Georgian Christian Thought and Its Cultural Context

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CONTENTS

PART THREE
IOANE PETRITSI AND HIS TIME

PART FOUR
SHOTA RUSTAVELI AND GEORGIAN CULTURE

THE PHILOSOPHY OF DIONYSIUS THE AREOPAGITE
An Approach to Intensional Semantics[1]

Basil Lourié

Introduction

Reading Dionysius as Philosopher

It is difficult to find a study published in the field of medieval philosophy that would ignore Dionysius the Areopagite. Yet that author's own philosophical ideas were analyzed, first and foremost, with a view to their background in ancient Greek philosophy. That earliest analytical approach has conditioned the focus of later research: the more Dionysius' work became known for its relevance in the context of the Neoplatonic tradition, the more this aspect of his works was and is studied, at the expense of other, specifically Christian, philosophical contexts. These latter contexts have not fared well. What I consider to be the most important philosophical themes for Dionysius, those that were necessary for him in formulating his Christian doctrine, have been studied only superficially. The study of any such themes, moreover, has been limited, for the most part, to finding parallels in Greek philosophy, rather than analyzing these themes in their proper philosophical and logical context. This article therefore attempts to reverse the priorities and suggests a study, first of all, of the logical and philosophical ideas of Dionysius *per se*, without searching for their possible Greek background in those cases for which this is not already known.

A much more important and broader consideration, moreover, serves as a foundation for this study as well: to inscribe Dionysius not only in the remote past of the history of philosophy, but in present-day philosophy as well. One cannot help but note the striking similarities and often the iden-

[1] The article was written with the support of the Russian Foundation for Basic Research, project Nr 13-06-00832A, "Description of the logic of natural language as a system of modal operators." I prefer to call this author by the name he himself would have used, without the prefix "pseudo-." In my opinion, the core of the *Corpus Areopagiticum* was produced by Peter the Iberian in the 460s, and the current pseudonymised version by the Palestinian monastics close to Peter the Iberian shortly after his death in 491, *ca* 500. See B. Lourié, "Peter the Iberian and Dionysius the Areopagite: Honigmann—van Esbroeck's Thesis Revisited," *Scrinium* 6 (2010): 143–212, where I try to prove the hypothesis put forward for the first time in 1942 by Shalva Nutsubidze.

tity of the problems Dionysius discussed with the most disputed topics of current philosophy, and especially the philosophy of language and non-classical logics.[2] It became customary, and rightly so, to trace these problems back to Leibniz, whose ideas were rescued from oblivion in the early twentieth century and, at least in part, remain fresh and even fruitful to the present day.[3] However, Leibniz's own scholarly intuition was fed in part by the Scholastic tradition and in part by the contemporary German so-called mystical tradition.[4] Both traditions were able to transmit at least some waves from the explosive appearance of the *Corpus Areopagiticum* in about 500 CE. I think that scholarly studies of Dionysius' thought could support contemporary philosophy and logics in the same manner as the studies of Leibniz did. Furthermore, as philosophers and logicians, Leibniz and Dionysius share important approaches, despite their differences in theology.[5]

An overview of the *Corpus Areopagiticum* allows one to discern at least four main philosophical knots of the Areopagite's thought:

1. "Divine names," that is, a theory of meaning: this is a classical problem of analytical philosophy but applied to relations between the created world and God.

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[2] However, the first modern philosophical traditions showing real interest in Dionysius were phenomenological and postmodernist ones, which, in turn, were following along the lines of their German precursors, especially Schelling. Cf. J. Zachhuber, "Jean-Luc Marion's Reading of Dionysius the Areopagite. Hermeneutics and Reception History," in *Reading Forwards and Reading Backwards. Conversations about Reading the Church Fathers*, ed. M. Ludlow and S. Douglass (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2011), 3–22. Their attention was focused on the negative theology, often extirpated from context (most recently, of course, in contrast and in parallel with Derrida's ideas of "deconstruction"). These approaches would hardly show an interest in Dionysius' very sophisticated theory of meaning as a whole, which would be of primary interest for analytical philosophers.

[3] I mean, first of all, Leibniz's ideas on intensionality; cf. B. Lourié, "*Intensio:* Leibniz in Creating a New Term for the Modal Logic," *Studia Humana* 1:3/4 (2012): 59–65. However, for Leibniz's impetus to modern logic in general through the second wave of Leibniz's influence in the 19th cent., s., most recently, V. Peckhaus, "The Reception of Leibniz's Logic in 19th Century German Philosophy," in *New Essays in Leibniz Reception: In Science and Philosophy of Science 1800–2000*, ed. R. Krömer and Y.-C. Drian (Basel: Springer Basel AG, 2012), 13–24; the paper partially covers Leibniz's reception in England, too.

[4] Cf. S. Edel, "Métaphysique des idées et mystique des lettres: Leibniz, Böhme et la Kabbale prophéthique," *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 213 (1996): 443–466 (with previous bibliography).

[5] S., for more details, B. Lourié, "Philosophy of Dionysius the Areopagite. Modal Ontology," in *Logic in Orthodox Christian Thinking*, ed. A. Schumann (Heusenstamm bei Frankfurt: Ontos-Verlag, 2013), 230–257 [hereafter Lourié, "Modal Ontology"].

2. The logic of the created being: the Areopagite understands this in a modal way, but as a quite specific system of modal logic.[6]
3. Paraconsistent logic of the divine being.[7]
4. Paraconsistent epistemic logic: a *docta ignorantia* doctrine, which is probably even more radical than that of Nicholas of Cusa.[8] Dionysius' epistemic doctrine is indivisible from his doctrine of divine being to such an extent that both form a unique doctrine of God.

These four main "blocks" certainly do not exhaust the philosophical contents of the *Corpus* but they represent the philosophical "skeleton" of the Areopagite's thought. Regardless of other preoccupations Dionysius may have had, both theological and liturgical, his philosophy was one of the main *raisons d'être* of the *Corpus* as a whole and the main topic of *De divinis nominibus* and *De mystica theologia*.

Theory of Meaning, or Dionysius' Analytical Philosophy

The Areopagite's theory of meaning shall be the initial focus of this investigation. Given the central place of the concept of "divine names" within

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[6] Lourié, "Modal Ontology."

[7] As a pioneering study of paraconsistent logic in both Eastern patristics and the Orthodox tradition in general and Dionysius in particular, see M. C. Rhodes, "On Contradiction in Orthodox Philosophy," in *Logic in Orthodox Christian Thinking*, ed. Schumann, 82–103, s., on Dionysius, p. 92. This paper, however, does not distinguish between the two types of paraconsistent logic, namely, based on either contrary or contradictory propositions.

[8] Usually, the modern historiography of paraconsistent logics jumps from Plato and his epoch directly to Nicholas of Cusa, ignoring the fact that Cusanus was an assiduous reader of the Areopagite. See especially G. Priest, *Beyond the Limits of Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995), 23–24; cf. Priest's sketch on the history of paraconsistent logic in: G. Priest, R. Routley, J. Norman, and A. I. Arruda, *Paraconsistent Logic: Essays on the Inconsistent* (Munich: Philosophia Verlag, 1989), 20–21. There are certainly some parallels here, in the "logic of divine being," between the Areopagite and at least some Neoplatonic non-Christian philosophers, but even their works have still not been studied properly by historians of non-classical logics. For the difference between the truly paraconsistent logic of Dionysius and the avoidance of paraconsistency by Dionysius' direct predecessor, Proclus, s., first of all, a very valuable study by C. Steel, "Beyond the Principle of Contradiction? Proclus' 'Parmenides' and the Origin of the Negative Theology," in *Die Logik des Transzendentalen. Festschrift für Jan A. Aertsen zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. M. Peckavé, Miscellanea mediaevalia 30 (Berlin/New York: W. de Gruyter, 2003), 581–599, although the author does not use the term "paraconsistency" nor does he take into account the modern logical literature. Steel elaborates as well on the misunderstanding of the Areopagite's paraconsistency by the Scholastics, especially in the *Commentary* to the *Corpus Dionysiacum* by Albert the Great, and the correction of this scholastic approach to Dionysius by Nicholas of Cusa.

Dionysius' system as a whole, it is clear that, in his philosophy, the theory of meaning functioned as a pillar. One can probably say that, in this respect, Dionysius the Areopagite is an analytical philosopher.[9] It is impossible to give a formal definition of what analytical philosophy is. It is, nevertheless, clear that, at the very least, it is a philosophy that takes natural language very seriously. There is, moreover, a peculiar way to define what "analytical philosophy" means: a philosophy that discusses the topics dealt with by Wittgenstein in his *Tractatus logico-philosophicus*. These two explanations are sufficient to define the philosophy of Dionysius the Areopagite as an analytical one, at least with respect to the theory of meaning—although quite opposite to that in Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*.[10]

Indeed, Wittgenstein concluded his *Tractatus* with the sentence "Wovon man nicht sprechen kann, darüber muß man schweigen" (7). In contrast to this, the Areopagite developed a doctrine of two ways of speaking about what is "unspeakable" (ἄρρητον)—cataphatic and apophatic—although both of these ways lead to a "mystical theology" which is beyond words and which was identified with ἡσυχία ("silence") in the subsequent patristic

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[9] To my knowledge, the first paper dealing with Dionysius as, so to speak, an analytical philosopher is that by T. D. Knepper, "Techniques and Rules of Ineffability in the Dionysian Corpus," in *Logic in Orthodox Christian Thinking*, ed. Schumann, 122–172. I was able to consult it only after its publication, when the present paper was already finished. However, I will deal with its main points below (n. 56). It must be stated now that, in his general approach to Dionysius, the author misses all aspects of paraconsistency, and so his Dionysius is, in fact, the Dionysius of Western Scholasticism. Cf.: "Dionysian Rule of Reference: God is properly identified as that which cannot be identified by *anything* of being (i.e., the properties sourced by the divine names themselves), but possesses of everything of being in *hyper*-being preeminence (i.e., precontains the properties sourced by the divine names themselves)"; then there follows a strictly analogous "Dionysian Rule of Predication" (*ibid.*, p. 139). Knepper fails to acknowledge that, in "the non-Scholastic Areopagite," every "*hyper*-being" means also "not being at all," and so any kind of Anselmian "ontological argument" would be inapplicable to the God of Dionysius. Knepper elaborates on his understanding of Dionysius' apophatism in T. D. Knepper, "Not Not: The Method and Logic in Dionysian Negation," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 82 (2008): 619–637, where his main point is that "It is not the case that Dionysius's negation of predicate terms should be read propositionally, that is to say, as *It is not the case that God is p*. Rather, when interpreted apophatically, Dionysius's *not-p* signifies *more-p-than-most-p*." This is exactly what Knepper's suppression of paraconsistency means. In paraconsistent terms, one should say that Dionysian *God is p* and *God is not-p* are together actually true.

[10] I quote according to the electronic edition: L. Wittgenstein, *Tractatus logico-philosophicus. Logisch-philosophische Abhandlung*, Side-by-side-by-side edition, version 0.27 (January 30, 2012). <http://people.umass.edu/phil335-klement–2/tlp/tlp.html#bodytext> (5 April 2012), which is based on: L. Wittgenstein, *Tractatus logico-philosophicus*, German text with an English translation *en regard* by C. K. Ogden (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1922), and idem, English tr. by David Pears and Brian McGuinness (London: Routledge, 1961).

tradition.[11] Wittgenstein insisted that "Wie die Welt ist, ist für das Höhere vollkommen gleichgültig. Gott offenbart sich nicht in der Welt" (6.432). The Areopagite, however, expanded the picture of created hierarchies transmitting the divine revelation which is God himself. Finally, the famous opening phrase of the *Tractatus*, "Die Welt ist alles, was der Fall ist" (1) (Pears/McGuinness' tr.: "The world is all that is the case"), if transposed into the Areopagite's system, would read: "The divine names are all that is the case" (providing that evil could not be treated *per se* as "the case"). Thus, a philosophy of the created being as a universe of "divine names" certainly has some relevance for modern analytical philosophy.

Dionysius' theory of meaning is not less elaborated—and, oddly enough, much less studied—than its predecessor in patristics, the theory developed by the Cappadocian Fathers against Eunomius in the second half of the fourth century.[12] I will take advantage of this by constructing a part of my analysis of Dionysius as a comparison with the theory of Basil of Caesarea.

Normally, the philosophy of the Areopagite is studied in a historical and comparative way, against its Neoplatonic background.[13] This is a necessary stage of investigation, but it has the potential to overshadow the more formal contents of the Areopagite's thought. Indeed, Dionysius was, not only but also, a poet, in the broadest sense of the word, and, more narrowly, a poet belonging, most probably, to a given and known literary network that centred around Nonnus Panapolitanus.[14] Notwithstanding his poetic

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[11] Thus, I share with Carlos Steel ("Beyond the Principle of Contradiction?," 599) his disgust with "the later speculative dialectic of German idealism," which drew its inspiration from Cusanus, and so, indirectly, from Dionysius, without, of course, partaking in Cusanus' real anti-speculative philosophical programme. Moreover, I agree with Steel that now, after disappointment with the German idealist tradition, one has become ready to appreciate much better, "in a Wittgensteinian mode," what it means "to remain silent about what cannot be said." However, my own point is that Dionysius' silence is not "in a Wittgensteinian mode" but rather in a quite opposite one. Dionysius' silence is prepared and preconditioned by a kind of successful "speaking of" (or, more precisely, "naming of") God, and therefore Dionysius' silence as the end point of a real way of naming the Unnamed is on the opposite side of the Wittgensteinian silence as an expression of agnosticism.

[12] There is a first attempt at such a study in R. Mortley, *From Word to Silence*, II: *The Way of Negation, Christian and Greek*, Theophaneia 31 (Bonn: Hanstein, 1986), 221–241 (Ch. XII: Pseudo-Dionysius: a positive view of language and the *via negativa*), but the author is familiar only with the Neoplatonic context without going deeper into the internal problems of patristics.

[13] As a recent example of such an approach I would recommend C. Schäfer, *Philosophy of Dionysius the Areopagite. An Introduction to the Structure and the Content of the Treatise* On the Divine Names, Philosophia Antiqua 99 (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2006).

[14] First observed by Sergei Averintsev: С. Аверинцев, *Поэтика ранневизантийской литературы* [*Poètika rannevizantijskoj literatury* (*Poetics of Early Byzantine Literature*)]

activities, Dionysius' philosophical method itself is very strict and formal, as I hope to demonstrate below. His highly poetic wording envelops contents that may be converted into formulas—in the same way as, for example, the contents of Aristotle's *Analytics*.

