

## A LATIN TRINITY

Brian Leftow

Latin models of the Trinity begin from the existence of one God, and try to explain how one God can be three Persons. I offer an account of this based on an analogy with time-travel. A time-traveler returning to the same point in time repeatedly might have three successive events in his/her life occurring at that one location in public time. So too, God's life might be such that three distinct parts of His life are always occurring at once, though without any succession between them, and this might give God the triune structure Christian theology believes He has.

The Athanasian Creed has it that Christians

worship one God in Trinity...the Father is God, the Son is God and the Holy Spirit is God. And yet they are not three Gods, but one God.<sup>1</sup>

Such odd arithmetic demands explaining. Some explanations begin from the oneness of God, and try to explain just how one God can be three divine Persons.<sup>2</sup> As Augustine, Boethius, Anselm and Aquinas pursued this project, let us call it Latin Trinitarianism (LT). I now sketch a Latin view of the Trinity and argue that it is coherent.

### *The Latin view*

On LT, there is just one divine being (or substance), God. God constitutes three Persons. But all three are at bottom just God. They contain no constituent distinct from God.<sup>3</sup> The Persons are somehow God three times over, since as the Athanasian Creed puts it, "we are compelled by the Christian verity to acknowledge every Person by Himself to be both God and Lord."<sup>4</sup> Thus too the Creed of the Council of Toledo has it that

although we profess three persons, we do not profess three substances, but one substance and three persons... they are not three gods, he is one God... Each single Person is wholly God in Himself and... all three persons together are one God.<sup>5</sup>

Again, Aquinas writes that



among creatures, the nature the one generated receives is not numerically identical with the nature the one generating has...But God begotten receives numerically the same nature God begetting has.<sup>6</sup>

To make Thomas' claim perfectly plain, let us talk of tropes. Abel and Cain were both human. So they had the same nature, humanity. Yet each also had his own nature, and Cain's humanity was not identical with Abel's: Abel's perished with Abel, while Cain's went marching on. On one parsing, this is because while the two had the same nature, they had distinct tropes of that nature. A trope is an individualized case of an attribute. Their bearers individuate tropes: Cain's humanity is distinct from Abel's just because it is Cain's, not Abel's.

With this term in hand, I now restate Thomas' claim: while both Father and Son instance the divine nature (deity), they have but one trope of deity between them, which is God's.<sup>7</sup> While Cain's humanity  $\neq$  Abel's humanity, the Father's deity = the Son's deity = God's deity. But bearers individuate tropes. If the Father's deity is God's, this is because the Father *just is* God: which last is what Thomas wants to say.

On LT, then, there clearly is just one God, but one wonders just how the Persons manage to be three. If the Father "just is" God, it seems to follow that

1. the Father = God.

If "each single Person is wholly God in Himself," and both Son and Father have God's trope of deity, it seems also to follow that

2. the Son = God.

But then since

3. God = God,

it seems to follow that

4. the Father = the Son,

and that on LT, there is just one divine Person.

(1) and (2) raise another problem. Cornelius Plantinga writes that an

incoherence...comes out in the generation statements: the divine thing does not generate, get generated or proceed, despite the fact that Father, Son and Spirit, identical with it, do. How are we to imagine this?<sup>8</sup>

Plantinga's point is this. According to the Nicene Creed,

5. the Father generates the Son.

But the claim that

6. God generates God

is either unorthodox or necessarily false. Nothing can "generate" itself, i.e. bring itself into existence. So if (6) asserts that something "generates" itself, it is necessarily false. But if (6) asserts that one God "generates" a second God, it implies polytheism, and so is unorthodox. Now the Nicene Creed commits Christians to (5). In conjunction with (1) and (2), (5) yields (6). So if LT is committed to (1), (2) and (5), LT entails either unorthodoxy or a necessary falsehood. Of course, avoiding this problem by rejecting (5) is just unorthodoxy of a different stripe.

