$, then $E=0$ ("If Socrates did not exist, then Singleton Socrates would not exist" and "If the shirt was navy, then it would not be red"). This showing, according to the counterfactual grounding test noted previously, that there is indeed a counterfactual covariance with the grounds and the grounded in both models, where if we wiggle the grounds, then the grounded wiggles too. This allowing us to understand *why* Singleton Socrates, in fact, exists; *because* of Socrates, and *why* the shirt is, in fact, red; *because* it is maroon. We thus have, as in the causal case, a better understanding of the nature of the grounding relation in this specific case and model.

Taking this all into account, it is clear that the structural equation formal framework seamlessly carries over, from the causal context to the grounding context. That is, we can utilise SEMs analogously, between a causal and grounding context, with the models helping us to understand the internal structure of the causal and grounding relation, and further emphasise the intimate connection between grounding and counterfactuals in the same way that we can for the causal relation.¹³⁰ This thus completes our final task of providing another strand of evidence for, a now *ultima facie* case, for a deep analogous link between grounding and causation, through adducing a clear and tractable grounding model within a formal causal framework. Taking this all together, the pieces of our systematic puzzle can now be summarised as such:

(1) Content

- Analogous types of relation and methodological status

(2) Internal Structure (Logical Structure & Application to Cases)

- Analogous logical properties, challenges/responses to challenges
- Analogous logical relationship
- Analogous type/token distinction and component/net Distinction
- Analogous contributing factors distinction
- Analogous screening-off and path-analysis

¹³⁰ Schaffer and Wilson introduce several examples of structural models for causation and grounding that are more wide-ranging than those featured in the main text, for these interesting examples, see: (Schaffer, 2016a) and (Wilson, 2018a and 2018b).

(3) External Connection

- Analogous connection to laws and explanation
- Analogous connection to necessity and counterfactuals
- Disanalogies as to be expected for both relations

(4) Formal Structure

- Analogous structuring through a formal causal framework

The depth of the systematic analogy here, provides the basis to not only take grounding to be very similar to, or analogous with, causation, but, in fact, due to the unity here with causation, we can plausibly take it to be identified *as* causation; that is, it is metaphysical causation, with a species similarity with nomological causation. G=MC, as Wilson (2018a) terms it, seems to provide the best explanation of the data at hand, and thus, we can go forward, on this evidential basis to take the grounding relation to be a causal relation.

2.3.3 Grounding Phase-Two: Trinitarian Analysis

From our detailed exploration of the nature of metaphysical causation (grounding), we thus have a successful means to, finally, specify the nature of the relation stated in MONARCHY.

As previously noted, in utilising a more "coarse-grained" notion of grounding, we construed the sole principality of the Father as such:

(SP₁) The Father is the sole principle of the Son and the Spirit =*df* The Father grounds the Son and the Spirits existence.

However, now that we have a more "fine-grained" notion of grounding at our disposal, this Trinitarian structure, and the sole principality that is established by it, can be further precisified through detailing the *causal nature* of the grounding relation. That is, to say that the Father grounds the Son and the Spirit is, to say that he metaphysically causes them. That is, assuming the above results of G=MC, we can further refine our definition of (SP₁) as such:

(SP₂) The Father grounds the Son and the Spirit =*df* The Father metaphysically causes the Son and the Spirit's existence.

In the case of Trinity, we thus have the situation of the Father metaphysically causing the Son and the Spirit. That is, the Father's existence grounding that of the Son and the Spirit's existence. The

Son and the Spirit exist *in virtue* of the Father. Now, to construct an SEM of this instance of grounding, we thus have a template from Window, Singleton and Determinable above, which we can now re-construe as such (with firstly Source representing the Father existing (1) versus not existing (0), and Procession representing the Son and the Spirit existing (1) versus them not existing (0)):

Trinity

$S4 = \langle \{Source\}, \{Procession\}, R4 \rangle$, where

$R4$ maps both *Source* and *Procession* to $\{0, 1\}$

$LA = \langle S4, \{Procession \leftarrow Source\} \rangle$

$M4 = \langle LA, \langle Source, 1 \rangle \rangle$

Graphical Representation

$Source \rightarrow Procession$

Trinity

Variables

C: Whether the Father exists

E: Whether the Son and Spirit exist

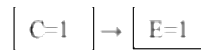
Structural Equations

$E=C$

Assignment

$C=1; E=1$

Graphical Representation



Again, as before, there is no change in the mathematical structure when we transition from a causal context, (and a general grounding context) to the Trinitarian grounding context. The SEM thus enables us to develop a plausibly apt model of eternal asymmetric processions within the Trinity, which delivers the verdict that the Father's existence grounds the existence of the Son and the Spirit in an *intelligible* manner. This model, however, unlike the previous model, is not one which simply states *what* grounds *what*, that is the Father grounding the Son and the Spirit. Instead, we now can also state *how* and *why* this grounding relation operates, through focusing on the fact of their being a counterfactual dependence between the Trinitarian persons, that is the existence of the Son and the Spirit *counterfactually depending* on the existence of the Father.

Now in further elucidating this explanatory claim, as before, instead of focusing on the facts of the matter (i.e. the Son and the Spirit existing and the Father existing), we consider the counterfactual: "If the Father *did not* exist, then the Son and the Spirit *would not* exist", that the structural equations ($E=C$) encode. This, again, illuminating the potential counterfactual co-variation, and dependencies, between the Father (i.e. (C); the grounds) and the Son and the Spirit (i.e. (E); the grounded).

To reveal this dependence, like before, we thus perform an "intervention", by replacing the exogenous variables in the model; $C=1$, with another variable; $C=0$, keeping all the other equations unchanged. After this intervention, we then again "update" the value of E, in

accordance with the structural equations in the models, enabling us to conclude that; If $C=0$, then $E=0$ ("If the Father did not exist, then the Son and the Spirit would not exist"). Applying then the counterfactual grounding test, we see a counterfactual covariance with the grounds and the grounded in this model, as with the other, where if we wiggle the grounds (i.e. the Father), then the grounded (i.e. the Son and the Spirit) wiggles too.

This all allowing us to have a better grasp of *how* and *why* the Son and the Spirit in fact exist; *because* of the Father.¹³¹ Thus, forming a grounding-based model, within the formal framework of an SEM, allows one to have a better grasp of the nature of the grounding relation between the Father, the Son and the Spirit. The Father *grounds* the Son and the Spirit's existence, and we can assert not just that this is so, but point to the operation of the structural equations and tell you how and why this is so as well.

Thus, taking this all into account, we can (again) illustrate the modification made to Swinburne's model as such (where the other terms and symbols are as before, with the addition now of "God(1)" referring to God in the *nominal* sense (i.e. as a proper name in reference to the Father) and "MC" standing for metaphysical causation (which replaces the generic causal relation)):

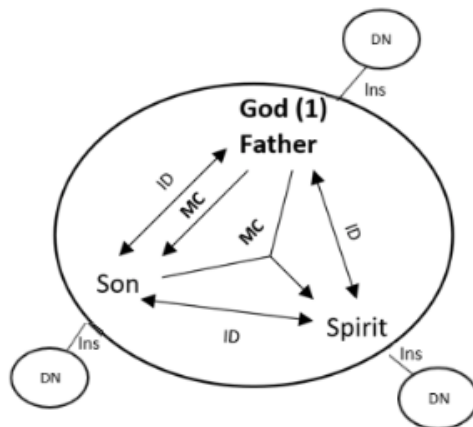


Figure 2.7 The Functional Monotheism model (Modification 2)

What we see through this modification is that the Father as the ground of the Son and (through the Son) the Spirit's existence, is indeed the *cause* of their existence. However, we do not need to assume that this causation takes place through a "beginningless period of time", in the manner that the original Model previously did. Instead, this causation is a *synchronic* form of causation, that of metaphysical causation, which utilises the notion of counterfactual

¹³¹ Specifically because of their counterfactual dependence upon the Father.

dependence and the various components of the grounding relation, such as it being directive, necessitating and generative. Thus we can have a better handle of the nature of the Trinitarian processional relation, once this modification is taken on board. Taking this into account, we can now state the position of the (modified) Model as such:

- the Father is the *metaphysical cause* of the Son and the Spirit and is thus the sole principle within the Trinity

And thus, from this, we, finally, can state a positive answer for (Q₂):

(A₂) Yes, the (modified) Model does affirm the fact that the Father is the sole principle within the Trinity.

Therefore, with this positive answer for (Q₂), and assuming the positive answer for (Q₁) we can state firmly that the Model affirms the statement of MONARCHY, and the conception of Trinitarianism expressed by this statement. The Father is the one God, through being an ontologically necessary being, and through being the sole principle within the Trinity, that is, within the modification made, him being the metaphysical cause of the Son and the Spirit. The (modified) Model thus emphasises the monarchy of God the Father, through the ontological necessity and (metaphysical) causal priority of the Father. According to the pro-Nicene trajectory, he is the one true God, and the Model takes this to be so.

Chapter Conclusion

In this chapter, I focused on addressing the Historical Objection, which is the second component of the Tri-Theism Objection (i.e. T-OBJECTION (ii)). How I sought to address this problem, in the first sub-section of this chapter, was through focusing on identifying and detailing the first historical construal of Trinitarianism in the pro-Nicene trajectory, leading to a concise statement of this conception (i.e. MONARCHY).

In the second sub-section of this chapter, I then focused on assessing the monotheistic credentials of the Model according to MONARCHY, and a modification of a certain aspect of the Model was made. This modification enabled me to demonstrate that the Model affirms the central elements of this statement and thus successfully fits within the boundaries of "orthodox" (pro-Nicene) Trinitarianism. The Model is thus monotheistic and (the second construal of) the Historical

Objection (i.e. (ii) of T-OBJECTION), fails to achieve its end. I will now proceed to show that this conclusion can also be reached, for the second possible conception of Trinitarianism, within the pro-Nicene trajectory.

Chapter 5: Historical Objection (C): Identifying Pro-Nicene Trinitarianism (ii)

Chapter Introduction

In this chapter, I demonstrate that the Model fits with the second conception of Trinitarianism, found within the pro-Nicene theological trajectory (i.e. the one God as the divine nature). To achieve this end, I firstly unpack the grammatical usage of the word God to express this conception of Trinitarianism. I then proceed to detail the historical context for the usage of this term within the trajectory. From this, I then provide a clear statement that expresses this conception of Trinitarianism, termed: NATURE, and then examine whether the Model affirms this statement. This allowing me to reach the position of the Model affirming the first part of the statement, but disaffirming the second part of it. The Model, as it stands, is thus not monotheistic in *this* specific sense. However, to deal with this disaffirmation, I then modify the Model by utilising a prominent ontological framework within contemporary metaphysics; the four-category ontology, which enables me to demonstrate that, once the model is modified in light of this framework, the objection of this chapter can be sufficiently dealt with. Therefore, allowing the conclusion to be reached that the Model is in line with the second concept of monotheism found within the pro-Nicene trajectory, and thus (the third construal of) the Historical Objection is ineffective against the Model.

Section 1: The Pro-Nicene Perspective and Assessment (B)

Section Introduction

In this section, I focus on unpacking the second construal of Trinitarianism within the pro-Nicene trajectory, centred on the notion of the “one God” being the divine nature. In doing, this I focus, firstly, on detailing the pro-Nicene grammatical use of the term God in reference to the divine nature (that is the divinity-universal). After this, I then turn my attention towards identifying the historical position of the trajectory, through an exploration of the conception of Trinitarianism found within it. During this exploration, I will provide a clear statement that expresses this conception of Trinitarianism, termed: NATURE. After this, I will then show that the Model, as it stands, does, in fact, disaffirm NATURE, through failing to affirm the second part of the statement. The Model is thus not monotheistic in *this* specific sense. However, I will then state how I will deal with this

problem in the next section so that the Model can be re-classed as monotheistic in this sense of the word.

1.1: Pro-Nicene Trinitarianism (ii): The Divine Nature as God

1.1.1 Historical Objection (C): Central Focus

The central focus of this chapter is on countering the Historical Objection, which underpins the Tri-Theism Objection. This objection asserts that the Model is outside of the "boundaries" of orthodox Trinitarianism. In assessing this objection, this chapter will focus on a second possible conception of Trinitarianism that is found within the "orthodox" (i.e. pro-Nicene trajectory, and grounded upon a scriptural and historical (creedal and theological) foundation. The Historical Objection, in this chapter, is thus re-construed as asserting that the Model is not in line with pro-Nicene Trinitarianism, in this second conception of it.

Thus, the correspondence between the Model and this conception will be assessed, leading to the conclusion, as a first approximation, that the Model (once necessary modifications are made) corresponds with this conception, and thus is within the "boundaries" of orthodox (pro-Nicene) Trinitarianism. The Model is thus monotheistic in a secondary sense and the Historical Objection, as construed in this manner, does not apply to the model.

1.1.2 Scriptural Foundation: New Testament Basis

The second component of the pro-Nicene grammatical interpretation of Trinitarianism centres around the usage of the word God in a *predicative* sense. That is, God, in this specific context, is used, as a predicate, in reference to the one (propertied) divine nature (or essence) that is ascribable to each of the persons of the Trinity. God, is thus not used as a proper name, as in the first conceptualisation, but simply serves as a predication ascribing to each of the persons of the Trinity the property of divinity. The term God, conceived in this way, thus states that each of the persons *is God* (i.e. is divine). Implying, as William Hasker writes, that 'all the attributes that qualify that Person as God in the full sense ("true God"), including omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, moral perfection, eternity, and whatever else needs to be included in the full package of divine attributes' (Hasker, 2013, 247, parenthesis in text). This specific usage of the term God, as a predicate ascribing a property, frequently features in the New

Testament in verses that predicate it to the person of Jesus, and, to a lesser extent, to the Spirit.

We see this in various verses, such as:

- (v) In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was *God*... And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only *Son* from the Father, full of grace and truth. (John 1:1, 14).
- (vi) Thomas answered him, “My Lord and *my God!*” (John 20:28).
- (vii) Waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great *God* and Saviour *Jesus Christ* (Titus 2:13).
- (viii) But of the *Son* he says, “Your throne, O *God*, is forever and ever, the sceptre of uprightness is the sceptre of your kingdom. (Hebrews 1:8).
- (ix) Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of *God*, which he obtained with his *own* blood (Acts 20:28).
- (x) “Ananias,” Peter asked, “why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the *Spirit* and to keep back part of the proceeds of the land?...How is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart? You did not lie to us but to *God!* (Acts 5:3, 4).

Within the scriptural texts, the predicative use of the word God is applied to the Son and the Spirit, in order to emphasise their divine status. However, the use of terms remains restrained, particularly to avoid confusion with the primary usage of the term God in the New Testament, as noted previously, as a reference to the Father (Hasker, 2013). This restraint was not carried over to the pro-Nicene trajectory, as expressed by the central creeds and theologians.

1.1.3 Historical Foundation: Central Creeds

Despite the primacy of the term God in reference to the Father, God, in this specific sense, should not be taken to exclude the other two persons of the Trinity, as the role, functions and worship offered to Jesus led the Church, as expressed in the historical creeds of Nicaea (325 CE) and Constantinople (381 CE), to recognise him as possessing the one divine nature, that is Jesus (i.e. the Son) is “homoousious” (i.e. of one nature, substance or essence) with the Father, and thus being ‘*true God from true God*’ (Tanner, 1990, 5).

Similarly, for the Spirit, despite him not being extensively referred to as God in the New Testament, through the roles and functions attributed to him, he was recognised, specifically in the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed, as a being who possesses the one divine nature, and thus 'who with the Father and Son together is worshipped and glorified' (Tanner, 1990, 5, emphasis added). With the reason for this recognition, as Hasker writes, being grounded upon

the fact that the ‘invocation of the Spirit in the baptismal formula, led to his recognition as a full, co-equal member of the divine Triad’ (Hasker, 2013, 247). Each of the persons of the Trinity can thus be addressed as God due to their possession of the one divine nature, which is *God*.

1.1.4 Historical Foundation: Greek Theologians

Basil of Caesarea and Gregory of Nazianzus

Now, in further elucidating the historical expression of this position within the pro-Nicene trajectory, we again do not only see the creeds expressing this position but certain individuals, such as the Greek-speaking theologians, who place additional emphasis on the notions of "*ousia*" (οὐσία) and "*hypostasis*" (ὑπόστασις) in conceptualising the nature of the divine nature and the Trinitarian persons.¹³² The relation between the two terms, for these theologians, is best captured through the statement that *ousia* is related to *hypostasis* as the common is to the particular. Theodoret of Cyrus, in reference to the teaching of the Cappadocian Fathers (i.e. Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nyssa and Gregory of Nazianzus), emphasises the point that 'according to the teaching of the Fathers, there is the same difference between essence and *hypostasis* as between what is common and what is particular, or between genus and species or individual' (Theodoret, *Er*, 65, 11-13).¹³³

Basil of Caesarea, in forwarding this position, utilises the particular/species distinction, noted above, to describe this sameness in nature (*ousia*), and the distinction of the persons (*hypostasis*), as he writes:

The distinction between οὐσία and ὑπόστασις is the same as that between the general and the particular; as, for instance, between the animal [human] and the particular man (Basil, *Ep*. 236.6 (NPF2 8:278), parenthesis in text).

Thus, in a similar way in which creatures are distinct, yet united, through possessing a common nature, the one divine nature (*ousia*) is a common nature that is, nevertheless, undivided

¹³² This is again not to divide the trajectory, as plausibly Latin speaking theologians such as Augustine, did also express a similar view, as Richard Cross (2002) has shown.

¹³³ Below I take nature and essence to be synonymous terms.

amongst the particular Trinitarian persons. It is thus an undivided, that is numerically singular, universal (i.e. a divinity-universal).

From this position of Basil, we see Gregory of Nazianzus also emphasising the numerical singularity of the divinity-universal, where he takes there to be ‘an *identity* of nature between Him That is begotten and Him That begets’ (Gregory, *Or.* 29, 16). This identity in nature is again akin to the creaturely case, as he writes:

Our position...is, that as in the case of a horse, or an ox, or a man, the same definition applies to all the individuals of the same species, and whatever shares the definition has also a right to the Name; so in the very same way there is One Essence of God, and One Nature, and One Name;...and that whatever is properly called by this Name really is God (Gregory, *Or.* 29, 13)

Gregory maintains here a distinction between the Persons, yet understands the oneness in nature within the Trinity as being grounded upon a conception of it as a singular, universal, nature that, as in the creaturely case, is common amongst the particular persons (Jacobs, 2008). That is there is only one nature (ousia) but three persons (hypostases) within the Trinity, the nature is a universal, whilst the persons are particular. The Trinitarian persons are related to the one divine nature as particulars are related to the universal that they instantiate (or exemplify).

They are, as Nathan Jacobs writes: ‘one in nature, but several in particularity’ (Jacobs, 2008, 339). That is, even though each of them exemplifies the divinity-universal in a similar manner in which humans exemplify the universal of humanity, unlike the latter universal, however, the divine nature is not divided amongst its instances (or exemplifications). Rather each of the instances (exemplifications) of the divine nature, that is the Trinitarian persons, *are* this nature, and thus *are* the one God. And the manner that the Persons are the divine nature is through this nature being an (immanent) *universal* (i.e. *in rem* universal) that is, wholly present within, repeatable and common to, the persons. That is, it is identical and undivided within the members of the Trinity (Jacobs, 2008). It is thus a numerically singular universal.

*Gregory of Nyssa*¹³⁴

¹³⁴ Over the past two decades, there has also been an interesting debate, between Richard Cross (2002b) and Johannes Zachhuber (1999, 2005), concerning the correct interpretation of Gregory's position on the nature of universals. With Cross favouring an *immanent* universal interpretation and Zachhuber favouring a *collectivist* (or part-whole) universal view. Again, though both sides of the debate have very interesting arguments and persuasive

Now, turning to the paradigm historical representative of this position that the one God is the one divine nature (i.e. a divinity-universal); Gregory of Nyssa. For Gregory, as with Basil and Gregory of Nazianzus, the divine nature is an entity that is common to the three persons of the Trinity. Gregory, in continuing with the Cappadocian rhetoric established by Basil and Gregory, emphasises this commonality through providing an analogy between the shared universality of divine and human natures. We see this unambiguously stated as such:

If now you transfer to the doctrine of God the principle of differentiation between ousia and hypostasis that you acknowledge on the human level, you will not go astray (Gregory, *Ep.* 38.3, ll. 30–3).¹³⁵

Gregory takes the position that the divine nature should be conceived, at least in this respect, to be the same as a created nature. That is the divine nature is analogous, in some sense, to human nature. And thus there is parity where, as human nature is taken to be universal, then so is the divine nature. This universal, in the divine context, however, for Gregory, is to be conceived as numerically singular, as he states:

But the nature is one, united to itself and a precisely undivided unit (*monas*), not increased through addition, not decreased through subtraction, but being and remaining one (even if it were to appear in a multitude), undivided, continuous, perfect, and not divided by the individuals who participate in it (Gregory, *Abl.* (GNO, III/1, 40.24–41.7)), translated in: Cross, 2002a, 280, parenthesis added in quotation).

The important term of *monas*, in the passage above, is found in earlier theological tradition, as Richard Cross notes, as 'a description of the Father, and in Plato and Plotinus as the form of (the) one. But in Iamblichean forms of Neoplatonism it is used to express the numerical singularity and indivisibility of any extrinsic form' (Cross, 2002, 281, parenthesis in text). Gregory thus takes it to be the case that the divine nature is a numerically singular universal *in this way*; it is indivisible between the Persons.

evidence in favour of their respective interpretations, in the subsequent passages however I will assume the correctness of the former interpretation, the immanent universal interpretation, without further argument, and refer one to the arguments adduced by Cross in favour of this position.

¹³⁵ This text, is taken in the literature to have been written by Gregory, even though they are part of the Basilian collection of writings.

Furthermore, we see Gregory making a similar claim concerning the numerical singularity of the divine nature, where he states that:

The essence is not divided into each of the persons, such that there are three essences for the respective persons. It is evident that the term God is not so divided, since it signifies the essence; such a distinction would result in three Gods. (Gregory, *Graec*, (GNO, III/1, 20.20–4), translated in: Cross, 2002a, 281).

A further emphasis of the sameness of nature between the Persons is made by Gregory when he comments on the shared qualities between them, as he writes

For the definition of being uncreated and of being incomprehensible is one and the same for the Father, Son and Spirit. One is not more incomprehensible and uncreated, and another less so (Gregory, *Ep.* 3).

In the passages from Gregory above, the divine nature is one and the same nature across the persons. That is, it is the *shared* nature between the Persons that secures the monotheism (i.e. the oneness of God) within the Trinity, as if it was possible that the nature, as a universal, could be divided amongst the particulars that instantiate (or exemplify it) then there would indeed be multiple Gods. However, as there are not multiple Gods, the divine nature, which is God, is numerically singular and common to the Trinitarian persons. We see this further emphasised by Gregory when he writes that

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 (Gregory, *Graec*, translated in: Branson, 2014, 191)).

God thus signifies the numerically singular divine nature. Furthermore, this numerically singular nature is an immanent entity, rather than a transcendent, or abstract entity. That is, for Gregory, along with the pro-Nicene trajectory that he represents, there is an assumption of an "*in-rem*" view of universals, where the divine nature is that 'of which the persons are' (Gregory, *Graec*, (GNO, III/1, 19.15) translated in: Cross, 2002a, 281). That is, the divine nature is *in* the persons, rather than bearing some other type of extrinsic relation to them. This immanence

resulting in the Trinitarian persons each being an overlapping bundle of properties (Cross, 2002a).

Where they are "bundles of properties" in the sense that each Trinitarian person is a collection of the universal divine nature + a personal property (i.e. unbegottenness, begottenness and spiration), and, they are "overlapping" in the sense that, as the divinity-universal is numerically singular, it is the same universal that is shared between them and constitutes them (Cross, 2002a). This overlapping is of such an extent that the Father, through this property (or attribute), is *in* the Son, and the Son, through this property (or attribute), is *in* the Father, as Gregory writes: 'we see all the [attributes] of the Father in the Son, and all the [attributes] of the Son belong to the Father, since the Son remains wholly in the Father and contains the Father wholly in Himself' (Gregory, *Ep.* 8, translated in: Behr, 2018, 329, square parenthesis in quoted text).

Importantly, however, the one divine nature, though a universal, is nothing over and above the three divine persons, in the sense of being an existing entity alongside the Persons. Instead, as Cross writes, the divine nature is 'the overlap of the divine persons, not a further thing distinct from any and all of them' (Cross, 2002a, 285). That is, it exists in a limited sense, in the presence of a universal that functions in a manner to ground the fact that the discrete persons, can nevertheless be identical in part, in that they share identically the same nature without also being identically the same entities (Cross, 2002a). Thus, the three divine persons, each possess the one divine nature, which is a numerically singular universal and is rightly referred to as the one God. The three divine persons are God, in this second sense, *because* they possess the one divine nature which is God. Thus, the conception of the one divine nature, as a numerically singular universal, common to the three persons, is, with the monarchy of God the Father, at the foundation of pro-Nicene Trinitarianism.

1.1.5 Summary Statement: NATURE

Thus, taking this all into account, we can state the central position of the second component of the pro-Nicene conception of Trinitarianism as such:

NATURE: The divine nature is the one God. It is (i) a universal shared by the Father, the Son and the Spirit and is (ii) numerically singular.

Therefore, we see that for the pro-Nicene trajectory, the predicate God was used in reference to the three persons of the Trinity, through their possession and sharing of the numerically singular, universal divine nature. This nature is God, and the Persons are designated as God through their possession of it. However, this nature is nothing over and above the persons, but serves as an entity that renders each of the Trinitarian persons as overlapping particulars,

Now that the second component of the pro-Nicene conception of Trinitarianism has been unpacked, I will now assess whether the Model affirms, or disaffirms, the central tenets of this view.

1.2 The Functional Monotheism Model: (Dis)affirmation of Statement

1.2.1 Central Target Questions

To accurately assess the second component of the pro-Nicene conception of Trinitarianism, and the Model's affirmation of this component, as captured by the statement of NATURE, it will be helpful to ask ourselves two target questions, corresponding to the two components of the statement:

(Q₁) Does the Model affirm the fact that the divine nature is a universal?

(Q₂) Does the Model affirm the fact that the divine nature is numerical singular?

Positive answers to (Q₁) and (Q₂) by the Model, would indicate an affirmation of NATURE, resulting in the Model being rightly classified as monotheistic, in accord with the statement of the trajectory. I will now proceed onto an assessment of the Model's answer to (Q₁) and (Q₂).

1.2.2 Assessment of (Dis)affirmation of NATURE

Affirmation of Divine Nature as a Universal

The Model maintains that the divine nature is a universal. The Model makes the general assumption that properties *are* universals, and then extends this within a Trinitarian context. That is, as Swinburne notes, properties are universals due to their multiple instantiability, as he states 'properties by contrast [to substances] are universals, in that they can be instantiated in many different things' (Swinburne, 1994, 7, square parenthesis added). Echoing this elsewhere Swinburne states that 'a property (as I shall understand the term) is a universal or is defined in terms of a universal; the same property can be possessed by many different substances' (or multiples of substances) (Swinburne, 2016, 15, parenthesis in text). Swinburne thus conceptualises properties as universals, given their multiple instantiability in many different substances.