There is a specific reason to include a paper on the philosophical contents of the *Corpus Areopagiticum* in a volume dedicated to the memory of Shalva Nutsubidze. My own personal admiration for the scholarly intuition of Nutsubidze, who recognized Peter the Iberian in Dionysius the Areopagite, was not the decisive reason for this inclusion. My main reasons derive from the field of Nutsubidze's purely philosophical interests, which, I believe, led him to Dionysius. In his doctrine of "alethology," or "alethological realism," Nutsubidze proposed a theory of truth and knowledge in which the distinction between the subject and the object of knowledge loses its meaning because knowledge has nothing to do with psychology, and truth has priority over existence. The Areopagitic roots of such concepts are clear to anyone who is familiar with Dionysius' thought. Therefore, I offer the following introduction with the modest hope that some of the philosophical themes of the Areopagite will contribute to stimulating further scholarly interest in the philosophical ideas of Shalva Nutsubidze.

1. *"Harmonization": A Way of Signification*

The world which is distinct from God but in which God is present everywhere and in everything becomes a world of signs. In the Areopagite's terminology, it is a world of divine names. Everything is a name of God. Indeed, such a worldview fits with the Neoplatonic line of thought. As has aptly been observed, for "Dionysius… as for Plotinus and Proclus, the whole of reality, all that is, is theophany, the manifestation or appearance of God."[15] However, in Dionysius, such a theophany becomes the ontological background of his doctrine of naming.

God is anonymous because he is above any name but, nevertheless, the multiple divine names are his own. Dionysius introduces the very notion

(Moscow: Nauka, 1977), 137–140 [the monograph is available in several reprints and in an Italian translation: S. S. Averincev, *L'anima e lo specchio: l'universo della poetica bizantina*, tr. G. Ghini, Collezione di testi e di studi (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1988)]. See, for futher details, Lourié, "Peter the Iberian," 172–180.

[15] E. D. Perl, *Theophany. The Neo-Platonic Philosophy of Dionysius the Areopagite*, SUNY series in ancient Greek philosophy (New York: SUNY Press, 2007), 32.

of divine name with an explanation of this apparent paradox.[16] His key notion here is "harmonization" (ἐφαρμονία, ἐναρμονία and other derivates of the same root). It is defined in the introductory chapter of his treatise on the divine names:[17]

> Οὕτως οὖν τῇ πάντων αἰτίᾳ καὶ ὑπὲρ πάντα οὔσῃ καὶ τὸ ἀνώνυμον *ἐφαρμόσει* καὶ πάντα τὰ τῶν ὄντων ὀνόματα <…> Οὐ γὰρ συνοχῆς ἢ ζωῆς ἢ τελειώσεως αἰτία μόνον ἐστίν, ἵνα ἀπὸ μόνης ταύτης ἢ τῆς ἑτέρας προνοίας ἡ ὑπερώνυμος ἀγαθότης ὀνομασθείη. Πάντα δὲ ἁπλῶς καὶ ἀπεριορίστως ἐν ἑαυτῇ τὰ ὄντα προείληφε ταῖς παντελέσι τῆς μιᾶς αὐτῆς καὶ παναιτίου προνοίας ἀγαθότησι καὶ ἐκ τῶν ὄντων ἁπάντων *ἐναρμονίως* ὑμνεῖται καὶ ὀνομάζεται (*DN* 1:7, 596 C-597A).[18]

Thus, all the names of the created beings are "harmonized" with the Above-Any-Name (ὑπερώνυμος) Cause of everything by the "Nameless Goodness" of Providence, by whom, as we know from Dionysius, the whole created world was created, is preserved in existence, and, eventually, is to be led to the completeness of deification. This is why God is simultaneously without any name and anonymous, and to be hymned with many names (πολυώνυμως, *DN* 1:6, 596AB) and even with any name:

> <…> οἱ θεολόγοι καὶ ὡς ἀνώνυμον αὐτὴν ὑμνοῦσι καὶ ἐκ παντὸς ὀνόματος (*DN* 1:6, 596A).[19]

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[16] On the Neoplatonic background of this concept of Dionysius, especially Proclus' interpretation of Plato's *Parm.* 142 a 3–6, see R. M. van der Berg, *Proclus' Commentary on the Cratylus in Context. Ancient Theories of Language and Naming*, Philosophia Antiqua 112 (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2008), 216–217. Cf. also E. Corsini, *Il trattato "De Divinis nominibus" dello Pseudo-Dionigi e i commenti Neo-Platonici al Parmenide*, Università di Torino. Pubblicazioni della Facoltà di lettere e filosofia 13.4 (Torino: G. Giappichelli, 1962), 104 *et passim*.

[17] The texts of the *Corpus Areopagiticum* will be quoted according to the critical editions: B. R. Suchla, *Corpus Dionysiacum I*, PTS 33 (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1990) (for *De divinis nominibus* = *DN*) and G. Heil and A. M. Ritter, *Corpus Dionysiacum II*, PTS 36 (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1991) (for *De mystica theologia* = *MT* and *Epistles*), but the references will be given within the text as following: abbreviated title (*DN*, *MT*), chapter, paragraph, column, and part of column (from A to D) in *PG* 3. English translation according to C. E. Rolt, *Dionysius the Areopagite: On the Divine Names and the Mystical Theology* (London: SPCK, 1920); electronic edition at <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/rolt/dionysius.html>. This translation is not literal enough for scholarly purposes, and so will be quoted below only for facilitating the reading of the Greek text. The translations given without reference to Rolt are my own.

[18] Rolt's translation is here somewhat vague: "Thus, then, the Universal and Transcendent Cause must both be nameless and also possess the names of all things <…>. For the Nameless Goodness is not only the cause of cohesion or life or perfection in such wise as to derive Its Name from this or that providential activity alone; nay, rather does It contain all things beforehand within Itself, after a simple and uncircumscribed manner through the perfect excellence of Its one and all-creative Providence, and thus we draw from the whole creation Its appropriate praises and Its Names."

[19] Rolt's tr.: "…the Sacred Writers [*lit.* Theologians—*B. L.*] celebrate It by every Name while yet they call It Nameless."

Thus, the names of God are not exclusively the names known from the Bible, and they are dealt with in subtle details in the subsequent chapters of *De divinis nominibus*. Rather, the names of everything are the divine names, too. Dionysius specifies that even the name of nonexistence, μὴ ὄν, is also a name of God:

> Τολμήσει δὲ καὶ τοῦτο εἰπεῖν ὁ λόγος, ὅτι καὶ τὸ μὴ ὂν μετέχει τοῦ καλοῦ καὶ ἀγαθοῦ, τότε γὰρ καὶ αὐτὸ καλὸν καὶ ἀγαθόν, ὅταν ἐν θεῷ κατὰ τὴν πάντων ἀφαίρεσιν ὑπερουσίως ὑμνεῖται. (*DN* 4:7, 704B).[20]

It is necessary to specify what μὴ ὄν means in this context. Obviously, it is not the Divine Nothing, that is, God himself considered as the absolute nonexistence. And this is not the kind of nonexistence that Dionysius ascribes to evil: evil is the impossibility of existing (more exactly, the logical connective of external negation,[21] not to be confused with nonexistence as such, τὸ μὴ ὄν) for a thing or an event which is necessary (that is, to conform to the divine Providence). But here we are dealing with a simple μὴ ὄν: the absence of a created object, *A*, regardless of its necessity or possibility.

It is not necessary to describe here how these different kinds of names of God form the basis of the two main theological methods, cataphatic and apophatic. Our only interest here is to show how the "harmonization" works behind both cataphatic and apophatic approaches:

> Καὶ ἔστιν αὖθις ἡ θειοτάτη θεοῦ γνῶσις ἡ δι' ἀγνωσίας γινωσκομένη κατὰ τὴν ὑπὲρ νοῦν ἕνωσιν, ὅταν ὁ νοῦς τῶν ὄντων πάντων ἀποστάς, ἔπειτα καὶ ἑαυτὸν ἀφεὶς ἑνωθῇ ταῖς ὑπερφαέσιν ἀκτῖσιν ἐκεῖθεν καὶ ἐκεῖ τῷ ἀνεξερευνήτῳ βάθει τῆς σοφίας καταλαμπόμενος. Καίτοι καὶ ἐκ πάντων, ὅπερ ἔφην, αὐτὴν γνωστέον· αὕτη γάρ ἐστι κατὰ τὸ λόγιον ἡ πάντων ποιητικὴ καὶ ἀεὶ πάντα *ἁρμόζουσα* καὶ τῆς ἀλύτου τῶν πάντων *ἐφαρμογῆς* καὶ τάξεως αἰτία καὶ ἀεὶ τὰ τέλη τῶν προτέρων συνάπτουσα ταῖς ἀρχαῖς τῶν δευτέρων καὶ τὴν μίαν τοῦ παντὸς σύμπνοιαν[22] καὶ *ἁρμονίαν* καλλιεργοῦσα. (*DN*7:3, 872AB).[23]

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[20] Rolt's tr.: "Moreover our Discourse will dare to aver that even the Non-Existent shares in the Beautiful and Good, for Non-Existence is itself beautiful and good when, by the Negation of all Attributes, it is ascribed Super-Essentially to God."

[21] S., for details, Lourié, "Modal Ontology."

[22] A term from the Stoic natural philosophy, literally "common breathing," which means here the internal harmony of the whole creation.

[23] Rolt's translation: "And yet on the other hand, the Divinest Knowledge of God, which is received through Unknowing, is obtained in that communion which transcends the mind, when the mind, turning away from all things and then leaving even itself behind, is united to the Dazzling Rays, being from them and in them, illumined by the unsearchable depth of Wisdom. Nevertheless, as I said, we must draw this knowledge of Wisdom from all things; for wisdom it is (as saith the Scripture) [cf. Wis 8:1] that hath made all things and ever

The continuous act of designation, which Dionysius calls "harmonization," makes every created thing and even every nonexistent thing, a sign, which is, regardless of its denotation, a sign of God. Why? What is the corresponding semantic mechanism?

2. *Divine Names: Irreducible Intensionality*

The nature of the divine names has been explained in theological language. This explanation is relatively well known, and will be summarized only briefly. It is based on the Cappadocian teaching of the uncreated energies of God as the principal tool of divine revelation. In Dionysius' wording, energies of God are mostly (although not exclusively) called διακρίσεις and πρόοδοι:

> Ταύτας ἡμεῖς τὰς κοινὰς καὶ ἡνωμένας τῆς ὅλης θεότητος διακρίσεις εἴτ' οὖν ἀγαθοπρεπεῖς προόδους[24] ἐκ τῶν ἐμφαινουσῶν αὐτὰς ἐν τοῖς λογίοις θεωνυμιῶν ὑμνῆσαι κατὰ τὸ δυνατὸν πειρασόμεθα τούτου, καθάπερ εἴρηται, προδιεγνωσμένου τὸ πᾶσαν ἀγαθουργικὴν θεωνυμίαν, ἐφ' ᾗπερ ἂν κεῖται τῶν θεαρχικῶν ὑποστάσεων, ἐπὶ τῆς ὅλης αὐτὴν ἐκληφθῆναι θεαρχικῆς ὁλότητος ἀπαρατηρήτως. (*DN* 2:11, 652A).[25]

The divine names refer to God in general and not to a specific hypostasis. However, the divine names, θεωνυμίαι, are far from being passive signs.

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ordereth them all, and is the Cause of the indissoluble harmony and order of all things, perpetually fitting the end of one part unto the beginning of the second, and thus producing the one fair agreement and concord of the whole."

[24] On the notions of διακρίσεις and πρόοδοι in God, see especially a classic article: V. Lossky, "La notion des analogies chez Denys le pseudo-Aréopagite," *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen Age* 5 (1930): 279–309. Cf. also A. Golitzin, Et introibo ad altare Dei. *The Mystagogy of Dionysius Areopagita, with Special Reference to Its Predecessors in the Eastern Christian Tradition*, Ἀνάλεκτα Βλατάδων 59 (Θεσσαλονίκη: Πατριαρχικὸν Ἵδρυμα Πατερικῶν Μελετῶν, 1994), 54–61. These terms cover both "energies" of God and divine hypostases, without, however, confusing them with each other. It is a widespread error of historians of philosophy to understand these "energies," "light," etc. in a metaphorical, purely intellectual sense, as a property of the human intellect.

[25] Rolt's translation: "For in divine things the undifferenced Unities are of more might than the Differentiations and hold the foremost place and retain their state of Undifference even after the One has, without departing from Its oneness, entered into Differentiation. These Differentiations or beneficent Emanations of the whole Godhead—whereby Its Undifferenced Nature is shared in common—we shall (so far as in us lies) endeavour to describe from the Divine Names which reveal them in the Scriptures, having now made this clear beforehand (as hath been said): that every Name of the Divine beneficent Activity [or "energy," which has became the more common term today—*B. L.*] unto whichever of the Divine Persons it is applied, must be taken as belonging, without distinction, to the whole entirety of the Godhead."

Instead, they are themselves ἀγαθουργικαί, that is, the beneficent energies of God. To be ἀγαθουργική is, in the Areopagite's terminology, a specific feature of God himself, and so the divine names are specifically *divine* names *qua* uncreated. The "beneficent energies" ensure that any name of God is referring to God. They ensure, moreover, the only effective way to know God (and this way is dealt with by Dionysius repeatedly, but especially in *MT*), which lies in overcoming both assertion and negation.

This properly theological side of Dionysius' doctrine of divine names is studied much more fully than its properly philosophical side, which is related to the divine names *qua* created terms (signs) referring to denotations which are created as well. What kind of theory of meaning is implied in Dionysius?

God's uncreated divine energies are responsible for the most radical form of semantic externalism, in which any specific or general term or negation of such term, regardless of its direct denotation, is a sign of God. In some ways, this recalls for us the "new antisubjectivism" of Donald Davidson,[26] but only in a restricted context. For Davidson, the schemes are necessary to understand our empirical experience as equally external. Thus they are as "objective" as this experience itself. If, turning to Dionysius, we take the divine energies as analogous to such schemes, it would be correct to state that they are responsible for our knowledge of God in a "Davidsonian" way: in the divine names, there is no "subjective" contribution to knowledge of God, that is, this knowledge comes only from a realm outside of the human. However, Davidson's negativist attitude toward the reference is intended to explain the relations between the sign and the denotation. In the Dionysian case, it is not *a priori* clear whether God is the denotation of the divine names or something else. At least, all these names have denotations of their own, which are not God.

When τὸ ἀνώνυμον ("the Nameless": *DN* 1:7, 596 D etc., cf. above) is named, it remains unnamed. It is named not as a reference in the sense of the Fregean *Bedeutung* (denotation: individual objects or truth values), nor even as the Fregean *Sinn* (sense: classes of objects).[27] I would prefer to call this kind of naming which the Areopagite applied to God an "intensional" one. It is sufficient, for the beginning of our study, to define "intensional"

[26] D. Davidson, "The Myth of the Subjective" [1988], in idem, *Philosophical Essays*. Vol. 3: *Subjective, Intersubjective, Objective* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001), 39–52.

[27] G. Frege, "Über Sinn und Bedeutung," *Zeitschrift für Philosophie und philosophische Kritik* 100 (1892): 25–50. Tr. as "On Sense and Reference" by M. Black in P. Geach and M. Black, *Translations from the Philosophical Writings of Gottlob Frege* (Oxford: Blackwell, ^{3}1980), 56–78.

in the broadest possible way as everything that is not extensional (that is, neither individual objects nor truth values). By the way, such an understanding of intensionality is in accord with its original understanding in the mature philosophy of Leibniz,[28] to whom our modern theories of intensionality ultimately can be traced.