The other options for LT are to reject all or just some of (1), (2), and the cognate claim that the Spirit is God. Rejecting all also seems to wind up unorthodox. For then there seem to be four divine things- Father, Son, Spirit and God. But if "each single Person is wholly God in Himself," each includes God somehow. So surely God is not a fourth divine thing in addition to any Person.<sup>9</sup> And in any case, on the doctrine of the Trinity, there are at most three divine things. That's why it's a doctrine of Trinity, not Quaternity. Rejecting just some can trim the number of divine beings to three- e.g. by accepting (1) but denying (2) and that God = the Spirit. This would retreat to a form of Trinity rejected well before Nicaea. It also raises the question of just what the relation between God and the Son is.<sup>10</sup>

Everything is either God, an uncreated object distinct from God or a creature. To call the Son a creature is to embrace Arianism. If the Son is a creature, it's hard to see how He can be fully divine, or even divine at all- divine/creaturely seems an exclusive disjunction. But Scripture does not let Christians deny all deity to the Son.<sup>11</sup> Further, whether or not the Son is *as* divine as God, if He is created, He is a divine being who *is not* God. The positing of divine beings in addition to God is of course polytheism. So it is easy to see why the early Church found Arianism unacceptable.

If the Son is an uncreated item discrete from God, it is false that God has made all that He does not include, which flies in the face of Scripture and Creed.<sup>12</sup> To call Him divine, uncreated and discrete from God is to opt for a polytheism even clearer than Arianism's. But if the Son is not a creature or an uncreated item discrete from God, He is in *some* way God.<sup>13</sup> How then, if not by simple identity? One option here would be to say that God is always Father, but only temporarily Son, or necessarily the Father but only contingently Son. This avoids polytheism: God *is* in some way Son. If there are no temporary or contingent identities, it is consistent with denying (2). But of course it leaves us the question of just what God's relation to the Son *is*. The clearest account of this seems to be Modalism: the being who is always, necessarily the Father, contingently and temporarily takes on a second role, as Son, in such a way that (so to speak) when the Son was on earth, nobody was home in heaven, and the Father counts as crucified. Modalism sits ill with Scriptural passages which seem to treat Father and Son as two separate persons, e.g. Christ's saying "I have come down from

heaven not to do my will, but to do the will of him who sent me" (*John* 6:38) and praying "Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the creation of the world" (*John* 17:5). Such texts make it clear why the early church found Modalism unacceptable. It thus seems that LT cannot be coherent, monotheist and orthodox. I now suggest that LT can be all three, and speculate as to how it may be so.

*Time-travel, tap-dancing, and the Trinity*

You are at Radio City Music Hall, watching the Rockettes kick in unison. You notice that they look quite a bit alike. But (you think) they must just be made up to look that way. After all, they came on-stage at once, each from a different point backstage, they put their arms over each others' shoulders for support, smile and nod to each other, and when the number is over, they scatter offstage each in her own direction. So they certainly seem to be many different women. But appearances deceive. Here is the true story. All the Rockettes but one, Jane, called in sick that morning. So Jane came to work with a time machine her nephew had put together for the school science fair. Jane ran on-stage to her position at the left of the chorus line, linked up, kicked her way through the number, then ran off. She changed her makeup, donned a wig, then stepped into her nephew's Wells-o-matic, to emerge in the past, just before the Rockettes went on. She ran on-stage from a point just to the right of her first entry, stepped into line second from the chorus line's left, smiled and whispered a quip to the woman on her right, kicked her way through the number, then ran off. She then changed her makeup again... Can one person thus be wholly in many places at once? The short answer is: she is in many places at the same point in *our* lives, but not the same point in *hers*. If Jane travels in time, distinct segments of her life coincide with the same segment of ours. To put this another way, Jane's personal timeline intersects one point in ours repeatedly.

Now in this story, there is among all the Rockettes just one trope of human nature. All tropes of human nature in the Rockettes are identical. But consider this argument:

- 1a. the leftmost Rockette = Jane.
- 2a. the rightmost Rockette = Jane.
- 3a. Jane = Jane.

So

- 4a. the leftmost Rockette = the rightmost Rockette.

The argument appears sound, but doesn't shorten the chorus line. There is just one substance, Jane, in the chorus line. But there *is* also an extended chorus line, with many of *something* in it. Many what, one asks? Some philosophers think that Jane is a four-dimensional object, extended through time as well as space- that not Jane's life but Jane herself has earlier and later parts.<sup>14</sup> If this is true, each Rockette is a temporal part of Jane.