Now, this conception of properties is also further emphasised, within a theological context, by Swinburne taking the three persons of the Trinity, despite their distinct “personhood”, to all possess the *same* divine "essence". Or, more specifically, the *same* essential intrinsic property, that is necessary and sufficient for divinity (i.e. everlasting omnipotence). There is thus an instantiation of this *same* property of divinity that unites the three persons, as Swinburne states:

it is exactly the instantiation of the *same* essence of divinity which makes the Father God, as makes the Son God, as makes the Spirit God. They would be the same individual but for the relational properties which are distinct from the divine essence and which distinguish them (Swinburne, 1994, 189, emphasis added).

This being further emphasised by Swinburne in his latest work on the topic:

I share the view of almost all the Fathers and later mediaevals that the Son has the same intrinsic nature as the Father...each of the persons has the *same essential intrinsic properties* which make each of them divine (Swinburne, 2018, 421, 433, emphasis in text).

Thus, in addition to Swinburne’s general assumption of properties being universals, as the essential intrinsic *properties* of the Trinitarian persons are taken to be the same, we have a situation where different substances possess the same property (i.e. it is multiply instantiated), and thus, plausibly this property can be taken to be a universal, as defined by above.

Thus, taking this into account, we can state the position of the Model as such:

- The divine nature, as an intrinsic, essential property, is a universal.

And we have a positive answer to (Q₁)

(Q₁) Yes, the Model does affirm a conception of the divine nature as a universal.

With this positive answer to (Q₁), we thus have an affirmation of the first component of NATURE. We can now turn our attention onto an assessment of the model's answer to (Q₂) and see if the Model can also be seen to provide a positive answer for this as well.

Assessment of Disaffirmation of Numerical Singularity

The Model (*prima facie*) maintains that the divine nature is a numerical singular universal. The Model seems to posit that the sameness in essence or nature between the three divine persons, is not to be taken simply in a qualitative sense, but in fact in the “strict” sense” of numerical identity. We saw this position concerning the numerical identity of the nature possessed by the Persons sketched out above by Swinburne where he stated that “They [the Trinitarian persons] would be the *same* individual but for the relational properties which are distinct from the divine essence and which distinguish them”. If it wasn't for the Persons' relational properties individuating them, and thus, *per impossibile*, they only possessed the divine nature, then they would not be similar individuals with an element of exact resemblance, but in fact would be the *same individual*, in the strictest sense (i.e. numerically the same). This possible numerical sameness between them being grounded upon the nature that they possess. Thus, the nature possessed by the Trinitarian persons being a numerically singular nature. And as this nature is conceived as a universal, the Model thus seems to assert the possession of a numerically singular divinity-universal (i.e. the same divine nature) by each of the Trinitarian persons.¹³⁶

However, an important question can be raised concerning the position reached here, this question centres around the postulation of an instantiate relation that ties the Persons to the divine nature. It is made quite clear, by Swinburne, that there is a relation of instantiation between the Trinitarian persons and the divinity-universal, as he writes 'a divine individual just

¹³⁶ This numerically singular universal is also to be taken as an immanent universal within the Model, as noted in Chapter 2.

is the *instantiation* of his properties...there is nothing more to a divine individual than the *instantiation* of the divine essence' (Swinburne, 1994, 166-189). And, as was noted above, Swinburne also states that 'it is exactly the *instantiation* of the same essence of divinity which *makes* the Father God, as makes the Son God, as makes the Spirit God' (Swinburne, 1994, 189).

One can ask again here, as we did in Chapter 2, but now in a different context, why the "sameness" here is simply not that of there being the same *kind* of essence (nature) between the Trinitarian persons, rather than there being the possession of the required numerically singular essence (nature)? With the former allowing there to be multiple instances of divinity within the Trinity.¹³⁷

Furthermore, there also seems to be two ways to interpret what the "instantiation of the same essence of divinity" in fact is. Either this instance of divinity that makes each of the Trinitarian persons God, is:

- (i) a particular instance of divinity (i.e. a divinity-mode) or
- (ii) a universal instance of divinity (i.e. a divinity-universal).

As was shown in Chapter 2, if we want to ward off falling into the category of "Tri-Theism", as we are wont to do, and more importantly if we plausibly take particular instances and properties, to be modes, that is to be identity-dependent entities, and the Trinitarian persons to themselves be identity-dependent upon each other, then this postulation by the Model (of there being a particular instance of divinity for each of the Trinitarian persons, which renders each of them as God), cannot be taken to be that of there being three divinity-modes within the Trinity. Thus, by the process of elimination, the postulation must be that of there being multiple universal instances (i.e. divinity-universals) within the Trinity.

This multiplicity of instances of the divinity-universal (i.e. multiple divinity-universals), which is presented to us because of the utilisation of an instantiation relation between the Trinitarian persons and the divine nature, thus seems to result in, what Timothy Pawl (2020) terms, one ultimately "giving up on monotheism", or at least a way of "making monotheism inexplicable".

¹³⁷ Even though I am referring here to universals as instances, I am not implying that the model holds to particularised properties, that is modes. As it was shown in Chapter 2. that, given the reciprocal identity-dependence between the Trinitarian persons, they cannot be characterised by a divinity-mode.

Due to the postulation of an instantiation relation in the Trinity, the fundamental tie between the Trinitarian persons and the divinity-universal lacks the means to secure the fact of there being one, sole nature within the Trinity, which is required by the orthodoxy standards of pro-Nicene Trinitarianism. As the Trinitarian persons, though closely related to the divine nature, are ultimately taken to be individual instances of this nature, it does not seem as if there is only one nature within the Trinity. This point is emphasised by Pawl (2020, 12), where he writes, for example, that:

When my daughters, Mary, Beatrice, Edith, and Agnes, each instantiate the universal, Humanity, and each has proper characteristics such that we don't confuse them, what we have there are four humans, not a single human.

That is, when we count human people, we count by individual instances of humanity. Thus, if there are a multiplicity of instances of humanity, then there are multiple human natures. Thus, as the Trinitarian persons, though closely related to the divine nature, are in a similar manner taken to be *individual instances* of divinity, it does not seem as if there is only one divinity (i.e. divine nature) within the Trinity. More fully, *if* we posit the existence of an instantiation relation between the Trinitarian persons and the divinity-universal, then it seems that when we are counting the number of divine natures within the Trinity, then we are to count by individual instances of that specific universal. And as there are indeed three instances of the divinity-universal within the Trinity, each of the Father, the Son and the Spirit, then there are *three particular divine natures* within the Trinity. Thus, because of this, it seems that, unlike the position stated by NATURE, if the Trinitarian persons are related to the divine nature through an instantiation relation, and thus there being multiple instances of the divinity-universal, then there is not *one God*, that is one divine nature. There is a parity here again with a human context, where if humans are related to human nature by an instantiation relation, and thus there being multiple instances of the universal of humanity, then, plausibly, we have multiple human natures rather than one human nature. Thus, in the Trinitarian context, if the Trinitarian persons are related to the divine nature by an instantiation relation, and thus there being multiple instances of the divinity-universal, then, plausibly, we have multiple particular divine natures, rather than one divine nature.

Therefore, taking this issue into account, as it stands, the Model, rather than positing one nature, that is a numerically singular divinity-universal, instead appears to allow a proliferation of universals within the Trinitarian life, with the number of universals corresponding to the

number of instantiations. Which, given that there are three divine persons, results in there being three universals. The postulation, by the Model, of an instantiation relation between the Trinitarian persons and the divinity-universal, thus seems to be highly problematic in establishing a monotheistic foundation for Trinitarianism that holds to the one God being a numerically singular universal. Thus, despite its *prima facie* affirmation, we are not led into a position of agnosticism here, as with the previous chapters. Instead, as we have the following position posited by the Model

- The divine nature is a universal that is instantiated, individually, by the Trinitarian persons, and thus this nature is not numerically singular.

We are led to a negative answer for (Q₂), stated as such:

(Q₁) No, the Model does not affirm the conception of the divine nature as a numerically singular universal.¹³⁸

Now, given that both conditions are necessary for a Trinitarian conception to be monotheistic in this sense, with this negative answer we see that the Model disaffirms NATURE, and thus, because of this, does not fit with the second component of the pro-Nicene conception of Trinitarianism. The Model, as it stands, does not affirm NATURE; thus, it cannot be taken as one that embodies monotheism in the second sense detailed in this chapter. However, the question now presented to us, is whether one can, in fact, modify the model so as to enable it to affirm NATURE?

As a first approximation, I believe that this can be done, through providing an alternative conception of the relation between the Trinitarian persons and the one divine nature, which enables the Model to fully affirm NATURE, without facing the need to deal with any issues plagued by the original model. The Model would thus also be monotheistic in the sense developed in this chapter.

¹³⁸ A related position to the ontological indivisibility of the divine nature is that of its non-compositeness. Both of these concepts play a part in the pro-Nicene trajectory. However, it is that of the former which is of greater relevance to the numerical singularity of the divine nature that secures the monotheism of Trinitarianism, which is why this notion features in the subsequent section. Nevertheless, the issue of this “non-compositeness” will be further detailed in Appendix 4, with the Model being assessed and modified in light of this notion. This again further supporting the position reached in this chapter.

Section Conclusion

In this section, I focused on unpacking the second construal of Trinitarianism within the pro-Nicene trajectory, that of the one divine nature as a numerically singular universal. During this unpacking, I provided a concise statement, termed NATURE, which captured the second pro-Nicene position on Trinitarianism. The Model was seen to provide an affirmation of the first component of NATURE, and a *prima facie*, affirmation, but *ultima facie*, disaffirmation of the second component, leading to an overall disaffirmation of the statement. I will now focus in the subsequent section on utilising a method to modify the Model, so as to enable it to fully affirm NATURE, which, ultimately, would allow the model to have rightly earned its monotheistic credentials, in the second sense of the word.

Section 2: Philosophical Troubleshooting - Relating the Divine Nature

Section Introduction

In this section, I focus on performing some troubleshooting through demonstrating that the Model, once modified, can be shown to affirm the second component of the pro-Nicene conception of Trinitarianism: NATURE. I do this by utilising certain philosophical concepts from a prominent contemporary formal ontology. I then, apply these concepts to the issue identified in the previous section, resulting in a potential solution that brings the Model in line with the second conception of pro-Nicene Trinitarianism detailed in this chapter. This, ultimately, allowing me to conclude that the Model fits this second conception of monotheism, and thus is monotheistic in this specific sense.

2.1 Formal Ontology: The Four-Category Ontology

2.1.1 Basic Ontological Categories

Jonathan Lowe (2006, 2009 and 2012) has developed a formal categorial ontology, termed the *four-category ontology*,¹³⁹ which aims to provide an ontological framework, and metaphysical

¹³⁹ This ontology is situated within the branch of analytical metaphysics called formal ontology. Formal ontology focuses on identifying the ontological categories and formal relations that obtain between members of those different categories (Lowe, 2006).

basis, for the natural sciences. Thus, within this ontological framework, Lowe posits that there are four, cross categorial, fundamental ontological categories. That is, the four fundamental categories are constituted by drawing together the substance/property dichotomy with the universal/particular dichotomy.¹⁴⁰ These two distinctions, according to Lowe, thus cut across one another, producing the four fundamental ontological categories of:

- (1) objects; (2) modes; (3) kinds; and (4) attributes (properties)

with three formal ontological relations (that relate the four categories):

- (5) instantiation, (6) characterisation and (7) exemplification,

The four categories of (1) – (4) are defined in terms of the formal ontological relations of (5)–(7) and are helpfully represented through a diagram, termed by Lowe (2006), the Ontological Square:

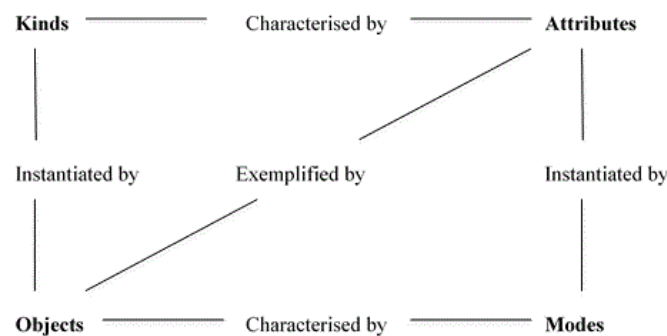


Figure 3.1 Ontological Square (Version 1)

(Lowe, 2006)

The defining features of the four categories are as follows: particular (or first) objects are property-bearing particulars that have determinate existence and identity conditions, are countable entities and are not themselves borne or possessed by anything else.¹⁴¹ They are instances of kinds, are *rigidly* existentially dependent upon them (that is necessarily its existence being dependent upon the existence of that *specific* kind) and are characterised by modes.

¹⁴⁰ Particulars specifically instantiate universals, but do not have instances. Whilst universals are instantiable, entities. Furthermore, universals and particulars are themselves not categories, but act as transcategorial entities, which, according to Lowe, are ‘not more fundamental than those of the third level [the four categories] because they are mere abstractions and do no serious ontological work on their own account; (Lowe, 2006, 39, square parenthesis added). The four categories are thus the most basic categories within this ontology.

¹⁴¹ For a helpful explanation of conditions of objecthood see, (Lowe, 1998).

Secondly, kinds (substantial universals) are universals that are (secondary) objects and kinds of *being*.¹⁴² They thus have their membership determined by certain, distinctive existence and identity conditions, which can be determined a priori.¹⁴³ Kinds have (particular) objects as their instances, are *non-rigidly* dependent upon them (that is necessarily its existence being dependent upon the existence of *some* instance),¹⁴⁴ and are characterised by attributes, which they are *identity-dependent* upon (that is essentially being dependent upon the existence of that *specific* for their identity).

Thirdly, attributes (non-substantial universals or properties) are *universal* ways of being. That is, they are general ways in which two (or more) different objects, may be a certain thing, in the *exact same* way (i.e. a numerically identical way). Attributes have modes as their instances, are non-rigidly existentially dependent upon, and characterise kinds.

Lastly, modes (property-instances or tropes) are *particular* ways of being. That is, they are particular *ways* in which a given object may be a certain thing, with the implication that no other thing could be that certain thing in exactly the same way (i.e. in a numerically identical way). Modes are instances of attributes, which they are rigidly existentially dependent upon, and characterise objects, which they are identity and rigidly existentially dependent upon.

2.1.3 Formal Ontological Relations

Now, these four basic ontological categories of objects, kinds, attributes and modes, are related, and, as noted above, are defined in terms of, the asymmetrical formal ontological relations of characterisation, instantiation and exemplification. These ontological relations, according to Lowe, are *irreducible* and *primitive* notions, and thus do not provide a reductive analysis or definition of their nature.¹⁴⁵ However, we can still conceptualise the certain distinctions

¹⁴² Lowe (2006) makes a distinction, within this ontology, between "first" or "particular" objects and secondary objects, which are kinds. As both types of entities fulfil the requirement of objecthood (i.e. are property-bearers, have determinate existence and identity conditions, are countable and are not themselves borne by any other entities).

¹⁴³ The a priori determination of these conditions distinguishes a kind of being from a natural kind, which would have the conditions for its membership determined a posteriori (Lowe, 2006).

¹⁴⁴ The four-category ontology assumes the position of immanent realism, which is that of there being no uninstantiated universals, and thus an essential feature of any universal being that of it having a particular instance which grounds its existence.

¹⁴⁵ Furthermore, these asymmetrical formal ontological relations are construed as "internal relations", in that they are necessitated by the existence of the entities that they relate, and thus, because of this, they are "no addition of

between them, in that, firstly, characterisation, which is traditionally termed “inherence”, is a relationship that takes the characterising entities (i.e. modes and attributes) to not be constituents or parts of the characterised entities (i.e. objects and kinds), but instead are simply taken to be “characteristics”, “features” or “aspects” of these entities. Thus, for example, a redness attribute (non-substantial universal or property) characterises the kind tomato, and thus the colour “redness” is taken to be a “characteristic”, “feature” or “aspect” of the kind tomato. Additionally, a redness mode, which is an instance of a redness attribute, characterises a particular tomato, and thus the colour “redness” is a particular “characteristic”, “feature” or “aspect” of that tomato.

Secondly, instantiation is a relationship between a particular entity and a universal, in which the particular entities (i.e. objects and modes) are again taken to not be constituents or parts of universals (i.e. kinds and attributes), but simply are particular *instances* of them. Thus, for example, again, a particular tomato is an instance of the kind tomato (substantial universal).

Thirdly, exemplification is a relationship between an object and an attribute. Exemplification is not a *primitive* formal ontological relation but is instead an indirect relationship between an object and an attribute. It is non-primitive (and non-direct) due to it being a resultant relationship derivable from the two other formal ontological relations of instantiation and characterisation. That is, these two different formal ontological relations are species of the relationship of exemplification and provide two fundamentally *different ways* in which an object can be indirectly related to (i.e. exemplify) an attribute. Where either the object exemplifies an attribute through it instantiating a kind that, in turn, is characterised by the attribute. Or, the object exemplifies an attribute through it being characterised by a mode which, in turn, instantiates the attribute. Thus, for example, a particular tomato exemplifies the attribute of redness through it either instantiating the kind tomato, which is itself characterised by the attribute of redness, or it is characterised by a redness mode, which is an instance of the attribute of redness.

Furthermore, these two different species of exemplification, according to Lowe, correspond to dispositional and occurrent *predication*. Thus, the exemplification relationship obtains, according to Lowe, in two different varieties, modes or manners, in the form of either “dispositional exemplification” or “occurrent exemplification” (Lowe, 2009). That is, more

being”. Lowe thus sees that these formal and ontological relations are to be more accurately taken as “relationships” rather than relations. For a further explanation of this distinction, see: (Lowe, 2006).

fully, for Lowe, and *contra* the majority of philosophers, the dispositional and occurrent distinction does not represent a distinction between two types of *properties*.¹⁴⁶ Instead, the idea here is that there is a distinction to be made between dispositional and occurrent *predication* and *state of affairs*, rather than properties. That is the four-category ontology actually disposes with dispositional and occurrent properties. Preferring to locate things at three levels:

- i. State of affairs level: Dispositional & occurrent state of affairs
- ii. Relational level: Dispositional & occurrent exemplification
- iii. Linguistic Level: Dispositional & occurrent predication

With these three levels being brought together as such: a dispositional state of affairs is one in which an object, instantiates a kind, which is, in turn, characterised by an attribute. ¹⁴⁷Thus resulting in the object *dispositionally* exemplifying that attribute. This is expressed linguistically through dispositional predication which can be stated formally as such (with “**Dis**[*a*, *F*]” standing for “*a* exemplifies attribute *F* *dispositionally*” and “/” standing for instantiation):

$$\text{(Disposition) Dis}[a, F] =_{df} (\exists \phi)(\phi F \ \& \ a/\phi) \quad \text{Lowe (2009, 178).}$$

Whereas an occurrent state of affairs is one in which, an object, is characterised by a mode, which, in turn, instantiates an attribute. Thus, resulting in the object *occurrently* exemplifying that attribute. This is expressed linguistically through occurrent predication which can be stated formally as such (with “**Occ**[*a*, *F*]” standing for “*a* exemplifies attribute *F* *occurrently*”, “*r*” standing for “kind”, and a juxtaposition of the constants or variables (e.g. “βG”), representing “characterisation”):

$$\text{(Occurrent) Occ}[a, F] =_{df} (\exists r)(ar \ \& \ r/F) \quad \text{Lowe (2009, 178).}$$

Objects can thus exemplify a given attribute in either of these two ways; dispositionally or occurrently, which is the obtaining of either a dispositional or occurrent state of affairs, expressed, linguistically, through dispositional or occurrent predication. Thus, for example, a particular tomato dispositionally exemplifies the attribute of redness, through it being an

¹⁴⁶ The majority of metaphysicians favour the term categorical rather than occurrent for properties that are not dispositional. However, Lowe sees this term as being metaphysically loaded, and so prefers the latter.

¹⁴⁷ Thus, a state of affairs here is simply the *indirect* “possession” of a property (attribute) by an object.

instance of the kind tomato, which is, in turn, characterised by the attribute of redness (thus in a predicative sense one would communicate this state of affairs by simply saying that “the tomato *is red*”, which in the above schema, is: **Dis**[*t*, *R*] where “*t*” stands for tomato and “*R*” for the attribute of redness).

However, a particular tomato occurrently exemplifies the attribute of redness, through it being characterised by a redness-mode, which is, in turn, an instance of the attribute of redness (thus in a predicative sense one would communicate this state of affairs by simply saying that “the tomato *is redding*”, which in the above schema, is: **Occ**[*t*, *R*] where “*t*” again stands for tomato and “*R*” for the attribute of redness)

We can further illustrate this dispositional/occurrent distinction through another version of the Ontological Square:

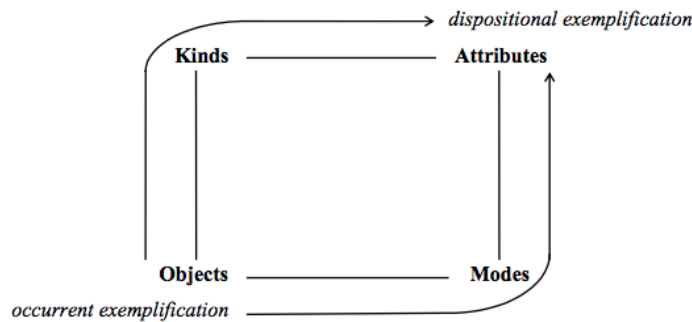


Figure 3.2 Ontological Square (Version 2)

(Lowe, 2009, 117)

There is thus a distinction between *dispositional* and *occurrent* states/relations/predicates that ground the exemplification of an attribute by an object. Therefore, taking this all into account, within the ontological framework of the four-category ontology, there are four basic ontological categories: objects, kinds, attributes and modes, that are defined and related by three basic formal ontological relations: instantiation, characterisation and exemplification.

The four-category ontology provides a clear ontological framework for assessing the ontological nature and relationships of various types of entities. We will now turn our attention to applying this framework within a Trinitarian context, helping us to explicate the relationship between the Trinitarian persons and the one divine nature.

2.1.4 Four-Category Ontology: Trinitarian Analysis

The Father, the Son and the Spirit are particular objects through each being property bearers (i.e. each bearing the attribute (property) of divinity), with determinate existence and identity conditions, and each not being borne or possessed by any other entity.¹⁴⁸

Thus, as particular objects, the Father, the Son and the Spirit each necessarily instantiate a kind, which we can term the kind *Deity*. This kind, being a kind of being, has its membership determined by certain distinctive existence and identity conditions, with these conditions being determinable a priori. These conditions could plausibly be that of existing everlastingly and being identified as an object that is unlimited in power. The Father, the Son and the Spirit are thus each necessarily *deity-instances*.¹⁴⁹ In addition to this, the kind Deity is generically existentially dependent on the existence of at least one of the Trinitarian persons existing (in that it necessarily exists if at least, for example, the Father exists). And each of the Trinitarian persons are rigidly existentially dependent on the existence of Deity (in that each of the Trinitarian persons necessarily exist if Deity exists).

Now, Deity, as a kind, would be characterised by an attribute, which we can term *divinity* (i.e. divinity-attribute). Divinity (i.e. essential, everlasting omnipotence) would be an essential property, feature or characteristic of the kind Deity, that is, in some sense, possessed by it, or "inheres" within it. Thus, every entity within the kind Deity, that is every instance of deity, (which, according to the Model, would solely be the Trinitarian persons), would be divine (i.e. essentially, everlastingly omnipotent).

Furthermore, assuming immanent realism, which is that of there being no un-instantiated universals, an essential feature of any universal is that it of it having particular instances, which ground its existence. And thus, the divinity-attribute, as a (non-substantial) universal, would be instantiated by at least one mode, which we can term, as before, a *divinity-mode*. As a particular instance of the divinity-attribute, the existence of divinity-mode would be rigidly existentially dependent upon the existence of divinity (in that it necessarily exists if divinity exists). And, conversely, the existence of divinity would be generically existentially dependent on the existence of the divinity-mode (in that it necessarily exists if at least it, or any other

¹⁴⁸ For these existence and identity conditions, see: Chapter 3.

¹⁴⁹ Lowe (2012) also sees particular instances to be (identical to) particular forms (in a hylemorphic sense (though without the "matter")). This fits nicely with Swinburne's (2016) that a divine person is a form.

divinity-mode, exists). Additionally, a divinity-mode, as with all modes, would be a particular way of being. That is a particular way in which its bearer would be characterised. Thus, a divinity-mode would exist as an entity that characterises its bearer through bestowing upon it a certain character. That is the character of being divine (i.e. essentially, everlastingly omnipotent).

Now, within the specific context at hand, the question stands where the Trinitarian persons, as conceptualised by the Model, can, in fact, be characterised by a divinity-mode? As if this is, in fact, possible then *each* of these divinity-modes would exist as an essential “property”, “feature” or “characteristic” of the Father, the Son and the Spirit. They would directly bestow the character of divinity onto each of the Trinitarian persons. Moreover, each of these divinity-modes would be identity-dependent on their bearers, in that it is *part of the essence* of a given divinity-mode to be the mode that it is in virtue of its relation to each of the Trinitarian persons (i.e. it is the mode of *that* specific bearer).

However, as we saw in in Chapter 2, the Father, the Son and the Spirit are each reciprocally identity-dependent. This reciprocal identity-dependence, within the Trinitarian life, results in the identity (or essence) of each of the Persons, including that of the other Persons. This resulting in each of the divinity-modes firstly being dependent on the identity of *more* than one entity, that is the Father *and* the Son *and* the Spirit. Secondly, it results in each of the divinity-modes also being able to characterise *more* than one entity, three particular objects, rather than one. However, as explained previously, this is not possible. Thus, given this impossibility, we must instead hold to the position that the Trinitarian persons are in fact *not* characterised by any divinity-mode (or any mode in general) at all.

This non-characterisation, however, does not result in the Trinitarian persons lacking divinity or a relationship to the one divine nature (i.e. the divinity-attribute). As within the ontological framework of the four-category ontology, as noted previously, there are two *different* ways in which objects may be related to an attribute. The first by *instantiating kinds* that are characterised by the attributes, which is a dispositional state of affairs (expressed by dispositional predication). And, the second, by being *characterised by modes* which instantiate the attribute themselves, which is an occurrent state of affairs (expressed by occurrent predication). What is being negated in the Model is solely that of the obtaining of the second type of state of affairs; the occurrent state of affairs.

Thus, what is important for us to secure the divinity of the persons, and their relationship to the divine nature, is that of each of the Persons *exemplifying* divinity in at least one of the above ways. That is, more specifically, the Father, the Son and the Spirit each being in some type of (indirect) relationship of exemplification to the divinity-attribute. Thus, in the Model, it is simply that of the divinity-attribute not being *occurrently* exemplified by the Father, the Son and the Spirit. That is there is no state of affairs where the Father, the Son and the Spirit each occurrently exemplify divinity by being characterised by a divinity-mode that, in turn, instantiates the divinity-attribute (thus in a predicative sense the following would be true: $\sim\text{Occ}[f, D]$, where “ \sim ” stands for “not”, “ f ” stands for “the Father” (who serves as a representative of the Trinitarian persons) and “ D ” for the divinity-attribute).

However, what is maintained within this framework is that of the Father, the Son and the Spirit each *dispositionally* exemplifying the divinity-attribute. That is there is a state of affairs where the Father, the Son and the Spirit each dispositionally exemplify divinity, through instantiating the kind Deity, which is, in turn, characterised by the divinity-attribute (thus in a predicative sense the following would be true: $\text{Dis}[f, D]$, where “ f ” continues to stand for “the Father” (who serves as a representative of the Trinitarian persons), and “ D ” continues to stand for the divinity-attribute).