This is not to say, however, that we shall not use the common conception of intensionality, as it was introduced by Rudolf Carnap, in the most Fregean way.[29] In the classical Fregean framework,[30] intensionality is a function from possibilities to extensions. Accordingly, intensional semantics is understood as a way of reducing the intensional to the extensional, sometimes called "extensionalist reduction."[31]

According to Carnap himself, the intensional part of meaning must be reducible to the extensional part, at least in the language of science. He expressed his hope in his "Thesis of Extensionality": "[A] universal language of science may be extensional." Carnap put forward this thesis "only as supposition," but considered it as "fairly plausible."[32] Even in the natural sciences this thesis is not without problems,[33] but, in the theology of Dionysius, it would become an exact opposition to the truth: Dionysius' "universal language of theology" is irreducibly intensional.[34] When the divine energies create order for everything in the entire world, they are legitimate heirs to the Platonic ideas, and thus they are a classical example of "intensional entities." Thus the intensionality of the Areopagite's semantics and his corresponding language is irreducible.

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[28] Cf. Lourié, "*Intensio*."

[29] R. Carnap, *Meaning and Necessity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1947).

[30] That is, interpreting intensionality as, more or less, the same thing as the Fregean *Sinn*. Cf., for such an approach in recent scholarship: D. J. Chalmers, "On Sense and Intension," in *Philosophical Perspectives 16: Language and Mind*, ed. J. E. Tomberlin (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), 135–182. Cf. A. Church, "A Formulation of the Logic of Sense and Denotation," in *Structure, Method, and Meaning: Essays in Honor of Henry M. Scheffer*, ed. P. Henle, H. M. Kallen, and S. K. Langer (New York: The Liberal Arts Press, 1951), 3–24.

[31] I. Shani, "Intension and Representation: Quine's Indeterminacy Thesis Revisited," *Philosophical Psychology* 18 (2005): 415–440.

[32] R. Carnap, *The Logical Syntax of Language*, tr. A. Smeaton (Countess von Zeppelin), International Library of Psychology (London: Routledge, 2001), 245–247 (first published in 1937).

[33] See especially a recent study: I. Shani, "The Myth of Reductive Extensionalism," *Axiomathes* 17 (2007): 155–183.

[34] S., on the intensional entities and the various attempts to reduce them to extensional ones in intensional logic, a succinct but informative entry by G. Bealer, "Intensional entities," in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Vol. 4, ed. E. Craig (2000), 803–806.

Very often a reference to "intensional language" has in view partly intensional and partly extensional language (and, most likely, reducible to an extensional language, in conformity with Carnap's Thesis of Extensionality).[35] In Dionysius, however, the divine names form an absolutely intensional language, which is irreducible to any extensional one. In this language, each act of naming provides that the named, although it has become named, remains nameless. It is impossible to invent a logical way to avoid this ubiquitous and inevitable namelessness, because it is a theological (ontological) fact.

God is the intensional of the divine names in the sense that he is "implied" by them. Of course, the mechanism of such an implication is quite specific—God is considered to be really present within the names—but it is not of any interest for semantics whether this ontological claim is true or not. The only important thing is that it is claimed to be true. This theology of "implication by real presence" will be elaborated much further in the eighth-, ninth-, and eleventh-century discussions about icons and other Church symbols.[36] At present, we are interested in such a theology in Dionysius only "from a logical point of view."

I think that there is no ready, formal logical framework suited to explain Dionysius' thought about God as, so to speak, the intensional of the divine names.[37] Nevertheless, modern analytical philosophy has elaborated some ideas that may be used in explaining Dionysius.

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[35] Cf. G. Bealer, *Quality and Concept*, Clarendon Library of Logic and Philosophy (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982; repr. 2002), esp. pp. 147–157. This author argues that the ideal of the Thesis of Extensionality can be achieved, but only in the case in which the intensional entities are accepted and, then, treated in a similar way to the extensional ones: "The moral is that those who wish to be extensionalists in logic may be so, but only if they are intensionalists in ontology" (p. 157). In the case of the Areopagite, the intensional entities (divine energies considered as intensionals arranging the entire world) do not allow such logical operations, because they remain "unnamed" (not explicated).

[36] Cf. B. Lourié, "Le second iconoclasme en recherche de la vraie doctrine," *SP* 34 (2000): 145–169, and idem, "Une dispute sans justes: Léon de Chalcédoine, Eustrate de Nicée et la troisième querelle sur les images sacrées," *SP* 42 (2006): 321–339.

[37] Below (section 9) we will show why Dionysius' theory of divine names cannot simply be translated into the language of predicate logic (or, more exactly, to what extent and in what sense it *can* be expressed through predicate logic).

3. *Dionysian Superlatives: A God-Centred Logical Universe*

It is natural that the names of God pose somewhat different problems for analytical philosophy than its more familiar objects do. To begin with, let us continue our discussion of intensionality.

The most evident difference is the fact that intensionality in any Fregean sense is inapplicable to the God of Dionysius. In one-world semantics, the Fregean intensional would take a given possibility, that is, a given god, and associate him with the denotation of a given divine name. However, such a scheme is inapplicable, because there is only one God, and so all the divine names belong only to him. There are no different possibilities from which to choose.

In possible-worlds semantics, intensionality is a function from worlds to referents. If it were applicable in our case, it would take a given world, that is, the world where God is the God of Dionysius, and associate it with the denotations of the divine names. This may seem to be closer to Dionysius, but, nevertheless, it is inapplicable. Even if we understand the possible worlds in the manner of Kripke, in which case only one of them is our actual world, whereas all others are no more than our intellectual constructs,[38] this would violate, in some way, Dionysius' thought. In Kripke's possible worlds, it is not necessarily known which one of these worlds is our actual one. Therefore, we would encounter a situation that required making a choice, even if not exactly in the same manner as in the one-world approach.

Within *l'Univers dionysien*,[39] there is not even an epistemic possibility of different gods or different worlds having different unique gods. Inside this universe, we have only those epistemic possibilities that are provided by divine energies, that is, by the real presence of God himself. This is the law of knowledge as deification, the only kind of knowledge that is present in the true theology, according to Dionysius. However, it is evident that, for Dionysius, a choice between different possibilities of identification of the true God exists outside his universe. His own personality was a symbol

[38] S. Kripke, "Semantical Considerations on Modal Logic," *Acta Philosophica Fennica* 16 (1963): 83–94 (many times reprinted). The exact opposition of Kripke's approach is the "modal realism" of David Lewis, where all possible worlds are considered as existing in reality: D. K. Lewis, *On the Plurality of Worlds* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986).

[39] As Réné Rocque called the entire intellectual construction of Dionysius. Cf. R. Roques, *L'Univers dionysien: stucture hiérarchique du monde selon le Pseudo-Denys*, Patrimoines/Christianisme (Paris: Cerf, 1983) (first published in 1954).

of performing such a choice: a famous Athenian philosopher converted to Christianity by the Apostle Paul.

The word "god" is, for Dionysius, insufficient when applied to the God of Christians—in the same manner as any other divine names are also insufficient. Thus, he normally uses this word with the superlative prefix ὑπερ-, such as ὁ ὑπέρθεος ("the Super-God": *DN* 2:10, 648 D).[40] Such a usage of the superlative expresses the result of the act of choosing between different concepts of god. However, this act was performed before entering the "universe" of Dionysius, and the corresponding epistemic procedure was not that of knowledge of God/deification governed by the understanding of the divine names. Instead, it is a necessary prerequisite for any kind of understanding of the divine names.

Therefore, *outside* the logical "universe" of Dionysius, the term "God" works as an indexical: there are many epistemological possibilities for understanding it, whereas only one of them is true, that of the "Super-God." Indexicals are the terms or expressions whose reference shifts from context to context, that is, such words as "I," "he," and so on. The term "God," taken outside of the Dionysian logical universe, behaves as an indexical: the truth values of any expressions containing this term depend on the context of our theology (our understanding of who or what our God is). However, *inside* the "universe" of Dionysius, there is only one epistemological possibility that can be fulfilled.

The theory of divine names is not about "God" as an indexical, but about the one, quite specific, God. The term "God" as a kind of pronominal is substituted by specific name(s).

When entering the "universe" of Dionysius, we factor out the indexicality of the term "God." More formally, a useful logical apparatus for treating such a situation can be provided by two-dimensional semantics.[41] In this terminology, Dionysius works, within his own "universe," with a unique scenario of the identification of God. This means that his "universe" is

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[40] Cf. also: ἡ ὑπέρθεος θεότης ("the superdivine divinity," *DN* 2:4, 641 A) and ὑπέρθεος ὑπερουσίως εἷς θεός ("superdivine superexistent one God," *DN* 2:11, 649 C). On the function of superlatives in the theological language of Dionysius, s. in general: P. Scazzoso, *Ricerche sulla struttura del linguaggio dello Pseudo-Dionigi Areopagita. Introduzione alla lettura delle opere pseudo-dionisiane*, Pubblicazioni dell'Università Cattolica "Sacro Cuore", Ser. III, 14 (Milano: Vita e pensiero, 1967), 35–46.

[41] S., most recently, D. J. Chalmers, *The Character of Consciousness*, Philosophy of mind series (Oxford etc.: Oxford UP, 2010), 541–568 (Appendix: Two-Dimensional Semantics). I am grateful to Victor Gorbatov for drawing my attention to two-dimensional semantics as being of potential interest for the interpretation of Dionysius.

centred on his God (or, rather, his "Super-God"). The Dionysian God ceases to be an indexical, because the corresponding logical universe becomes *centred*.

The superlatives in Dionysius, which always mark the uniqueness of the true God, are, logically, the markers of such *centring* of the logical universe.

Theologically, this *centring* is a result of the cessation of epistemic activity governed by the human mind and the starting of epistemic activity governed by the divine energies. However, in both cases, human activity and divine activity work together. The difference arises only from the location from which leadership is exercised.[42] When human activity transforms itself into passivity (which might more appropriately be called "active passivity") to give way to a working place for the activity of God, the logical universe definitively becomes ὑπέρθεος-centred.

Two-dimensional semantics is certainly not the only way to interpret Dionysian superlatives, but it is a useful approach to highlight the fact that the Dionysian universe is "embedded" into a larger intellectual construction, in which the Christian God is still not defined as the only true one. Dionysius starts from the point at which this construction collapses, but he never forgets its existence.[43]

4. *Naming the Unnamed: Intensional Designation*

So far, we have been dealing with the situation that exists in front of the gates of the Dionysian logical universe. We have been answering the question of how the indexical "God" acquires its unique denotation, which will be extended by Dionysius. So far, so good: the real God is considered as the denotation of a term. However, once we set foot into Dionysius' logical universe, things are immediately changed: God ceases to be a denotation. Instead of one name, he acquires many names while continuing to remain

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[42] This is a commonplace of Eastern Christian mysticism. In Dionysius, see, first of all, the motives related to his teacher Hierotheos of Athens, who οὐ μόνον μαθὼν ἀλλὰ καὶ παθὼν τὰ θεῖα ("was not only learning, but also undergoing the divine [things]," *DN* 2:9, 648 B), and the whole *MT*. Cf. A. Golitzin, "Dionysius Areopagites: A Christian Mysticism?" *Scrinium* 3 (2007): 128–179, esp. 162–165.

[43] It would also be useful to compare Dionysian superlatives to specific operators able to transform descriptive names into a kind of rigid designator, in the manner of the operator *Dthat* by David Kaplan, but we will discuss this possibility below (section 12). At any rate, regardless of the details of interpretation, it is clear that the Dionysian *hyper*s serve as logical operators transforming, in some way, the notions of the created world to which they are applied.

without a name. Each of these many names has a denotation of its own. Among these denotations, together with the real things, there are such logical objects as the lack (negation) of each one of them and the lack (negation) of all of them (μὴ ὄν), which means that the hole that is left by an actual thing that is lacking is, for Dionysius, no less real than the thing itself.[44]

Normally, an indexical in a centred possible world acquires a unique denotation, which, in turn, may have some proper name. Instead, in the Dionysian universe, God acquires many denotations and many names. Theoretically speaking, this plurality of names could be interpreted as a plurality of descriptions through the predicates (such as "predicate of being $[\![n_i]\!]$," where $[\![n_i]\!]$ is the denotation of the divine name n_i), and so does not present any specific problem *per se*. However, it is impossible to ascribe to God created predicates.[45] Therefore, no classical way out is left to us. The divine names are "non-classical" anyway, whether they are approached as names or descriptions, but both approaches turn out to conform to Dionysius' own way of thought.

It is Kripke's conception of rigid designators that can be of help here as a comparison. The concept of rigid designators presupposes that there are some terms (and, among others, the proper names) that designate the same object in any of the possible worlds, that is, that there are terms that behave absolutely independently from any context.[46]

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[44] Here we avoid the details of an interesting, but not directly relevant, discussion of the denotations of the lacking (negated) objects. Such logical objects, including the μὴ ὄν, are ontological holes in the creation, and so, as holes, they do have denotation.

[45] However, s. below (sect. 9) on the approach I call quasi-predicative.

[46] S. Kripke, *Naming and Necessity* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1980; repr. 2001). S., on the proper names as rigid designators, pp. 18–19 and 233–234. Here, Kripke returned to Mill's approach, rejected by Frege and Russell; cf. J. S. Mill, "On Names" [from his book *System of Logic*, book I, ch. 2, sect. 5, publ. 1881], in *The Philosophy of Language*, ed. A. P. Martinich (New York/Oxford: Oxford UP, ^{4}2001), 266–271. One can ask why I am speaking here about the Kripkean rigid designators instead of some theory of direct designation, such as those by Ruth Barcan Marcus and David Kaplan. Indeed, in the *Corpus Areopagiticum*, we have no explanation of the meaning of human proper names sufficient to discern between the rigid designator as the limit case of description (Kripke) and the proper name as a simple "tag," a pure *Bedeutung* without *Sinn* at all (cf. R. Barcan Marcus, "Modalities and Intensional Languages" [1961–1967], in eadem, *Modalities. Philosophical Essays* (New York/Oxford: Oxford UP, 1993), 3–38). However, there is a general patristic tradition of understanding proper names of created individuals (s. below, section 13), which is clearly a descriptivist one. Therefore, it is reasonable to suppose that it is this tradition that was shared by Dionysius. Be this as it may, this question does not affect our understanding of the divine names.