If (as I believe) Jane has no temporal parts, then not just a temporal part of Jane, but Jane as a whole, appears at each point in the chorus line, and what the line contains many of are segments or episodes of Jane's life-events. This may sound odd. After all, Rockettes dance. Events do not. But what you see are many dancings of one substance. What makes the line a line is the fact that these many events go on in it, in a particular set of relations. Each Rockette is Jane. But in these many events, Jane is there many times over. She plays different causal roles, once (as the leftmost Rockette) supporting the second-from-left Rockette, once (as the second-from-left) being supported by the leftmost, etc. And she has genuine interpersonal relations with herself in her other roles. She leans on herself for support, smiles to herself, talks (and talks back) to herself. The talk may even be dialogue in the fullest sense. In changing makeup, wig, etc., Jane might well forget what she said when she was leftmost in the line, and so a remark she hears when she is one in from the left might well surprise her, and prompt a response she did not anticipate.<sup>15</sup> The Wells-o-matic lets the one Jane be present at one time many times over, in many ways, as the leftmost Rockette, the rightmost, etc. It gives us one Jane in many *personae*. If we give the name "Rockette" to what we see many of, it lets the one Jane be (or be present in) many Rockettes. The Wells-o-matic allows this by freeing the events composing Jane's life from the general order of time.

Is time travel genuinely possible? I travel in time into the future if, with no gaps in my existence, periods of suspended animation, time spent unconscious, or subjective slowing in my experience, I find myself at a point in world-history beyond where the biological aging of my body and (say) the time on my watch would date me: if, say, I step into a machine, step out 10 seconds later by watch- and body-time, and find that it is next year. If this is an acceptable description of futureward time-travel, then the Special Theory of Relativity entails that it occurs. For the theory entails that the time of an accelerated object dilates: if we mount a sufficiently precise clock on a body A, accelerate A a while, then compare the A-clock with one which has not been accelerated, the A-clock will be found to have run more slowly. If A-time thus dilates, the A-clock travels into the future *per* the description above. Experiments have confirmed that time-dilation occurs.<sup>16</sup>

In some models of the universe consistent with General Relativity's field equations and requirements on the universe's mass-energy distribution, physical objects can travel into the past. This is reason to call pastward time travel physically possible.<sup>17</sup> Paradoxes threaten stories of pastward time travel ("suppose I went back and killed my earlier self before he got into the time machine..."). Some think these reason to call it conceptually impossible.<sup>18</sup> But they may not be. According to Earman, these paradoxes

bring out a clash between Gödelian time travel and what might be held to be conceptual truths about spatiotemporal/causal order. But in the same way the twin paradox of special relativity theory reveals a clash between the structure of relativistic space-times and what were held to be conceptual truths about time lapse. The special and general theories of relativity have both produced conceptual revolu-

tions. The twin paradox and the [time-travel paradoxes] emphasize how radical these revolutions are, but they do not show that these revolutions are not sustainable or contain inherent contradictions.<sup>19</sup>

In other words, if the physics clashes with our pre-theoretic intuitions, it may be the intuitions (and *a fortiori* philosophical theories built on them) which should give. And the paradoxes are not necessarily intractable. It would take a full paper of its own fully to motivate a solution to the time-travel paradoxes. But it would be good to say something to suggest that these can be solved, or at least come as close to solution as matters for my purposes. For I go on to model the Trinity on a time-travel case.

#### *Time-travel paradoxes*

The “killing my earlier self” paradox is the most disturbing intuitively. This paradox applies to Jane: can Jane as rightmost turn and kill Jane on her left, before next-left Jane made it to the time machine to re-emerge and take her rightmost place? A “no” answer seems untenable. Surely it’s physically possible for Jane to pick up a knife on the way to her rightmost station, turn toward the next person in line, etc. But if yes, then there is a physically possible world in which Jane arrives at a point in her personal future after (it seems) having made it impossible for herself to get there. Moreover, Jane’s killing her earlier self seems to generate a contradiction: Jane does travel back in time this last time, else she could not commit the murder, but if Jane does commit the murder, Jane dies before returning to the time-machine and so does not travel back in time. So if yes, it is apparently within Jane’s power to make a contradiction true.