Taking this into account, and continuing to take Father as a representative for all of the persons, we can now re-construe the Ontological Square as such, to express the relationship between the Trinitarian persons and the divinity-attribute:

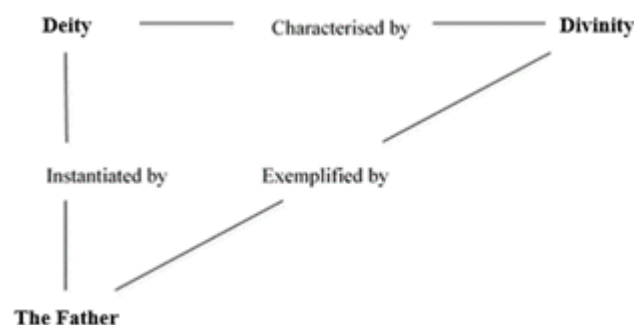


Figure 3.4 Ontological Square (Trinitarian Version)

As we can see in the Ontological Square above, the framework of the four-category ontology, within a Trinitarian context, does not feature the category of a mode. This due to the fact of the Trinitarian persons' reciprocal identity-dependence (and the identity-dependence of modes),

resulting in them not exemplifying the property of divinity in *both* a dispositional and occurrent manner. Instead, the Persons exemplify the divinity-attribute *solely* in the former way (i.e. all of the Trinitarian persons exemplifying the kind Deity, which is characterised by the divinity-attribute). Thus, taking this all into account through this ontological framework we have a means for us to assert the exemplification of the divinity-attribute by the Trinitarian persons, whilst negating their possession of any modes of divinity, which would be a feature of a tri-theistic model, as shown in Chapter 2.

In sum, the Father, the Son and the Spirit are thus each related to the one God, which we take along with the pro-Nicene trajectory, to be the one attribute (non-substantial universal) of divinity, through each of them instantiating the kind Deity (i.e. each of them being deity-instances), which is characterised by this one attribute. This secures the oneness of the divine nature, as there is indeed one divinity-attribute within the Trinitarian life. Thus, more fully, when one says that:

- (i) the Father *is* the one God (i.e. the one divine nature),
- (ii) the Son *is* the one God (i.e. the one divine nature), and
- (iii) the Holy *is* the one God (i.e. the one divine nature),

the “is” clause, is to be taken as the “is” of exemplification, (i.e. the “is” clause expressing a relation of exemplification), where “*x is y*” is, at a more fine-grained level, restated as “*x exemplifies y*”.

Furthermore, along with the trajectory, the one divine nature, is taken to be a universal, and thus the "one God" is the one *divinity-attribute*, that is, within the framework of the four-category ontology, the *non-substantial* divinity-universal. Taking this into account, we can thus re-construe (i) – (iii) as:

- (i*) the Father *exemplifies* the one attribute (non-substantial universal) of divinity,
- (ii*) the Son *exemplifies* the one attribute (non-substantial universal) of divinity, and
- (iii*) the Holy *exemplifies* the one attribute (non-substantial universal) of divinity.

Through this relationship of exemplification between the Trinitarian persons and the divinity-attribute, the Trinitarian persons are the one God; they (i.e. dispositionally) exemplify the divinity-attribute (through instantiating the kind Deity, which is, in turn, characterised by the

divinity-attribute). The Trinitarian persons are thus each God, through being in an *indirect* relationship with God, that is the one divinity-attribute. This position sketched here enables us to deal with our multiplicity problem that was presented against the original model.

The indirect relationship of exemplification between the Trinitarian persons and the divinity-attribute, unlike the *direct* relationship of the instantiation of the divinity-attribute, as featured in the original model, does not negate there from being only one God, that is one divinity-attribute within the Trinity. This is because, in a *direct* relationship such as instantiation, where the Trinitarian persons instantiate the one divinity-attribute, there would then plausibly have to be *three* instantiations of the divinity-attribute; one instantiation for the Father, one instantiation for the Son and one for the Spirit. However, as the divinity-attribute, within this conception of Trinitarianism, *is* God, three instantiations of the divinity-attribute thus results in there being three “Gods”.

However, by utilising an *indirect* relationship, such as (dispositional) exemplification, one can take there to be only one divinity-attribute within the Trinitarian life. This is due to solely *one* divinity-attribute being required to perform the role of characterising the *kind* Deity, which then *itself*, rather than the attribute, having multiple instantiations. It is the kind Deity rather than the divinity-attribute that is in a direct relationship to the Persons. And as there is *one* kind deity, plausibly there is only one divinity-attribute characterising that kind, and which the Persons are then, as *instances* of that kind, indirectly related to. Thus, rather than having three instances of the divinity-attribute, we have three instances of the kind deity (the Trinitarian persons), with the kind being characterised by the one divinity-attribute, the one God.

Lowe’s ontological framework, thus allows one to express *how* the Trinitarian persons are the one God through their exemplification of the divinity-attribute (i.e. the non-substantial divinity-universal). And, most importantly, it allows one to assume a non-identity relationship between the Trinitarian persons and the one divine nature, without being presented with a proliferation of universals (attributes) of divinity within the Trinity. There is one God, that is one divinity-attribute, as there is one kind (i.e. deity) which is characterised by it.

Taking this into account, we can, again, further illustrate the modification made to the Model through a diagram that captures the main tenets detailed above (where the other terms and symbols are as before, with the addition now of “God(2)” referring to God in the *predicative*

sense (i.e. as a property/universal ascribable to the Persons), and “Ex” standing for the exemplification relation (which now replaces the instantiation relation)):

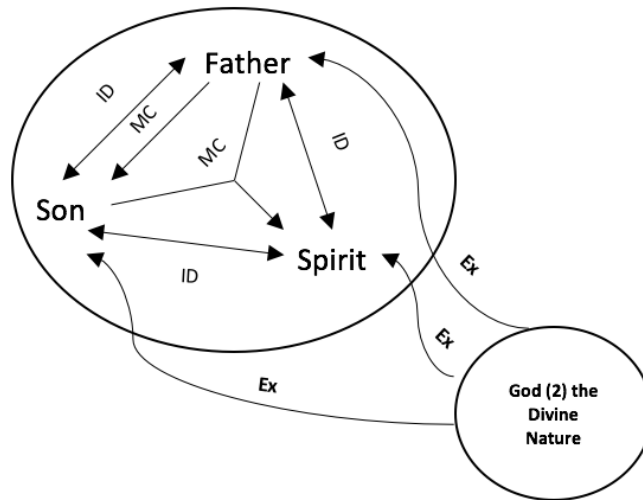


Figure 3.4 The Functional Monotheism model (Modification 3)

In assuming this ontological framework, we thus have a modification of the Model that allows one to hold onto the oneness of God, that is the numerical singularity of the universal (attribute) of divinity (that is the divine Nature which is “God(2)” in the illustration above), without incurring the issues faced by the original model (i.e. instantiation by the Trinitarian persons entailing multiple “Gods”), through an exemplification relation (which includes substantial kinds). Thus, taking this and the position elucidated within the four-category ontology, we can state the position of the (modified) Model as such:

- the divine nature that is the divinity-universal, exemplified by the Trinitarian persons, is numerically singular.

And thus, from this, we have a positive answer to (Q2):

(A₂) Yes, the (modified) Model does affirm that the divine nature is a numerically singular property of divinity.

Therefore, with this answer, we see that the Model affirms (ii) of the statement of NATURE, and, given its previous affirmation of (i) of the statement, we can take it to now fully affirm the conception Trinitarianism captured by this statement. Through utilising Lowe’s four-category ontology, to perform a modification of the model, we can reach the position that the divine

nature, that is the divinity-universal, is numerically singular (despite the Trinitarian persons *not* being identical to it),¹⁵⁰ as required by pro-Nicene Trinitarianism. The (modified) Model thus affirms the second component of the pro-Nicene conception of Trinitarianism. And, in addition to the sense detailed previously, the Model is also monotheistic in *this* sense as well.

Chapter Conclusion

In this chapter, I focused on addressing the Historical Objection, which is the second component of the Tri-Theism Objection (i.e. T-OBJECTION (ii)). How I sought to address this problem, in the first sub-section of this chapter, was through focusing on identifying and detailing the second historical construal of Trinitarianism in the pro-Nicene trajectory, leading to a concise statement of this conception (i.e. NATURE).

In the second sub-section of this chapter, I then focused on assessing the monotheistic credentials of the Model according to NATURE, and a modification of a certain aspect of the Model was made. This modification enabled me to demonstrate that the Model affirms the central elements of this statement and thus, again, successfully fits within the boundaries of "orthodox" (pro-Nicene) Trinitarianism. The Model is thus monotheistic and (the third construal of) the Historical Objection (i.e. (ii) of T-OBJECTION), fails to achieve its end. I will now proceed to show that this conclusion can also be reached, for the third possible conception of Trinitarianism, within the pro-Nicene trajectory.

¹⁵⁰ Which Pawl (2020) took to be the only available alternative to the instantiation relation.

Chapter 6: Historical Objection (D): Identifying Pro-Nicene Trinitarianism (iii)

Chapter Introduction

In this chapter, I demonstrate that the Model fits with the third, and final, conception of Trinitarianism, found within the pro-Nicene theological trajectory (i.e. the one God as the Trinity). To achieve this end, I firstly unpack the grammatical usage of the word God to express this conception of Trinitarianism, and then proceed to detail the historical context for the usage of this term within the trajectory. From this, I then provide a clear statement that expresses this conception of Trinitarianism, termed: TRINITY, and then examine whether the Model affirms this statement. This allowing me to reach the position of the Model affirming the first part of the statement, but disaffirming the second part of it. The Model, as it stands is thus not monotheistic in *this* specific sense. However, to deal with this disaffirmation, I then modify the Model by utilising a prominent metaphysical thesis within contemporary metaphysics; Composition as Identity, which enables me to demonstrate that, once the Model is modified in light of this thesis, the objection of this chapter can be sufficiently dealt with. Therefore, allowing the conclusion to be reached that the Model is in line with the third concept of monotheism found within the pro-Nicene trajectory, and thus (the fourth, and final) construal of the Historical Objection is ineffective against the Model.

Section 1: The Pro-Nicene Perspective and Assessment (C)

Section Introduction

In this section, I focus on unpacking the third construal of Trinitarianism, focused on the notion of the “one God” being the Trinity. In doing this I focus firstly on detailing the pro-Nicene grammatical use of the term God in reference to the Trinity (the simple substance that is identical to the Father, the Son and the Spirit). After this, I then turn my attention towards identifying the historical position of the trajectory, through an exploration of the conception of Trinitarianism found within it. During this exploration, I will provide a clear statement that expresses this conception of Trinitarianism, termed: TRINITY. After this, I will then show that the Model, as it stands, does, in fact, disaffirm TRINITY, through failing to affirm the second part of the statement. The Model is thus not monotheistic in *this* specific sense. However, I will then state how I will deal with this problem in

the next section so that the Model can be re-classed as monotheistic in this sense of the word as well.

1.1. Pro-Nicene Trinitarianism (iii): The Trinity as God

1.1.1 Historical Objection (D): Central Focus

The central focus of this chapter is on countering the Historical Objection, which underpins the Tri-Theism Objection. This objection asserts that the Model is outside of the "boundaries" of orthodox Trinitarianism. In assessing this objection, this chapter will focus on a third possible conception of Trinitarianism, that is found within the "orthodox" (i.e. pro-Nicene) trajectory, and grounded upon a historical (theological) foundation. The Historical Objection, in this chapter, is thus re-construed as asserting that the Model is not in line with pro-Nicene Trinitarianism, in this third, and final, conception of it.

Thus, the correspondence between the Model and this conception will be assessed, leading to the conclusion, as a first approximation, that the Model (once necessary modifications are made) corresponds with this conception, and thus is within the "boundaries" of orthodox (pro-Nicene) Trinitarianism. The Model is thus monotheistic in a third, and final, sense and the Historical Objection, as construed in this manner, does not apply to the Model.

1.1.2 Scriptural & Historical Foundation: Lack of Basis

The third component of the pro-Nicene grammatical interpretation of Trinitarianism centres around the usage of the word God in a *titular sense*. That is, God, in this specific context, is used as a title in reference to the Trinity as a whole. This specific usage of the word God, unlike the nominal and predicative sense of the word, does not find specific, explicit precedent in the New Testament and the Historical creeds. With the usage of God in reference to the Father and to the one divine nature being the primary way in which the word is used in these authoritative documents. However, this *innovative* usage of the word God, in this specific sense, finds some historical basis in the mid-late 4th century Trinitarian debates that played out within the Latin pro-Nicene context, and which featured theologians such as Hilary of Poitiers, Ambrose of Milan and, most of all, Augustine of Hippo.

1.1.3 Historical Foundation: Latin Theologians

Hilary of Poitiers and Ambrose of Milan

Within the Latin pro-Nicene context, we see that Hilary and Ambrose played a role in the development of the usage of the term in this way, in their defence against the anti-Nicene (Homoian and Heterousian) charge that Christ is not correctly referred to as "true God". Hilary saw this charge however as being incorrect, given the character of the Son's birth demonstrating that he shares in the Father's divinity as "only" and "true" God, without this leading to the conclusion that Christ becomes God in separation from the one divine substance (or nature) (Ayres, 2010).

That is, that Hilary asserts, in multiple places, that 'he [Christ] was the true God in the nature of the one true God' (Hilary, *Trin.* 9.27 square parenthesis added); and that 'if the one God the Father does not deprive Christ of being the one God, so the only God the true Father does not take anything away from Christ so that he is not the true God' (Hilary, *Trin.* 9.29). Thus, as Ayres writes, Hilary 'asserts the unity of the divine nature, but does not say without qualification that the Son is also *solus verus Deus*' (Ayres, 2010, 101, emphasis in text).

Ambrose, in a similar vein, focuses on the issue of Christ being correctly termed "true God. However, we see Ambrose being more willing to ascribe to the Son the same attributes ascribed to the Father in his handling of the scriptural verse; 1 Timothy 6:16: 'who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see. To him be honour and might forever. Amen'. Ambrose sees the term "alone" in this verse as referring to God used as a name for the Father *and* the Son (Ayres, 2010). Based on this differentiation in reference, without separability, Ambrose asserts that

if this is what the Scripture saith of created men, that, being many, they are one who can in no way be compared to Divine Persons, how much more are the Father and the Son one in Divinity, with Whom there is no difference either of substance or of will!
(Ambrose, *fid.* 1.18 (NPF₂ 2:204), emphasis added).

Ambrose, as Ayres writes, thus 'pushes a little further than Hilary in arguing that the title "only true God" may also be directly accorded the Son because of the unity of nature' (Ayres, 2010, 102). Furthermore, we see the dual reference of terms used for the Father also being used

correctly, by Ambrose, not only for the Son, but also for the Godhead, when, in commenting on another specific scriptural passage; Luke 18:19 (“Why do you call me good?” Jesus answered. “No one is good—except God alone”), he writes:

With divinely inspired comprehension, then, our Lord said *not* there is none good but the Father alone, but there is none good but God alone, and Father is the proper name of Him Who begets. But the unity of God by no means excludes the *Godhead* of the Three Persons, and therefore it is His Nature that is extolled. Goodness, therefore, is of the nature of God, and in the nature of God, again, exists the Son of God—wherefore that which the predicate expresses belongs not to one single Person, but to the [complete] unity [of the Godhead] (Ambrose, *fid.*, 2.18 (NPF₂ 2:226), emphasis added).

Ambrose, though upholding the primacy of the Father, did not delimit an inclusion of the Son and the Spirit in the one divine nature and power of God. That is this power and nature is present in both the Father, the Son *and* the Spirit (Ayes, 2010). Thus, from *this* basis, Ambrose, in comparison to most of the earlier pro-Nicenes, speaks more directly of the Trinity as the one God, as he states: ‘therefore God is one, the majesty of the eternal Trinity being preserved’ (Ambrose, *Spir.* 3.14.94 (NPF₂ 7:148)). He further states ‘But does anyone deny that the divinity of the eternal Trinity is to be worshipped?’ (Ambrose, *Spir.*, 3.12.86 (NPF₂ 7:148)).

It is thus clear that from the path mapped out by Hilary, and most importantly Ambrose, the later pro-Nicenes inherited a practice for the application of the term God to an entity *other* than the Father; first, the Son, and then, increasingly through the work of Ambrose, the Trinity itself.

Augustine of Hippo

Now, turning to the paradigm historical representative of this position, Augustine of Hippo, Augustine along with other theologians within the (Latin) pro-Nicene trajectory (though for the latter in a more rudimentary manner) took the Trinity, to be (titled as) the one God, and the Father, Son and Spirit, who *are* the Trinity, to be of one substance,¹⁵¹ as Augustine writes:

¹⁵¹ For brevity, I am now referring to God the Trinity, simply as the Trinity, until later in the philosophical troubleshooting section, when it will be useful to refer to it as this.

Wherefore, our Lord God helping, we will undertake to render, as far as we are able, that very account which they so importunately demand: viz., that *the Trinity is the one and only and true God*, and also how the Father, the Son, and the Spirit are rightly said, believed, understood, to be of *one and the same substance* or essence (Augustine, *Trin*, 1.2.4, (NPF₁ 1:19), emphasis added).

This one substance (*substantia*) of the Trinity, refers to the “general nature of existing”, it is unchanging, eternal and explains “what something truly is” (Ayres, 2000).¹⁵² The grounds for the oneness and ontological indivisibility of the divine substance is built upon the simplicity of God, which, for Augustine, provides the fundamental grammar and principles for talk about the substantiality of God (Ayres, 2000). Augustine’s conception of simplicity is predicated on the fact that God, as Ayres writes is ‘non-composite: God has no parts, is incapable of division, and is not composed of a number of elements’ (Ayres, 2004, 281).

This position concerning God’s simplicity, takes the Trinity to be in complete, ontological distinction from other entities, who possess *composite* natures, that can be clearly distinguished from attributes that are predicated of them, and which are derived from an external source. However, by contrast, as Augustine notes:

According to this, then, those things which are essentially and truly divine are called simple, because in them quality and substance are identical, and because they are divine, or wise, or blessed in themselves, and without extraneous supplement (Augustine, *Civ*, XI.10, (NPF₁ 2:211)).

No distinction exists within God, who possesses his attributes “in itself” (i.e. these attributes not be participated in), is *identical* with each of these attributes, and each of these attributes are identical with every other attribute. This identity of the attribute within the Trinity, and the non-compositeness that it establishes, has been termed the “identity thesis” and provides grounds for the indivisibility of the substance of God.¹⁵³ That is, as Augustine writes:

¹⁵² Cf. (*De Trin*, 1.37 (NPF₁ 3:66)). As seen in the first quotation of this section, Augustine regularly uses the term *substantia* across his written corpus. Still, he is quite accommodating of other terms, due to him interchanging between various terms in expressing the means, by which, the Trinity, (i.e. the Father, the Son and the Spirit) is one.

¹⁵³ Cf. (Radde-Gallwitz, 2009).

But in that Highest Trinity, which is incomparably above all things, there is so great an indivisibility, that whereas a trinity of men cannot be called one man, in that, there both is said to be and is one God, nor is that Trinity in one God, but it is one God (Augustine, *Trin*, 23.43, (NPF₁ 2:222)).

This indivisibility, establishes the oneness of God. That is, this notion of the ontological indivisibility of the Trinity is central to Augustine's thought, and it is grounded upon his position concerning the simplicity and identity of God, with everything that is predicated of it. The central question to be faced here, in our context, is thus how the notion of simplicity is to be maintained in light of the tri-personality of God? Can the simple divine substance be characterised by a God who is tri-personal? Augustine certainly believed so, as, according to him, in spite of the distinction between the three persons of the Trinity, one can maintain the simplicity of God, as he writes 'This Trinity is one God; and none the less simple because a Trinity' (Augustine, *Civ*, XI.10, (NPF₁ 2:211)).

That there is a plurality of Persons' within the Trinity does not result in a plurality of substance, as anything that is said in reference to each of the Trinitarian persons, as Augustine notes, is said in respect of them as relations (and therefore not in respect of their substance), and thus 'is to be taken of them, not in the plural in sum, but in the singular'. (Augustine, *Trin*, 5.9, (NPF₁ 5:92)). Thus, for example, to state that each is God, (that is the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Spirit is God), however, this does not result in there being three "Gods", as truly there is only one God (Ayres, 2010).

That is, as Augustine writes:

whenever each is singly spoken of in respect to themselves, then they are not spoken of as three in the plural number, but one, the Trinity itself, as the Father God, the Son God, and the Spirit God; the Father good, the Son good, and the Spirit good; and the Father omnipotent, the Son omnipotent, and the Spirit omnipotent: yet neither three Gods, nor three goods, nor three omnipotents, but one God, good, omnipotent, the Trinity itself. (Augustine, *Trin*, 8.9 (NPF₁ 5:92)).

If one were indeed to hold to the position that there are three "Gods", "goodnesses" and "omnipotences", then it would be, then it would be to introduce a *division* into the

Trinitarian life, created by the use of these terms. (Barrett, 2017). There is no real *ontological distinction* between the Trinity and anything within it.¹⁵⁴

Thus, as noted above, there is no composition within the Trinity, and each of person of the Trinity does not possess an individual and unique substance or essence, but instead, the Father, Son and Spirit are *equally*, and essentially of one and the same substance (or “essence”).¹⁵⁵ It is important to note, however, that the one divine substance, for Augustine here, is not to be taken as a fourth entity in addition to the three divine persons,¹⁵⁶ as Augustine writes:

The Father, the Son and the Spirit are the Trinity, but they are only one God; not that the divinity, which they have in common, is a sort of fourth person, but that the Godhead is ineffably and inseparably a Trinity. You that in the catholic faith it is the true and firm belief that the Father and the Son and the Spirit are one God, while remaining a Trinity...the Trinity is of one substance and the essence is nothing else than the Trinity itself (Augustine, *Ep.* 120, 3.13, 3.17)

The one divine substance, rather than being a separate, individually existing entity, exists rather instead *as* the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, that is *as* the Trinity. The one divine substance is thus not distinct from the three persons. The Father, the Son and the Spirit are the Trinity, and the Trinity, as one substance, “is” the Father, the Son and the Spirit. There is thus an extension of the “identity thesis”, above, to the divine persons, who like God’s qualities, are also *identical* to the one divine substance, that is the Trinity itself.

However, given this position, it is important to note that, by utilising the notion of divine simplicity, and the identification of the Trinity (and the one substance) with all that God has (i.e. his qualities and the Persons), there is, again, no division of the one substance into various parts within God. Rather, simplicity thus, as Barrett writes, provides ‘the unity and ontological inseparability amid distinctions and differentiation’ (Barrett, 2017, 58).

¹⁵⁴ It’s important to emphasise however, that despite the lack of an ontological distinction between the Trinity and anything within it, the Persons remain distinct given their relations which do not add anything to, or provide a division within, the substance of the Trinity. That is the relations between the Persons are ontologically “lightweight” distinctions within the Trinity (Cross, 2010).

¹⁵⁵ Cf. (Augustine, *Civ.* XI. 10 (NPF₁ 2:211)).

¹⁵⁶ On this point, Colin Gunton (1993) interprets Augustine as taking the divine substance to be a real entity that underlies the three divine persons. For an argument against this interpretation, see: (Ayres, 2000).

Thus, in summary, the Trinity (of Father, Son and Spirit) is one, through possessing one substance. And in conceptualising the one, ontologically indivisible, substance of the Trinity, we take it to be simple, and thus lacking composition. There is thus no real distinction between the Trinity, its substance and the Father, the Son and the Spirit who are each identical to this substance. Thus, in reality, there is only a *numerically* singular thing within the Trinity; the one divine substance, which *is* the persons, and, in turn, *is* the Trinity. This conception of the one God, though not foundational to pro-Nicene Trinitarianism, still provides a basis for asserting the ontological indivisibility and uniqueness of the Persons, who are the Trinity.

1.1.4 Summary Statement: TRINITY

Thus, taking this all into account, we can state the central position of the third component of the pro-Nicene conception of Trinitarianism as such:

TRINITY: The Trinity is the one God. It is (i) an ontologically indivisible substance, that is (ii) ontologically simple and identical to each of the Trinitarian persons.

Therefore, we see that for the (Latin) pro-Nicene trajectory, the title of God was used in reference to the Trinity which is one, indivisible substance. That is, the Trinity lacks all composition, and thus God, in this sense, is an entity that is not composed of *any* parts (i.e. is simple). Whatever is in God, that is the Trinity, or whatever God has, *is* God. Thus, the Father, the Son and the Spirit being *in* God, are thus identical to it. The Trinitarian persons, though distinct from each other by their relations, are nevertheless *identical* with the one substance which is God.

Now that the third component of the pro-Nicene conception of Trinitarianism has been unpacked, I will now assess whether the Model affirms, or disaffirms, the central tenets of this view.

1.2 The Functional Monotheism Model: (Dis)affirmation of Statement

1.2.1 Central Target Questions

To accurately assess the second component of the pro-Nicene conception of Trinitarianism, and the Model's affirmation of this component, as captured by the statement of TRINITY, it will be helpful to ask ourselves two target questions, corresponding to the two components of the statement:

(Q₁) Does the Model affirm the fact that the Trinity is ontologically indivisible?

(Q₂) Does the Model affirm the fact that the Trinity is simple and is identical to the Trinitarian persons?

Positive answers to (Q₁) and (Q₂) by the Model, would indicate an affirmation of TRINITY, resulting in the Model being rightly classified as monotheistic, in accord with the statement of the trajectory. I will now proceed onto an assessment of the Model's answer to (Q₁) and (Q₂).

1.2.2 Assessment of (Dis)affirmation of TRINITY

Affirmation of Ontological Indivisibility

The Model maintains that the Trinity is an ontologically indivisible substance, or more specifically a "collective", consisting of the Father, the Son and the Spirit. That is the Model posits that the Trinity, is one, due to the *ontological indivisibility* which is secured by the *two forms* of interdependence between the Persons that ultimately stems from the Father's active causal activity (and sustenance) of the Son and the Spirit. That is, as noted previously, in the act of the causation of the Son and the Spirit the Father communicates the totality of his being (i.e. his divinity), and 'share[s] his rule' (Swinburne, 2018), with the Son and the Spirit, and thus, each *continues* to exist because of the other. That is, there is an ontological unity (or interdependence) between the Persons. Furthermore, by the Father establishing the various spheres of activity, and by the perfect goodness of the Persons requiring them to coordinate with each other outside of their own sphere of activity, there is a further volitional unity (interdependence) between the person. These forms of unity (interdependence), thus securing an ontological (and volitional) indivisibility between the Trinitarian persons, which results in, what Swinburne terms, a 'totally integrated divine society, the Trinity, which *acts* as one coordinated whole' (Swinburne, 2010, 34, emphasis added). That would be, as quoted previously, that the Trinity (the collective) is

indivisible in its being for logical reasons--that is, the kind of being that it would be is such that each of its members is necessarily everlasting, and would not have existed unless it had brought about or been brought about by the others. The collective would also be indivisible in its causal action in the sense that each would back totally the causal action of the others (Swinburne, 1994, 181, emphasis added).

The Trinity, is thus a collective that is, in some sense, one, *ontologically* indivisible "substance" (or "being"). We thus have the following position posited by the Model:

- The Trinity, is an ontologically indivisible collective, composed of the Father, the Son and the Spirit.

This leading to us to a positive answer for (Q₁), stated as such:

(A₁) Yes, the Model does affirm the fact of the Trinity being ontologically indivisible.

Therefore, with this positive answer, we see that the Model affirms the first component (i) of the statement of TRINITY. We can now turn our attention onto an assessment of the Model's answer to (Q₂) and see if it can provide a positive answer for this as well.