The interpretation of the proper names of rational creatures as rigid designators is a necessary, although rather implicit, part of patristic anthropology as it was formulated against the metempsychosis doctrine: any rational individual, human or angelic, is identical to himself or herself throughout his or her eternal life. Taken as a whole throughout both his or her temporary and eternal life, a human being could hardly be summarised with any description of his or her actual state, whereas other descriptions (such as, e.g., indicating the person's origin) would seem too artificial for any practical purpose because they lack actualization. To my knowledge, in patristic literature, there is no descriptivist discussion of proper names in such sempiternal contexts. On the contrary, there is an alternative, descriptivist patristic doctrine of proper names in the context of the actual state of the names' bearers (see below, section 13). Thus, for an understanding of the patristic doctrine of the proper names of created beings which are considered as temporary and eternal wholes, it is only the Kripkean concept of rigid designation that may be of use.[47]

It is rather clear that the *Corpus Dionysiacum* shares this view, even if Dionysius' attitude toward the Origenist tradition is now disputed.[48] The Origenist tradition itself disavowed metempsychosis no later than in the fourth century. Thus, the concept of proper name as a rigid designator indicating the same person throughout the whole of eternal life, notwithstanding before or after death and resurrection (i.e., in all possible worlds), was the only natural one to Dionysius.

The case of the divine names is quite different. First of all, labelling God with a specific name was at odds with the whole Jewish-Christian tradition, because this would mean that the God of Israel was one among other (heathen) gods, each of them having a name. As Christopher Stead

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47 By the way, such an applicability of the Kripkean theory of reference in the context of theological anthropology, where the problem of the transworld identification is *a priori* resolved in a purely "haecceitist" way (when different individuals are always, in any possible world, individuated in the only right but nonlogical manner, that is, from the Creator's viewpoint), is an illustration of its weakness as a general theory of reference. S., for the criticisms most relevant to us, J. Hintikka and G. Sandu, "The Fallacies of the New Theory of Reference," *Synthese* 104 (1995): 245–283; repr. in J. Hintikka, *Selected Papers* 4: *Paradigms for Language Theory and Other Essays* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1998), 175–218.

48 The main proponent of the Origenist affiliation of the *Corpus Areopagiticum* is now István Perczel; s. bibliography and a detailed and, in my opinion, convincing refutation of his view in K. Pinggéra, "Die Bildwelt im 'Buch des heiligen Hierotheos'—ein philosophischer Mythos?," in *Mystik—Metapher—Bild. Beiträge des VII. Makarios-Symposiums*, ed. M. Tamcke (Göttingen: Universitätsverlag, 2008), 29–41.

put it, "…we might suppose that it is normally the function of a personal name to pick out an individual within a class of similar beings; in this case, to apply a personal name to God would be to suggest that he is not unique."[49]

In Dionysius, instead of the one-to-one relation between a proper name and a rational being throughout multiple possible worlds, we have a relation between the unique God and multiple names within a unique centred (in the sense of two-dimensional semantics) world. The one-to-one relation exists, however, between each of these names and their corresponding denotates (extensionals). Unlike the proper names of the created rational beings, which indicate the corresponding beings as their extensionals, the divine names do not indicate God as their extensional. It is reasonable to affirm that God is their intensional, taking into account the broadest possible understanding of intensionality as that part of meaning which is not extensional. We will elaborate on this understanding of intensionality in the next sections, but for now we need to separate, in this conception of Dionysius, its purely theological contents from its general logical framework, which has nothing theological *per se*. We will see that the phenomenon which we have just termed "intensional designation" is nothing but the logical mechanism of metaphor and metonymy, although this metaphor-like logical machinery does not exhaust the logical structure of the divine names.

Indeed, in Dionysius, the proper understanding of the divine names is secured from the two sides, divine and human, by the divine energies and the proper ascetical practice. However, this two-sided process has a logic of its own. Setting aside epistemic problems, let us consider semantics.

5. *Naming the Unnamed as Poetry*

The very idea of expressing some meaning with different and, sometimes, mutually incompatible descriptions consisting of terms or expressions having one-to-one relations with their extensionals is well known in poetry. Moreover, as we now know about Dionysius, his own poetic language is deeply influenced by a famous poet of his time (the middle of the fifth

[49] C. Stead, "Logic and the Application of the Names to God," in *El "Contro Eunomium I" en la produccion literaria de Gregorio de Nisa*, ed. L. F. Mateo-Seco and J. L. Bastero (Pamplona, 1988), 303–320, esp. 317 [repr. in: idem, *Doctrine and Philosophy in Early Christianity: Arius, Athanasius, Augustine*, Variorum Collected Studies Series CS224 (Aldershot/Burlington: Ashgate, 2000), Ch. XX].

century), Nonnus of Panopolis.[50] Thus, Dionysius' theological method of obtaining knowledge of God by surpassing any kind of positive and negative naming has, among others, poetic roots. It has a great deal in common with poetic tropes and especially, in the case of Dionysius, with metaphor. Indeed, many modern readers of Dionysius did consider his "divine names" as mere metaphors that divorced them from their theological (and thus also logical) ground. However, the divine names are still divine names, even if, in Dionysius, they are metaphor-like divine names. Understanding the logical structure of metaphor is a necessary but not sufficient condition of understanding the logical structure of the Dionysian divine names.

Of course, no kind of secular poetry could compete with the divine energies in terms of their effectiveness in connecting with God, but this is only a theological truth. The corresponding logical truth consists in the fact that there is no logical possibility of separating the single "true" poetic language about God from the other "untrue" ones. The poetic language itself is basically the same regardless of whether one speaks about God or something else. Outside of a proper theological context, it could not attain any kind of supernatural security, such as that provided by divine energies, so this language normally does not pretend to offer the infallibility of expression. Nevertheless, its intensional semantic is accessible to many connoisseurs of poetry. Thus, the possibility of mutual understanding using an intensional language absolutely irreducible to an extensional one is not an illusion.

Turning back to Dionysius, we have to note that his intensional language was neither his original invention nor something created for any specific theological purpose, unless we go as far back as considering the poetry itself as having its origins in the religious cult. The divine names are "intensional designators," whose property of rigidity—they belong to the same God in any context within the Dionysian logical universe—is a feature of Dionysian poetics, which he shared, e.g., with Nonnus Panopolitanus. The use of intensional description and designation is a common feature of any poetic language, and the designators here could be more or less "rigid."

6. *Naming the Unnamed: Poetic Paraconsistency*

Without going into the details of the paraconsistent logic of Dionysius, it is still necessary at least to describe the divine names as paraconsistent

[50] S. above, n. 14.

logical objects. The names of God are different and applied one by one, but they are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Thus, they are connected with the inclusive disjunction, or logical sum (∨). Together, they form a power set, that is, a set containing a natural number of elements including the null set (because μὴ ὄν is also a name of God). Each element of this set is accompanied by its negation, because the negation of any divine name is also a divine name. So, if we design any "positive" (not negated) divine name as n_i, and taking into account that the negation of the null set is also the null set, we can present the whole set of the Dionysian divine names as the following conjunction:

$$(1) \quad \bigvee_i n_i \wedge \bigvee_i \neg n_i$$

This conjunction is paraconsistent on two levels. The conjunction itself is straightforwardly paraconsistent, because it is based on the contradiction ($a \wedge \neg a$). On a deeper level, paraconsistency could arise within the inclusive disjunction, because the inclusive disjunction (unlike the exclusive disjunction ⊕ "exactly one of two") does allow the coexistence of the names that could be mutually incompatible in classical logic (we will address this case below, when dealing with the descriptions, in section 9).

The poetics of both secular and religious poetry could be more or less paraconsistent. Paraconsistency arises when poetic tropes are used in a mutually exclusive way, without necessarily claiming any paraconsistency in reality. Thus, the famous final verse of each odd strophe of the *Akathistos Hymn* (sixth century)[51] Χαῖρε Νύμφη Ἀνύμφευτε ("Hail, O Bride Unbrided!") contains no paraconsistent claim *de re* (because there is nothing paraconsistent in being both a bride in one sense, but not a bride in another sense; thus, we do not have here contradictory propositions). However, if we simply substitute for this trope[52] the corresponding (and adequate!) description, the whole poetic power of the verse vanishes. Thus, the specific sense of this trope contains irreducible paraconsistency. Such poetic paraconsistency may or may not be accompanied with claims of paraconsistency in ontology. One may also note that such an element of paraconsistency

[51] On which s., first of all: L. M. Peltomaa, *The Image of the Virgin Mary in the Akathistos Hymn*, The medieval Mediterranean 35 (Leiden etc.: Brill, 2001).

[52] One can further specify that this trope is a metaphor (in the literal sense, the Virgin Mary is not a bride at all). Cf. for more about metaphor and metonymy below, sect. 7.

is a normal property of poetic language, shared by both religious and secular poetry.

The phenomenon which we termed "intensional designation" is limited, as such, to inclusive disjunctions of different terms, but without the necessity of inserting the inclusive disjunction in places where classical logic would allow only the exclusive one. The paraconsistent language of Dionysius and those who follow him can be presented as the limit case of the "usual" intensional designation, where the different designators may be not only different but also mutually exclusive from the point of view of non-paraconsistent logic.

7. *Divine Names* vs *Metaphor and Metonymy*

It is clear from the above that the understanding of the logical nature of the main poetic tropes, especially metaphor, but also metonymy, is a necessary prerequisite for our further analysis of the divine names in Dionysius. The usual manner of description *via* similarity, metaphor (which works with intensional designation), and paraconsistent intensional designation does not represent a sharp division but rather forms a continuum. Moreover, below in reference to Basil of Caesarea and other Cappadocian authors we will see another kind of divine names, where the corresponding continuum will be contiguity, metonymy, and, then, intensional description and paraconsistent intensional description. This is why the logical structure of both metaphor and metonymy is relevant for our further discussion.

The present context does not allow one to enter into the hotly disputed topic of the logical nature of metaphor.[53] It is enough to state that I agree with Davidson's criticism of the attempts to reduce the meaning of metaphor to any kind of description,[54] but that I disagree with his radical cutting off of the metaphor from the sphere of semantics (and moving it to pragmatics).[55] *Mutatis mutandis*, the same is true for metonymy. My own

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[53] Cf. M. Leezenberg, *Contexts of Metaphor*, Current Research in the Semantics/Pragmatics Interface (Amsterdam etc.: Elsevier, 2001), where the author provides a kind of historical survey starting from Aristotle and even earlier but ending with *ca* 1980s (with no mention of Hintikka–Sandu's approach, s. below).

[54] In the sense that there is no possibility of substituting a metaphor with a description without losing the very reason why the metaphor was uttered.

[55] Cf. D. Davidson, "What Metaphors Mean" [1978], in idem, *Inquiries into Truth and Interpretation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984; repr. 1991), 245–264. For a criticism of the Davidsonian rejection of any specific semantics of metaphor, s., among others, E. F. Kittay,

understanding of metaphor and metonymy follows the general lines of the Hintikka–Sandu approach,[56] but adds that both metaphor and metonymy are paraconsistent logical objects.

According to Hintikka and Sandu, metaphor is neither reducible to a comparison based on the similarity of properties nor is it understandable without any comparison. Like the comparison, metaphor points out similar properties (predicates). In the same manner, metonymy points out relevant relations of contiguity. However, both metaphor and metonymy go further in establishing the "meaning lines" between the proprietaries of properties (subjects of predicates). The meaning lines are based on their relevant properties (predicates). The meaning lines drawn from world to world (in the sense of possible worlds semantics) connect the characteristic sets of individuals in each world corresponding to the relevant predicate, but without identification of the individuals themselves. Otherwise, these meaning lines would be the lines of transworld identification of the individuals.

Therefore, Hintikka and Sandu interpret these meaning lines as establishing some kind of transworld identity, although not an existential one. The meaning lines are not transworld lines, which would be based on

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"Metaphor as Rearranging the Furniture of the Mind: A Reply to Donald Davidson's 'What Metaphors Mean,'" in *From a Metaphorical Point of View. A Multidisciplinary Approach to the Cognitive Content of Metaphor*, ed. Z. Radman, Philosophie und Wissenschaft 7 (Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 1995), 73–116. The discussion continues. For the most recent defence of the Davidsonian approach, s. E. Lepore and M. Stone, "Against Metaphorical Meaning," *Topoi* 29 (2010): 165–180.

[56] J. Hintikka and G. Sandu, "Metaphor and Other Kinds of Nonliteral Meaning," in *Aspects of Metaphor*, ed. J. Hintikka, Synthese Library 238 (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1994), 151–188; repr. in: J. Hintikka, *Selected Papers* 4: *Paradigms for Language Theory and Other Essays* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1998), 274–310. It has been rightly stated that, on the one hand, this approach ignores the psychological side of the problem, but, on the other hand, it does not create any obstacle to the studies of metaphor in cognitive semantics; cf. A. Enstrøm, "Hintikka and Sandu on Metaphor," *Philosophia* 28 (2001): 391–410. Nevertheless, the approach of cognitive semantics (Lakoff, Johnson, and others) is hardly very promising from a logical point of view; cf. A.-V. Pietarinen, "An Iconic Logic of Metaphors," *Journal of Cognitive Science* (forthcoming). Knepper, "Techniques and Rules of Ineffability," proposes another approach to the Areopagite's semantics based on the speech act theory of John Searle and the metaphor theory of George Lakoff and Mark Johnson. I consider his results obtained with the application of Lakoff–Johnson's theory to the *Corpus Areopagiticum* as having value of their own (although rather for cognitive psychology than for semantics), but Searle's approach to the problem of non-direct meaning seems to me not especially effective (here I second the criticisms by, first of all, Davidson and Hintikka and Sandu, whereas Knepper takes Searle's theory uncritically and, moreover, not in full, without Searle's theory of metaphor, which is an application of his theory of speech acts).

neither similarity nor contiguity, but on continuity, because it is continuity which is the criterion of the transworld identification of the individuals.[57]

Hintikka and Sandu stated that their conclusions go along with Roman Jakobson's understanding of the similarity-based metaphor and the contiguity-based metonymy as the two poles of language and of human thinking in general.[58] I think that the Hintikka–Sandu approach to the logic of poetic trope reveals its anatomy but not its physiology. This approach provides a kind of description (of the meaning lines) but fails to explain how the trope works, that is, why the meaning lines are so especially important. My answer is that the meaning lines form the trope only after having been put into the frame of paraconsistency, that is, a kind of equation between the two propositions of the type *p* and *not-p*. It is precisely paraconsistency that differentiates any trope from its description, even the most correct one which takes into account the meaning lines.[59]

Unlike both metaphor and metonymy, the divine names are about the identification of individuals. It does not matter that God remains unnamed; the divine names are the true names of God in the sense that each of them *is* God—in the same sense that the unnamed God is named. The relation of continuity is secured by the divine energies (called by Dionysius ἀγαθουργίαι, πρόοδοι, διακρίσεις etc.) that are present in each created thing as its uncreated λόγος.