For my purposes, I need not suggest a full solution to this paradox. I want to suggest by analogy with a time-travel case that it is possible that God be a Latin Trinity. That is, I want to suggest that for all we know, this is how it is with God in some metaphysically possible world. To suggest this, I need only make out the analogy (which I have already begun to do) and make a case that there is a metaphysically possible world containing pastward time travel. To do this last, I need only point to the physics and suggest that in some world with such a physics, the paradoxes would not arise. A full solution to the time-travel paradoxes would show in effect that time-travel is compatible with all the facts about our own world. I need not argue this, for my claim is only that a Latin doctrine of the Trinity has likenesses to something found in *some* metaphysically possible world.

Now the paradox above is that seemingly we cannot grant either that Jane can or that she cannot kill her past self. To show that there is a possible world immune from this paradox, we need only show that there is a possible world conforming to an appropriate solution to the General Relativity equations in which an analogue of one or the other claim is true. I suggest that in some such GR-world, a creature just like Jane and in her situation simply cannot kill her past self. We think that Jane can kill her past self because we think she has libertarian freedom and the physical possibility of so using it. But it is within God’s power to make creatures very like us save that they lack libertarian free will, and to site them in an

appropriate GR-world physically deterministic at the macro-level. Suppose that God makes such a creature, Janet, and sets her in such a world which physically determines that she does not kill her past self when she emerges from a time-machine. Then there is no possible world indiscernible from Janet's up to the time at which she exits the machine in which she kills her past self. It is just not possible that she do so given these antecedents. Physical determinism and the lack of libertarian freedom can occur in an appropriate GR-world. So the "retro-suicide" paradox does not entail that pastward time travel does not occur in any possible world. And I do not need to claim that time travel can occur in *our* world to claim that a Latin Trinity exists in some world. For that matter, I don't need to claim this to assert that a Latin Trinity exists in our world. For if physical indeterminism and created libertarian freedom did in fact rule time travel out of our world, they would not also rule out a Latin Trinity. These things have no bearing at all on God's nature, since I do not claim that God travels in time, and in any case they exist only logically after God has His nature.

A second sort of paradox can be built on the first, and to this I now suggest a full solution. Suppose that rightmost-Jane knifes the next person in line. Next-left Jane, stunned and confused by the attack, picks up a knife to defend herself on the way back to the time-machine, and in her confusion attacks in the wrong direction when she emerges: she attacks herself because she was attacked. A causal "loop" runs from next-left Jane's being attacked to the attack by rightmost Jane, and so the being-attacked is in its own causal ancestry. Every event in the causal loop is fully explained causally by immediately prior events. The puzzle is that *globally*, each event seems its own full explanation- since in tracing its ancestry, we find our way around the loop to the event itself- and that since nothing can explain its own occurring, it seems that globally, each event has no full explanation at all, despite having a *local* causal explanation. Putting it another way, there seems no real reason that Jane has a knife-wound. She has it at every point in the loop due to something earlier in the loop, but there seems no answer to the question of why there is ever any time at all at which Jane has a wound.

This is a paradox, but is it an impossibility? Quantum theory suggests that we must learn to live with events with no full physical causes. "No event causes itself" looks like a necessary truth, but it doesn't rule loops out. In the loop, no event *locally* causes itself. Nor does any event *globally* cause itself. Globally- that is, taking into account all events in the loop- events in the loop are uncaused, at least physically. The loop offends against intuitions that favor principles of sufficient reason, but it is impossible only if some fairly strong PSR is a necessary truth. If one is, of course, one can run powerful arguments for the existence of God. So atheists, at least, might not wish to push this sort of objection. Of course, an atheist might Chisholm away at PSRs to produce one gerrymandered to keep both loops and God out. But such a principle would quite likely forfeit its claim on our intuitions, and so provide no real *reason* to think loops impossible. And even theists needn't push PSR objections. For given a PSR strong enough to yield God, an explanation of the entire loop's existence is avail-

able from outside the loop. It is that God brought it into existence: the reason Jane has a wound is that God brought this about, by conserving the entire loop.<sup>20</sup> So I claim that an intuitively plausible PSR strong enough to rule loops out will rule God in. But with God ruled in, loops become compatible with the PSR after all. I conclude that the possibility of loops is an oddity, but does not rule time travel out.