Disaffirmation of Simplicity and Identity

The Model maintains that the Trinity is ontologically complex, that is mereologically composite, and is not identical to the Trinitarian persons. The Model proposes that the relation between the Trinity, and each of the Trinitarian persons, is in fact, that of a relation of *composition*. This resulting in the Trinity, not simply being conceptualised as a "collective", but as a "composite whole". And that *the* Model posits *this* conception of the Trinity is quite clear, as Swinburne writes that God is used to refer to 'the *composite whole* of which the Persons are its unique proper parts' (Swinburne, 1994, 186, emphasis). And as he further states: 'the three together form a *whole* (the Trinity)' and 'Father, Son and Spirit together *form one larger individual*, God' (Swinburne 1994, 187n20; Swinburne 2008, 35).

With the latter statements all, as Howard-Snyder (2015) quips, surely being "mereological vocabulary", where the three divine persons 'are the unique proper parts of the *composite* object

named God' (Howard-Snyder, 2015, 4, emphasis added). That is, more fully, as Howard-Snyder further writes, according to Swinburne

The unity of the Godhead does not consist in such relations alone. It at least partly consists in this: there is exactly one God. That's what makes Trinitarian orthodoxy monotheism. On Swinburne's view, therefore, God is identical with the composite object whose unique proper parts are the Persons and, therefore, in his view, God is not a mere collective or group no matter how tightly unified its members might be (Howard-Snyder, 2015, 4).

The Model thus takes the Trinity to be a composite entity, that is not identical to each of the Trinitarian persons, but is instead composed by them, and thus has the Persons as non-identical, that is "proper" parts. This position explicated here thus reveals that the Model, on this point, is indeed out of step with that of the (Latin) pro-Nicene trajectory.

As the (Latin) pro-Nicene trajectory,¹⁵⁷ as shown above, takes the Trinity, to be a non-composite entity that is *identical* to the Father, the Son and the Spirit. And thus, the reason *why* the Trinity, is "one" is *because* there is only one "thing" within God, the one substance, identical to it, and each of the three persons, who are *solely* distinct by their relations to each other.¹⁵⁸

Whilst, for the Model, instead, we have an opposite conception of God being postulated; that of the Trinity necessarily being the one *composite* source of all. There is a *composition* relation between the three divine persons and the Trinity, and an ontological indivisibility, that is secured, not by the simplicity of the substance of God, but instead by the laws of logic. Furthermore, the Trinity is taken to be an entity that is indeed "over and above" the Trinitarian persons. That is, it is not reducible to the persons, but is instead an ontologically real, though dependent, entity, besides the Father, the Son and the Spirit. Whilst the pro-Nicene position is that of the Trinity being nothing *but* the Persons, and the Persons being nothing *but* the Trinity. Taking this all into account, we can thus have the following position posited by the Model:

¹⁵⁷ One could reply that the Model is not a model that seeks to capture the monotheism inherent in Latin pro-Nicene Trinitarianism, but solely that of the Greek trajectory. In response to this, one could easily point to Swinburne's latest work (2018) and say that Swinburne does not share this "*De Regnon*" divide within the trajectory. The Latin position *is* the Greek position.

¹⁵⁸ Which are ontologically lightweight, as noted above.

- The Trinity, is a composite whole, that has each of the Trinitarian persons as composite parts, and thus is not identical to them.

This leading to us to a negative answer for (Q₂), stated as such:

(A₂) No, the Model does not affirm the simplicity of the God Trinity and the identity between it and the Trinitarian persons.

Now, given that both conditions are necessary for a Trinitarian conception to be monotheistic in this sense, with this negative answer here we see that the Model disaffirms TRINITY, and thus, because of this, does not fit with the third, and final, component of the pro-Nicene conception of Trinitarianism. However, the question now presented to us, is whether one can, in fact, modify the Model so as to enable it to affirm TRINITY?

As a first approximation, I believe that this can be done, through providing an alternative conception of the relation between the Trinitarian persons and the (God) the Trinity. With this alternative, and the modification made to the Model by it, enabling it to fully affirm TRINITY, without facing the need to deal with any issues plagued by the original Model. The Model would thus also be monotheistic in the sense developed in this chapter.

Section Conclusion

In this section, I focused on unpacking the third, and final, construal of Trinitarianism within the pro-Nicene trajectory; that of the one God being the Trinity. During this unpacking I provided a succinct statement, termed TRINITY, which captured the second pro-Nicene position on Trinitarianism. The Model was seen to provide an affirmation of the first component of TRINITY, and an explicit disaffirmation of the second component, leading to an overall disaffirmation of the statement. I will now focus, in the subsequent section, on utilising a method to modify the Model, so as to enable it to fully affirm TRINITY. Which, ultimately, would allow the Model to have rightly earned its monotheistic credentials, in the third, and final, sense of the word.

Section 2: Philosophical Troubleshooting - Composing the Trinity

Section Introduction

In this section, I focus on performing some troubleshooting through demonstrating that the Model, once modified, can be shown to affirm the third component of the pro-Nicene conception of Trinitarianism: TRINITY. I do this by utilising the philosophical notion of Composition as Identity. I then, apply this notion to the issue identified in the previous section, resulting in a potential solution that brings the Model in line with the third conception of pro-Nicene Trinitarianism detailed in this chapter. This, ultimately, allowing me to conclude that the Model fits this third, and final, conception of monotheism, and thus is monotheistic in this specific sense.

2.1 The Nature of Composition as Identity

2.1.1 The Nature of Composition as Identity: The Varieties

Composition as Identity (hereafter, CAI) is the general thesis that the composition relation is the identity relation. That is, more specifically, that a composite whole is identical with its parts individually, collectively or analogically. In the literature, this specific thesis comes in various varieties. One taxonomy of these varieties can be categorised as such:

- (a) Weak Composition as Identity (Identity: Collective, Analogical Identity)
- (ii) Moderate Composition as Identity (Identity: Collective, Non-Numerical Identity)
- (iii) Strong Composition as Identity (Identity: Collective, Numerical Identity)
- (iv) Strange Composition as Identity (Identity: Individual, Cross-Count Identity).¹⁵⁹

In the first iteration of the thesis, Weak Composition as Identity (hereafter, Weak CAI), introduced by David Lewis (1991) and defended by Ted Sider (2007), the composition of identity thesis posits that the relation between some parts, taken collectively, and the whole, that they are parts of, is analogous to identity. That is the predicate “are” that is used to indicate

¹⁵⁹ This taxonomy of the varieties of CAI finds its source in (Cotnoir, 2013). However, the addition to it that I have made here is that of adding a fourth category, which takes into account a construal of CAI that does not obey Leibniz's Law, and I have added the type of identity relation for each category. The terminology for this additional category was proposed by (Baxter, 2014), but finds its roots in (Lewis, 1991).

the composition relation is only to be taken analogously as another form of the “is” of identity (Wallace, 2011). This specific iteration was criticised by Peter van Inwagen (1994) and Byeong-uk Yi (1999), with the central criticism being the lack of explanatory power, given that composition is *not* identity, and thus the thesis, in this sense, lacking any utility value.

In the second iteration of the thesis, Moderate Composition as Identity (hereafter, Moderate CAI), introduced by Aaron Cotnoir (2013) and Philip Bricker (2016), the composition of identity thesis posits that the relation between some parts, taken collectively, and the whole, that they are parts of, is non-numerical identity. That is the predicate “are” used to indicate the composition relation is literally another non-numerical form of the “is” of identity (Wallace, 2011). This specific iteration was criticised by Katherine Hawley (2013), Massimiliano Carra and Giorgio Lando (2017) and Manuel Lechthaler (2017), with the central criticism being that of a violation of the substitution of identity, resulting in the identity relation, within this iteration of composition as identity, not being a genuine form of identity, and thus lacking in utility value.

In the third iteration of the thesis, Strong Composition as Identity (hereafter, Strong CAI), introduced by David Armstrong (1978) and Lewis (1991),¹⁶⁰ and developed, and defended, by Megan Wallace (2009, 2013a,b) and Einar Bohn (2009, 2014 and 2018), the composition of identity thesis posits that the relation between some parts, taken collectively, and the whole, that they are parts of, is numerical identity. The predicate “are” used to indicate the composition relation is literally a plural form of the “is” of identity (Wallace, 2011). This specific iteration was criticised by Lewis (1991), van Inwagen (1994), Yi (1999, 2018), Trenton Merricks (2003), Sider (2007), Ross Cameron (2012a, 2012b), Kris McDaniel (2008, 2010) and Claudio Calosi (2018), with the central objection being that of a violation of Leibniz's Law, resulting again in the identity relation, within this iteration of composition as identity, not being a genuine form of identity, and thus lacking in utility value.

In the fourth iteration of the thesis, Strange Composition as Identity (hereafter, Strange CAI),¹⁶¹ introduced by Donald L.M. Baxter (1988a, 1988b and 2014), regimented by Jason Turner (2014) and developed, in a different format, by Kris McDaniel (2016) and Martina Botti

¹⁶⁰ For an interpretation of Lewis' view on CAI, that takes it to be a Strong CAI account, see: (Bohn, 2011a).

¹⁶¹ This terminology was given to this iteration of the CAI thesis by Lewis (1991), and adopted by Baxter (2014).

(2019),¹⁶² the composition of identity thesis, in this sense, posits that the relation between some parts, each taken individually, and the whole, that they are parts of, is non-numerical identity. That is, the predicate “are” used to indicate the composition relation is literally another form the “is” of identity, however, the identity relation here does not obey the Indiscernibility of Identicals (i.e. Leibniz’s Law) (Wallace, 2011). This specific iteration was criticised by Bohn (2009), Lechthaler (2017), Joongol Kim (2019) and Claudio Calosi (2018). With the central objection being that of firstly the obscurity concerning the central notions of a ‘count’ and ‘aspects’, and secondly a violation of Leibniz’s Law, resulting again in the identity relation, within this iteration of composition as identity, not being a genuine form of identity, and thus lacking in utility value.¹⁶³

Now, these varieties of the thesis of CAI all provide interesting ways to tackle our question concerning the Model’s postulation of the relation between the three divine persons (i.e. ‘parts’) and the whole (i.e. the Trinity), that they are parts of.¹⁶⁴ However, the specific account of CAI, that would serve us most fully in achieving our aim, would be that of the Strange CAI account. Due to this being the only variety of CAI that in fact, takes the parts of a whole each *individually*, rather than collectively, to be identical (in some sense) to the whole. And if this can be shown to in fact be correct in the Trinitarian case, then the Trinity, would solely have *improper parts*, given the (generally) accepted definition of proper parthood in the literature. The three divine persons would be identical to the Trinity, as improper parts of it, yet the distinctions between the Persons being retained (thus providing an affirmation of TRINITY).

Thus, in the next sub-section, I now proceed onto an extensive unpacking of the central model of the Strange CAI category, that of the model proposed by Donald L.M. Baxter (as regimented by Jason Turner).¹⁶⁵ After this account has been elucidated, the Strange CAI account will be applied to the Trinitarian case, and the (generally) accepted definition of proper parthood

¹⁶² McDaniel (2016) re-construes the notion of Strange CAI (termed by him “Parthood is Identity”) as the temporary identity relation between a part and its whole, relative to a given index. Botti (2019), re-construes the notion, in order to overcome the supposed deadlock surrounding the thesis, highlighted by Calosi (2018), as thesis focused on analysis, rather than identity. Due to the lack of space, these developments will not be further interacted with. However, these developments of the thesis are indeed very interesting and will serve as active research interests in the future.

¹⁶³ Two other interesting taxonomies have been provided in the literature, firstly by (Yi, 1999) and (Wallace, 2011).

¹⁶⁴ For an interesting explication of elements of a Strong CAI account, within a theological context (i.e. the doctrine of the Trinity), see: (Bohn, 2011b). And for arguments against this type of application, see: (Kleinschmidt, 2012).

¹⁶⁵ I will now take Strange CAI to simply be Baxter’s account, rather than upholding the distinction between the Strange CAI accounts noted above.

within the literature will be stated. In light of this definition of proper parthood, the position will ultimately be reached that the persons of the Trinity are each individually improper, rather than proper, parts of the Trinity, thus securing the simplicity of God and the identity of the Persons with it.

2.2 The Nature of Strange Composition as Identity

2.2.1 Strange CAI: Central Features

Baxter, who was one of the main instigators of the modern debate on the thesis of CAI, has proposed a distinctive account of CAI, that of Strange CAI. The majority position (featured in Weak CAI, Moderate CAI and Strong CAI theories) is that of CAI being the (non)numerical identity of several parts,¹⁶⁶ taken collectively, with the whole that they are parts of. However, Baxter's view, is that of a whole, a single entity in one count, being cross-count identical with many distinct entities in another count, which are its parts (Baxter, 2013).

More fully, in the count in which the whole is a single thing (i.e. exists), its parts are taken to simply be (qualitatively) differing, but numerically identical aspects of the whole (Baxter, 2013).¹⁶⁷ The parts are then each cross-count identical with an aspect of the whole, and then, in turn, the aspects of the whole are each intra-count identical with the whole. Finally, by the transitivity of identity, which governs both kinds of identity (i.e. cross-count and intra-count identity), the parts of a whole are thus each identical with the whole itself. Thus, Strange CAI takes composition to be a distributive, many-one cross-count identity relation. (Turner, 2014). This is a unique and explanatorily intriguing position that will be fully explored, and, by this exploration, provide a means to deal with our task at hand.¹⁶⁸

Now, central to this specific construal of CAI, for Baxter, are three important notions:

- i) Count

¹⁶⁶ Or, some analogue of numerical identity in the Modern CAI and Weak CAI views.

¹⁶⁷ It is as if, in this count, the count where the whole exists, the distinct particulars 'coalesce' into a whole. And in the other count, where the parts exist, it's as if the whole 'divides' into several individual parts (Baxter, 2013).

¹⁶⁸ Baxterian (Strange) CAI is rarely interacted with in the literature, with Baxter's account being cited, rather than explored and applied to other philosophical issues. Turner (2014) notes interestingly that the lack of interaction with Baxterian (Strange) CAI, compared to that of Lewisian (Weak and Strong) CAI, could be because of Lewis' influence in contemporary philosophical thought, rather than the high utility value of the latter over the former.

- ii) Count-Identity
- iii) Discernibility of Identicals

Now, once we have a good conceptual grasp of these three notions, we can begin to understand how composition *is* identity according to Baxter's Strange CAI account, and how the Trinitarian persons are identical to the (simple) Trinity itself (without this position leading to absurdity). I will now unpack these three central notions in turn.

2.2.2 Counts

Counts: Preliminary Sketch

The first notion is that of a count. A count is used by Baxter as a technical term for the *result* of some way of counting. With a 'way of counting', being specified by one giving rules/instructions/standards for counting (Baxter, 1988b). And importantly, as Baxter writes, 'the results of a way of counting-a-count-would be specified by saying what things are counts as one thing' (Baxter, 1988b, 200).

A count determines the particular *number* of things that there are in a certain domain, where to be in a count, as Baxter notes, 'is to be counted in, on that way of counting' (Baxter, 1988b, 201). An individual can have different counts, due to the possibility of one counting an object in *different ways*. The specific count that is chosen is dependent on the situation, and different considerations would influence which different count is chosen (Baxter, 1988b). Baxter believes that due to the fact that there are different ways for one to count, there is thus good evidence that there is more than one true number of things that exist. That is, as he states, 'there is more than one real "count"' (Baxter, 1988b, 200). Thus, to illustrate this, let's take a potential piece of land that is to be sold by a farmer (we can term this the Piece of Land example).¹⁶⁹ Now, in an answer to the question of how many objects there are in the example, one can focus on *counting the piece of land itself*, and the answer would be one, or, instead, one can focus on *counting each of the parcels of the land*, and the answer would be six. These two different answers are dependent on different ways of counting which, in turn, are dependent upon the

¹⁶⁹ All of the subsequent issues addressed below also apply to all the other examples raised by Baxter. For an application to these examples, again see: (Baxter, 1988b).

different ways in which the farmer in the example could have divided up the farm to suit his interests (Lechthaler, 2017).

That is, given these different ways of counting, Baxter thus takes it to be the case that existence (i.e. what there is), number, (i.e. how many things there are) and identity (i.e. what something is), are *relative* to a count.¹⁷⁰ Thus, returning to our example again (as illustrated by (Lechthaler, 2017)), the farmer could firstly decide to not divide the farm, and thus have one piece of land that he could sell to an individual as a whole (Figure 4.1: top left). Secondly, he could decide to divide up the farm into the six parcels and sell each parcel to different individuals (Figure 4.1: top right), or he could decide to (horizontally) divide the farm up into two parcels, creating a Northern half and a Southern half (Figure 4.1: bottom left), or he could decide to (vertically) divide the farm up into two parcels, creating a Western half and an Eastern half (Figure 4.1: bottom middle) and sell each half to two different buyers (Lechthaler, 2017). Or, finally, he could decide to divide the farm up into two parcels of different sizes and sell the smaller size to one buyer and the larger size to multiple buyers etc. (Figure 4.1: bottom right).

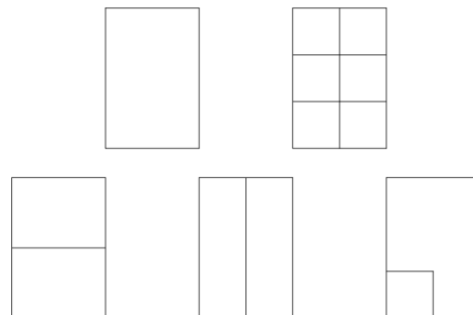


Figure 4.1 Piece of Land Example

(Lechtaler, 2017, 57)

If the farmer wants to sell his land and ward off *double-counting* this object,¹⁷¹ he has to settle for one way of counting the land. Although he can divide and count his property in numerous ways, he cannot hold on to more than one way of counting and dividing up his property *at the same time* (Lechtaler, 2017). If he wants to sell his property to some buyers, he must sell it as

¹⁷⁰ Since existence is relative to counts, it follows that identity and number are also relative to counts, as it is only things that exist that can bear the relation of identity to one another and possess the properties of being either one or being many (Kim, 2019).

¹⁷¹ The issue of double-counting (i.e. counting an object more than once) is seen as an important motivation for CAI theories. For issues around this, see: (Wallace, 2011) and (Varzi, 2014).

one piece of land, *or* as six parcels *or* as a Northern and Southern half, *or* as a Western and Eastern half, *or* as one small piece and one large piece, etc. (Lechtaler, 2017).

Thus, what specific properties exist in reality, are determined and are dependent upon how the farmer *counts and divides up the land*. If he decides to keep it as one piece, *then* only one piece of land exists and can be sold to one buyer. However, if he decides to divide it up into six parcels, *then* only six parcels exist and can be sold to one buyer, or if he decides to divide it up into two pieces vertically, or horizontally, then only the Northern and Southern half, *or* the Western and Eastern half exist, and can be sold to two buyers and so on (Lechtaler, 2017). Thus, Baxter states that it is a 'principle that there is a count which includes the several parts and a count which includes the whole, but no count which includes both' (Baxter, 1988b, 201). That is, in line with what has been said above, as Baxter further writes, 'in counting we either count the whole as one, or each part as one. If we count the whole, then we do not count the parts. If we count the parts then we do not count the whole' (Baxter, 1988b, 200). If something exists, according to Baxter, then it is in a count. But, a whole and its various parts, are not *both* in a given count. So what exists is relative to a count. We can call this principle, that a whole and its various parts do not exist in the same count, the Separation Principle (hereafter, Separation).

Baxter, however, does not take a privileged view on which count is the correct count and thus there is no objectively correct count, but, instead, certain counts might be held to be pragmatically more valuable than others for specific individuals, relative to their interest. That is, in returning to our example again, the farmer, for economic reasons, might decide to keep the piece of land as a whole, to ward off, being taxed per parcel of land, and thus the count in which only the land exists (i.e. the count in which the land is counted as one and not divided) would be privileged over, and thus seen as more valuable than, the count in which the land is divided into various parcels (i.e. the count in which the land is counted and divided into six parcels or two parcels corresponding to a Northern or Southern half etc.).

Even though that this all sounds intuitive, one might object that the Piece of Land example, and other examples adduced by Baxter, are simply an observation of human activity, rather than an indicator of what number of things actually exist. However, as Jason Turner notes, Baxter 'is after something deeper' (Turner, 2014, 231), Thus, in further understanding this count distinction and count relativity, following Turner's (2014) lead, we can proceed through an alternative path which is that of assuming, for example, a *deflationary* understanding of

reality. That is, assuming the world ultimately consists of stuff that is spread throughout various regions, without any division of stuff into countable things, we can see, however, that *in thought* one can divide stuff into distinct things (e.g. dividing certain stuff into three, four or five separate things with clear boundaries.) (Turner, 2014). On this deflationary view, each choice made by an individual imposes a certain ontological structure onto the world, which can be represented with different quantifiers, where, as Turner writes,

If “ \exists_c ” corresponds to one choice and “ \exists_d ” to another, then “ $\exists_c xFx$ ” will be true if the c-choice carves a boundary around some F stuff, and “ $\sim \exists_d xFx$ ” will be true if the d-one doesn't (Turner, 2014, 232).

These “choices” in Baxter’s terminology are the “counts” which we have been detailing above, as firstly they *determine* how many things exist in reality, dependent on the person’s choice, and secondly because they determine which specific parcels of reality also “count” as single things (Turner, 2014). However, where Baxter’s position differs from the deflationary example above, is that Baxter rejects the overall deflationist framework, as Turner notes, for Baxter ‘counts aren’t things we project onto the world, but are part of its fundamental metaphysical structure’ (Turner, 2014, 232). Baxter’s account, which Turner terms “*count-relativity*”, is indeed similar to the deflationary approach, but overall is more correctly seen as a specific form of “ontological pluralism”.¹⁷²

Counts: Ontological Pluralism

Now, ontological pluralism is the position that there are different *ways of being*. That is that there are different *kinds* of existence for the entities that exist in *different ways*. Existence, in post-Quine philosophical thought, is held to be expressed through quantification. An ontological pluralist would thus posit the need for different quantifiers to express the different kinds of existence for the entities that exist in these different ways. The project of ontological pluralism is thus, in contemporary thought, linked with *quantificational pluralism* (Turner,

¹⁷² This position here deals with one of the primary objections of Strange CAI raised by (Bohn, 2009) of the ambiguous nature of counts in Baxter's account. As above, a count is simply a domain of reality, quantified over by an elite quantifier, which we simply *call* a count. Ontological Pluralism is a historically rooted position, which has, in contemporary philosophical thought lost favour, but in recent times has started to make a comeback through the insightful work of Kris McDaniel (2009, 2010 and 2017) and Turner (2010, 2012 and 2020) and Ben Caplan (2011). The explanation and interaction with this position, in the main text, will, unfortunately, have to be limited. However, the relationship between Strange CAI and the notion of ontological pluralism will be the focus of future research. For a helpful introduction to the notion of ontological pluralism, see: (Spencer, 2012).

2020). However, as noted by (Caplan, 2011) and (Turner, 2020), only certain types of quantifiers are of concern to pluralist, and metaphysics in general, that of *elite* quantifiers.¹⁷³ However, defining eliteness is challenging, given that eliteness seems to come in degrees (Turner, 2020).

However, as noted by McDaniel (2009 and 2017) and Turner (2010 and 2012), adopting Ted Sider's (2009 and 2011) extension of Lewis' (1983) notion of naturalness; that of "carving nature at the joints", seems to serve well here. That is, existential quantifier expressions that 'carve nature at the joints' are to be taken elite (or 'more elite' than others that do not). Thus, for example, taking into account the oft established distinction between abstract and concrete objects, many have the strong intuition, as Francesco Berto and Matteo Plebani (2015, 56), note that

abstractness and concreteness are exclusive, exhaustive, and intrinsic features of objects: everything is either abstract or concrete, nothing is both; nothing belonging to one category is allowed to trespass into the other in any possible situation (think about kissing the number four).

Given this distinction, ontological pluralists take these two kinds of entities to have different ways of being. These ways can be expressed by two elite quantifiers: " \exists_a " meaning existing abstractly (i.e. the quantifier ranging over the domain of abstract objects) and " \exists_c " meaning existing concretely (i.e. the quantifier ranging over the domain of abstract objects). These two existential quantifiers, and the multiple existential quantifiers posited by pluralists, are thus regularly taken as *primitives*, through the notions that they express being irreducible, and *elite*, through these quantifiers (" \exists_a " expressing abstractness and " \exists_c " concreteness) being deeply "joint carving".

Thus, taking this all into account, as Turner writes, 'Pluralism isn't just the (unremarkable) claim that there are multiple existential quantifiers. It is the (surprising) claim that there are multiple elite existential quantifiers' (Turner, 2020). Now, returning to the task at hand, we can thus also take Strange CAI as plausibly assuming two *elite* quantifiers to capture the different,

¹⁷³ See: (Caplan, 2011) and (Turner, 2020) for a further contrast between elite quantifiers and quantifiers, which are metaphysically uninteresting.

relativized “ways of being”, or more specifically, senses of “exist” for composite wholes and their parts (Turner, 2014).¹⁷⁴

Thus, at a more formal level, the elite quantifiers, used in this context, will be tied to different counts that are expressed by different subscripted indices. So, for example, following Turner, we can use “ c ” and “ d ”, to express the counts associated with respective elite quantifiers. Such as: “ $\exists_c xFx$ ” meaning that there is some count c in which x exists and x is F and “ $\exists_d xGx$ ” meaning that there is some count d in which x exists and x is G .¹⁷⁵ A count (or the process of counting) can thus be taken to simply be the recognition of a certain domain of reality, where one count recognises a certain *kind* of existence or *way* of being of an object, and another count recognises another *kind* of existence or *way* of being of an object. These counts being expressed by elite quantifiers, with subscripted indices expressing the specific count being quantified over.¹⁷⁶ And, in the context of the part-whole relation in Strange CAI, the domain, in which a whole exists, and the domain, in which the parts exist, *can* be ranged over by *elite* quantifiers, given the naturalness of the part-whole relation (i.e. it 'carves nature at its joints'). The notion of counts can thus be clarified through elucidating them within the framework of ontological pluralism and utilising the notions of elite quantifiers to represent a given count.

Now taking this all into account, this notion of a count leads us to the next important central notion for Baxter, count-identity.

2.2.3 Count Identity

Types of Count Identity

The notion of count-identity is utilised by Baxter to explain how a certain part, which exists in one count, is identical with a whole, that it is a part of, as *distinguished some way*, which exists in another count (Baxter, 1988b). Identity (one-one and many-one) is taken by Baxter to be primitive, in that the concept cannot be constructed from other more basic conceptions of identity (Baxter, 1988b). And as noted above, number and existence, are relative to a count,

¹⁷⁴ This here deals with one of the primary objections against Strange CAI raised by (Bohn, 2009) of the ambiguous nature of counts in Baxter's account. As above, a count is simply a domain of reality, quantified over by an elite quantifier, which we simply *call* a count.

¹⁷⁵ However, for us to make this inference two other premises will need to be in place such as:

¹⁷⁶ This way of explaining counts through elite quantifiers is original. (Turner, 2014) was very helpful in bridging the gap for me between counts and ontological pluralism. However, he does not further elaborate on the connection by explaining what the nature of a count is within this type of framework.

however, Baxter also sees that *identity* is relative to a count, and thus there is a distinction between:

- (i) intra-count identity
- (ii) cross-count identity

I will now briefly unpack each of the types of count-identity.