Of course, the most widely known parallels to such an understanding of divine names are to be found in magic. However, magic presupposes a lot of pragmatics, especially related to magical power over the supernatural phenomena. Moreover, the very ontology of the divine presence within the divine names could be quite different. This is why there is no serious ground for any magic-like interpretation of Dionysius. What we are inter-

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[57] The idea of the transworld lines was first formulated for possible-worlds semantics by David Kaplan in his 1967 paper, but he refuted it even before the first publication (although, meanwhile, it became widely discussed in manuscript): D. Kaplan, "Transworld Heir Lines," in *The Possible and the Actual*, ed. M. Loux (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1979), 88–109 (cf. footnote on p. 88). Thus, Kaplan joined the majority of philosophers of that time, who considered the problem of transworld identity as a pseudo-problem. However, this problem was taken quite seriously by Jaakko Hintikka. Cf., among others, J. Hintikka, *Knowledge and the Known. Historical Perspectives in Epistemology*, Synthese Historical Library 11 (Dordrecht/Boston: D. Reidel, 1974), 202–207, and note 61 below.

[58] R. Jakobson, "Two Aspects of Language and Two Types of Aphasic Disturbances" [1956], in idem, *Selected Writings*. Vol. II: *Words and Language* (The Hague/Paris: Mouton, 1971), 239–259 (esp. section V, "The Metaphoric and Metonymic Poles," pp. 254–259).

[59] S., for more details, В. Лурье, О. Митренина, *Логика естественного языка: нефрегевость и модальность* [B. Lourié, O. Mitrenina, *Logic of Natural Language: Non-Fregeanity and Modality*] (forthcoming).

ested in now is neither ontology nor pragmatics but only semantics. Thus, we need to understand what kind of transworld identity is presupposed by the divine names of Dionysius.

8. *Naming the Unnamed: Paraconsistent Essentiality*

It is impossible to discuss transworld identity when, at the same time, avoiding ontological topics completely. We can only try to isolate the problem of identity between God and not-God from other ontological issues.

In fact, the Dionysian universe shows a sophisticated and mathematically elegant picture of hierarchies which are different ontological levels corresponding to different levels of deification.[60] Without any kind of deification at all, there is no being at all. To be created means to have uncreated divine *logos*, and so to be deified, at least on some zero level. Any subsequent levels of any hierarchy correspond to additional *logoi*. God is above all hierarchies and is the ultimate goal of all hierarchies, that is, the limit case of the graduated deification. Looking for an adequate logical construction to deal properly with this multi-layered ontology, we probably have to turn to a system of logics similar to that which is elaborated for the formalisation of Meinong's conception of *Außersein*.[61] In such logics, there is no such thing as simply one existence and one non-existence, but several different kinds of both existence and non-existence.

Yet if we are interested in the most basic nature of transworld identity between God and not-God, we need not take into account these subtle distinctions between ordinary things and, say, sacred Church symbols. We are allowed to factor out the whole ontology of hierarchies (and the corresponding logic).

This hierarchical ontology is nothing but a detailed elaboration of the very fundamental idea that the created existence is basically twofold. On the one hand, it is an existence that is sharply distinct from the divine one—to the extent that if the created beings exist, then God does not, and *vice versa*. It is in this sense that Dionysius calls God "nothing" (not to be

[60] Golitzin, *Et introibo ad altare Dei*, 86–91 *et passim*. Cf. Lourié, "Modal Ontology."

[61] Cf. В. Л. Васюков, "Не-фрегевский путеводитель по гуссерлевским и мейнонговским джунглям, I–II [V. L. Vasjukov, "A Non-Fregean Guide to Husserl's and Meinong's Jungles, I–II]," *Логические исследования* [*Logical Studies*] 11 (2004): 99–118; 12 (2005): 146–161. I owe to Victor Gorbatov my acquaintance with these and other studies by Vasjukov. Vasjukov's logics and ontology for the formalisation of Meinong are, in turn, a development of the Non-Fregean semantics of Roman Suszko; cf. R. Wójcicki, "R. Suszko's Situational Semantics," *Studia Logica* 43 (1984): 323–340.

confused with another "nothing" which is one of the divine names!).[62] On the other hand, everything that exists is deified by the divine *logoi*, and so it participates in the divine being. Thus, created being and divine being remain unmingled, but the former is impossible without the latter.

Such an ontological approach, although not completely alien to Western thought (representatives of which were, among others, Meister Eckhardt, Tauler, Suzo, and Jakob Böhme, who was well known to Leibniz), is, nevertheless, too often confused with its alternative, which became the mainstream view in the thinking of the Scholastics. Thus, it is probably necessary to state that, according to Dionysius, God is *not* the perfect being and something like the limit case (perfection) of any created properties. God is not the perfect being because he is not a being at all—in any sense applicable to the created entities.[63] The hierarchies whose ultimate goal is God are the hierarchies of different levels of deification but not of the created beings *qua* created. This is why it is impossible, in the Dionysian framework, to construct for God and the created things some common ontology, where, e.g., God would be a subject of created predicates. Nevertheless, a limited usage of the predicate logic is still allowable—in a way that is somewhat similar to the applicability of Newtonian physics to Quantum mechanics (the "correspondence principle" of Niels Bohr). The Areopagite, too, formulated his own principle of correspondence, which consists of his cataphatic and apophatic theologies put together.

The reverse side of such a peculiar ontology for the divine being is a multi-layered structure of the ontology for creatures. In the first approximation, it can be represented as a two-layered structure using categories of the alethic modal logic.

For any created individual and any class of created objects, there are some specific divine *logoi* (which are distinct from each other in a paraconsistent way, that is, without being distinct: God is divisible into divine energies/*logoi* only without division), without whom they are non-existent in any sense of the word and even impossible. With their *logoi*, they are necessary; nevertheless, their existence is not necessary but only possible. The so-called modal axiom (M) ("whatever is necessary is the case") does not hold:

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[62] Cf. "[God] is the cause of the every being, and he is himself μὴ ὄν as being above every essence" [αἴτιον μὲν τοῦ εἶναι πᾶσιν, αὐτὸ δὲ μὴ ὂν ὡς πάσης οὐσίας ἐπέκεινα (*DN* 1:1; 588 B)]; "It is the Cause of all things and yet Itself is nothing (οὐδέν), because It super-essentially transcends them all" (Rolt's tr.) [ὅτι πάντων μέν ἐστι τῶν ὄντων αἴτιον, αὐτὸ δὲ οὐδὲν ὡς πάντων ὑπερουσίως ἐξῃρημένον (*DN* 1:5; 593 C)].

[63] Cf. above, n. 9.

(M) $\Box A \rightarrow A$

In any given moment of history, several things and events which are necessary according to God's will do not actually take place, but only wait to be realised. The original imperfectness of the created world (which is not fully deified from the beginning) together with the existence of evil prevent the will of God from being fulfilled in all cases.[64] Thus, instead of (M), it is the weaker deontic axiom (D) ("when *A* is obligatory, *A* is permissible," which is equivalent to "whatever is necessary *may be* the case") that holds:

(D) $\Box A \rightarrow \Diamond A$

The situation in ontology is very much the same as the common situation in deontic logic, where something which is necessary (obligatory) can be left unrealised.

However, the so-called necessitation rule (NR), which is the axiom that is the reverse to (M), is even stronger than in a "habitual" modal logic:

(NR) $A \rightarrow \Box A$

Here, NR means that if something exists, then it is strongly implied that it exists necessarily. Normally, in modal logic, this rule is applicable to the theorems of a given theory, but not to any fact that takes place.

Applied to the simplified (two-layered, with the hierarchies being factored out) ontology of the Areopagite's theophanic creatures, NR means that every existing created object (an individual, a class, or even a situation) necessarily has some participation in divine being. Any one-layered existence of the created things (without divine *logoi*) is impossible, and so could not be necessary.

This participation in the divine is the "essential property," as modern logicians would say, which is necessary for establishing the transworld identity between God and non-divine denotations of the divine names. In some sense, the divine *logos* of the created thing is such an essential property—but neither in the sense of modern essentialism, nor in any Aristotelian sense (regardless of which of the ancient and mediaeval commentators of Aristotle we follow).

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[64] S., for more details, Lourié, "Modal Ontology." The full system of axioms of this ontology is NR + K + D + CD, the iteration axioms (S4, S5, B) do not hold.

In any Aristotelian sense, an essential property of a created object is a property of its created essence, not that of divine essence, as divine *logoi* are. In the sense of modern essentialism, a property is essential if it makes a given object distinct from other objects; thus, if this property is shared with another transworld object, transworld identity takes place. However, there are some objects which, necessarily, do not share this property that is essential to other objects.[65] The latter is always false with respect to the divine *logoi*: there are no such objects which do not share with other objects the property of having divine *logoi*.

The divine *logoi qua* divine establish transworld identity but do not individuate their created objects. At the same time, the divine *logoi qua* being differentiated according to the creatures (that is, *qua logoi* within the creatures) individuate their created objects but do not establish their transworld identity with God. Thus, considered as a property of a creature, its divine *logos* is not a property which *both* establishes transworld identity *and* differentiates this creature from others, as modern essentialism would require. Instead, it is a property which *either* establishes transworld identity *or* differentiates this creature from others, whereas both functions are conjunct.

In other words, considered as a predicate (in a very specific sense of the word) of a created entity, the divine *logos* must be interpreted as a paraconsistent conjunction of the two incompatible properties.

9. *Naming the Unnamed: the Correspondence with Predicate Logic*

A modern reader of *On the Divine Names* would have the illusion that Dionysius explains to us what and who God is in the classical manner of predicate logic. Indeed, Dionysius states that God "is" something, and, then, something different, and something different from this, and so on. Every time, this "something" is presumed (rightly) to be known to the reader. Thus, the reader becomes able to understand who and what God is. Yet it is not so easy. This is only an imitation—or rather an extension—of classical predicate logic. In fact, the correspondence with predicate logic takes place only to a certain degree.

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[65] For a detailed discussion, s., first of all, T. Parsons, "Grades of Essentialism in Quantified Modal Logics," *Noûs* 1 (1967): 181–191. Cf. T. Catterson, "Hintikka on the Problem with the Problem of Transworld Identity," in *Quantifiers, Questions and Quantum Physics. Essays on the Philosophy of Jaakko Hintikka*, ed. D. Kolak and J. Symons (Dordrecht: Springer, 2004), 33–47.

Thus, God "is" something and, simultaneously, "is not" this very something. This fact does not affect the internal semantics of the corresponding sentences. They are not paraconsistent *per se*; it is only the manner of applying them to the same subject simultaneously that is paraconsistent. Therefore, the sentences constructed according to the pattern "the divinity is (something)" are not to be interpreted in a classical way. In other words, we are not allowed, knowing the truth values of such sentences, to fix the reference of the term "divinity" (or its synonyms). Yet this is so not only for God. It is so even for the interpretation of the metaphoric and metonymic sentences.

Hintikka and Sandu stated that there is no such thing as a specific "metaphoric truth": for metaphoric sentences the notion of truth is the same as for ordinary sentences. Instead, there is only "a special sense of meaning (special kind of interpretation)."[66] This specific kind of interpretation is the meaning line, that is, a non-standard function of meaning existing apart from the Fregean intensional[67] and in contrast with the Fregean intensionals of both terms connected with each other by metaphor or metonymy. Such a situation is not very transparent for the reference in any Fregean sense. Thus it renders us uneasy with regard to its Fregeanity.

Thus, it is clear that Dionysius' explanations "work" in a somewhat non-classical way. Or, to be more precise, it is clear that what is classical in patristics could be not-so-classical in modern logic.

We are now in a position to ask, what is the meaning of all the Areopagitic propositions like "the divinity is …" (light, darkness, anything, nothing, etc.), that is

(2) α_i : divinity (θεότης) "is" n_i

and its negation

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[66] Hintikka and Sandu, "Metaphor," 172 (acc. to 1994 edition). It is evident that the same is applicable to metonymy.

[67] A generalization of Fregean semantics as applied to the multi-world framework was anticipated by Carnap and proposed in the first elaborated form by Montague; s. R. Montague, *Formal Philosophy. Selected Papers*, ed. R. H. Thomason (New Haven/London: Yale UP, 1974), *passim*, but especially "Pragmatics and Intensional Logic" (1970), pp. 119–147, here 127–131. For an accommodation of Montague intensionals to Hintikka's world lines, s.: J. Hintikka, "On the Proper Treatment of Quantifiers in Montague Semantics" [1974], in J. Hintikka and M. Hintikka, *The Logic of Epistemology and the Epistemology of Logic: Selected Essays*, Synthese Library 200 (Dordrecht etc.: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1989), 97–112.

(3) $\neg\alpha_i$: divinity (θεότης) "is not" n_i

Where α_i is a sentence (formula), n_i is a divine name (term), and i is a natural number ($i \in \mathbb{N}^+$).[68]

The whole set $\{\alpha_i\}$ is a set of the formulae having the same truth value ("true"), as well as the whole set $\{\neg\alpha_i\}$,which is a set of the formulae having the same truth value (which is also "true"). That both of them are true simultaneously is an expression of the paraconsistency of the whole system of divine names. However, now we are interested in an aspect that is different from paraconsistency as such, namely, the possibility of knowing the meaning of the term "divinity" after knowing the meaning of other terms and the truth values of both sets $\{\alpha_i\}$ and $\{\neg\alpha_i\}$.

Within the Fregean perspective, formulae (2) and (3) have the same truth value, and so are logically equivalent:

(4) $\alpha_k \leftrightarrow \alpha_j$

(5) $\neg\alpha_k \leftrightarrow \neg\alpha_j$

for any $k, j \in \mathbb{N}^+$.

All of them, according to Frege, have the same denotation, namely, their truth value. Therefore, both of the formulae α_i and $\neg\alpha_i$ denote the same thing (the truth value "true"),[69] and so are useless for any further logical exploration of the meaning of the term "divinity." Obviously, this is not the attitude of Dionysius himself and the whole patristic tradition after him (and before him, too).

In Dionysian thought, the sets of his formulae $\{\alpha_i\}$ and $\{\neg\alpha_i\}$ express some non-trivial truth. Thus, these sentences refer to something other than their (equal) truth values. Their referents (denotations) are different. This is possible only in the case in which the so-called Fregean axiom (FA) does

[68] $\mathbb{N}^+$ is the set of natural numbers ($\mathbb{N}$) excluding 0.