Retro-suicide and causal loops yield the strongest objections I know to the possibility of time-travel. I suggest that the loop paradox dissolves on inspection, leaving us with an oddity that falls well short of contradiction, and that there is a possible world containing time-travel in which retro-suicide is not possible. But even if I turn out wrong about these things, Jane's story is consistent and broadly conceivable. Even if pastward time travel is in some way impossible, we have detailed physical models of the world in which it can occur. It is physically impossible that there be frictionless planes, but talk about them—detailed physical models in which they occur—can clarify the behavior of actual physical things. More to the point, time-travel stories may have at worst the status of intuitionist logic. I hold that classical logic is true, and necessarily true. If it is, there are no intuitionist possible worlds—it is not, for instance, possible for some  $p$  that  $\neg p$  be true and  $p$  not be true. The distinctive theses of intuitionism state metaphysical impossibilities. But they are internally consistent, comprehensible impossibilities. We know in great detail how logic would be were they true—so to speak, we have detailed logical models of the world in which they occur. We understand intuitionist theses full well, we can reason consistently within intuitionist strictures, and—here's the most important point—we can even appeal to intuitionist theses to clarify other things which may be metaphysically possible or even true (“if the future is indeterminate, then it is as if for some future-tensed propositions, negation behaves intuitionistically”). So even if pastward time travel is impossible, talk about it may help us clarify other, genuinely possible things.

Further, *if* pastward time-travel is impossible, this is due to the nature of space, time, and the causal order within them: in short, because of the relations which link events located in space and time. If pastward time-travel is impossible, what pastward time-travel stories show us are relations time-bound events cannot instance because they *are* time-bound. The classic Latin Trinitarians agree that God is not in time. If He is not, then if there *are* such things as events in His life, they are free from temporal constraints. They need not be related as events in time are. Again, if God *is* in time, it does not follow that events in His life are ordered as other temporal events are. Even if they have some temporal properties, they might not have the full complement of ordinary temporal properties.<sup>21</sup> If God's life is at least as free from ordinary temporal ordering as a pastward time traveler's would be, it is conceivable and so may be possible that in His life, one substance is three Persons in some form of social relation— as in Jane's case one substance is (or is present in) many Rockettes. So we need not suppose that God travels in time to draw this moral: God's life may be free from time's bonds. If it is, its events may be strangely structured, and this may be relevant to the doctrine of the Trinity.

*Events and the Trinity*

There is one Jane, but she was present many times over in the chorus line. At one point in our lives, many discrete maximal episodes in her life were co-present. These episodes were discrete in that along Jane's own personal timeline, they did not overlap (they were strictly successive). These episodes were maximal in that any point during each included one event in Jane's life of which every other event occurring at that point in Jane's life was part, and at any point we could say, for a shorthand, simply that *that* event was occurring. Suppose, then, that God's life has the following peculiar structure: at any point in our lives, three discrete parts of God's life are present. But this is not because one life's successive parts appear at once. Rather, it is because God always lives His life in three discrete strands at once, no event of His life occurring in more than one strand and no strand succeeding another.<sup>22</sup> In one strand God lives the Father's life, in one the Son's, and in one the Spirit's. The events of each strand add up to the life of a Person.<sup>23</sup> The lives of the Persons add up to the life God lives *as* the three Persons. There is one God, but He is many in the events of His life, as Jane was in the chorus line: being the Son is a bit like being the leftmost Rockette.