Intra-Count Identity

Intra-count identity is the ordinary and familiar one-one identity. It is the classical identity relation that is governed by the formal principles of reflexivity, symmetry and transitivity etc. However, why Baxter terms it *intra-count* identity is due to the fact that, as he writes, this ‘familiar version of identity rules *within* counts’ (Baxter, 1988a, 193, emphasis added). This type of identity only holds within a count. It is thus, according to Baxter, the normal, *numerical identity* that we regularly encounter. However, the application of this type of identity here is solely to be restricted within a count.

Thus, to return to our example, in the specific count in which the farmer does not divide the piece of land and thus counts one object, the piece of land is identical to one object bought by the interested buyer. And in the count where the farmer divides the piece of land horizontally into two pieces, a Northern half and a Southern half, and counts two objects, the Northern half is identical to the one half bought by one interested buyer, and the Southern half is identical to the one half bought by the other interested buyer. Therefore, aside from the relativisation to counts, intra-count identity seems to be classical numerical identity, and thus it is reflexive, symmetric and transitive. (Lechtaler, 2017).

Cross-Count Identity

Whilst cross-count identity is identity *across different counts*. This is an *n*-ary relation, in that for any *n* greater than zero, it relates it (or them) across different counts. With Baxter, also taking cross-count identity to be a primitive notion, that behaves in a similar way to classical numerical identity; namely, it is reflexive, symmetric, and transitive (Turner, 2014). Additionally, Baxter sees cross-count identity as coming in two different forms, the first is *one-one* cross count identity that relates one object with another object, and the second is *many-one*

cross-count identity that relates many objects with one object. That is, for the former, one entity in a specific count, is (cross-count) identical with the *same* entity, in another count (Baxter, 1988b). It is the identification of objects with each other across different counts (Lechtaler, 2017). And in the context of the part-whole relation, *each* different part is cross-count identical with the whole, as distinguished in a *different way* (Baxter, 1988b).¹⁷⁷ Whilst for the latter, which Baxter takes to be the composition relation, is that of many entities, taken collectively, in one specific count, being (cross-count) identical, with one object in another count. Many-one cross-count identity is a relation between many entities in one count and a single entity in another count (Baxter, 1988b).

Now, that we have distinguished these forms of identity, it will be important to qualify a potential misconception concerning cross-count identity.

As noted above, according to the notion of cross-count identity, an entity in one count, is identical to an entity in another count. Baxter sees, however, that it would be strange to term this type of identity *numerical* identity, given that this specific relation can be many-one (Baxter, 2014). Furthermore, *number* is taken to be, as noted above, *relative* to a count, and so numerical identity is relative to a count as well (Baxter, 2014). That is why it is more accurate to call it "cross-count" identity, however, this identity is not, as Baxter writes, 'some exotic variant of or analogue to identity' (Baxter, 2014, 247). Rather it is identity, in the normal sense (i.e. something being itself) and the identity across counts is *absolute* (Baxter, 2014).

However, why this type of identity might mistakenly be classed as “some exotic variant or analogue to identity” is, according to Baxter, because of a certain, influential part of the philosophical tradition that has been, as Baxter writes, ‘fixated on numerical identity as what underlies variation in quality, and [has] neglected to see how identity itself can underlie variation in number’ (Baxter, 2014, 246, square parenthesis added). Thus, this type of identity, for Baxter, is even more *fundamental* than numerical identity (Baxter, 2014).¹⁷⁸ Intra-count and cross-count identity are thus the ordinary identity relation, relativised to a count, or working across counts, and thus operate, and are governed by, the same formal principles. Thus, given

¹⁷⁷ More on this important point below.

¹⁷⁸ Despite the distinction made here I will continue to use, unless indicated otherwise, the term ‘numerical identity’ as a kind term that includes within it the more fundamental forms of identity explained in this section; cross-count and intra-count identity.

that the notion of counts that has been clarified above, these two notions should not be viewed with any more disdain than the ordinary identity relation itself.

Now, to further develop the position unpacked here, specifically cross-count identity, it will be important to understand the third, and final, central notion for Baxter, the discernibility of identicals.

2.2.4 The Discernibility of Identicals

The Discernibility of Identicals Explicated

The notion of the discernibility of identicals,¹⁷⁹ is utilised by Baxter in order to explain how a whole, as distinguished one way, can qualitatively differ, but be numerically identical with *itself*, as distinguished another way (Baxter, 1988b).¹⁸⁰ The notion of the discernibility of identicals, however, should not be taken as the acceptance of contradiction. Instead, it is adduced by Baxter to clarify the clear situation of how identicals may differ, even in the number of things that they are. That is holding on to the *Indiscernibility of Identicals*,¹⁸¹ according to Baxter, precludes literal differing, it 'darkens what is plain as day' (Baxter, 2014, 248). Baxter thus believes that one can begin to understand the thinking behind his account of CAI if we grasp the notion of the *discernibility* of identicals. As specifically, in the part-whole context, where Separation is assumed, the whole can be qualitatively distinguished from *itself*, rather than the parts being numerically distinguished from each other (Baxter, 1988b).

That is of one, and the same entity can be discernible *from itself*; namely, it qualitatively differs from itself, in that it can possess different, and incompatible properties at the same time. This is, what Baxter terms, *self-differing*. Self-differing, according to Baxter, is the qualitative differing of some entity in one way (or respect) from itself in another way (or respect).

¹⁷⁹ Baxter (1999) uses the phrase "discernibility of identicals" to piggy-back on the common understanding of the phrase 'the indiscernibility of identicals', which, as noted below, he endorses only in a restricted number of cases.

¹⁸⁰ Baxter does, however, utilise the notion of the discernibility of identicals (and aspects, to be explained below) in a different context to elucidate the instantiation relation between particulars and universals (Baxter, 2001).

¹⁸¹ I will be interchanging between the term "Indiscernibility of Identical Individuals" and "Leibniz's Law", without a change in meaning, unless indicated in the text. More on the nature of this principle below.

Now, how this position can be held onto, without falling into a contradiction, requires one to understand the further notion of *aspects* that has been introduced by Baxter.¹⁸² Aspects, according to Baxter, are incomplete and dependent entities that are numerically identical with the individuals (i.e. complete individuals) that they are dependent upon (Baxter, 2016). Self-differing is thus the qualitative differing of numerically identical *aspects* possessed by an individual (Baxter, 2018a). That is the same individual can possess *qualitatively differing* aspects, that are nevertheless numerically identical with the individual, and thus with each other. And therefore, according to Baxter, even though Leibniz's Law truly applies to individuals, (i.e. is complete entities), it does not generalise over to aspects, (i.e. dependent entities).¹⁸³ These are aspects in a nutshell. However, let's now gradually unpack the central elements of the above description.

The Nature of Aspects: Qualifiers

Aspects are expressed through such terms as “insofar as” and “in some respect” (and to a lesser extent “as” and “qua”). These locutions are termed “Qualifiers”, and cases in which the first two phrases (i.e. when “insofar as” and “in some respect”) are used as parts of noun phrases, these are termed “Nominal Qualifiers” (Baxter, 2018a). These ‘Nominal Qualifiers’ will, as Baxter notes, allow ‘contradictories to be predicated of the same thing in a way that Leibniz’s Law is silent about’ (Baxter, 2018a, 172). More fully, Baxter writes, taking Hume as an example:

For instance, “Hume as an agent is satisfied on this point, but Hume as a philosopher is not.” The negation in “Hume as a philosopher is not satisfied,” with its restricted scope, can be thought of as an internal negation, as opposed to an external negation such as “It is not the case that Hume as philosopher is satisfied.” In the former, the nominal qualifier is *not* in the scope of the negation, and in the latter, it is (Baxter, 2016, 172, emphasis in text).

The Nominal Qualifiers that are used to express an aspect, are thus specifically present within cases of self-differing, where the same entity can be discernible from itself, that is, it can differ

¹⁸² Aspects are also further developed by Baxter in the different context of clarifying the instantiation relation between a particular and a universal. For this, see: (Baxter, 2001).

¹⁸³ More on the relation between aspects and Leibniz's law below.

in its properties, without that resultant differences indicating numerically different objects (Baxter, 2016a).

The Nature of Aspects: Attributes

Now, concerning the nature of aspects, Baxter believes that aspects are hard to distinguish from other entities, and, thus, in firstly taking a negative position concerning them (i.e. stating what they are not), one can say that:

- (1) Aspects are not qualities.
- (2) Aspects are not individuals.
- (3) Aspects are not mereological parts.

For (1), aspects are not qualities (or properties) because they, themselves, possess qualities (or properties). For (2), aspects are not the individuals that they are aspects of, even though they are numerically identical to those individuals, as they lack the qualities (or properties) that the individuals possess. And for (3) aspects are not mereological parts, of the individuals that they are aspects of, as they are numerically identical with, rather than a “part” of, these individuals (Baxter, 2018a).

However, secondly, we can say some positive things about aspects, such as:

- (4) Aspects are particulars.
- (5) Aspects are abstract.
- (6) Aspects are incomplete entities.

For (4), aspects are particulars in that they are numerically identical with particular individuals. For (5), aspects are abstract in the sense of them not possessing all of the properties that the particular individuals they are aspects of have. And, for (6), aspects are incomplete entities in the sense of them being dependent on complete entities (i.e. independently existing entities) (Baxter, 2018a).

More fully, for (4) and (5) aspects are abstract particulars in a similar manner to how tropes were conceived to be (Baxter, 2018a). However, a key difference is that an individual's tropes are numerically distinct from it and each other, however, this is not the case with aspects, which

are numerically *identical* to the individual that they are aspects of (Baxter, 2018a).¹⁸⁴ Lastly, for (6), Baxter draws here a distinction between complete and incomplete entities. Complete entities are certain individuals that can exist independently. (Baxter, 2018a). However, aspects are incomplete entities, where entities are incomplete, as Baxter writes, in ‘having fewer properties than it takes to exist on one's own’ (Baxter, 2018a, 916). That is that they are dependent entities, that, nevertheless, are numerically identical with individuals that they are aspects of.¹⁸⁵

The Nature of Aspects: Formalising

Now, that we have begun to grasp the nature of aspects, we can formalise this position. For clarity, following Turner, taking α as a regular term and $\varphi(y)$ as any formula open in y , we can introduce a term to refer to aspects, namely an *aspect term*, as such: $\alpha_y[\varphi(y)]$ (Turner, 2014). So applying this aspect term to an example, such as the following:

David is an ardent philosophy professor and is also a loving and faithful father of two children, Jacob and Melissa. And suppose that, firstly, David has an upcoming philosophy conference in which he is the keynote speaker, and, due to other work commitments, has not prepared his speech yet. Secondly, also suppose that David had previously promised that he would reward his children with a camping trip this upcoming weekend if they achieved A* grades in their A-Level results. And thirdly, suppose that Jacob and Mellissa have both in fact recently achieved A* grades in their A-Level results.

David is in a situation of self-differing as he knows that he has an important keynote speech that he needs to prepare, and, being an ardent philosophy professor he wants to fulfil this commitment and thus complete his speech, so he *does not want to take his children on a camping trip this upcoming weekend*. However, having promised his children that he would reward them for their academic achievement, and being a loving and faithful father, he wants

¹⁸⁴ For the same reason, as Baxter writes, ‘aspects should not be confused with Casteneda's guises (1975), or Fine's qua-objects (1982), or other such attenuated entities’ (Baxter, 2018a, 13).

¹⁸⁵ In motivating aspects, Baxter believes that the clearest cases, as in the example in the main text, are those of the internal psychological conflict of a person. Though self-differing, according to Baxter, is not only confined to these psychological conflicts but, as Baxter writes, cases 'of being torn give us the experiences by which we know that there are numerically identical, qualitatively differing aspects. We feel them' (Baxter, 2018a, 14). Thus, we experience self-differing, with its *aspectival distinction*, in the case of conflicting desires, as in these cases we often have a property and lack it at the same time, in the virtue of playing different roles (Baxter, 1999). More on this below.

to fulfil his promise to them. He thus also *does want to take his children on a camping trip this weekend*.

Thus, taking this example into account, one aspect term of David would be: David_y[y is a philosopher], which is a name for David-as-a philosopher. And another aspect term of David would be: David_y[y is a father] which is a name for David-as-a father. Thus, re-construing the above situation, it is not David, *unqualified*, that does and does not want to take his children on a camping trip this weekend. Instead, it is David_y[y is a philosopher] that does not want to take his children on a camping trip this weekend and it David_y[y is a father] that does want to take his children on a camping trip this weekend. Aspects of David exemplify these properties, but not David (unqualified), thus there not being any contradiction.

That is Baxter would accept that:

(1) David_y[y is a philosopher] does not want to take his children on a camping trip this weekend

and

(2) \sim (David_y[y is a father] does not want to take his children on a camping trip this weekend)

Saying that there is self-differing in the above sense, does seem to be contradictory, but in fact through the use of nominal qualifiers such as ‘insofar as’ (i.e. formally $\alpha_y[\varphi(y)]$) removes any explicit contradiction (Baxter, 2018a). As the above case does not say that David does and does not want to take his children on a camping trip this weekend. Nor does it say that David, in one respect, does not want to take his children on a camping trip this weekend. Either of those, as Baxter notes, would indeed be contradictory (Baxter, 2018a).

Rather it is simply David_y[y is a father] (i.e. David insofar as he is a father) who wants to take his children on a camping trip this weekend, but David_y[y is a philosopher] (i.e. David insofar he is a philosopher) who does not want to take his children on a camping trip this weekend. The negation, as Baxter writes, ‘is internal, that is, has short-scope relative to the nominal qualifier and so there is no contradiction’ (Baxter, 2018b, 16).

Furthermore, according to Baxter, David_y[y is a philosopher] and David_y[y is a father], as aspects of David are *identical* to him. Thus, as Turner (2014, 239) notes, Baxter endorses the following principle

$$(3) \text{ Aspect Identity: } \forall x(\exists z(z = xy[\varphi(y)]) \rightarrow x = xy[\varphi(y)]).$$

However, given the above result concerning count relativity, such that identity is relative to a count (i.e. a specific domain of reality quantified over by a ‘count’) this would need to be rewritten as:

$$(4) \text{ Count Relative Aspect Identity: } \forall_{c,x}(\exists dy(y = xz[\varphi(z)]) \rightarrow x = xz[\varphi(z)]) \text{ (Turner, 2014),}$$

David *is* David_y[y is a philosopher] and David *is* David_y[y is a father], within the specific count in which David exists. That is David *insofar* as he plays one of these specific ‘roles’ (i.e. philosopher or father) is still David. Furthermore, Baxter also accepts the formal principles that govern the identity relation (i.e. reflexivity, symmetry, and transitivity of identity). So in our example, as (Turner, 2014) further notes Baxter will accept that:

$$(5) \text{ David}_y[\text{y is a philosopher}] = \text{David}_y[\text{y is a father}].$$

Within the specific count, in which David exists. Thus, in this context, the same thing can be discerned in two ways, and thus in this discernment, it can differ from itself, whilst still being that the same thing. David is *intra-count* identical to the two above aspects (and a near-infinite other aspects), and these aspects are all intra-count identical with each other

Aspects and Leibniz’s Law Failure

Now taking the above into account, there does seem to be a Leibniz’s Law failure, as nominally qualified phrases refer to aspects, and aspects qualitatively differ but are *numerically identical*. And Baxter seems to agree with this failure stating:

I am urging the discernibility of identicals. To say that identicals are indiscernible is to mean that for all *a* and *b* if *a* and *b* are identical, then *a* and *b* have the same properties. So when I say that identicals are discernible I mean there exists some *a* such that *a* has

and lacks *a* property. For *a* insofar as it is one way has the property and *a* insofar as it is another lacks it.⁵ (Baxter, 1988b: 205–206)

That is Baxter rejects the following formulation of the Indiscernibility of Identicals (i.e. Leibniz's Law):

For anything, *x*, and anything, *y*, if *x* is numerically identical with *y* then, for any property, *x* has it if and only if *y* has it (Baxter, 2018a, 900).

And formally this can be stated as such:

(6) Leibniz' Law: $\forall x \forall y (x = y \rightarrow (\varphi(x) \leftrightarrow \varphi(y)))$ (Turner, 2014, 239)¹⁸⁶

However, even though Baxter acknowledges a Leibniz' Law failure here, he raises the question concerning specifically *why* Leibniz's Law should be taken to apply to *all entities*, without restriction? Baxter sees that the issue might be that of the frequently raised worry¹⁸⁷ that a relation that is not characterised by Leibniz's Law, is *not* identity.¹⁸⁸ Baxter sees, however, that the only reason for this attitude is that the principle seems to express the truth that no entity both possesses and lacks a property, that is that contradiction cannot exist in reality (Baxter, 2018a). That is, as Baxter writes, 'It may seem that the original Indiscernibility of Identicals is just another way of saying that nothing both has and lacks a property, which is just another way of saying that no contradictions are true' (Baxter, 2018a, 907). It thus seems that individuals regularly accord Leibniz's Law (the Indiscernibility of Identicals) the same unassailable status that is regularly given to the Principle of Non-Contradiction (Baxter, 2018a). However, following Aristotle, Baxter sees that what is central to the latter principle, is that simply nothing can both possess and lack a property in the same respect at the same time (Baxter, 2018a).

¹⁸⁶ Turner terms this formulation of Leibniz's law *Strong Leibniz's Law*, to distinguish it from weaker formulations which might be acceptable to Baxter and others that defend his views. For the weaker formulations and a helpful explanation of them, see: (Turner, 2014).

¹⁸⁷ As Sider (2007, 57) states, 'Defenders of strong composition as identity must accept this version of Leibniz's Law; to deny it would arouse suspicion that their use of 'is identical to' does not really express identity'. And as Bohn (2019, 2, square parenthesis added) writes, [Leibniz's Law] is simply conceptually rock bottom of what I mean by identity. So, violating it amounts to, at best, changing the subject'.

¹⁸⁸ One might could content that it is inconceivable to *define* numerical identity without utilising Leibniz's Law, and thus Baxter's approach should be rejected. However, Baxter notes that he is *not* defining identity; but instead is taking it as primitive. That is, for Baxter, for one to be numerically identical is to be one single individual and to be numerically distinct is simply to be two single individuals (Baxter, 2018a). It is the connection with cardinality, rather than qualitative sameness, which is essential to numerical identity, not some connection with qualitative sameness (Baxter, 2018a).

This formulation thus leaves room to manoeuvre, as it opens up the possibility that, as Baxter writes, ‘something in one respect has a property that it in another respect lacks’ (Baxter, 2017, 15).¹⁸⁹ *That* claim, however, is not contradictory, as a contradictory claim here would be for one to say that some object in one respect possesses a property that in no respect it possesses (Baxter, 2018a). The non-contradictory claim made by Baxter is thus simply that something *in one respect* is in fact, numerically identical with itself *in another respect*.¹⁹⁰ Thus, based off of this claim, it is simply that of some numerically identical things qualitatively differing, without an entailment of a contradiction (Baxter, 2018a). Baxter thus believes that we lack any substantial reason to believe that Leibniz’s Law applies to every entity without question, and states that ‘Leibniz’s Law should not be thought of as applying absolutely generally to anything that can be talked about; the argument that it must apply so generally, fails’ (Baxter, 2018a, 907). Baxter thus believes that it is important to consider the *domain of quantification* for Leibniz’s Law.

That is, the non-contradictory internal negation in specific self-differing claims, such as David’s above, seems to suggest that Leibniz’s Law is not applicable to aspects (Baxter, 2018a). Thus, there are certain cases in which identicals *are discernible*, yet do not falsify the principle. That is when an individual possesses aspects that are numerically identical with it (and each other that they possess), however qualitatively differ from the individual (and each other). These aspects are thus entities, as noted above, that spoken loosely are many, based on their qualitative difference. However, speaking “strictly”, they are not many due to them *not* being numerically distinct. Leibniz’s Law is not applicable to aspects.

This non-applicability here thus leads Baxter to propose a further distinction concerning the Indiscernibility of Identicals, which he terms the *Indiscernibility of Identical Aspects*:

For anything, x, and anything, y, if x is numerically identical with y then, for any property, any aspect numerically identical with x has it if and only if any aspect numerically identical with y has it (Baxter, 2018a, 911).

¹⁸⁹ Baxter (2018a) does not see any other reason in support of the absolute allegiance to the principle, rejecting Leibniz’s reason tied to his view of substance.

¹⁹⁰ A single individual differs from itself by having two or more aspects, an important question that can be raised here is that of if the two-ness of the aspect entails a numerical distinctness between the aspects? Baxter believes not, as counting aspects is only a *loose way* of counting individuals (Baxter, 2018a). As aspects possessed by a single individual are counted as more than one in virtue of their qualitative difference, however, this does not entail a numerical difference that would result in the individual being more than one individual (Baxter, 2018a).

And formally stated:

$$(7) \text{ Indiscernibility of Identical Aspects } (\forall x)(\forall y)(\forall z)(\forall w)(\forall X)(\forall Y)(x = y \ \& \ x = zk[Xk] \ \& \ y = wk[Yk] \rightarrow (\forall Z)(Z(zk[Xk]) \leftrightarrow Z(wk[Yk]))) \text{ (Baxter, 2018a, 911).}$$

Thus, the issue that we have here is that of there being problems with the Indiscernibility of Identical Aspects, as an individual might be numerically identical with an aspect that differs from an aspect that another individual is numerically identical with, even in the situation in which the first and second individuals are identical (Baxter, 2018a). That is an individual can differ from itself, by having aspects that differ, yet without this requiring that the individuals are numerically distinct. Identicals that are considered *unqualifiedly* are indiscernible. But identicals that are considered *qualifiedly* may be discernible, that is something may qualitatively differ from itself (Baxter, 1999).

Furthermore, it is not just the "bare" entities that the principle applies to, but also "complete" entities, as previously explained. Leibniz's Law (the indiscernibility of identicals), according to Baxter, is applicable to complete entities, such as individuals. Thus the same thing cannot be true and false of the same individual, in the same respect, without entailing a contradiction (Baxter, 2018a). Phrases such as "David insofar as he is a father" refers to aspects, which are incomplete entities, as also noted above, and thus not the individual that the aspect is numerically identical with (Baxter, 2018a).

This type of reference is termed, as previously noted, by Baxter, "aspectival reference", which refers to aspects. It is to be distinguished from singular reference, which refers to complete entities (Baxter, 2018a). Singular reference, according to Baxter, is not sensitive to the aspectival distinction, whilst the former is. That is, a distinction can be drawn between the aspects of the same individual (and also between these aspects and individual themselves), which as Baxter writes, 'is a less-than-numerical distinction but more than a mere distinction of reason' (Baxter, 2018a, 14),¹⁹¹ For example, taking two aspects of an individual, these aspects will only be "two" when "speaking loosely", but as they are numerical identical; "speaking strictly" they are one. This type of distinction is what Baxter terms an 'aspectival' distinction (Baxter, 2018a).

¹⁹¹ Baxter sees this distinction as being similar to Duns Scotus' formal distinction and Francisco Suarez's modal distinction (Baxter, 2018a).

Once we are sensitive to this distinction, we can realise that the domain of quantification for Leibniz's Law, in its original sense, as Baxter writes, 'includes all the complete entities, but does not include the incomplete entities numerically identical to some of them' (Baxter, 2018b, 16). And it follows from this that Leibniz's Law, taken as the Indiscernibility of Identical *Individuals*, does not preclude the aspects of an individual from being qualitatively different from each other and the individual themselves (Baxter, 2018a).¹⁹²

The notion of aspects is thus central for Baxter in understanding the important notion of self-difference. And assuming the reality of aspects does not lead to a complete denial of Leibniz's Law. Instead, according to Baxter, there is only a denial of an unrestricted understanding of the Leibniz's Law. We thus have counterexamples solely to the principle that ranges over aspects (i.e. Indiscernibility of Identical Aspects), and so to the *unrestricted* Leibniz's Law, when it is taken as the conjunction of the former *and* the Indiscernibility of Identicals properly so-called.

Now taking the three central notions into account, there is thus a means now to fully understand Strange CAI. Specifically, how many parts can be distributively identical with the one whole that they are part of.

2.3 Composition as (Cross-Count) Identity¹⁹³

2.3.1 Distributive Cross-Count Identity

Distributive Cross-Count Identity: Mapping Explication

In conceptualising distributive cross-count identity of a whole and its parts, suppose that we have a certain number of parts and the whole that they are all parts of. Firstly, according to the notion of counts, the whole and its parts would exist relative to a count. And given Separation,

¹⁹² Baxter sees Leibniz's Law as being closely related to the further principle that co-referential terms are substitutable *salva veritate*. However, he notes that this specific principle concerns only singular reference, and thus the substitution of expressions only refer to single individuals. One would thus need to provide an argument for why it should be generalised to aspects. the principle concerns singular reference. It concerns the substitution of expressions that refer to single individuals. There needs to be an argument that it generalizes to reference to aspects.

¹⁹³ The following section solely focuses on one-one (i.e. distributive) cross-count identity and thus does not interact with Strange CAI in a many-one context (i.e. non-distributive cross-count identity) due to the latter not being relevant to the task at hand.

the whole would exist relative to one count (i.e. the whole-count), and its parts would exist relative to another count (i.e. the parts-count). That is the whole, and its parts would exist relative to *separate* counts (i.e. the whole-count is *not* the parts-count).

Now consider the whole-count, in which the whole exists, but not each of its parts. As Baxter believes that a whole can be considered *as* various things, through possessing aspects, we can thus *consider* the whole, through any of its parts (i.e. aspectively the-whole-as/qua/in-so-far-as it is part x_1 , part x_2 , part x_3 ...part x_n). Let's term these ways of considering the whole (i.e. its aspects) as part-aspects. And, though the whole and its various part-aspects can qualitatively differ, they are numerically identical with each other and the whole itself. Thus there is only *one* thing that actually exists in the whole count, the whole. The whole is thus discernible, from, but *intra-count* identical with, each of its part-aspects. Additionally, by the formal principles that govern identity (i.e. symmetry and identity), each of the part-aspects would also be *intra-count* identical with each other.

Turning our attention now to the parts-count, in which each of the parts exist, and not the whole. Baxter believes that the best way to conceptualise the cross-count identity here is through utilising the notion of *mapping*. That is, there is a mapping of items that exist in one specific count (i.e. the parts) onto an item that exists in another (i.e. the whole) (Baxter, 1988b). In Baxter's terminology, the pre-image (the parts) is mapped onto an image (the whole), where the pre-image exists in a different count from its image.

An important question to ask here is what exactly is the image of a part? Well, according to Baxter, the 'image of a part is: *the whole as partially located somewhere*' (Baxter, 1988b, 207, emphasis added). That is, for example, a can is mapped onto the six-pack, on one count, as it is partially located in the area in which the can is located in the other count (Baxter, 1988b). The six-pack *insofar as* it is located in a given location, is thus taken to be the image of the can which occupies that specific location (Baxter, 1988b). Images, in one count (such as the six-pack) and the several parts (such as the six cans) that they are mapped onto, in another count, are thus numerically identical to the whole and each other. They just *are* the whole distinguished in different ways, that is they are aspects of the whole. Thus, in further illustrating this, Baxter writes,

suppose you have six parts in locations 1 through 6 respectively. Then the image of the first part is the whole insofar as it is in location 1, the image of the second part is the whole

insofar as it is in location 2 etc. The six images are qualitatively distinct but numerically identical. The images are intra-count-identical, for they are all identical to something viz. the whole –that exist in the same count in which they do (Baxter, 1988b, 208).

Each part is identical to its image, with images that are identical with each other and the whole. So according to Baxter, we can *map* each of the parts, in the parts-count, onto the part-aspects of the whole, in the whole count, that *correspond* with (i.e. are located where) each of the parts (are located) in the parts-count. And off of this mapping process, of image (i.e. whole as located in a given location) and pre-image (i.e. part), Baxter believes that ‘there is a perfectly good sense of identity in which each part is identical with its image’ (Baxter, 1988, 208). With this identity, being what we have termed “cross-count identity”. This notion of (one-one) cross-count identity, in Baxter’s mind, enables one, to fully make sense of how a whole can be identical to each of its parts (i.e. be distributively identical with its parts).