[69] Or, alternatively, as Davidson formulated in his version of the demonstration of the same Fregean conclusion, all the true sentences refer to the only and to the same "Great Fact," which is nothing but the state of affairs in the entire world: "[n]o point remains in distinguishing among various names of The Great Fact when written after 'corresponds to'; we may as well settle for the single phrase 'corresponds to The Great Fact'. This unalterable predicate carries with it a redundant whiff of ontology, but beyond this there is apparently no telling it apart from is true" (D. Davidson, "True to the Facts," [1969], in idem, *Inquiries into Truth and Interpretation*, 37–54, here 42).

not hold (this term was coined by Roman Suszko,[70] who explained this basic presupposition implied in Fregean logic):

(FA) $(p \leftrightarrow q) \rightarrow (p \equiv q)$

If FA does not hold, the logical equivalence of the formulae (sentences) p and q does not entail their identity. This means, in turn, the abolition of the principle of the co-referentiality of the equivalents CE (the sentences have the same denotations if they logically follow from each other)[71] ($\vdash$ means "logically deductible"):

(CE) If $A \vdash B$ and $B \vdash A$, then $A \equiv B$

In the system of logics in which FA and CE do not hold, the logically equivalent sentences are not necessarily co-referential, although the co-referential sentences are necessarily equivalent. Thus, it is the Non-Fregean axiom (NFA) that holds (the identity of the denotations implies the equivalency):

(NFA) $(p \equiv q) \rightarrow (p \leftrightarrow q)$

The denotations of the sentences are the *situations* they describe (and *not* their truth values). There are several kinds of such logics, often called "situational" ones.[72]

Thus, Suszko introduced the identity connective $\equiv$ as a non-truth-functional connective distinct from the logical equivalence ($\leftrightarrow$). The sentences

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[70] R. Suszko, "The Abolition of the Fregean Axiom," in *Logic Colloquium: Symposium on Logic Held at Boston, 1972–73,* ed. R. Parikh, Lecture Notes in Mathematics 453 (Berlin/New York: Springer, 1975), 169–239. Cf. note 61 above and I. Golińska-Pilarek and T. Huuskonen, "Number of Extensions of Non-Fregean Logics," *Journal of Philosophical Logic* 34 (2005): 193–206.

[71] Cf. В. В. Горбатов, "О необходимости различения форм и уровней нефрегевости" [V. V. Gorbatov, "On the Necessity to Discern among the Forms and Levels of Non-Fregeanity"], in *Логическая семантика: перспективы для философии языка и эпистемологии. Сборник научных статей, посвященных юбилею Е. Д. Смирновой*, ред. Е. Г. Драгалина-Черная и Д. В. Зайцев [*Logical Semantics: Perspectives for the Philosophy of Language and the Epistemology. Collected Studies dedicated to the Jubilee of E. D. Smirnova*, ed. E. G. Dragalina-Černaja and D. V. Zajcev] (Moscow: Kreativnaja èkonomika, 2011), 165–182.

[72] Especially after Jon Barwise and John Perry, who published the earliest version of their views in J. Barwise and J. Perry, "Semantic Innocence and Uncompromising Situations," *Midwest Studies of Philosophy* 6 (1981): 387–403 [repr. in Martinich, *The Philosophy of Language*, 392–404]. For a further development of their views and their disagreements, s., e.g., J. Barwise, *The Situation in Logic*, CSLI. Lecture Notes 17 (Menlo Park etc.: Center for the Study of Language and Information, Stanford University, 1989), 242–251. Cf. notes 61 and 71 above.

are identical only in the case in which their denotations are the same, that is—according to the basic postulate of situational semantics—if and only if the situations they describe are the same. Turning back to Dionysius, we see that his sentences $\{\alpha_i\}$ and $\{\neg\alpha_i\}$, although equivalent according to (4) and (5), are not identical in Suszko's (or any kind of situational semantic) sense:

(6) $\alpha_k \not\equiv \alpha_j$

(7) $\neg\alpha_k \not\equiv \neg\alpha_j$

Therefore, they are nontrivial and not tautological, and so nothing prevents them from being meaningful for further understanding of what and who God is.

10. *Divine Names: Ontologization of Tropes*

A Non-Fregean perspective allows us to continue an understanding of the Dionysian divine names in comparison with metaphor and metonymy. The "negative" argumentation of Quine and Putnam, which in its original context was intended to show the "opacity" of the reference in Fregean theories, could have a positive value in a Non-Fregean context.

Quine gave examples of some situations when, *pace* Frege, the truth-conditions of the entire sentences underdetermine the reference.[73] Putnam, in his famous theorem, showed "…that there are always infinitely many different interpretations of the predicates of a language which assign the 'correct' truth-values to the sentences in all possible worlds, *no matter how these 'correct' truth-values are singled out*" (Putnam's italics).[74] Putnam's theorem was accompanied, in addition to a strict formal demonstration, by an example, in which the sentence "A cat is on a mat" turned out to refer to a cherry on a tree—to show that one cannot fix the reference if one can fix the truth values of the entire sentences and even if the truth values for sentences are specified in every possible world. The method of demonstration of Putnam's theorem is instructive for further investigation of both poetic tropes and divine names.

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[73] S. especially W. V. O. Quine, "Ontological Relativity" [1968], in idem, *Ontological Relativity and Other Essays* (New York: Columbia UP, 1969), 26–68.

[74] H. Putnam, "A Problem about Reference," in idem, *Reason, Truth, and History* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1981) 22–48 and 217–218, here 34–35.

If the reference of "cat" turns out to be a cherry, this is probably devastating for the Fregean understanding of reference, but could be quite appropriate for poetry and even for a slightly more expressive kind of ordinary utterance. For instance, the nickname Cherry is quite popular for cats (at least, in Russia: Вишенка, with a diminutive suffix), and sometimes it is given because of external similarities (therefore, metaphorically) between a given cat and a cherry, e.g., when a small kitten has rolled itself up into a ball. Or, one can imagine that some cat is called "cherry" (metonymically) because cherries are its beloved toys. The poetic tropes, metaphor and metonymy, have truth values which are not specifically "poetic" truth values, that is, the same as those Frege and Putnam deal with, and so, in both cases, the cats will be "cherries," albeit in a somewhat unusual way, but without destroying the reference: the corresponding sentences are quite understandable and meaningful.

These examples go further than those of Quine (who discussed the reference of the term "rabbit," which can refer to an animal or to a part of this animal on a plate, etc.), because Quine took his examples from either an actual lexicon or, at least, from some imagined lexicon.[75] Our examples of cats which are "cherries" resulted from metaphor and metonymy, that is, from neither dictionaries nor pragmatics (*pace* Davidson) but from other possible worlds *via* unusual meaning lines. In such cases sentences like "a cat is a cherry" are not only true but also meaningful, although hardly in a Fregean sense. However, these cats are still relatively far from Putnam's cat, because there remains between them the distance that separates the Hintikka–Sandu meaning lines from the Montague (Fregean) intensionals with which Putnam's theorem deals.[76]

The divine names are situated closer to Putnam's cat. They, too, are about intensionals and individuals, not about proprieties and meaning lines. Thus, unlike metaphor and metonymy, the divine names do have some ontological commitment. Nevertheless, their resemblance with the former is so striking that one can consider them as "ontologized" poetic tropes. Of course, both poetic tropes and divine names (considered from their human side) have magical words as their common ancestors. Broadly

[75] Cf. also W. V. O. Quine, *Word and Object* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT, 1960).

[76] To rewrite Putnam's formalism for the reference *via* metaphor and metonymy, one should operate with meaning lines instead of Montague intensionals and properties of individuals instead of the individuals themselves. To rewrite the same formalism for the situation with divine names, one should consider instead of the arbitrary predicate F_i, which under interpretation I has in the possible world W_j extensions R_{ij}, the predicate "to be God," which has only one individual as its extension, the same in all possible worlds.

speaking, it was poetic tropes that evolved from the magical words, which became free from ontological commitment. For Dionysius, the whole picture was more complex, because he was influenced not only by the Christian liturgy and the rituals of Jamblichus but also by secular poetry.

In Table 1 below, the logical structures of ordinary descriptions, tropes (metaphor and metonymy), and magical words/divine names are compared without taking into account ontological and pragmatic differences between the divine names and the magical words.

The first column of Table 1 presents a continuum. For instance, on the one hand, some very weak and especially the so-called "dead" metaphors are hardly distinguishable from ordinary descriptions. On the other hand, the possible worlds of fiction and poetry have some specific ontology, which cannot be completely alien to that of the world their readers live in.[77] Therefore, the demarcation lines between descriptions, tropes, and magical words/divine names should not be set too rigidly.

The most important differences are the following. The ordinary description establishes binary relations within one world, whereas the tropes and the magical words/divine names establish some transworld connexions. However, the nature of these connexions is different for the tropes and the magical words/divine names: the identity of some properties in the first case and the identity of individuals in the second. It is the presence of a transworld connexion that makes intensionality irreducible.

Table 1.

	Logical Core	Irreducible Intensionality	Transworld Connexion	Ontological Commitment
Description	Binary relations	–	–	–
Trope	Meaning line	+	+	–
Magical word / divine name	World line	+	+	+

[77] Cf., for the possible worlds of fictions, L. Doležel, *Heterocosmica. Fiction and Possible Worlds*, Parallax. Re-visions of culture and society (Baltimore/London: The Johns Hopkins UP, 1998), and, especially for poetry, E. Semino, *Language and World Creation in Poems and Other Texts*, Textual explorations (New York: Longman, 1997).

11. *Naming the Unnamed: Principles of Complementarity and Correspondence*

Sentences (2) and (3) are really establishing an identity between God and everything and, simultaneously, between God and nothing, which can be explicitly written as (8) and (9) (sentence (9) follows from (8) according to NFA):

(8) $\text{divinity} \equiv [\![n_i]\!] \wedge \text{divinity} \equiv \neg [\![n_i]\!]$

(9) $\text{divinity} \leftrightarrow [\![n_i]\!] \wedge \text{divinity} \leftrightarrow \neg [\![n_i]\!]$

where $[\![n_i]\!]$ is the denotation of the divine name n_i.

The left parts of both conjunctions would result in pantheism and the right parts in atheism, but Dionysius professes both parts only within these paraconsistent conjunctions. One can call such a usage of classical logical constructs within a paraconsistent structure the "principle of correspondence" of Dionysius, analogous to the principle of correspondence in Quantum mechanics (whose apparatus uses classical conceptions in a non-classical way, so the proper Quantum concepts only "correspond" to the classical ones without being classical themselves).

It is also striking that (8) and (9) embody the Complementarity Principle (two mutually exclusive conceptual schemes are simultaneously applied in a paraconsistent way), but there are already genuine terms for (8) and (9)—cataphatic and apophatic theologies. Both theologies go hand in hand (the apophatic one is by no means "higher" than the cataphatic), and, from a (Quantum) logical point of view,[78] they "correspond" (in the sense of the Correspondence Principle) to the predicate logic.

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[78] To be more precise, from the point of view only of those Quantum logics which do not try to avoid the collapse of the wave function and, moreover, take the Copenhagen interpretation of Quantum theory quite seriously. Cf., for an up-to-date classification: H. Putnam, "A Philosopher Looks at Quantum Mechanics (Again)," *The British Journal for the Philosophy of Science* 56 (2005): 615–634. In this most recent paper on the topic, Putnam, whose views changed substantially since his first publications on Quantum logics in the early 1960s, is quite firm in his aversion to "Bohr's rejection of scientific realism" (p. 625, n. 13) and expresses his extreme disappointment in non-classical logical approaches. However, at the present time, the non-classical paraconsistent logics are still considered as potentially useful for the future development of Quantum logic; cf.: G. Cattaneo, M. L. Dalla Chiara, R. Giuntini, and F. Paoli, "Quantum Logic and Nonclassical Logics," in *Handbook of Quantum Logic and Quantum Structures: Quantum Logic*, ed. K. Engesser, M. Gabbay Dov, and D. Lehmann (Amsterdam etc.: Elsevier, 2009), 127–226, esp. 173–175 (for a logical rep-

Of course, there is no necessity, for an understanding of Dionysius, to take any position with regard to the Copenhagen interpretation of Quantum theory in physics. However, those kinds of Quantum logics that are aimed at formalising Bohr's approach, regardless of their applicability in physics, are especially helpful to our purpose. To my knowledge, they are the only modern attempts at presenting a logical understanding of an ontology which is logically similar to the Dionysian "two-layered" ontology of created being.

Let us turn to our conjunctions (8) and (9). The "pantheistic" conjuncts point out the divine layer of the ontology of created being, that is, they indicate that the whole created being is deified with the divine *logoi*. This deification is inseparable from the created individuals, classes, and even the situations where the divine providence is in action. The "atheistic" conjuncts point out the complete distinctness of the whole created being from the divine one, to the extent that they share no common ontology.

Dionysius tries to formulate his "non-classical" (non-Aristotelian) ideas in a "classical" language, that is, in the common language of the Platonic Aristotelianism of his epoch, and so his logic is presented as an extension of the classical one along the same lines as Bohr's Correspondence Principle. Dionysian thought is "non-classical," but his logical language is an ordinary classical one.

The Complementarity Principle is not only explicated in conjunctions (8) and (9) but also implied in each of the conjuncts in them. As an illustration, let us consider the famous Dionysian phrase: Ὁ θεῖος γνόφος ἐστὶ τὸ «ἀπρόσιτον φῶς», ἐν ᾧ κατοικεῖν ὁ θεὸς λέγεται ("The divine darkness is *the unapproachable light*, in which God is said to dwell (1 Tim 6:16)"; *Epistle* 5:1; 1073 A).

Formally, "darkness" is not a negation of "light" but this sentence (whose general meaning consists in the statement that God is both light and darkness) contains a meaningful contradiction expressing, once more, the Complementarity Principle.

Generally, the Complementarity Principle can be formalised in the following way.[79] Let T be a logical theory, and α and β formulae of the language

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resentation of Bohr's understanding of complementarity). Dionysius the Areopagite would, even less than Bohr, satisfy Putnam's criteria of scientific realism. His cataphatic and apophatic ways are just another occurrence of Bohr's complementarity principle, which, according to Bohr's "unrealistic" viewpoint, is fundamental for human knowledge as such. Cf. Niels Bohr, *Atomic Physics and Human Knowledge* (New York: J. Wiley & Sons, 1958).

[79] S., for details: D. Krause and N. C. A. da Costa, "The Logic of Complementarity," in *The Age of Alternative Logics: Assessing Philosophy of Logic and Mathematics Today*, ed.

of *T*. Thus, α and β are *T*-complementary (complementary in the theory *T*) if there exists a formula γ of the language of *T* such that:

$$(10)\quad \begin{cases} T \vdash \alpha \text{ and } T \vdash \beta \\ \alpha \vdash \gamma \text{ and } \beta \vdash \neg\gamma \end{cases}$$

As it follows from this definition, α and $\neg\alpha$ are also complementary. An important property of (10) is the following theorem: if α and β are theorems of *T*, then $\gamma \wedge \neg\gamma$ is in general not a theorem of *T*. Thus, *T* may be a classical theory that does not contain internal paraconsistency. For instance, "particle" is not a negation of "wave," and both particles of light (photons) and waves of light can be demonstrated experimentally and described classically (with the tools of classical physics using classical logic), but the Quantum theory requires that both descriptions must form a conjunction within a unified picture, where they result in contradictions (light *is* particles and *is not* particles; it *is* waves and *is not* waves); the contradictions belong to Quantum theory, whereas descriptions of photon scattering and light diffraction, taken separately, are classical.

In our example from Dionysius, God ("the divine darkness") is darkness but is also light. The two descriptions are not necessarily mutually exclusive (e.g., some other object, such as a beacon, could from time to time be both darkness and light), but they are mutually exclusive and simultaneously true in the given context. Each of these descriptions is within the limits of classical logic, but their non-classical conjunction is paraconsistent (complementary).