Of course, the cases also differ. Not all of Jane's life is on display in the chorus line. But every event in God's life is part of the Father-Son-Spirit chorus line; God does not live save as Father, Son and Spirit. Jane has just one life, with a peculiar episode partway through. It does not consist of anything else that counts as an entire life. God's life always consists of three other things which count as entire ongoing lives.<sup>24</sup> While the disruption between Jane's personal timeline and the sequence of events in ordinary public time had a special cause, God's life just naturally runs in three streams. Again, along Jane's personal timeline, first she only dances in one spot, then she runs to the machine, then she only dances in another spot. Jane dances in one spot only after she dances in another. Not so for God: God always lives in all three streams. God's life always consists of three non-overlapping lives going on at once, none after the other, as the series of positive numbers consists of two non-overlapping series, the positive rationals and irrationals, "going on at once" within the series, neither after the other.

Jane's story includes an account of how the many Rockettes are generated (the time-travel story) which involves succession. This account does not rule out Jane's existing at all times, and even having three streams of her life going at all times. For suppose that Jane exists at all public times. Then if public time has a first and last instant, the time-machine brings it about that after Jane's life at time's last instant comes a next instant of Jane's life located at time's first instant.<sup>25</sup> There is no public time after public time's last instant or before its first, but in Jane's life, her personal time, there is a period after the last instant of time (one which begins Jane's life's second stream, at time's first instant) and one before public time's first instant (namely, her entire first life-stream).<sup>26</sup> If time has a finite length but no last instant, there is a further puzzle. Suppose that the Wells-o-matic sends Jane pastward at some particular time. If time has no last instant, there is time *after* that time. So it seems that Jane misses some of time the first time

around, in which case it's not true that her first life-stream exists at all times. But suppose e.g. that there is a last full second followed by an open period not more than a second long. Then we can simply say that Jane spends all of that open period in the machine, and that the machine brings it about that the first period of Jane's second life-stream succeeds the period she spent in the machine. If time has an infinite future, there is no particular problem in saying that infinite periods of Jane's life succeed one another. Such number-series as 1, 3, 5... 2, 4, 6... are mathematically unproblematic. Jane's life in this case would consist of minutes paired 1:1 with the members of some such series. What's puzzling is again just when the machine sends Jane back. One way to dissolve the puzzle is just to have Jane live in the machine for all time after a particular point, and say that the machine links her time in it to her life's second stream earlier in time. It should be clear from what I've said how the time-machine scenario can handle further permutations on the length and topology of time. So talk of time-travel can even provide some model of a life which always has three streams. Jane's generation-account, again, involves succession. Whatever account we give in God's case will not. But here my point is simply that we can make some sense of there being a life so structured as to have three discrete streams going on at once, even if that life includes all of time. I do not claim that the analogy is perfect.

Some might say that what makes the time-travel story comprehensible is precisely what's missing in the Trinitarian case.<sup>27</sup> Parts of Jane's life *succeed* parts of Jane's life, and so we can make sense of her winding up as three dancers at once as we watch her. But Persons' lives do not succeed Persons' lives. Instead, I've said, God just always lives in three streams. So how does one better understand the Trinity *via* the time-travel analogy? In Jane's story, again, three streams of events going on at once, which initially seem like three lives, turn out to be the life of one individual. On the surface, it might seem that what makes the story work is the succession between the life-segments. But it's more basically the causal relations between her life-segments. These are segments of one individual's life not because they succeed one another in a timeline but because the right causal relations link them. For one can imagine (borrowing an illustration from Lewis<sup>28</sup>) that when Jane enters the time-machine, she is annihilated and replaced by an atom-for-atom duplicate put together by the machine, with Jane existing at all times up to *t* in her personal timeline and the duplicate existing from Jane-time *t* onward. In this story, the duplicate is an "immaculate replacement" for Jane- its timeline succeeds and continues hers without a gap. But clearly the resulting life is not a further part of Jane's. Now some argue that the difference between duplicate-succession and continued existence is primitive and ultimate- that identity over time is a brute matter, not grounded in relations among the events of a life.<sup>29</sup> But if it is not, it rests largely on causality. The duplicate's life does not continue Jane's *inter alia* because the causal relations between the events aren't right- the positions, motion etc. of the atoms constituting Jane's body (and Jane herself, on materialism) don't directly cause those of the duplicate's atoms.<sup>30</sup> Conversely, on materialism, it's because (*inter alia*) these atoms' present motion is caused in the right way by the immediately prior motion of the atoms in Jane's body