As, according to Baxter, and as previously noted, a whole is *intra-count* identical, with each of its part-aspects,¹⁹⁴ and now, by adding the notion of *cross-count* identity, one is allowed to say that the mapping process, explained above, details how a given part, in the part count, is *identical* with the part-aspect of the whole, that corresponds with it in the whole count (i.e. with its image). A part-aspect, in the whole-count, is taken to be (cross-count) identical with a part, in the part-count. And thus, importantly, by the formal principles of identity, in this case, the transitivity of identity, the whole is *identical* with that part as well, in that the whole is (cross-count) identical with that given part.¹⁹⁵ That is, more succinctly, the parts are cross-count identical with images/part-aspects (i.e. the whole insofar as it is located in the location of the part) intra-count identical with each other and the whole. And importantly, Baxter writes that he wants ‘the mapping of part to image in the whole to be a case of identity –cross-count identity. Since the images are intra-count identical, the many parts are cross-count identical with the one whole’ (Baxter, 1988b, 209). The above account here is thus to be taken as one-one (cross-count) identity.

However, can more be done here to sharpen up this account through providing a more fine-grained analysis that leads to the same conclusion above? I believe so, through again turning to Turner’s regimentation of Baxter’s account.

¹⁹⁴ Though again qualitatively discernible from them.

¹⁹⁵ More specifically, the part is (cross-count) identical with its image, which is, in turn, (intra-count) identical with the whole). By transitivity, the part is (cross-count) identical to the whole.

Distributive Cross-Count Identity: Formal Explication

Following Turner (2014), we can proceed to sharpen up the account here by focusing on the example provided by Baxter, where he states:

You are showing a child an orange then its parts. First you say, 'Here is an orange. It's juicy inside but not outside.' After peeling you say, 'Here is the inside of the orange — it's juicy. And here's the outside — it's not juicy.' In the before case, you are talking about one thing, the orange. The orange inside is one way and the orange outside is another. . . In the after case, the inside of the orange is one thing that is one way, and the outside of the orange is a second thing that is another way. (Baxter, 1988b, 206)

Staying with this example here, we can term the orange “Otto”, the peel “Peely” and the juicy inside “Innie” (Turner, 2014). Peely and Innie are parts of Otto, as depicted through this illustration provided by Turner:

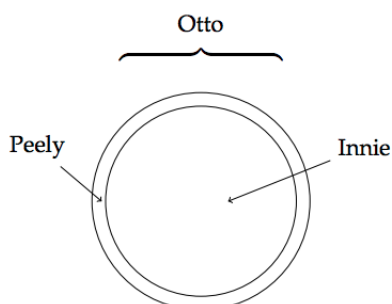


Figure 4.2 Orange and Parts Example

(Turner, 2014, 234)

Now, taking into account Separation, parts and wholes do not exist in the same count, and thus in the case before Otto is peeled, we have a count that includes Otto, but excludes Peely and Innie (Turner, 2014). In this count, we do not have Peely and Innie, but we do have what Baxter terms the “orange outside” and the “orange inside”, which according to him is short for 'the orange insofar as it occupies the location of the peel,' (Baxter, 1988b, 206).

This strange phrasing, however, as Turner (2014), notes should be seen as aspects of Otto that are tied to *location*.¹⁹⁶ So letting P stand for Peely's location and I for Innie's location, in the case before Otto is peeled, and utilising the language of an aspect term introduced previously: $\alpha_y[\varphi(y)]$, and '@' as a shorthand for the term "occupies", we are referring to the "orange outside" as $\text{Ottoy}[y@P]$ (i.e. 'Otto-as-occupying-P') and the "orange inside" as $\text{Ottoy}[y@I]$ (i.e. "Otto-as-occupying-I") (Turner, 2014). The move to CAI, as Turner terms it, is made through a "cross-count"¹⁹⁷ identification between "Otto-as-occupying-P" with Peely (i.e. $\text{Ottoy}[y@P]$ with Peely) (or "Otto-as-occupying-I" and Innie (i.e. $\text{Ottoy}[y@I]$ with Innie)) and then an (intra-count) identification of $\text{Ottoy}[y@I]$ and $\text{Ottoy}[y@P]$ with Otto.¹⁹⁸ That is, in stepping away from this example for the moment, Baxter writes,

The identity of part with whole is really the cross-count identity of part with whole as in sub-location, and then intra-count identity of that with the whole. So the identity between part and whole seems to be between two things considered unqualifiedly, but it is so only by the mediation of identity with something considered unqualifiedly — i.e. the whole as in sub-location. (Baxter 1988b, 214)

As previously noted, parts, in one count, are meant to be identical to an object-as-located-at-the-part's-region, in another count (that is, following Baxter's terminology above, the whole as in 'sub-location'). Now returning to our example, Peely and Innie are thus cross-count identical to $\text{Ottoy}[y@P]$, and $\text{Ottoy}[y@I]$ specifically for the reason that Peely is *located* at P and Innie is *located* (Turner, 2014). Thus, again following Turner (2014, 236), we can formulate this more precisely, using the symbol ' \approx ' to represent cross-count identity, we can state the important principle as such:

Cross-Count: $\forall x \forall y \forall R ((x@R \wedge y@R) \rightarrow x \approx y_z[z@R])$ (Turner, 2014, 236).

¹⁹⁶ Turner notes that the notion of location (or occupational regions) is central to Baxter's position here. For a regimentation of this relation, in light of influential and foundational work of Josh Parsons (2007), see: (Turner, 2014).

¹⁹⁷ This identification is cross-count identity, rather than intra-count identity simply for the fact that Peely and $\text{Ottoy}[y@P]$ and Innie and $\text{Ottoy}[y@I]$ cannot exist in the same count.

¹⁹⁸ A question concerning the relation of cross-count identity and actual identity can be raised here again. That is one could ask why exactly should cross-count identity be viewed as actual identity? The reason is simply that the object-as-occupying-the-part's-location and the part itself seem to be ways of getting at the same object, just from the perspective of different counts. Thus, it's not too much of a stretch to say they are *actually* identical, simply across counts (i.e. different domains of reality).

Cross-count identity thus leads us to say that a given part x is cross-count identical to a whole, so long as the whole y has an aspect that is located in the same region R that x is located at (i.e. possess the aspect y -as-occupying- R). And the further step, to move from the cross-count identity of x with y -as-occupying- R , to the intra-count identity of y -as-occupying- R with y , can be captured through the following:

Part-Whole Identification: $\exists R(x \approx y_z[z@R] \wedge y_z[z@R] = y)$.¹⁹⁹

We thus have here the one-one identity between part and whole, as in “sub-location” (i.e. the aspect of a whole), and *then* the intra-count identity of that with the whole. In a more coarse-grained manner, we have the one-one identity between part and whole. We can now apply the notions and account detailed above to the relation between the divine persons and God the Trinity.²⁰⁰

2.3.2 Composition as (Cross-Count) Identity: Trinitarian Analysis²⁰¹

Trinitarian Composition as Identity: General Explication

Now, suppose that God the Trinity is a whole (or fusion) of the Father, the Son and the Spirit who are its parts. We can use “ t ” and “ p ”, to talk about the counts associated with respective quantifiers. God the Trinity exists relative to one count, count $_t$, and the Father, the Son and the Spirit exist relative to another count, count $_p$. As noted above, according to Separation, these would be separate accounts, in that the whole-count in which God the Trinity exists is *not* the parts-count in which the Father, the Son and the Spirit exist (i.e. count $_t$ is *not* count $_p$).

¹⁹⁹ Turner (2014) defines the parthood predicate by taking this principle as a definition, however, I believe that this principle also captures identification between part and whole clearly, as featured in the above quotation from Baxter, and thus I will utilise this definition to serve that specific end.

²⁰⁰ In the subsequent sub-sections I will now re-adopt the title of God in reference to the Trinity.

²⁰¹ The following Trinitarian account, which seeks to utilise the concepts found within Baxter’s Strange CAI account, might seem to some to be a version of Peter van Inwagen’s (1995, 2003) Relative Identity Trinitarianism. However, against this apparent seeming, there are two important distinctions between the proposed account and van Inwagen’s; firstly, the concepts utilised to formulate this Trinitarian account (such as counts, cross-count identity, aspects, location etc.), unlike van Inwagen’s account, are found within the broader field of philosophy and thus, the charge of *ad hocness* (which is regularly raised against van Inwagen’s account) cannot be raised against this account. Secondly, as noted previously, the identity in play within the proposed account, unlike van Inwagen’s *relative identity*, is not an “esoteric” notion of identity, but the ordinary notion of identity simply working *across* different counts (i.e. different domains of reality each quantified over by an elite existential quantifier). Thus, the proposed account might indeed be some type of “relative identity” account (in that identity is *relative* to a count), but, as it stands, it is not one within the van Inwagian tradition and thus does not face the objections raised against that type of account.

Now focusing on count_t, in which God the Trinity exists, but not the Father, the Son and the Spirit (i.e. each of its parts). God the Trinity, would possess aspects, and some of these aspects are tied to location. With the specific aspects of the Trinity in this context would be what I term, *Father-aspect*, *Son-aspect* and *Spirit-aspect*. These aspects, being aspects, are abstract particulars, incomplete entities, and qualitatively differing (in that the Father-aspect, Son-aspect and Spirit-aspect, would possess different qualities (or properties))²⁰² yet, each is numerically identical to God the Trinity; they *are* God the Trinity simply distinguished in different ways.

Thus, in this count, count_t, we do not have the Father, the Son and the Spirit, but we do have the whole, the Trinity and its qualitatively distinct, yet numerically identical aspects, “Father-aspect”, “Son-aspect” and “Spirit-aspect”.²⁰³ And in count_p, we do not have God the Trinity and its aspects, but instead its parts, the Father, the Son and the Spirit. These are separate counts with different entities existing within them. We can thus express this through adopting the framework of ontological pluralism which takes there to be different domains of reality that are quantified over by two “elite” existential quantifiers “ \exists_t ” and “ \exists_p ”.

One quantifier ranging over the domain (i.e. count) in which the whole exists (i.e. God the Trinity exists), expressed by the following: “ $\exists_t x Gx$ ” meaning that there is some count_t in which x exists and x is G (God the Trinity). And another quantifier ranging over the domain (i.e. count) in which the parts exist (i.e. the Father, the Son and the Spirit exist), expressed by the following: “ $\exists_p x Gx$ ” meaning that there is some count_p in which x exists and x is P (each of the Father, the Son and the Spirit).

Now the question can be raised concerning why we should take there to be any specific correspondence between ‘Father-aspect’ and the Father, ‘Son-aspect’ and the Son, and ‘Spirit-aspect’ and the Spirit, who exist within different counts (i.e. different domains of reality)? Well, this is because each of the aspects occupy, in count_t, *the same location* of the corresponding part in count_p. And thus, taking this all into account, these three aspects can, therefore, be further defined as such:

²⁰² Such as relational properties (which, though ontologically reducible/supervenient as noted in the previous chapter) which qualitatively distinguish the aspects (and persons in count_p).

²⁰³ And in count_p, we do not have God the Trinity and its aspects, but instead its parts the Father, the Son and the Spirit.

- (1) Father-aspect, God the Trinity *insofar* as it occupies the location of the Father,
- (2) Son-aspect, God the Trinity *insofar* as it occupies the location of the Son and
- (3) Spirit-aspect, God the Trinity *insofar* as it occupies the location of the Spirit.²⁰⁴

Now, focusing on the relationship between count_t and count_p and the cross-count identity between the God the Trinity, specifically his aspects of "Father-aspect", "Son-aspect" and "Spirit-aspect", and the Father, the Son and the Spirit. In utilising the notion of *mapping*, we take God the Trinity to be the *image* (more specifically, the Father-aspect, Son-aspect and Spirit-aspect to be the *images* which are each located in the area in which the Father, the Son and the Spirit are located in count_p) and the Father, the Son and the Spirit are taken to be the *pre-images*.

We then *map* each of the parts, in count_p ; the Father, the Son and the Spirit, onto their corresponding images in count_t ; "Father-aspect", "Son-aspect" and "Spirit-aspect", which are each intra-count-identical with each other and the whole, God the Trinity. Finally, by the transitivity of identity, which governs the (cross-count and inter-count) identity relation we reach the point of the Father, Son and Spirit, in count_c , each being (cross-count) identical with God the Trinity in count_t . To illustrate this and focusing now on one part of God the Trinity, in count_p , the Father, we see that by the Father (pre-image) in count_p , being mapped onto, and thus being cross-count identical with, "Father-aspect" (image) in count_t , and "Father-aspect" being inter-count identical with God the Trinity (which it is an aspect of, and thus numerically identical with) in count_t , then by transitivity, the Father, in count_p , is (cross-count) identical with God the Trinity, in count_t .

We can now further restate this account, through applying Turner's regimentation of Baxter's account to the Trinitarian account here.

²⁰⁴ An objection here that can be raised is concerning the importance of location or occupational relations to Strange CAI. As one could argue that, even if this account of CAI works, it is not applicable in a theological context, given that God (i.e. the Trinity and each person of the Trinity) is usually taken to *have* a location or occupational relation. Or, at least, God has a location or occupational relation in a *derivative* sense, such as found within the account of divine omnipresence in: (Swinburne, 2016), (Hoffman and Rosenkrantz, 2002) and (Wierenga, 2010) etc. However, a possible way to deal with this issue is to adopt Hudson's (2009) and Alexander Pruss' (2013) *ubiquitous entension* account of omnipresence, which takes God to have a location or occupational relation in a *fundamental* sense, through *entending* that region. And thus, within this account, God's aspects can indeed do have a location in the manner Strange CAI requires it to have. The relationship between Strange CAI and the notion of ubiquitous entension will also be the focus of future research. For a detailed explanation of this account of omnipresence, see: (Hudson, 2009), (Pruss, 2013) and a further discussion, and historical modification of this in light of the 'materialist' implications of the account, in: (Inman, 2017).

Trinitarian Composition as Identity: Formal Analysis

As just noted, the Father, the Son and the Spirit are each (cross-count) identical with God the Trinity. Thus, letting G stand for God the Trinity, F stand for the Father's location, S for the Son's location and H for the Spirit's location, and using again aspect term $\alpha_y[\varphi(y)]$ and "@" as a shorthand for the term "occupies", we state each of the aspects of God the Trinity under consideration, as the following: Father-aspect is short for $\text{God}_y[y@F]$ (i.e. 'God-as-occupying-F', God the Trinity *insofar* as it occupies the location of the Father), Son-aspect is short for $\text{God}_y[y@S]$ (i.e. "God-as-occupying-S", God the Trinity *insofar* as it occupies the location of the Son), and Spirit-aspect is short for $\text{God}_y[y@H]$ (i.e. 'God-as-occupying-H', God the Trinity *insofar* as it occupies the location of the Spirit).

The move to CAI, in a similar manner as before, is through a "cross-count" identification between "God-as-occupying-F" with the Father (i.e. $\text{God}_y[y@F]$ with Father), 'God-as-occupying-S with the Son (i.e. $\text{God}_y[y@S]$ with Son) and 'God-as-occupying-H' with the Spirit (i.e. $\text{God}_y[y@H]$ with Spirit).

That is, the Father, the Son and the Spirit are cross-count identical to $\text{God}_y[y@F]$, $\text{God}_y[y@S]$ and $\text{God}_y[y@H]$ specifically for the reason that Father-aspect is *located* at F , Son-aspect is *located* at S and Spirit-aspect is *located* at H . Thus, again as before, we can formulate this more precisely, using symbol ' \approx ' to represent cross-count identity, and the Father, the Son and Spirit represented by a P , we can state the important principle as such:

$$\text{Person-Trinity Cross-Count: } \forall tx \forall py \forall R((P@!R \wedge G@R) \rightarrow P \approx G_z[z@R])$$

Person-Trinity Cross-Count thus leads us to say that the Father, the Son and Spirit are cross-count identical to God the Trinity, so long as firstly the God the Trinity G has an aspect that is located in the same region R that P is located at (i.e. possesses the aspect G-as-occupying- R), stated as such: $(P@!R \wedge G@R)$.

We can then, further off of this, make the move from the cross-count identity of P (i.e. the Father, the Son and the Spirit) with G-as-occupying- R (i.e. God-as-occupying-region), stated above as such: $(P \approx G_z[z@R])$ to an 'intra-count' identification of $\text{God}_y[y@F]$, $\text{God}_y[y@S]$ and $\text{God}_y[y@H]$ each with God the Trinity. We reach that result through the previously adduced principle:

Person-Trinity Identification: $\exists R(P \approx G_z[z@R] \wedge G_z[z@R] = G)$.²⁰⁵

The Father, the Son and the Spirit are thus each cross-count identical with an aspect of the whole, Father-aspect, Son-aspect and Spirit-aspect, stated above as such: $(P \approx G_z[z@R])$, and then, in turn, the Father-aspect, Son-aspect and Spirit-aspect are each intra-count identical with the whole, God the Trinity, stated above as such: $(G_z[z@R] = G)$.

From this, the transitivity of identity, which governs intra-count (and cross-count) identity leading us to the conclusion that the Father, the Son and the Spirit (parts) are thus each (cross-count) identical with God the Trinity (the whole). This conclusion can now, finally allow us to reach the further conclusion that the Father, the Son and the Spirit, though genuine, and literal, parts of God the Trinity, are not literal, *proper* parts of God the Trinity which we will turn our attention to now.²⁰⁶

Trinitarian Composition as Identity: The Persons as Improper Parts

In the contemporary mereological literature the proper parthood relation PP is usually defined as such (where “P” stands for “part of”, “ \wedge ” stands for “and”, and “ \neg ” stands for “not”:

Proper Parthood $:= Pxy \wedge \neg x = y$ (Cotnoir and Varzi, n.d., 23).

According to this conception of proper parthood, x is a proper part of y iff x is distinct from y . Something is, therefore, a proper part of an object in the case in which it is a part *distinct* from the object itself, such as a finger, is a proper part of a hand.²⁰⁷ Thus, the central difference between a proper part and an improper part of an object, is simply that a proper part is *not identical* to the entity that they are part of, whereas, instead, an improper part of an object is *identical* to the object that it is part of (Cotnoir, 2018).²⁰⁸ This conception, thus ties parthood

²⁰⁵ Turner (2014) defines the parthood predicate by taking this principle as definition however I believe that this principle also captures the identification between part and whole clearly, as featured in the above quotation from Baxter, and thus I will utilise this definition to serve that specific end.

²⁰⁶ The above analysis would also apply to the Trinitarian persons taken as a whole (i.e. the many-one cross-count identity between God the Trinity and the three divine persons taken collectively). However, as the one-one version of cross-count identity is the type of cross-count identity relevant to dealing with our issue, the many-one version will not be further unpacked.

²⁰⁷ This example of a proper part comes from (Cotnoir and Varzi, n.d.).

²⁰⁸ Cotnoir states that ‘if Leibniz’s Law governs the identity relation, then any part which is discernible in any way from the object it is part of will count as a proper part. As such, this conception is explicitly tied to qualitative discernibility’ (Cotnoir, 2018, 7). However, I reject this conditional given our, albeit fairly brief, discussion in n11 above, concerning the essentiality of cardinality, rather than qualitative sameness, for numerical identity.

to the relation of identity, in that a proper part is *numerically distinct*, whilst an improper part is *numerically identical* with the object it is part of, we thus conceive of the latter simply as the converse of Proper Parthood:

$$\text{Improper Parthood} := Pxy \wedge x = y.$$

According to this conception of improper parthood, x is an improper part of y iff x is identical to y , that is, something is thus an improper part of an object in the case in which it is a part that is the object *itself*, such as a hand is an improper part of a fist.²⁰⁹ Conceiving of a part in the *proper* sense is conceiving a part of x in a manner in which it is incompatible with that part being the whole x , whereas, conceiving a part in the *improper* sense is conceiving of a part of x in a manner in which it is compatible with that part being the whole x . That is, in the latter case, nothing in the part lies *outside* the whole, and nothing in the whole lies *outside* the part.

Whilst in the former case, that is not so, as the whole includes *something else* that is not included within the part (Lando, 2017).²¹⁰ Thus, in the case of a part being an improper part of an object, it is, according to Giorgio Lando (2017, 142) as if the part and the object occupy the ‘same mereological level for the same portion of reality’. The improper part of an object, in sum, is simply just *that object*.

Now, transitioning back onto our analysis of the parthood relation between the Trinitarian persons and God the Trinity. The Father, the Son and the Spirit are each parts of God the Trinity, which is the whole composed of all, and only of, these parts. However, we reached the conclusion above, that the Father, the Son and the Spirit are *each* (cross-count) identical with God the Trinity.²¹¹ Now, taking into account the conception above of proper parthood (i.e. $Pxy \wedge \neg x = y$) and improper parthood (i.e. $Pxy \wedge x = y$), that centre around the notion of identity (and distinctness). The Father, the Son and the Spirit are *not* proper parts of God the Trinity,

²⁰⁹ This example of an improper part comes from (Simons, 1987).

²¹⁰ This is why decomposition principles, such as Weak Supplementation, is important in helping establish this distinction here between a proper and improper part of an object, with the former requiring something outside of the part, within the whole, for it to be a part in the proper sense, or it would simply be the whole itself (i.e. an improper part).

²¹¹ That is that they are (cross-count) identical with an aspect of God the Trinity, which are, in turn, (intra-count) identical with God the Trinity. And by the transitivity of identity, they are then (cross-count) identical with God the Trinity itself.

as they are each not parts *distinct* from God the Trinity, but instead, each is (cross-count) identical with God the Trinity *itself*.²¹²

So, more fully, letting P continue to stand for “part of”, G stand for “God the Trinity”, *f* for “the Father”, *s* for “the Son”, and *h* for the “Spirit”, we take it as a given in our case that Father is *part of* God the Trinity (i.e. PfG), the Son is *part of* God the Trinity (i.e. PsG), and the Spirit is *part of* God the Trinity (i.e. PhG). Though existing as parts in a separate count from God the Trinity, namely, count_{*p*}.

Moreover, given the (cross-count) *identity* of each of the persons *with* God the Trinity itself, (with the identity relation being governed by the formal principles of transitivity and symmetry), the Father *is* God the Trinity itself (i.e. $f = G$), the Son *is* God the Trinity itself (i.e. $s = G$), and the Spirit *is* God the Trinity itself (i.e. $h = G$).²¹³

There is thus nothing in the Father, the Son and the Spirit that lies *outside* the God the Trinity, and nothing in God the Trinity that *outside* the Father, the Son and the Spirit. ²¹⁴

²¹² And this cross-count identity relation, being *the* identity relation, but simply ranging across counts.

²¹³ Specifically, at a more fine-grained level, the relation is that of the cross-count identity relation symbolised by \approx , used to express the cross-count identity between each of the Trinitarian persons in count_{*p*}, with their corresponding aspect in count_{*t*}. Rather than $=$, which symbolises the intra-count identity of each of these aspects with God the Trinity itself. And so the full formula in play here is that of Person-Identification above, which for each of the persons is as follows:

- (i) Father *is* God the Trinity itself (i.e. $f \approx G_z[z@R] \wedge G_z[z@R] = G$),
- (ii) Son *is* God the Trinity itself (i.e. $s \approx G_z[z@R] \wedge G_z[z@R] = G$), and
- (iii) Spirit *is* God the Trinity itself (i.e. $h \approx G_z[z@R] \wedge G_z[z@R] = G$).

We can, however, state the above in a more coarse-grained manner which simply does not state the mid, cross-count identity stage between each of the three persons and the corresponding aspects of the Trinity, but the end result of the identification of the persons with God the Trinity itself; ($f = G$), ($s = G$) and ($h = G$), as in the main text. Furthermore, as noted in the footnotes above, the transitivity of identity works within counts, rather than across counts, then even if the three divine persons are each identical with God the Trinity, it does not follow that three divine persons are also identical with each other.

²¹⁴ One potential objection is that, given the result that has been reached here, there is a transgression of a fundamental principle of classical mereology (CEM), namely Weak Supplementation, which requires there to be something *more* in in the object that does not overlap with the part (or that remains when the part is removed). However, the three persons each being identical with God the Trinity, these principles are clearly transgressed (i.e. there is nothing more to God the Trinity, that does not overlap with the three persons and, if each of the three persons were removed from God the Trinity, there would be nothing remaining). This is of course only an issue, however, if CEM, or another mereological theory that takes Weak Supplementation to be fundamental axioms, is assumed as the theory in which Strange CAI is formulated within. However, that is not the case as Strange CAI is not tied to any mereological theory (as Turner (2014) notes).

Additionally, a different mereological theory can be assumed, rather than CEM in order to clarify the mereological underpinnings of this approach. A potential theory could be that of Josh Parsons' SPO (Supplementary Pre-Order) or Cotnoir's non-extensionalist theory. For the former, see: (Parsons, n.d.) and for the latter, see: (Cotnoir, 2010, (Cotnoir and Bacon, 2012), (Cotnoir, 2013) and (Cotnoir, 2018). The relationship between Strange CAI and Parsons'/Cotnoir's mereological theories will also be the focus of future research.

The Father, the Son and the Spirit occupy the “same mereological level for the same portion of reality”, with God the Trinity (with the only divide being that of each existing in different counts, but given that the identity at hand operates *across* counts, this divide makes no ontological difference). Therefore, taking this all into account, we reach the position that the Father, the Son and the Spirit are each an *improper*, rather than a proper, part of God the Trinity, given that each of them is (cross-count) identical with God the Trinity. God the Trinity, within this account is thus simple, through lacking proper parts. the Father, the Son and the Spirit, though parts of the object that is God the Trinity, are each (across counts), simply just *that object*.

Now, one could ask however by assuming there to be some form of an identity relation between each of the Trinitarian persons and God the Trinity, then are we not saddled with the issue of the Persons being identical with each other? Well, in the account just sketched we do not have this issue spring up, given the notion of counts (and aspects). That is, given that the Father, the Son and the Spirit are each cross-count identical with an *aspect* of the whole, in a different count, which is in turn, intra-count identical with God the Trinity, the different count-identities *do not mix* and result in each of the divine persons being identical with each other. That is, only by *mixing* cross-count and numerical identity would it falsely seem that the Persons are also identical on the count on which they are distinct (i.e. the parts-count). To further emphasise this point, we can see the working of the cross-count (and intra-count) identity relation in the following diagram (where “CC” stands for “cross-count identity” and “IC” stands for “intra-count identity”):

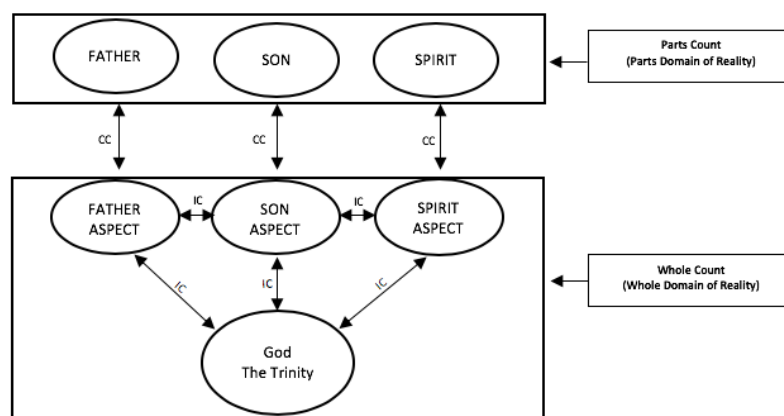


Figure 4.3 Trinitarian Identification

In the parts-count the Trinitarian persons exist as *numerically distinct entities* in a distinct count (i.e. domain of reality), with no identity relation between them. Instead, there is an identity relation (i.e. a cross-count identity relation) running between the different counts, and an identity relation within the whole-count (i.e. an intra-count identity relation). Transitivity requires us to identify each of the Persons with God the Trinity (given the identity of them with their respective aspects in the whole-count), but there is no requirement to identify the persons *within* the parts-count. They instead remain as numerically distinct entities, which wouldn't be the case if we *directly* identified them with God the Trinity within the same count (as was done before), that is, without channelling this identity *through their aspects* in a *distinct* domain of reality (i.e. the whole-count). Thus, as Turner helpfully states, in focusing on the issue of an individual's arms being identical, given that they are identical with the individual's body:

Each of my arms is cross-count identical to an aspect of me, and those aspects are intra-count identical. But although cross-count and intra-count identity are each transitive, *their mixture isn't*, so there's nothing forcing us to cut out the middlemen and make my arms identical (Turner, 2014, 236 emphasis added).