12. *Naming the Unnamed: The Rise of Intensionality*

Now we are in a position to draw an intermediate conclusion. In what sense are the divine names descriptions and in what sense are they names as rigid designators? Insofar as they have a metaphor-like nature based on similarity (or a metonymy-like nature based on contiguity), they are descriptions pointing out some "qualities" ("properties") of God. At the same time, the paraconsistency of the entire system of such descriptions

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J. van Benthem, G. Heinzmann, M. Rebuschi, and H. Visser (Berlin/New York: Springer, 2006), 103–120; eidem, "Complementarity and Paraconsistency," in *Logic, Epistemology, and the Unity of Science*, Vol. 1, ed. H. Rahman, J. Symons, D. M. Gabbay, and J.-P. van Bendegem (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2004), 557–568.

prevents us from understanding any single one of them as a full-fledged description similar to those that might be available for a created object. This leads to a "rigidifying" of the descriptions and their similarity with proper names in a Kripkean sense.

Such proper names that are "rigidified" descriptions were termed "partial descriptive names" by Scott Soames,[80] who also compared them with the result of applying to descriptions of the operator *Dthat* by David Kaplan[81] ("Dthat" transforms the description *D* to "*dthat D*," which is just the denotation of *D* fixed as the same in any context, even in worlds where the denotation of *D* does not exist).

However, both Soames' partial descriptive names and Kaplan's "*dthat D*" imply a one-level ontology, so neither concept is sensitive to the main problem related to the description and indescribability of God. A formal logic of poetic tropes (metaphor and metonymy), were it elaborated in the Hintikka–Sandu line,[82] would be more helpful, because it would establish the meaning lines between two different levels of ontology.[83] However,

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[80] S. Soames, *Rigidity: The Unfinished Semantic Agenda of 'Naming and Necessity'* (Oxford etc.: Oxford UP, 2002), 110–130, cf. 49. The referent of a partially descriptive name is determined in part by having some descriptive property and "…in part by the same nondescriptive mechanisms that determine the reference of ordinary nondescriptive names" (p. 51).

[81] D. Kaplan, "DTHAT" [1978], in *From Syntax to Semantics*, Vol. 9, ed. P. Cole (New York: Academic Press, 1978), 221–253; repr. in Martinich, *The Philosophy of Language*, 325–338.

[82] Cf., among presently available formal semantics of metaphors: Y. Mao and B. Zhou, "Interpreting Metaphors in a New Semantic Theory of Concept," in *New Frontiers in Artificial Intelligence: Proceedings of the 20th Annual Conference of the Japanese Society for Artificial Intelligence*, ed. T. Washio et al., Lecture Notes in Computer Science 4384 (Berlin/Heidelberg: Springer, 2007), 177–190 (in Lakoff–Johnson's line) and Pietarinen, "An Iconic Logic of Metaphors" (in Pierce's line, although influenced by Hintikka–Sandu).

[83] In fact, semantics based on the meaning lines (but without using this term or referring to Hintikka and Sandu) has already been developed by Vladimir Vasjukov for other purposes (s. above, n. 61); he called it "metaphorical logic" and characterizes it as non-Non-Fregean and non-Suszkean. The basic idea consists in a further weakening of the Non-Fregean version of the so-called Leibniz principle of identity of indiscernibles [I retain this traditional name of the principle, although Leibniz himself eventually rejected it at the very end of his life, in 1716, in the Fifth letter to Clarke; s.: F. Chernoff, "Leibniz's Principle of Identity of Indiscernibles," *The Philosophical Quarterly* 31 (1981): 126–138]. This principle can be formulated in Non-Fregean situational semantics as: $(a \sqsubseteq b) \leftrightarrow \forall\varphi(\varphi(a) \Rightarrow \varphi(b))$, where φ is a formula, $a \sqsubseteq b$ means "a situationally entails b," $\Rightarrow$ is a Non-Fregean connective "referentially leads to" [such as $\Leftrightarrow$ is the same as Suszko's connective $\equiv$ "(extensionally/referentially) identical to"]. The Leibniz principle's equivalent in metaphorical logic is the principle of similarity of indiscernibles from a preconceived viewpoint: $(a \trianglerighteq b) \leftrightarrow \exists\varphi(\varphi(a) \underline{\Rightarrow} \varphi(b))$, which means that, at least, one situation where a does occur must be involved, in some sense (from a preconceived viewpoint), in situations where b does occur. Obviously, the latter principle is too weak to be applicable to the divine names, but seems to fit quite well with the meaning lines of Hintikka and Sandu.

there are, among the modern systems of logic, those that deal with some kind of transworld identity, where Carnap's Extensionality Principle is violated and intensionality is irreducible. All of these systems of logic result from attempts to construct Quantum logic as a kind of intensional semantics (where the propositions are identified with the sets of the possible worlds in which they are true, that is, in which the outcomes of the physical events verify a given proposition).[84] The irreducibility of intensionality in such systems of logic follows immediately from the indiscernibility of Quantum objects, when different individuals show absolutely identical properties, including their spatio-temporal localisation (an impossible thing if the Leibniz principle holds).[85]

The divine *logoi* within the created objects form a limit case of such a combination of well-individuated entities corresponding to each of the created objects and the unique God. The *logoi* are different and individual, but without different properties, and simultaneously they are not only non-different but they are also unique, even more unified than the money in Schrödinger's bank account.[86]

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[84] Among the pioneering works one should name R. I. Goldblatt, "Semantic Analysis of Orthologic," *Journal of Philosophical Logic* 3 (1974): 19–35, and G. Toraldo di Francia, "Connotation and Denotation in Microphysics," in *Recent Developments in Quantum Logics*, ed. P. Mittelstaedt and E. W. Stachow (Mannheim: Bibliographisches Institut, 1985), 203–214. As Vasjukov noticed, Goldblatt uses, in his Kripkean frames, a function analogue to the intensionals of Montague: В. Л. Васюков, *Квантовая логика* [V. L. Vasjukov, *Quantum Logic*] (Moscow: Per Se, 2005), 105–106.

[85] Cf., first of all, a detailed discussion of designation and description problems (including the impossibility of the Kripkean "rigid designation") in M. L. Dalla Chiara and G. Toraldo di Francia, "Individuals, Kinds, and Names in Physics," in *Bridging the Gap: Philosophy, Mathematics, and Physics*, ed. G. Corsi, M. L. Dalla Chiara, and G. C. Ghirardi, Boston Studies in the Philosophy of Science 140 (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1992), 261–283. S., moreover, other important works: M. L. Dalla Chiara, "An Approach to Intensional Semantics," *Synthese* 73 (1987): 479–496; M. L. Dalla Chiara and D. Krause, "Quasiset Theories for Microobjects: a Comparison," in *Interpreting Bodies: Classical and Quantum Objects in Modern Physics*, ed. E. Castellani (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1998), 142–152; M. L. Dalla Chiara, R. Giuntini, and R. Greechie, *Reasoning in Quantum Theory. Sharp and Unsharp Quantum Logics*, Trends in Logic. Studia Logica Library (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2004), esp. pp. 199–200. S. also the next footnote.

[86] The unity of money in the bank account became a famous comparison explaining the idea of the indiscernibility of quantum objects proposed by Erwin Schrödinger in the early 1950s, and it became extremely popular from the early 1960s on; cf., for the full story, S. French and D. Krause, *Identity in Physics: A Historical, Philosophical, and Formal Analysis* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2006), 142–143, 159, 220, 370–371.

The difference between the *logoi* becomes observable in their created "effects" only, that is, in the diversity of the created world.[87] The situation is very similar to that of two electrons, which can be experimentally counted as two different objects but by no means ordered (because they are indiscernible). The plurality in God in the divine *logoi* is of a similar logical nature: it is only cardinal but by no means ordinal, because the *logoi* (energies) are indiscernible, or, in other words, they are discernible only by number but not by order.

These basic logical ideas provided Dionysius with the grounds for his doctrine of knowledge of God and deification—in the acts of "experimental" *undergoing* (παθῶν) *of divine* [*things*] (*DN* 2:9, 648 B).

13. *The Descriptionism of Basil of Caesarea*

Dionysius formulated his doctrine of naming God in the second half of the fifth century, when the most elaborated and widely known Christian doctrine on this subject was that of the Cappadocian Fathers, especially in the formulations of Basil the Great and Gregory of Nyssa in their polemics against Eunomius.[88] According to a widespread and, most probably, correct scholarly opinion, it is this doctrine that presented a firm traditional base for Dionysius' doctrine of divine names.[89] However, the Cappadocian doctrine of divine names was aimed at dealing with intra-Trinitarian distinctions. Thus it touched only in general terms on the question of divine names (the names referring to God without differentiation of hypostases—the

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[87] Cf., as a short but very instructive introduction to this topic in Dionysius, an early 6th-cent. scholion to *On the Heavenly Hierarchy* 15:4, to the place where Dionysius quotes Eph 3:10 on *the manifold Wisdom of God* (πολυποίκιλος σοφία τοῦ θεοῦ): *PG* 4, 109 AB.

[88] Our actual knowledge of this polemics is gathered together especially in V. H. Drecoll, *Die Entwicklung der Trinitätslehre des Basilius von Cäsarea: Sein Weg vom Homöusianer zum Neonizäner*, Forschungen zur Kirchen- und Dogmengeschichte 66 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996), and S. M. Hildebrand, *The Trinitarian Theology of Basil of Caesarea. A Synthesis of Greek Thought and Biblical Truth* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2007).

[89] S. especially the seminal article by B. Krivochéine, "Simplicité de la nature divine et les distinctions en Dieu selon S. Grégoire de Nysse," *SP* 16 (1985): 389–411, although this author does not devote even a single word to Dionysius. However, he describes Gregory of Nyssa's conception of naming God as grounded on the divine energies. For a larger perspective, s. J.-C. Larchet, *La théologie des énergies divines. Dès origines à saint Jean Damascène*, Théologie et sciences religieuses. Cogitatio Fidei 272 (Paris: Cerf, 2010), where the main part of the book is dedicated to the three Cappadocians. However, the divine names, in Cappadocian thought, are never explicitly identified with every created object or lack thereof, even if such a conclusion can be derived from their doctrine.

main concern of Dionysius) and it did so only tangentially. In their treatment of non-triadological names of God, the Cappadocians had a limited purpose—to demonstrate that the names taken from ordinary language can be applied to God univocally, that is, not as complete homonyms, even if not in a literal manner. They did not go into the level of detail presented later by Dionysius, nor did they intend to do so. The core of their doctrine was a theory of the names of individual beings as distinct from the names of general essences (classes). Unlike Dionysius, the Cappadocians were obliged to construct a theory of proper names for different hypostases of the Trinity.

Studies of the Cappadocian theory of names are still in their beginning stages. Only Basil's works have been thoroughly examined, whereas the relevant works of Gregory of Nyssa (and, possibly, Marcellus of Ancyra and Didymus the Blind, who were closely connected with the Cappadocian Fathers) are still awaiting their investigator, who would have to be armed with our modern theories of meaning. What is most relevant here is that the available studies, which focus on Basil's texts, are mostly centred on Basil's understanding of the proper names of humans and his pertinent background in philosophical traditions of Greek antiquity. However, Basil's logic, which was implied in the application of the doctrine of human proper names to the Holy Trinity, remains unexplained.[90] There are, nevertheless, some recent studies in which the problem of the tension between Basil's usage of common philosophical terms and the natural language, on the one hand, and their application to the Trinity, on the other, is fully recog-

[90] The question of the grounding and limitations of the applicability of Basil's theory of human proper names to God is never posed in any of the three most important studies in the field: P. Kalligas, "Basil of Caesarea on the Semantics of Proper Names," in *Byzantine Philosophy and Its Ancient Sources*, ed. K. Ierodiakonou (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2002), 31–48; D. G. Robertson, "A Patristic Theory of Proper Names," *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 84 (2002): 1–19 (the paper is limited to Basil of Caesarea, with no mention of any of the other Fathers); Д. А. Бирюков, "Тема описания человека через 'схождение особенностей' у свт. Василия Великого и ее церковно-исторический и историко-философский контекст" [D. A. Birjukov, "The Theme of the Description of the Human Person through the 'Concurrence of Characteristics' in St. Basil the Great and Its Context in the History of the Church and the History of Philosophy"], *Богословские труды* [*Theological Studies*] 42 (2009): 87–109. I am grateful to Dmitry Birjukov for discussing these topics with me. A recent important wide-ranging study by M. Del Cogliano, *Basil of Caesarea's Anti-Eunomian Theory of Names. Christian Theology and Late-Antique Philosophy in the Fourth Century Trinitarian Controversy*, Supplements to *VC* 103 (Leiden etc.: Brill, 2010), basically follows Kalligas and Robertson in understanding Basil's theory of proper names, while entering into some details of Basil's philosophical background, but without any mention of the modern logical theories (pp. 191–196).

nized and discussed. However, in these studies, Basil's procedure of "purification" of the corresponding terms before their application to God is simply described following Basil's own explanations, without any specific logical analysis.[91]

Basil needed to prove, as opposed to Eunomius, that the term ἀγεννητός ("unbegotten"), attributed to the Father by both the Arians and their adversaries, refers only to a hypostasis ("hypostasis" means an individual being = first essence, οὐσία, in Aristotelian language), but not to the second essence (universal/common being, such as genus or species). A part of his argumentation is constructed on his original—or, at least, with no exact ancient parallels known to us—semantics of proper names. The crucial passage is *Contra Eunomium* II, 4,[92] where Basil explains his understanding of the proper names of humans as the "concurrence of different characteristics" (ἑτέρων ἰδιωμάτων συνδρομή). This συνδρομή (lit. "concurrence," and, in philosophical usage, "conjunction") produces a specific "character" (χαρακτήρ) of each man. Thus, the proper names refer not to human essence as a whole (which includes all men) but only to an individual human. It is no wonder that this concept of "character" would have an important future in the theology of icons and, thus, in the corresponding developments in Christology.[93] However, its usability in the triadological discussions was not without problems.

As both Kalligas and Robertson noticed, Basil's approach here is very similar to John Searle's way of avoiding both Kripke's rigid designators theory and Putnam's externalism (denying any internal connexion between the words and their meanings)[94] and returning to the descriptionism of

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[91] S., first of all, D. G. Robertson, "Relatives in Basil of Caesarea," *SP* 37 (2001): 277–287, esp. 279–280, and, following him, A. Radde-Gallwitz, *Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nyssa, and Transformation of Divine Simplicity*, OECS (Oxford etc.: Oxford UP, 2009), 114–122 (section entitled "A Central Tension: 'Common Usage' and Purification"). These pages form a necessary context for the apprehension of the papers by Kalligas and Robertson (cited in the previous footnote) within their genuine context in Basil the Great.

[92] B. Sesboüé, *Basile de Césarée. Contre Eunome*, T. II, SC 305 (Paris: Cerf, 1983), 18–22.