that this person's life continues Jane's, and so this person is Jane. If Jane has a soul and continues to exist only if it does, still causation is relevant, for the same soul continues to exist only if its earlier states contribute causally to appropriate sets of its later.<sup>31</sup> Succession by a duplicate isn't continued existence, and so doesn't give us a case of three streams of one life going on at once, because the causal relations between the relevant streams of events aren't right. Causal relations at least help determine the identity of the substance in the differing streams of Jane's life; it's (perhaps *inter alia*) because the right causal relations link them that they are successive stages of one life, as vs. successive smoothly continuous lives of duplicate Janes. And if this is correct, it lends itself to Trinitarian use.

As causal relations between the event-streams in the Jane case help make them streams within one life, we can suppose that causal relations do the like without succession in the Trinitarian case: that is, we can suppose that causal relations between the event-streams involved are what make them all streams within one individual's life. The causal relations involved are those of the Trinitarian processions: the Father "begetting" the Son, the Father and the Son "spirating" the Spirit. Nobody has ever claimed to explain how these work, so I'm at no disadvantage if I do not either. Every Trinitarian has claimed that whatever these relations amount to, they yield distinct Persons who are the same God. I say the same. The time-travel analogy makes this point: causal relations between streams of events going on at once and apparently involving wholly distinct individuals can make them streams of events within a single life. That point applies univocally to the Trinitarian case. Those who hold that the Son eternally proceeds from the Father hold that there eternally is a causal relation between them such that the events of the Son's life and the events of the Father's are events within the life of one single God. They leave the mechanism involved a mystery. The time-travel case shows that there is some intelligible story one can put where the mystery is in a structurally similar case. This does not remove the mystery, but it domesticates it a bit: thinking about time-travel shows us that causation can do the kind of thing Trinitarians claim it does. In Jane's case, ordinary identity-preserving causal relations link events in her life as each Rockette, and the causal relation which makes what look like three individuals' lives into the lives of one individual—the one the time-machine induces—directly links only the ends of various short event-streams, not the events in the middle. The Trinitarian relations of generation directly link entire streams: every maximal event in the Father's stream has or contains a begetting relation to an appropriate event or set of events in the Son's stream. But we know of nothing that would make this impossible—why *can't* causal relations which turn what are apparently three lives into one life link more than just the end-segments of streams?

If one asks what sort of persons the Persons are, on this account, the right answer is that they are whatever sort God is- the Persons just *are* God, as the Latin approach will have it. The Persons have the same trope of deity. Numerically the same substance generates their mental episodes. Just as Jane has her own thoughts while she is the left- and rightmost Rockettes, God has His own thoughts as Father and Son. But just as Jane does not think her leftmost thoughts at the point in her life at which she is

rightmost, God does not think His Father-thoughts at the points in His life at which He is Son. Just as Jane can token with truth "I am the leftmost Rockette" and "I am the rightmost," God can token with truth "I am the Father" and "I am the Son." But just as Jane cannot token both claims with truth at the same points in her life, God cannot token with truth "I am the Son" at points in His life at which He is Father.<sup>32</sup> Just as Jane at the leftmost spot on the chorus line has no internal access to and is not thinking the thoughts she thinks at the rightmost spot, God as Father has no internal access to and is not thinking the thoughts of God as Son.<sup>33</sup> So the Son is distinct from the Father as leftmost Rockette is from rightmost, and the Son's mind is distinct from the Father's as leftmost's is from rightmost's.