Thus, the Father, the Son and the Spirit are cross-count identical with differing aspects of God the Trinity and so are not cross-count identical with each other. Those aspects are solely numerically identical on the count on which God the Trinity is a single thing (i.e. the whole-count). And the Father, the Son and the Spirit are numerically distinct on the count on which they are individuals (i.e. the parts-count). So there is no count on which Father and Son are both numerically identical and numerically distinct. That is, as noted above, only if one were to mix-up cross-count identity with numerical identity could one identify each of the Persons. However, as numerical identity is relative to count and cross-count identity is not relative to count, this mix-up would not be justified.²¹⁵

Thus, the roundabout way of identifying a part (i.e. each of the Trinitarian persons) with the aspect of the whole (i.e. God the Trinity), rather than *directly with the whole*, helps one to ward off the issues of the parts being identical with each other. We thus have a workable way of identifying the Father, the Son and the Spirit, each with God the Trinity, without falling into absurdity. Taking, this into account, we can illustrate our final modification as such (where the other terms and symbols are as before, with the addition now of "God(3)", which refers to God

²¹⁵ I am very grateful to Professor Baxter for helping to further clarify this issue in personal correspondence.

in the *titular sense* (i.e. as a title applicable to the Trinity), Father/Son/Spirit Aspect referring to the aspects of God the Trinity, " \approx " (and the boldened arrow) for a cross-count identity relation and " $=$ " (and the double-headed arrows) for an "intra-count identity" identity relation):

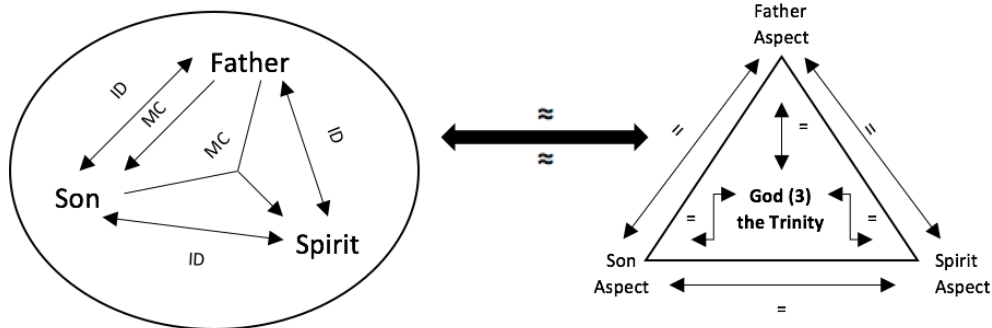


Figure 4.4 The Functional Monotheism model (Modification 4)

Through this modification, that of utilising the notion of CAI, and the concept of “cross-count” identity that underpins it we have a workable way of identifying the Father, the Son and the Spirit, each with God the Trinity, without falling into absurdity. We have a means to directly identify them with their corresponding aspects in the whole-count and then the identification of those aspects with the Trinity and, by the transitivity of identity working across counts, the identification of each of them with the Trinity itself. The Persons *are* each God the Trinity, and God the Trinity *is* each of the Persons. Taking this all into account, we can thus finally state the position of the (modified) Model as such:

- The Trinity, is ontologically simple and is (cross-count) identical to the Trinitarian persons

And thus, from this, we have a positive answer to (Q₂):

(A₂) Yes, the (modified) Model does affirm the simplicity of the Trinity and the identity between it and each of the Trinitarian persons.

Therefore, with this answer, we see that the Model affirms (ii) of the statement of TRINITY, and, given its previous affirmation of (i) of the statement, we can take it to now fully affirm the conception Trinitarianism captured by this statement. Through utilising Donald Baxter’s (Strange) CAI account to perform a modification of the model we can reach the position of that the Father, the Son and the Spirit being cross count identical with the Trinity, and who are thus

improper parts of it. God the Trinity is therefore without parts and is the one simple, God, who is identical with the Trinitarian persons, as required by pro-Nicene Trinitarianism. The (modified) Model thus affirms the third, and final, component of the pro-Nicene conception of Trinitarianism. And, in addition to the two senses detailed previously, the Model is also monotheistic in *this* sense as well.

Chapter Conclusion

In this chapter, I focused on addressing the Historical Objection, which is the second component of the Tri-Theism Objection (i.e. T-OBJECTION (ii)). How I sought to address this problem, in the first sub-section of this chapter, was through focusing on identifying and detailing the third historical construal of Trinitarianism in the pro-Nicene trajectory, leading to a concise statement of this conception (i.e. TRINITY).

In the second sub-section of this chapter, I then focused on assessing the monotheistic credentials of the Model according to TRINITY, and a modification of a certain aspect of the Model was made. This modification enabled me to demonstrate that the Model affirms the central elements of this statement and thus, again, successfully fits within the boundaries of "orthodox" (pro-Nicene) Trinitarianism. The Model is thus monotheistic and (the fourth construal of) the Historical Objection (i.e. (ii) of T-OBJECTION), fails to achieve its end.

With this conclusion, (ii) of the T-OBJECTION is fully disaffirmed in its tri-theistic construal (as demonstrated in Chapter 3), and in three possible pro-Nicene construals of it (as demonstrated in Chapter 4, Chapter 5 and the present chapter). Therefore, given this conclusion, T-OBJECTION has been fully disaffirmed. The Tri-Theism Objection, contra Feser and Kelly, fails against the Model. The Functional Monotheism model is not tri-theistic, but is a model of pro-Nicene Trinitarianism.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

Section 1: Chapter Summaries – Brief Explications

1.1 Thesis Summary: Brief Explication

In this thesis, I have argued that the Functional Monotheism model is not tri-theistic, but is instead a model of pro-Nicene Trinitarianism. I have successfully defended this thesis by addressing the two sub-objections (i.e. (i) and (ii)) that underpin the Tri-Theism Objection (i.e. T-OBJECTION), which was taken, in this thesis, to be the primary objection that charges the Functional Monotheism model (i.e. the Model) with tri-theism. The Model was shown to actively disaffirm the notion of tri-theism (i.e. (i) and (ii)), and instead be in line with three conceptions of Trinitarianism found within the pro-Nicene trajectory. I will now conclude this thesis by summarising the results of each chapter which has led us to this conclusion.

1.2 Chapter Summaries: Brief Explications

Chapter Summary: Chapter 1

In establishing this thesis, a focus was made in Chapter 1 to explicate the most prevalent objection to the Model, which is that of the Tri-Theism Objection, raised by Kelly James Clark and Edward Feser. This objection was further specified as two types of sub-objections; the Scriptural Objection and the Historical Objection. Chapters 2 to 6 were then focused on addressing these two sub-objections, and thus the Tri-Theism Objection, which is established on the basis of them.

Chapter Summary: Chapter 2

In Chapter 2, I focused on addressing the Scriptural Objection directly. This was achieved by an identification of Second Temple Jewish monotheism as the relevant “strict” form of Jewish monotheism for Trinitarian theorising. A summary statement of this conception of Jewish monotheism was provided; termed DIVINE IDENTITY and a target question was asked concerning whether, or not, the Model affirmed the summary statement, and thus should be classed as monotheistic in that sense. The Model was then shown to affirm this statement and

thus, because of this, was taken to in fact being in line with this conception of “strict” Jewish monotheism. Therefore, the Model, contra the Scriptural Objection, is monotheistic in a “strict” sense. The Scriptural Objection is thus inapplicable to the Model. That is, the Model *is* monotheistic in the “strict” sense of the word that underpins Christian Trinitarian theorising.

Chapter Summary: Chapter 3

In Chapter 3, I turned my attention towards addressing the Historical Objection, specifically the first component of the problem, which was that of Model failing to be in line with "orthodox" Trinitarianism because of its correspondence with a tri-theistic conception of God. In addressing this first component of the Historical Objection, an identification was made concerning a specific form of tri-theism, Classical Tri-theism, which could serve as the standard for assessing the tri-theism of the Model. A summary statement of this conception of tri-theism was then provided; termed TRI-THEISM and two target questions were asked concerning whether, or not, the Model affirmed the summary statement, and thus should be classed as tri-theistic in that sense. It was then shown that the Model does in fact (*prima facie*) affirm this statement.

However, once a further clarification of the central terms of the statement was made, which was that of re-construing the statement through the notion of an Aristotelian substance and a particular property (i.e. a mode) the Model was then shown to in fact disaffirm TRI-THEISM, and thus was not tri-theistic in the sense captured by this statement, and the position of the Classical Tri-Theistic trajectory that it expresses.

The first task of this thesis was thus accomplished, which is that of showing that the Model was not tri-theistic. However, despite this position reached, more work had to be done to show that the Model expressed a Trinitarian monotheism, in an "orthodox" sense of the term, and thus, overall, the Historical Objection being shown to be unproblematic for the Model. Thus, in Chapter 4 attention was turned towards showing the correspondence between the Model and the first conception of Trinitarian monotheism found within the pro-Nicene Trinitarian trajectory, which, as noted in Chapter 1 was taken to be the “orthodox” form of Trinitarianism relevant to our task here.

Chapter Summary: Chapter 4

In Chapter 4, I focused on explicating the first conception of pro-Nicene Trinitarianism, which construed the term God in a nominal sense, and which conceived of the one God as being the Father (i.e. the monarchy of the Father). The central tenets of this conception were explored through an exploration of its scriptural and creedal expression (in the Nicene Creed and Niceno-Constantinopolitan creed) and its theological expression (in the work of Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nyssa, and most importantly Gregory of Nazianzus). A summary statement of this position was then provided, termed MONARCHY and a target question was asked concerning whether, or not, the Model affirmed this summary statement, and thus should be classed as monotheistic in this specific sense. It was then shown that the Model does, in fact, affirm both tenets of the statement (that the Father is God in the primary sense and the sole principle within the Trinity).

However, the latter affirmation was made hesitantly, given a contestable assumption that needed to be made for this affirmation. Thus, an alternative, which does not rely on this assumption, was proposed. This alternative enabled the Model to be further modified through the utilisation of the notion of metaphysical causation (i.e. grounding). Ultimately allowing the Model to successfully affirm the second tenet of the statement (the sole principality of the Father) without accruing the problem faced by the original Model's affirmation of it. Thus, given this modification, and the affirmation of MONARCHY provided by it, the Model is monotheistic in the first conception of the term in the pro-Nicene trajectory, and the Historical Objection is inapplicable on this specific account. The Model is in fact within the boundaries of “orthodox” Trinitarianism, as conceived in this manner.

Chapter Summary: Chapter 5

In Chapter 5, this conclusion was further emphasised, through focusing on showing the correspondence between the Model and the second conception of pro-Nicene Trinitarianism, which construed the term God in a predicative sense, and which conceived of the one God as being the divine nature. The central tenets of this conception were, again, explored through detailing its scriptural and creedal grounds (i.e. the Nicene Creed and Niceno-Constantinopolitan creed) and its theological expression (in the work of Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nazianzus, and most importantly Gregory of Nyssa). A summary statement of this position was then provided, termed NATURE, and two target questions were asked concerning

whether, or not, the Model affirmed this summary statement, and thus should be classed as monotheistic in this specific sense. It was then shown that the Model does, in fact, affirm the first tenet of the statement (that the one God, which is the divine nature, is a universal). However, it was also shown that the Model (despite appearances to the contrary) does, in fact, disaffirm the second tenet of the statement (the divine nature being a numerically singular universal, shared by the Trinitarian persons). The Model was thus taken to be out of line with the second conception of pro-Nicene Trinitarianism, due to its failure to affirm this integral part of NATURE.

A modification of the Model was thus required to bring it in line with this conception, and statement, which was that of utilising the four-category ontology, which allowed the Model to affirm the second tenet of the statement (the numerical singularity of the divine nature). Thus, given this modification, and the affirmation of NATURE provided by it, the Model is also monotheistic in the second conception of the term in the pro-Nicene trajectory, and the Historical Objection is again inapplicable on this specific account, as the Model is in fact within the boundaries of “orthodox” Trinitarianism, as conceived in this alternative way.

Chapter Summary: Chapter 6

In Chapter 6, a third, and final re-emphasis of this conclusion was made, through focusing on showing the correspondence between the Model and the third possible conception of pro-Nicene Trinitarianism, which construed the term God in a titular sense and conceived of the one God as being the Trinity. The central tenets of this conception were explored solely through its historical-theological expression (in the work of Hilary of Poitiers, Ambrose of Milan, and most importantly Augustine of Hippo), given its lack of scriptural and creedal precedence. A summary statement of this position was then provided, termed TRINITY, and two target questions were asked concerning whether, or not, the Model affirmed this summary statement, and thus should be classed as monotheistic in this specific sense as well. It was then shown that the Model again affirms the first tenet of the statement (that the one God, is ontologically indivisible). However, it was also shown that the Model, explicitly, disaffirms the second tenet of the statement (the simplicity of God the Trinity and identity between it and each of the Trinitarian persons). The Model was thus taken to be out of line with the third conception of Trinitarian monotheism, due to its failure to affirm this integral part of TRINITY.

A modification of the Model was thus required to bring it in line with this conception, and statement, which was that of utilising the mereological notion of Composition as Identity, which allowed the Model to affirm the second tenet of the statement (the numerical singularity of the divine nature). Thus, given this modification, and the affirmation of TRINITY provided by it, the Model is also monotheistic in the third conception of the term in the pro-Nicene trajectory, and the Historical Objection is again inapplicable on this specific account, as the Model is in fact within the boundaries of “orthodox” Trinitarianism, as conceived in this alternative way as well. The Historical Objection, as with the Scriptural Objection, fails to show that the Model is not within the boundaries of "orthodox", that is pro-Nicene, Trinitarianism. There is thus no Tri-Theism objection that applies to the Model, given that the Model disaffirms (i) and (ii) of T-OBJECTION. The Model is not tri-theistic but is monotheistic.

Section 2: Thesis Conclusion - Findings and Result

2.1 Findings, Result and Modified Model

I have thus been successful in establishing my thesis that the Model is not tri-theistic, but is a model of pro-Nicene Trinitarianism through demonstrating that the Model:

- (i) Disaffirms the central tenets of (Classical) tri-theism, once clarified, and thus is not tri-theistic in that sense.
- (ii) Affirms, once modified, the central tenets of the conception of “strict” Jewish monotheism (Second Temple Jewish Monotheism) that underpins Trinitarianism, and thus is monotheistic in this sense.
- (iii) Affirms, once modified, the central tenets of the first possible conception of Trinitarian monotheism (Trinitarianism) of the pro-Nicene Trajectory (that the one God is the Father), and thus is also monotheistic in this sense
- (iv) Affirms, once modified, the central tenets of the second possible conception of Trinitarian monotheism (Trinitarianism) of the pro-Nicene Trajectory (that the one God is the divine nature), and thus is also monotheistic in this sense.
- (v) Affirms, once modified, the central tenets of the third possible conception of Trinitarian monotheism (Trinitarianism) of the pro-Nicene Trajectory (that the one God is the Trinity), and thus is also monotheistic in this sense

Piecing together our previous results, we can now provide a final illustration of the (modified) Model, (where, as before, "God (1)", as a proper name, applies to the Father, "God (2)", as a predicate, applies to the divine nature, and "God (3)", as a title, applies to the Trinity, the "oval-shape" representing "the Trinity" (as an aspect of the Persons), "ID" (and the double headed arrows) stands for an "identity-dependence relation", "MC" for a "metaphysical causation (grounding) relation", "Ex" (and the single headed arrow) for an "exemplification relation", "≈" (and the boldened arrow) for a cross-count identity relation and "=" (and the double headed arrows) for an "intra-count identity" identity relation):²¹⁶

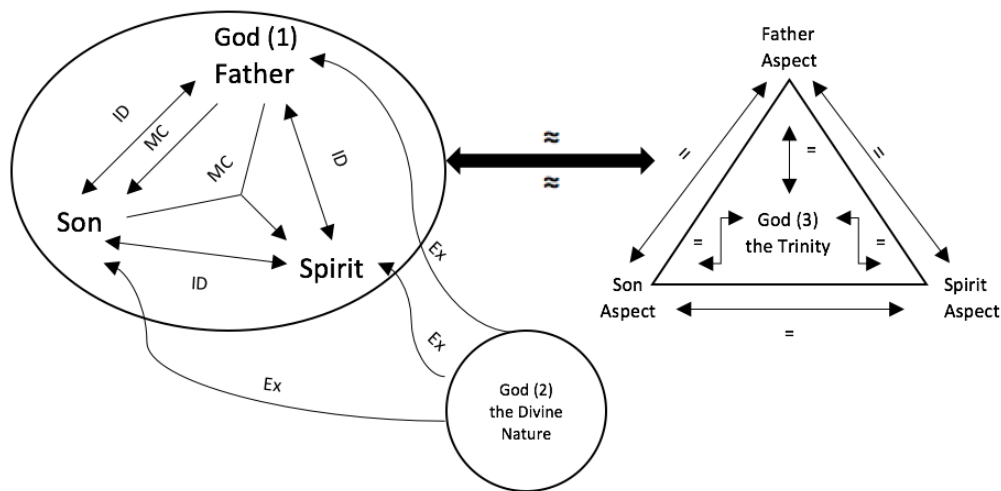


Figure 4.5 The (modified) Functional Monotheism model

We can see in this illustration the overall model, and the various modifications to the model, that is being proposed. The original model states that there are three divine persons (i.e. persons in the modern sense), who are each ontologically interdependent,²¹⁷ and are each God (i.e. "possess" the property of everlasting, omnipotence), yet there is one God (i.e. the Trinity). Now, the modifications that are proposed here is that of firstly, there being three entities (i.e. the Father, the divine nature and the Trinity), who are each taken to be the one God in different senses (i.e. Theistic Pluralism; the Father is the one God in the "nominal sense", the divine nature is the one God in the "predicative sense", and the Trinity is the one God in a "titular sense").

²¹⁶ Though not stated in the diagram, the Son and the Spirit are still God, but are not God in the primary (i.e. nominal) sense, as emphasised by the diagram.

²¹⁷ They are also volitionally interdependent.

Secondly, the relations between the Trinitarian persons is that of a reciprocal identity-dependence relation (rather than an undefined dependence relation) and an asymmetrical metaphysical causal relation (rather than a generic causal relation). Between the Trinitarian persons and the divine nature is that of an exemplification relation (rather than a mere instantiation relation) and between the Persons and the God Trinity is that of a cross-count identity relation (rather than a mere compositional relation), the latter resulting in the Persons existing in a different domain of reality from the Trinity, with the Trinity possessing aspects that are intra-count identical to it, and the Trinity, and its numerical identical aspects, being cross count identical with each of Persons. The Trinitarian persons are thus *each* the Trinity. The various modifications thus allow us to conclude that the Model, once these modifications are in tow, is a (metaphysically robust) model of pro-Nicene Trinitarianism.

The Model is thus not “classically” tri-theistic, but is a model of pro-Nicene Trinitarianism that takes the one God to either be the Father, the divine nature or the Trinity. The Model might be tri-theistic in another sense, and it might not be monotheistic when the one God is taken to refer to something outside of the three entities above (i.e. a different conception of Theistic Pluralism being true). However, given the importance of *this* conception of tri-theism (which was condemned by an Ecumenical Council; the Sixth Ecumenical Council), and *these* conceptions of Trinitarian monotheism (which have been expressed by either holy scripture, the ecumenical creeds or a collection of significant pro-Nicene theologians), we indeed have, in the (modified) Model, a workable model for the doctrine of the Trinity going forward.

Appendix: Alternative Particularities

Appendix Section 1: Alternative Conception of Particular Substances

A.1.1 Central Focus: Alternative Aristotelian Account

The central focus of Chapter 2 was on identifying the central tenets of Classical Tri-Theism, expressed by the statement TRI-THEISM, and assessing the Model by these tenets. With an affirmation of these elements by the Model demonstrating that it is correctly classified as a tri-theistic model of the Trinity, rather than one that expresses "orthodox" Trinitarianism. In assessing the Model's affirmation of TRI-THEISM, the first element of the tri-theistic conception of the Trinity, which was captured by (ii) of the statement was the following:

- (a) there are three particular substances within the Trinity

The key terms "particular substances" were further taken to refer to "Aristotelian substances" and thus the first element of (ii) of TRI-THEISM, posited that

- (a*) there are three Aristotelian substances within the Trinity.

In elucidating the nature of these three Aristotelian substances, an account developed by Joshua Hoffman and Gary S. Rosenkrantz was utilised, which was termed the Category Account. Applying the Category Account's conception of an Aristotelian substance, to the task at hand, led to the first element of (ii) of Tri-Theism, being further re-construed as such:

- (a') there are three categorially-independent particular objects within the Trinity

The Model was taken to have disaffirmed (a') through the postulation of the following:

- (a'') there is one categorially-independent particular object, that of the Trinity.

The Model thus should not be taken to postulate the existence of three particular (Aristotelian) substances within the Trinity, as stated by TRI-THEISM (ii), and thus is not correctly characterised as a tri-theistic conception of the Trinity on this specific point.

Interestingly, however, we can also reach this above conclusion through assuming a different account and conception of the nature of an Aristotelian substance that is prevalent within the contemporary metaphysics literature. This account, which is also taken to be an ontological independence account of substance, has been deemed a "strong" ontological independence account of substance, with the account featured in the main text thus being a weak independence account (Hoffman and Rosenkrantz, 1997). The former account, being termed "strong" due to the ontological independence criterion being applicable at the individual level, whilst the latter is weaker due to the ontological independence criterion, as we have seen, applying at the categorial level. Thus, as depicted here, we have two (ontological independence) accounts of the nature of a particular (Aristotelian) substance:

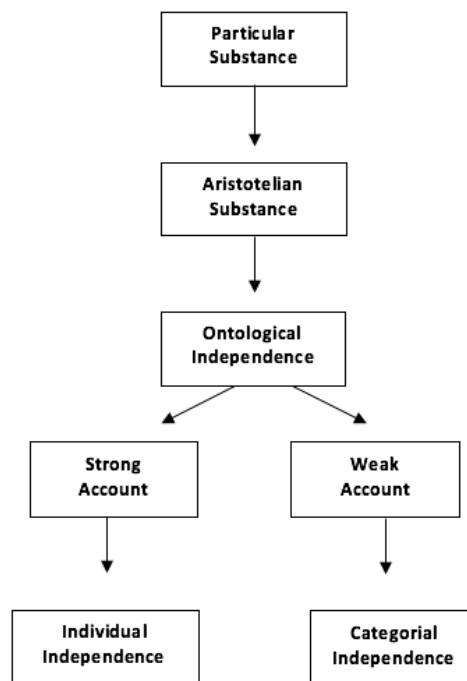


Figure 5.1 Two Aristotelian Accounts

I will now detail the second, that is “strong”, account and apply it, as before, in turn, to the issue at hand.

A.1.2 The Identity Account: Central Features

Jonathan Lowe (1998) and (2005) provides an analysis of the nature a substance, centred around the notion of ontological independence, and which can be termed an Identity-Independence Account (hereafter, Identity Account). Central to this account of substance is the dependence relation of identity-dependence. Identity-dependence, which previously featured

in the main text, centres around that of the identity of an entity *x* depending on the identity of another entity *y*. Where to say that *x* depends for its identity upon *y*, is to say that *which* thing of its kind *y* is *fixes*, that is metaphysically determines, which thing of its *kind* *x* is (Lowe, 1998).

Applying this now to the notion of substance, an entity is a substance if it is an ontologically *identity-independent* particular object, in the sense that it is firstly a particular object, as defined previously as a non-instantiable, countable property bearer, with determinate existence and identity conditions. Secondly, that it is not part of the essence of this particular object that there is a distinct (i.e. non-identical) entity that it is in a functional relation to, in the sense that this entity fixes the identity of this particular object.

More fully, a particular object is an ontologically identity-independent entity, and thus a substance, only when *which* entity that particular object is, is not fixed by that particular object's relationship to any other entity. That is, for that particular object to qualify as a substance, it must be the case that the particular object does not possess their synchronic identity (i.e. individuation), based on a relationship that they have to any other entity that is numerically distinct from them (Koslicki, 2013). In other words, there is no synchronic criterion of identity (i.e. a principle of individuation), appealing to any numerically distinct entity, that can be provided for a particular object that is a successful substance candidate. Rather, that object being the very entity that they are, at each time at which they exist, is simply to be taken as a non-derivative fact about that entity (Koslicki, 2013).

Taking this all into account, the Identity Account thus defines a substance as the following:

(SUB*) *x* is a substance if and only if *x* is (i) a particular and there is no particular *y* such that *y* is not identical to *x* and (ii) the identity of *x* depends on the identity of *y*.

As with (SUB), featured in the main text, this is also a clear and helpful construal of the nature of substance that will serve us well in assessing the substantiality of the divine persons within a Tri-Theistic context. Now onto an application of this within that context.

A.1.3 The Identity Account: Trinitarian Analysis

The alternative conception of the nature of an Aristotelian substance, provided by the Identity Account, enables us to re-construe (A) in the following way:

(a'1) there are three ontologically identity-independent particular objects within the Trinity.

Within the Identity Account, the notion of an ontologically identity-independent particular object is determined by conditions (i) – (ii) (SUB*). We can now also assess, in turn, the conception of the persons of the Trinity, firstly expressed from the Tri-Theistic perspective and secondly from the Model's perspective. Which will allow us to assess whether the latter does, in fact, posit the existence of three Aristotelian substances, in the specific sense in question.

For condition (i) within Tri-Theism, we see that the Trinitarian persons; the Father, the Son and the Spirit, are each a particular object. This is due, firstly, to each of them being a property bearer (i.e. each exemplifying the property (attribute) of divinity). Secondly, each possessing the following determinate existence and identity conditions. Which, for the Tri-Theistic conception of the Trinitarian persons, these conditions could plausibly be construed as such:

- (i) the Father exists, and is distinctly identifiable, as an *individually existing uncaused divine person*,
- (ii) the Son exists, and is distinctly identifiable, as another *individually existing uncaused divine person*,
- (iii) the Spirit exists, and is distinctly identifiable, as another *individually existing uncaused divine person*.²¹⁸

The Father, the Son and the Spirit are particular objects, that is, within Tri-Theism, there are particular objects.