[93] For the notion of character in the theology of icons, s.: В. А. Баранов, "К вопросу об экзегезе святоотеческого текста по триадологической проблематике в иконоборческих спорах" [V. A. Baranov, "Toward the Question of the Exegesis of a Patristic Text Related to the Problems of Triadology in the Iconoclastic Quarrels"], in *"Св. Троица" прп. Андрея Рублева в свете православного апофатизма. 18 ноября 2005 г. Иконоборчество: вчера и сегодня. 22 сентября 2006 г. Материалы конференции* (St Petersburg: RKhGA, 2007), 127–143, and, for a later period, Lourié, "Le dispute sans justes."

[94] S. especially his 1975 paper (based on a previous version from 1973): H. Putnam, "The meaning of 'meaning'," in idem, *Philosophical Papers*, Vol. 2: *Mind, Language and Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1979), 215–271.

Frege and Russell, although on a different level. According to Searle,[95] the proper names do refer to the individual characteristics of objects, but in a rather loose way. The relevant characteristics can be collected into different sets, and so any proper name corresponds to a logical sum (inclusive disjunction) of different descriptions. This means that, normally, several different ways are available if there is a need to describe who Aristotle is (Searle's example) or, say, who Peter and Paul are (Basil's examples). These paths are different but not mutually exclusive (e.g., Aristotle is *both* "a man who originated from Stagira" and "the teacher of Alexander the Great"), and this is why their disjunction is inclusive. All the improper contexts, which would lead to a misunderstanding of such descriptions, are rejected, in the process of communication, by the *intention* of the communicating persons. Thus, Fregean descriptionism still holds, but only when one takes into account intentionality.

In Basil of Caesarea, the proper names of humans function in very much the same way. Basil's χαρακτήρ, too, is a logical sum (inclusive disjunction) of different characteristics (individual idioms), that is, a set of available descriptions (or, as Kalligas has rightly put it, a power set of such descriptions *minus* the null set). The most important question is, however, how such a theory could be applied to the names of the hypostases of the Holy Trinity.

14. *Naming the Unnamed: Metonymic Approach*

Basil of Caesarea interpreted the proper names of the hypostases of the Holy Trinity as descriptions. Thus, for instance, the name "Father" refers to "fatherhood," that is, to be unbegotten (ἀγεννητός) and to beget, and the name "Son" refers to "sonship," which means to be begotten by the Father.[96] There is an important distinction between such descriptions and the descriptions appropriable to humans: there is no place, here, for the variability of possible descriptions, and so their inclusive disjunction contains only a unique element, because "fatherhood" and "to be unbegotten and

[95] S. his seminal paper: J. R. Searle, "Proper Names," *Mind*, New Ser. 67 (1958): 166–173, esp. 172–173. For a broader perspective, s. J. R. Searle, *Intentionality: An Essay in the Philosophy of Mind* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1983), 231–261 (Ch. 9: Proper Names and Intentionality).

[96] In Basil's own words (*Contra Eunomium* I, 5), "…τῆς Πατρὸς φωνῆς ἴσον δυναμένης τῷ ἀγεννήτῳ… (…since the term 'Father' is equivalent in meaning to 'unbegotten'…)" [B. Sesboüé, ed., *Basile de Césarée. Contre Eunome*, T. I, SC 299 (Paris: Cerf, 1982), 176]. S., for details, Robertson, "Relatives in Basil of Caesarea," 277–278 *et passim*.

to beget" are synonyms referring to the same extensional content. Despite some variety in terminology, it was always important, in the Cappadocian system of thought, that the idioms of each of the hypostases of the Holy Trinity were unique, in such a way that each single hypostasis has only one hypostatic idiom. Thus, the corresponding power sets of descriptions contain only one element for one hypostasis, which means that the corresponding power sets of descriptions are singletons.

However, these idioms are relative properties (τὸ πρὸς τί, which can be translated as "relation") that are defined through each other, for example, the relative property of "being a father" implies the existence of another being with the relative property of "being a child." The extensional contents of these terms when they are applied to the divine realities remain the same as in their habitual usage for created things. As Basil himself states, "[f]or the difference between the Son and other things does not consist in relation [the concept of relation is the same in both cases—*B. L.*]; rather, the superiority of God to mortals manifests itself in what is proper to his essence."[97] Here Basil explicitly formulates the metonymic principle (contiguity, relation) as the basis of the Trinitarian divine names. The difference, in comparison to human fatherhood, consists not in that principle (contiguity) but in the objects connected according to that principle.

Thus, calling the triune God "Father," "Son," and "Spirit" is a kind of metonymy, although, in the larger context of the Cappadocian theology, we have to specify that this metonymy is ontologically committed, that is, it is based on world lines instead of meaning lines.

The same names "Father," "Son," and "Spirit" could be applied to God in a metaphor-like manner in which they are not considered as relatives to each other. The examples of such a usage of "Father" and "Spirit" are abundant, because it is a biblical tradition.[98] However, in this case, these names are not exactly the same as in the Trinitarian context. In Scripture-based theological discussions, especially on Trinitarian issues (e.g., on the *Filioque*), we very often meet with attempts to discern between metaphor-

[97] *Contra Eunomium* II, 10.25–27: Οὐ γὰρ ἐν τῷ πρὸς τί πως ἔχειν ἡ διαφορὰ τῷ Υἱῷ πρὸς τὰ ἄλλα, ἀλλ' ἐντῇ ἰδιότητι τῆς οὐσίας ἡ ὑπεροχὴ τοῦ θεοῦ πρὸς τὰ θνητὰ διαφαίνεται (ed. Sesboüé, t. II, 40), quoted, together with the translation, according to Radde and Gallwitz, *Basil of Caesarea*, 116, n. 9.

[98] However, not the name "Son." Both names "Son" and "Father" are relative to each other, but God can be called "Father" outside the Trinitarian context, e.g., "Our Father" of the Lord's Prayer, whereas it is difficult to imagine a context in which he can be called "Son." Nevertheless, this peculiarity of the name "Son" is of a theological rather than a logical nature.

like and metonymy-like usages of the corresponding divine names in the Bible, that is, whether they refer to one of the three hypostases or the triune God.

Therefore, unlike the names applied to God without distinguishing between the hypostases, the proper names of the hypostases of the Holy Trinity are defined as a system of the three relative properties connected to each other. In other words, the triune God is described with the three descriptions, which, in turn, are disjunctions (logical sums) of unique descriptions.

Such a metonymy-based theological language is not alien to Dionysius, but he never elaborates on it. He limits himself to an indication (almost the only one) that he does know that language and uses it:

> Πάλιν, ὅτι μέν ἐστι πηγαία θεότης ὁ πατήρ, ὁ δὲ υἱὸς καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς θεογόνου θεότητος, εἰ οὕτω χρὴ φάναι, βλαστοὶ θεόφυτοι καὶ οἷον ἄνθη καὶ ὑπερούσια φῶτα, πρὸς τῶν ἱερῶν λογίων παρειλήφαμεν. (*DN* 2:7, 645 B).[99]

15. *Trinitarian Connective: Paraconsistent Ternary Exclusive* Or

To conclude our exposition of the semantics of the Cappadocian idea of triunity, let us consider its logical core in a more formal way.

Let d_i be a description implied by the proper name p, so that p can be defined (taking into account the proper intentional context) as the inclusive disjunction:

$$(11) \quad p =_{def} \bigvee_i d_i$$

However, when applying this to the divine hypostases, only the unique description remains available, d. So, for the proper names of the Trinity, P, F, and S, the descriptions are the singletons d_P, d_F, and d_S. All of them are relative to each other, but also mutually exclusive: to have the property d_P means to have neither property d_F nor d_S, and so on.

Thus, for each one of the three hypostases, only one of these three properties can be and is true. In other words, for a given hypostasis, these three properties are connected with the ternary exclusive *or*, which is not to be

[99] Rolt's tr.: "Again, that the Father is Originating Godhead while Jesus and the Spirit are (so to speak) Divine Off-shoots of the Paternal Godhead, and, as it were, Blossoms and Super-Essential Shinings Thereof we learn from Holy Scripture; but how these things are so we cannot say, nor yet conceive."

confused with the exclusive disjunction in the habitual sense of the term, $\oplus$. The ternary exclusive *or* (which we will designate $\underline{\vee}^3$, following Pelletier and Hartline[100]) means "exactly one of the three":

(12) $\underline{\vee}^3 (d_P, d_F, d_S)$ (for each one of the three hypostases).

The connective $\underline{\vee}^n$ could be called "the 'real' variable adicity exclusive *or*," because "…it is the one that is relevant to formal accounts of natural language," although "…that topic has not been addressed by the logic textbooks (nor by the formal semantic descriptions of natural language)."[101] Instead, the textbooks pay much attention to another kind of exclusive disjunction, whose meaning is quite different when its arity becomes more than 2.

This ordinary exclusive disjunction $\oplus$ (roughly corresponding to the English "either… or") is a binary and not a ternary connective, and so, $\oplus^3 (d_1, d_2, d_3) = d_1 \oplus d_2 \oplus d_3$, which is nothing other than an iteration of $\oplus$. The difference between the two connectives, $\underline{\vee}$ and $\oplus$, has a crucial value for understanding Cappadocian trinitary logic. For the unique God, the three hypostatic properties form a ternary conditional:

(13) $d_P \leftrightarrow d_F \leftrightarrow d_S$ (for the unique God),

which means that the existence of each single hypostasis implies the existence of the two others; no separate existence of the hypostases is possible.

There would be no problem to attribute (12) to one single logical object and (13) to another single logical object. However, such a pair of different logical objects does not exist. The three hypostases and the unique God are simultaneously the only and the same logical object. We have here the most well-known feature of the Cappadocians' paraconsistent logics, its famous equation 3 = 1 (the statement that God is triune). Here we approach it not in the most common way, through ontology, whose point of departure is a paraconsistent use of the Aristotelian ontological categories of the

[100] F. J. Pelletier and A. Hartline, "Ternary Exclusive *Or*," *Logic Journal of the IGPL* 16 (2008): 78–83.

[101] Pelletier and Hartline, "Ternary Exclusive *Or*," 77. The ternary exclusive *or* was first described in the pioneering studies of logical connectives by Emil Post (1941), which were rescued from oblivion mostly in the 1990s. Cf. A. Urquhart, "Emil Post," in *Handbook of the History of Logic*, Vol. 5: *Logic from Russell to Church*, ed. D. M. Gabbay and J. Woods (Amsterdam etc.: Elsevier, 2008), 617–666.

first and the second essences,[102] but starting from the use of descriptions, that is, semantics. Our conditions (12) and (13), when applied simultaneously, form a paraconsistent biconditional (14):

$$(14) \quad \underline{\vee}^3 (d_P, d_F, d_S) \leftrightarrow (d_P \leftrightarrow d_F \leftrightarrow d_S)$$

This expression means that both and only both could be true: God is simultaneously the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, and, for him, it is impossible to be the Father when being the Son or the Spirit.

Were there another connective, $\oplus^3$, here, the biconditional (14) would be not only not paraconsistent, but trivial. The binary exclusive disjunction with any arity $\oplus^n$, where n is a natural number, is equivalent to the n-ary conditional for any odd n starting from $n = 3$. This is evident from the fact that the logical biconditional is the negation of the exclusive disjunction $\oplus$, and *vice versa*: $a \oplus b = \neg (a \leftrightarrow b)$. Therefore, for any odd $n \geq 3$, the truth value of the function $\oplus^n$ is "true" not only in the case that exactly one of its n arguments is true, but also in the case that all of them are true. In contrast, the truth value of the function $\underline{\vee}^n$ is "true" only in the case that exactly one of its n arguments is true. Taking this into account, the function $\oplus^n$ might be called "the odd counting function of adicity n," and iterations of $\oplus$ should be called "addition modulo 2" rather than "exclusive disjunction."[103] When $n = 2$, $\underline{\vee}^n$ is also a counting function resulting in the same truth values as $\oplus^2$ (that is, simply $\oplus$) with the same results of its iterations. However, $\underline{\vee}^2$ is a counting function only "extensionally"—in the sense that "intensionally" it is a derivate of $\underline{\vee}^3$ (and not *vice versa*), and the latter is not a counting function: "iterating $\underline{\vee}^3$ does not 'keep track of' how many arguments are true/false."[104]

Thus, the use of the iterated binary exclusive disjunction instead of the ternary one would imply "keeping track of" truth values of previous arguments, and so express some kind of subordination between the divine hypostases, which is absolutely prohibited in the Cappadocian framework.

Moreover, for $n = 3$, $\oplus^3 (d_1, d_2, d_3) = d_1 \leftrightarrow d_2 \leftrightarrow d_3$, which would make our biconditional (14) trivial, if it contained $\oplus^3$ in the place of $\underline{\vee}^3$.

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[102] В. М. Лурье, *История византийской философии. Формативный период* [B. Lourié, *A History of Byzantine Philosophy. The Formative Period*] (St Petersburg: Axiōma, 2006), 80–101.

[103] Pelletier and Hartline, "Ternary Exclusive *Or*," 77.

[104] Pelletier and Hartline, "Ternary Exclusive *Or*," 80.

16. *Conclusion*

We have been trying to avoid—as far as possible, and, therefore, not completely—any discussion of the Areopagite's ontology and epistemology. Instead we have focused our attention on his semantics. In what sense are Dionysius' "divine names" true names and in what sense are they descriptions? In what sense does the unnamed God become named with these divine names?

Predictably, the Areopagite's semantics turned out to be paraconsistent, but, in other respects, this is not as odd as one might have expected. One can consider his "divine names" as a limit case of metaphors and metonymies, but ontologically committed ones. The corresponding semantics is irreducibly intensional and Non-Fregean. In modern logic, the closest parallels to Dionysian semantics are to be found in those Quantum logics where the basic ideas are the Kripkean possible worlds as the propositions and the violation of the Leibniz principle of the identity of indiscernibles.

Dionysian "non-classical" logic is strongly attached to classical logic *via* the Correspondence Principle, and paraconsistency is introduced *via* the Complementarity Principle. Of course, this is hardly an innovation on the part of Dionysius but rather a tradition (inherited from, first of all, the Cappadocian Fathers). I deliberately used for both principles the names coined by Niels Bohr, because it was Bohr who reintroduced both of them into modern philosophy.

A comparison with the intensional semantic of metaphor and metonymy opens a door to further the understanding of our perception of irreducible intensionality. Metaphor and metonymy are not completely translatable into the language of description: any paraphrase of them with ordinary words would destroy precisely that meaning which was the purpose of using the corresponding trope. Nevertheless, normally, tropes are used to improve the explanatory power of discourse rather than to fog the truth. This fact proves that our thinking sometimes works in Non-Fregean ways, and this is so especially in cases in which its power needs to be greater. Therefore, the real laws of right thinking which are called "logic" are, in general, irreducibly intensional, and thus can be submitted to Carnap's Extensionality Principle only in some particular cases. Such was the basic logical intuition of Leibniz, the father of modern intensional logics. No wonder, then, that this same intuition was the basis of the logic of patristics.[105]

[105] I am very grateful to Dr. Claudia R. Jensen for having improved my English.