Now, for condition (ii), within Tri-Theism, it is not part of the essence of each of the Trinitarian persons that there is a distinct (i.e. non-identical) entity that they are each in a functional relation with, that is in which *their* identity depends upon the identity of *that* entity. Which is to say that there is no synchronic criterion of identity (i.e. a principle of individuation), that appeals to any numerically distinct entity, which can be provided for each of the Trinitarian

²¹⁸ These conditions are equivalent to the real definitions featured in Chapter 2.

persons. There is no functional relationship, between each of the Trinitarian persons, and any other entity, such that it individually “fixes” *which* entity of their kind (i.e. deity) each of the divine persons are (that is it fixing the identity of the Trinitarian persons).

Thus, within this framework, the three divine persons each lack any *external* individuator that makes them distinct from others, and the very entities that they are, as opposed to any other. Instead, the Father, the Son and the Spirit being the very entities that they are, at each time at which they exist, is simply to be taken as a non-derivative fact about each of them. The Trinitarian persons are thus each an identity-independent particular object. That is, they are substances, in accord with the definition of (SUB*).

Now, turning to the Model we also see that the Trinitarian persons; the Father, the Son and the Spirit, are each a particular object. This is due, firstly, again, to each of them being a property bearer (i.e. each exemplifying the property (attribute) of divinity). Secondly, each possessing the following determinate existence and identity conditions. Where within the Model, these conditions could also plausibly be construed as such:

- (i*) the Father being exists, and is distinctly identifiable, as the uncaused cause of the Son and the Spirit,
- (ii*) the Son exists, and is distinctly identifiable, as the caused divine person that is the (direct) co-cause of the Spirit
- (iii*) the Spirit exists, and is distinctly identifiable, as the divine person co-caused by the Father and the Son.²¹⁹

The Father, the Son and the Spirit are thus also within the Model, particular objects, that is, there are three particular objects.

For, condition (ii), however, we see a divergence between Tri-Theism and the Model, as, even though the Trinitarian persons are each a particular object, under both conceptions, within the Model, we see that Persons' identities *do* in fact depend upon the identity of other entities. That is, specifically within the Model, the Father, the Son and the Spirit are each an identity-*dependent* particular object, in that *which* things of its kind this individuating entity *fixes* (i.e. metaphysically determines) *which* thing of their kind that the Father, the Son and the Spirit each are. Now, the question is, however, what entities might play this role? Plausibly we can

²¹⁹ These conditions are also equivalent to the real definitions and identity conditions featured in Chapter 2.

locate these entities within the Trinity itself. That is there is a reciprocal or mutual identity-dependence amongst the Trinitarian persons, in that they are each identity-dependent *upon each other*. We can thus construe this identity-dependence, as was done in the main text, as such:

- (i) The identities of the Son and the Spirit *fix* (metaphysically determine) the identity of the Father,
- (ii) The identities of the Father and the Spirit *fix* (metaphysically determine) the identity of the Son and
- (iii) The identities of the Father and the Son each partially *fix* (metaphysically determine) the identity of the Spirit.

For (i), the Model postulates that the Father is in a functional relationship with the Son and the Spirit. As noted in the main text, the identity conditions of the Father centre around him being:

- (a) the uncaused divine person,
- (b) the cause of the Son (i.e. the divine person caused to exist by the uncaused divine person acting alone) and
- (c) the (indirect) active co-cause of the Spirit (i.e. the divine person caused to exist by the uncaused divine person acting through the divine person caused to exist by the uncaused divine person acting alone.²²⁰

The identity of the Son and the Spirit (i.e. what the Son and the Spirit *are*), each partly fix the Father's identity (i.e. Son and the Spirit each partly being individuators of the Father).²²¹ More fully, the Son and the Spirit are in some relation such that they, and only they, have that relation to the Father, which is that of both of them being divine persons actively caused to exist by the Father. Thus, within this relationship, the identity of the Son and the identity of the Spirit each (partly) fix the identity of the Father.

Which entities of their kinds the Son and the Spirit are (partly) metaphysically determines which entity of his kind the Father is, that is, a particular divine object that (inevitably) causes two other divine particular objects; the Son and the Spirit.²²² The synchronic identity (and

²²⁰ I state here that the Father is the indirect cause of the Spirit, in order to keep in play the notion of the filioque, without further detailing the nature of it (e.g. the Father being the co-cause with the Son).

²²¹ This, and the following, were featured in the main text. However, it will be helpful now to revisit this and further elucidate how the Son and the Spirit are identity-dependent entities as well, which, for brevity, was not explained in the main text.

²²² The Father's identity would also include him being divine. However, this is not fixed by his relationship to the other Persons but has this quality in and of himself. In this case, it would thus be more accurate to say that the Trinity "partially" fixes the identity of the Father.

existence) conditions of the Father are determined by the Son and the Spirit, who are the individuators of the Father.

Now, for (ii), the Model postulates that the Son is in a functional relationship with the Father and the Spirit. As noted in the main text, the identity conditions of the Son centre around him being:

- (d) the divine person caused to exist by the Father (i.e. the uncaused divine person) acting alone and
- (e) the (direct) active co-cause of the Spirit (i.e. the divine person caused to exist by the uncaused divine person acting through the divine person caused to exist by the uncaused divine person acting alone). ²²³

The identity of the Father and the Spirit (i.e. what the Father and the Spirit *are*), each partly fix the Son's identity (i.e. Father and the Spirit each partly being individuators of the Father). More fully, the Father and the Spirit are in some relation such that they, and only they, have that relation to the Son, which is that of, for the Father being the *sole* cause (source) of the Son's existence, and, for the Spirit, being the divine person actively co-caused to exist by the Son. Thus, within this relationship, the identity of the Father, and the identity of the Spirit, each partly fix (i.e. partly metaphysically determine) the identity of the Son.

Which entities of their kinds the Father and the Spirit are (partly) metaphysically determines which entity of his kind the Son is, that of, on the one hand, being a particular divine object that is caused by another particular divine object; the Father, and, on the other hand, being a particular divine object that co-causes another particular divine object; the Spirit. The synchronic identity (and existence) conditions of the Son are determined by the Father and the Spirit, who are the individuators of the Son.

Lastly, for (iii), the Model postulates that the Spirit is in a functional relationship with the Father and the Son. Again, as noted in the main text, the identity conditions of the Spirit centre around him being:

²²³ I state here that the Son is a co-cause of the Spirit, however, to not privilege any interpretation of the filioque, this co-causality is not to be interpreted as cooperation, but solely as indicating some form of involvement in the causation of the Father.

- (f) the divine person (indirectly) actively co-caused to exist by the Father (i.e. the uncaused divine person) and
- (g) the divine person (directly) active co-caused to exist by the Son (i.e. the divine person caused to exist by the uncaused divine person acting alone).

The identity of the Father and the Son (i.e. what the Father and the Son *are*), each partly fix the Spirit's identity (i.e. Father and the Son each partly being individuators of the Spirit). More fully, the Father and the Son are in some relation such that they, and only they, have that relation to the Spirit, which is that of, both being the divine persons, either directly or indirect, actively co-causing the Spirit to exist. Thus, within this relationship, the identity of the Father, and the identity of the Son, each (partly) fix the identity of the Holy.

Which entities of their kinds the Father and the Son are (partly) metaphysically determines which entity of his kind the Spirit is, that is, being a particular divine object that is actively co-caused by two particular divine objects; the Father and the Son. The synchronic identity (and existence) conditions of the Spirit are determined by the Father and the Son, who are the individuators of the Son. The Trinitarian persons are thus each identity-dependent upon each other, and are thus not substances, in accord with (SUB*).

However, within the Model, there is, in fact, an entity that *does* exist as an ontologically identity-independent particular object, and thus is a substance. This entity is that of the Trinity itself. That is, the Model posits that the Trinity is the one particular object, that does not depend for its identity upon any other entity. The identity conditions of the Trinity centre around it being:

- (h) a divine composite object that has the Father, the Son and the Spirit as "parts".

The identity of the Trinity is determined solely by itself. That is, the Trinity is not in a functional relationship with any entity within, or without it.²²⁴ No external entity fixes which entity of its kind the Trinity is, that is a particular divine object, which solely has its divinity in a derivative sense, through it having the Father, the Son and the Spirit as "parts", who

²²⁴ It's not in a functional relationship with the members of the Trinity, because they are either "proper parts" of the Trinity, as Swinburne holds to them being, or they are "improper parts" as I argued in Chapter 6. For them being. And, as Lowe (1998) and Gorman (2005) note, an entity does not have its identity set by its (proper) parts) or by itself.

are themselves, divine persons. No *external* entity “fixes” (or metaphysically determines) *which* entity of its kind the Trinity is and thus the Trinity lacks an external individuator that makes it distinct from other composite objects, and thus it being the very entity that it is. The Trinity has its identity and is what it is, in and of itself. Thus, the Model takes it to be the case that (SUB*) *does* indeed apply in one case, that is in the case of the Trinity. The Trinity is thus a substance, in accord with (SUB*).

Thus, given that the Trinitarian persons are each ontologically identity-dependent particular objects, and the Trinity is an ontologically identity *independent* particular object, it, and not they, meet the necessary and sufficient conditions of substantiality. The Model, unlike Tri-Theism, in the Strong Account, like in the Weak Account, thus does not posit three substances within the Trinity, but only one substance, that of the Trinity. There is thus a disaffirmation of (a'1) of TRI-THEISM (ii):

(a'1) there are three ontologically identity-independent particular objects within the Trinity.

And an affirmation of the following:

(a''1) there is one ontologically identity-independent particular object, that of the Trinity.

Taking this all into account, the Model as assessed according to the conditions of the "strong" account of the nature of a substance, through it postulating (a''1), rather than (a'1), it clearly disaffirms the existence of three Aristotelian substances, and thus three particular substances within the Trinity, in the "strong" sense as well. There are thus, in a "strong" and "weak" sense solely one particular (Aristotelian) substance postulated by the Model. The Model is thus still not tri-theistic on this account as well. I will now turn my attention onto demonstrating a similar disaffirmation made by the Model for an alternative conception of a particular nature as well.

Appendix Section 2: Alternative Conception of Particular Properties

A.2.1 Central Focus: Alternative Property Account

In Chapter 2, an assessment of the Model's affirmation of TRI-THEISM, the second element of the Tri-Theistic conception of the Trinity, captured by TRI-THEISM (ii), was the following:

(b) there are three particular natures within the Trinity

The key terms: "particular natures" were further taken to refer to "particular properties" and thus the second element of (ii) of TRI-THEISM, posited that

(b*) there are three particular properties within the Trinity.

In elucidating the nature of these three particular properties, an account developed by Charlie B. Martin and John Heil was utilised, which was termed the Mode Account. Applying the Mode Account's conception of a particular property, to the task at hand, led to the second element of (ii) of Tri-Theism, being further re-construed as such:

(b') there are three divinity-modes within the Trinity

Like its disaffirmation of (SUB) (and now (SUB*)), the Model was taken to have disaffirmed this through the postulation of the following:

(b'') there are no divinity-modes that characterise the Father, the Son and the Spirit, within the Trinity.

The Model thus should not be taken to postulate the existence of three particular (propertied) natures within the Trinity, as stated by TRI-THEISM (ii), and thus is not correctly characterised as a tri-theistic conception of the Trinity on this specific point as well.

However, as was noted in the previous text, there is an alternative construal of a particular property, which is prevalent within the literature, that of a trope. Tropes, which are held in contradistinction from that of a mode, is associated with a theoretical framework called: "pure trope theory" and the modes are associated with a theoretical framework termed "impure trope theory" (Koslicki, 2016). With the divide between these theories centring on the fundamentality of the bearers of these properties (pure trope theory; tropes are fundamental, impure trope theory; particular objects are fundamental) and the nature, or character, of these types of properties (pure trope theory; tropes are possibly independent, "free-floating properties", impure trope theory; modes are existentially/identity-dependent upon their bearers). Thus, we

can illustrate the two frameworks for the characterisation nature of a particular (propertied) nature as such:

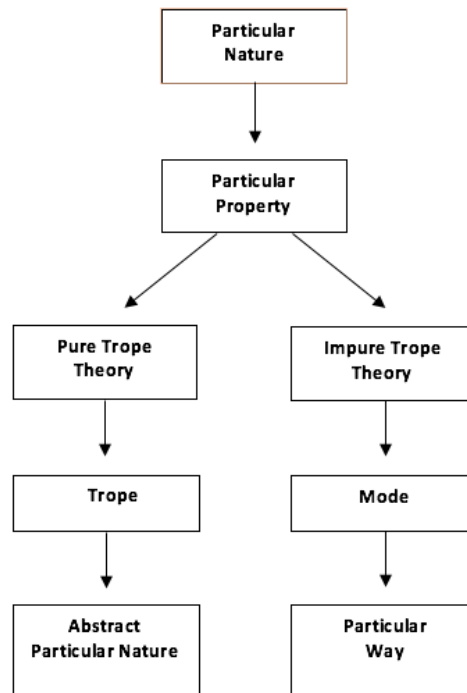


Figure 5.2 Two Property Accounts

Now, it seems to be the case that the conception of a particular property as a mode, rather than the conception of it as a trope, is, in fact, the one that is in line with Philoponus' position that posits firstly the ontological primacy of particular objects, rather than the properties that characterise, and, secondly, the impossibility of the natures within the Trinity being able to exist independently, in such a manner as to be an additional entity, alongside the Trinitarian persons.²²⁵ However, it will still be interesting to assess the Model's potential (dis)affirmation of the existence of particular properties in this sense as well.

Thus, taking into account this distinction, we can, as with (SUB*) above, also in fact reach a similar negative conclusion that was reached within the impure trope theoretical framework, through a different account and alternative conception of the character of a particular property associated with the theoretical framework of "pure trope theory". I will now further detail the character of a particular property within this framework and, after this, I will then apply this specific type to the issue at hand.

²²⁵ This primarily being the reason why this conception was featured in the main text, rather than the conception of a particular property as a trope.

A.2.2 The Trope-Account: Central Features

Pure Trope Theory, is the specific theoretical framework proposed by D.C. Williams (1953, 1986), Keith Campbell (1990), Anna Sofia-Maurin (2002, 2018) and A.R.J. Fisher (2017, 2019). In contemporary literature, this has been termed the Classical Trope Theory/Account (hereafter, Trope Account). A trope, within this perspective, is an abstract particular nature. The concept of a nature, within this theoretical framework, is taken as an unanalysable notion (i.e. a primitive) that directly applies to a given trope (Fisher, 2019). A trope is thus a (qualitative) nature, in that it does not have or possess a nature of its own, but simply *is* a nature (i.e. is identical with its nature). Given this understanding of a nature, tropes are thus taken, to be simple entities, in that they are not constituted by any other entity, that is, as noted by Maurin, tropes ‘have no constituents, in the sense that they are not “made up” or “built” from entities belonging to some other category’ (Maurin, 2018). Tropes are thus taken to be primitively qualitative, in that their qualitative nature is not further reducible.

Now, closely related to this conception of a trope as a primitive nature are two fundamental truths, that of this nature being abstract and that of this nature being particular (Fisher, 2019). That is a trope is not only a qualitative nature but is also a particular and abstract primitive nature (Fisher, 2019). Abstractness, in the general sense of the word, as Fisher notes ‘is vague, imprecise, and ambiguous, like many other words in our philosophical theories and ordinary language’ (Fisher, 2019, 4). That is there is not a single conception of the term “abstract”. However, Trope Account theorists, in disambiguating this term, focus on the original and broadest sense of the word, as Williams writes: ‘At its broadest the “true” meaning of “abstract” is *partial*, *incomplete*, or *fragmentary*, the trait of what is less than its including whole’ (Williams, 1953, 15, emphasis in text). That is a trope is abstract in the sense that it does not exhaust its content, or is, in some sense, less than its content.

This is in contrast firstly to the meaning of “concrete” which, according to Williams, is ‘if not the main thing which this means is that, however discontinuous the placetime, or “plime”, which just contains such an object, the object exhausts or is the whole content of it’ (Williams, 1986, 3). And thus, as Williams further adds, ‘abstract entities differ from concreta in that many of them can and do occupy the same plime’ (Williams, 1986, 3). Thus, for example, a shape trope, possessed by a table (such as a rectangle-trope) is abstract because it does not exhaust its content, as other tropes, such as a colour trope (such as a brown-trope) and a mass trope (such as a 5kg-trope) are also collocated with the trope by occupying same content. However, in

contrast, the table would be *concrete* by itself exhausting its content, and thus not allowing another table (or object) to also occupy this content. The table would thus be a *concrete* entity, whilst the shape of the table would be an *abstract* entity. Therefore, as Campbell (1990, 2-3) writes:

Abstract here contrasts with concrete: a concrete entity is the totality of the being to be found where our colours, or temperatures or solidities are. The pea is concrete; it monopolises its location. All the qualities to be found where the pea is are qualities of that pea. But the pea's quality instances are not themselves so exclusive. Each of them shares its place with many others.²²⁶

Thus, following Fisher (2019, 4-5), we can state this more schematically as such, for concrete entities, through (C):

(C) Entity *e* is concrete iff and because *e* exhausts the content of the region it occupies or is identical with the content of that region.

And for abstract entities, through (A):

(A) Entity *e* is abstract iff and because *e* fails to exhaust the content of the region it occupies or is merely part of the content of that region.

This definition of “abstract”, through (A), thus shows again that an entity is abstract, not because of its relation (or lack thereof) to spatio-temporal reality, but simply because it fails to exhaust the content of the region that is located (or is a part of the content of that region).

Now, for particularity, in a similar vein to the abstractness of a trope, a trope's particularity is defined in a specific way within the Trope Account. In a general setting, universals are

²²⁶ This use of the term "abstract" (and concrete) also contrasts with the prevalent understanding of the term which sees an abstract entity as something that has, for concrete entities, or lacks, for abstract entities, spatio-temporal location or causal efficacy (Fisher, 2019). Instead, abstract entities are incomplete or partial aspects of a given whole, and concrete entities are complete entities or aspects of the whole, without any assumption of spatiality/causality or the lack thereof (Fisher 2019). Thus, as Campbell further writes, focusing on abstract entities:

Abstract does not imply indefinite, or purely theoretical. Most importantly, it does not imply that what is abstract is non-spatiotemporal. The solidity of the is bell, here and now, is a definite, experienceable and locatable reality. It is so definite, experienceable and locatable and that it can knock your head off, if you are not careful (Campbell, 1990, 3).

regularly taken to be entities that can be wholly present in different location simultaneously (Macbride, 2004). And, particulars, in contrast, are taken as not being able to be wholly present in different locations simultaneously. Williams (1986), Campbell (1990), Fisher (2017) and Douglas Ehring (2011) however have proposed an alternative means of distinguishing properties as universals, from properties as particulars, through the *Identity of Indiscernibles Principle*. In proposing this view, Williams (1986, 8) writes that:

Entities determined and named in the first principle, by definition not subject to the identity of indiscernibles, are cases or particulars; entities determined in the second way, by definition subject to the identity of indiscernibles, are ‘general’ entities, that is, kinds or universals.

The central contention here is that of universals, but not particulars conforming to the Identity of Indiscernibles Principle (Ehring, 2011). That is, by not conforming to the Identity of Indiscernibles Principles particulars are thus entities, as Williams further writes, which ‘may be exactly similar and yet not only distinct but discrete’ (Williams, 1986, 3). Thus, for example, a shape-trope is particular, according to this account, because it is possible that there exists a duplicate of this shape, that is, an entity that is exactly similar, but also distinct from this shape. And this position, that a shape trope, and other tropes, are particular is a central claim of every variant of the Trope Account (Fisher, 2019). It is, as Fisher notes, ‘one of the key differences between trope theory and mainstream variants of realism about universals’ (Fisher, 2017, 156).

Thus, if a property (or a given entity) obeys the Identity of Indiscernibles principle, then it is universal. If it does not obey this principle, then it is particular (i.e. a trope). Stating this more schematically as (P), Ehring writes:

(P) x is a particular just in case it is possible that there exists a y such that x and y are non-identical but exactly similar independently of their non-intrinsic properties, and x is a universal just in case it is not possible that there exists a y such that x and y are non-identical but exactly similar independently of their non-intrinsic properties (Ehring, 2011, 35).

Therefore, for properties as universals, the principle holds, in that exactly similar entities (universals) are identical (i.e. if universal x and universal y are indiscernible, then $x = y$). Whereas for particulars (e.g. tropes) the principle does not hold, as exactly similar entities (tropes) can be distinct (i.e. if trope x and trope y are indiscernible, then $x \neq y$).

Taking this all into account, we can take a trope, to be construed as such:

(TROPE): x is a trope if and only if x is (i) abstract (ii) particular and (iii) a primitive nature.

Similar to our construal of the character of a particular property provided by (MODE), we have a helpful characterisation of a particular property as a trope, which can help us to assess the particular nature that are the divine persons within a Tri-Theistic context. Now onto another application of this within that context.

A.2.3 The Trope-Account: Trinitarian Analysis

The alternative conception of the character of a particular property, provided by the Trope Account, enables us to re-construe (b*) in the following way:

(b'1) there are three divinity-tropes within the Trinity.

Within the Trope Account, the notion of an abstract particular nature is determined by condition (i) – (iii) of (TROPE). We can now, as before, assess, in turn, the conception of the persons of the Trinity, firstly expressed from the Tri-Theistic perspective and secondly from the Model's perspective, which will allow us to assess whether the latter does, in fact, posit the existence of three particular properties, in the specific sense in question.

For condition (i) within Tri-Theism, the Father, the Son and the Spirit each possess (qualitative) natures, not in the sense that they each instantiate a nature, distinct from themselves, but simply that they *are identical* with their nature. The qualitative nature of the Father, the Son and the Spirit is a primitive, in that it is not reducible to anything outside of them. There is no nature that is distinct from each of the Persons. Each of their natures are primitively qualitative, in that they are characterised as divine by them, but this quality of each of the Persons is not further reducible.

Now, closely related to this concept of a nature, as noted above, are two fundamental truths; a nature as abstract and a nature as particular. The notion of abstractness is understood to be concerned with an entity, such as a trope, being “partial, incomplete, or fragmentary”, and with the trait of it being “less than the including whole”.

Thus, for condition (ii) the nature of the Persons is abstract in the sense that they are each less than their including whole, that is each of the Trinitarian persons. Thus, more specifically, they do not, in accord with (A), each exhaust their “content” or “plime”, or our less than their “content” or “plime”, where their content is taken to be each of the Persons as a whole, and the plime to be the location in which the Persons are each located at. As for each of the Persons, and their nature, such as for the Father for example, there is the Father’s particular divine nature and (some undefined) individuating factor, that renders that nature as the Father’s and makes him a “different species” from the other Trinitarian persons. This individuating factor is exactly located where the Father’s nature is. That is the Father, the Son and the Spirit’s particular natures are each collocated with each of their individuating factors by occupying the same content; that of the Persons. They are thus abstract entities.²²⁷

Lastly, for condition (iii), the notion of particularity, a given entity, nature in our case, is particular simply, in accord with (P), due to it failing to abide by the identity of indiscernibles principle, and thus permitting the possibility of the existence of an entity (i.e. a duplicate) that is exactly similar, in its intrinsic properties (i.e. its nature) to the first entity, yet is not identical to it. With a universal being the denial of this (i.e. an entity abiding by the Identity of Indiscernibles Principle, and thus not permitting a duplicate of the given entity).

Now, clearly within Tri-Theism, the Father, the Son and the Spirit's natures are not a universal, in that for each of their natures, the principle of identity of indiscernibles does not hold, as for each of the natures of the Persons, there is a duplicate entity. That is, the natures of the Persons are exactly similar to each other (i.e. each of the persons possessing a *divine* nature) but is distinct, that is the Father’s nature \neq the Son’s nature, the Son’s nature \neq Spirit’s nature and the Father’s nature \neq the Spirit’s nature. Thus, according to this construal of particularity the Father, the Son and the Spirit’s natures are particular entities. Thus, in Tri-Theism, we have the case that:

- (i) The Father possesses a divinity-trope (i.e. an abstract particular nature)

²²⁷ The individuating factor here is left undefined as Ascoutzanges and Philoponus do not specify the ontological nature that underpins the view, as noted in the main text, that the Persons are “completely different in species from the rest”. Thus, as was stated in the main text, Philoponus writes that “Likewise, when “rational” or “irrational” is added to “animal” (which is used generally of all the animals of different species), this makes them different in species, namely rational animal and irrational animal. In the same way, when “Father, “Son” or “Spirit” is added to the godhead, this makes God the Father different from God the Son or the divine Spirit. Thus each of them is different from God the Son or the divine Spirit. Thus each of them in different from the two others related to him”.

- (ii) The Son possesses a divinity-trope (i.e. an abstract particular nature)
- (iii) The Spirit possesses a divinity-trope (i.e. an abstract particular nature)

That is, within Tri-Theism, the Father, the Son and the Spirit each possess a divinity-trope (i.e. a divine abstract particular nature); thus there being three divinity-tropes within the Trinity.

Turning now to the Model, we see that the Model diverges from the Tri-Theistic Model from the start. The Model takes it to be the case, like Tri-Theism, in accord with (A), that the Trinitarian persons' nature is abstract. That is, like Tri-Theism, their divine nature is less than their including whole; that of each of the Persons and their individuating factor (i.e. their relational properties) that is exactly located where that nature is. Thus, the Model affirming (ii) of (TROPE), however where the problems are located is concerning (i) and (iii) of the statement. For condition (i), the Father, the Son and the Spirit are not primitively characterized through possessing (qualitative) natures, but instead possess a distinct nature. That is, more specifically, they each instantiate (or exemplify) a nature that is distinct from them, which is that of the one divine nature. Within the Model, they are not identical to this nature, and thus it is not to be taken as a primitive, as their qualitative natures can be further reducible to that of the divine nature. The Trinitarian persons do not possess primitive natures.

And for (iii) of (TROPE), the Father, the Son and the Spirit are not particular in the required sense, namely, the sense found in (P). As, within the Model, their nature, that is the one divine nature (i.e. the divinity-attribute), does, in fact, abide by the identity of indiscernibles principle. That is, there can exist an entity (i.e. a nature) that is exactly similar to one possessed by one of the Trinitarian persons (e.g. the Father's nature), and it would be identical to it (e.g. the Son's nature being identical to the Father's). There is thus no permittance of a duplicate of natures within the Model. The Persons' natures are thus not particular natures, but rather, as was explained in Chapter 5, is a shared nature, that is a numerically singular universal. The Model, unlike Tri-Theism, in the Trope Account, like in the Mode Account, thus does not posit three particular natures within the Trinity, but rather disaffirms the existence of any type of particular property within the Trinity. There is thus a disaffirmation of (b'1) of TRI-THEISM (ii):

(b'1) there are three divinity-tropes within the Trinity.

And instead an affirmation of the following:

(b''₁) there are no divinity-tropes that are possessed by the Father, the Son and the Spirit, within the Trinity.

Taking this all into account, the Model assessed according to the conditions of the "impure" trope account of the character of a particular property, through postulating (b''₁), rather than (b'₁), disaffirms the existence of three particular properties, and thus three particular natures within the Trinity, in this alternative sense as well. There are thus, in a "mode" conception and "trope" conception, no particular (propertied) natures postulated by the Model. The Model is thus still not tri-theistic on this account as with all the accounts that tri-theism has been interpreted through in this thesis.

Appendix Conclusion

In conclusion, as with its disaffirmation of the existence of three Aristotelian Substances, construed in a "weak", or "categorical" sense, the Model also disaffirms the existence of a plurality of substances in the alternative "strong", or "individual" sense as well. Furthermore, as with the Model's disaffirmation of the existence of three particular (propertied) natures, construed in a "mode" sense, the Model also disaffirms the existence of a plurality of particular natures construed in the alternative sense of a "trope" as well. The Model is thus not tri-theistic in any relevant sense of the word.

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