On my account, the Persons' distinctness, like the Rockettes', depends on that of events involving a particular substance. Their identities are event-based; facts about events in God's life are what make Him triune. There is reason to say that at least one classic Latin account of the Trinity is in this way event-based. Aquinas begins his *Summa Theologiae* Ia account of the Trinity with questions on Persons' procession from Persons (q. 27), relations among Persons (q. 28) and finally the Persons themselves (q. 29). The first claim in his positive account of procession is that "all procession is according to some action"<sup>34</sup> that Persons proceed from Persons because of some divine act. The story Thomas tells of some of these acts is this.<sup>35</sup> God understands Himself. This is a divine act- God *does* something.<sup>36</sup> Because God does something, His understanding Himself is what we would call an event.<sup>37</sup> According to Thomas, because God understands Himself, His mind naturally generates an "understood intention," something expressing the content of His self-understanding. This is His "inner Word."<sup>38</sup> The coming to be of this "intention" is the Word's proceeding from the Father. Now "coming to be" suggests a process. This is misleading, as the Word is generated instantaneously and so exists co-eternal with God's self-understanding.<sup>39</sup> As Thomas points out, what's left when we remove this misleading implication is just an eternal relation of origin.<sup>40</sup> But this is a *causal* relation. And so its distal term is a caused state of affairs, the Word's existing. The obtaining of a caused state of affairs as and because it is caused is (I'd argue) an event.<sup>41</sup> One can call this event the Word's filiation. Because the Word proceeds, God's initial self-understanding has a relational property: it is the cause of an understood intention. Because it has this property, God's understanding Himself is also the Father's fathering the Son, His having the causal relation of paternity. For Thomas (following Augustine and Boethius), the Persons are distinguished solely by relational properties (being the Father of, being the Son of). That is, the only difference between God the Father and God the Son is that one is someone's Father (and no-one's Son) and the other is someone's Son (and no-one's Father). These relational properties are exemplified entirely because certain acts- events-take place in God's inner life (self-understanding, inner expression; fathering, filiation): this is why Thomas orders *ST's* Trinity treatise to move from acts to processions to relational properties, and only then to Persons. In fact, Thomas says, the relational properties' being exemplified just *is* the acts' taking place.<sup>42</sup> So what distinguishes God the Father from God the Son is simply which act God is performing. God the Father is God fathering,

God the Son is God filiating, or being fathered. The Persons simply are God as in certain acts—certain events—in His inner life.<sup>43</sup> These events have no temporal sequence. None succeeds the other, for none are in time. As they are not in time, they have no temporal parts. God just eternally *does* the acts which constitute His life; these acts render Him triune.

Aquinas attempts to explain why God's self-understanding renders Him a Father and a Son, when our own acts of self-understanding do not do this to us.<sup>44</sup> But we needn't tackle this issue, at least for now.<sup>45</sup> One *could* suggest that it's just a primitive fact about the kind of thing God is that one stream of His life generates a second stream, and the two together generate a third stream, as it is about our kind that that this does not happen to us.<sup>46</sup> Explanation has to stop someplace, and the doctrine of the Trinity is supposed to be in the end mysterious.

### *Preserving the Persons*

To be minimally acceptable, an account of the Trinity must be coherent and orthodox. So an event-based account must at least show that it can deal with (1)-(4) and the "generation" argument. On an event-based account, on one reading, (1)-(4) is sound but irrelevant. If God as the Persons is relevantly like Jane as the Rockettes, then just as (1a)-(4a) did not shorten the chorus line, (1)-(4) do not collapse the Trinity. (1a)-(4a) did not shorten the chorus line because the real force of (4a) is

4a\*. the substance who is the leftmost Rockette = the substance who is the rightmost Rockette.

(4a\*) is compatible with the sort of distinction leftmost and rightmost have. To eliminate Rockettes, one would have to infer from (1a)-(3a) not (4a) or (4a\*), but that the episode of Jane's life in which she is the leftmost Rockette and has not previously been any other Rockette is the last episode on her timeline in which she is any Rockette. It's obvious that (1a)-(3a) cannot by themselves yield this conclusion. The Trinitarian parallel is clear: (1)-(3) do not license the conclusion that the events (life) in which God is Father are the only events (life) in which He is any Person.

On the present view, the generation argument loses its sting. For it assigns (5) the sense

5a. God in the event(s) in which He is Father generates God in the event(s) in which He is Son.

(5a) asserts something relevantly like event causation within God's life: it causally links one segment of God's life to another. This does not entail that a second God exists *or* that one item causes itself to exist.<sup>47</sup> (5a) so taken still yields (6), but also so interprets (6) as to make it harmless. And in fact, the event-causal relations involved here provide a natural hook on which to hang an account of the Persons' generation-relations.

Thus one could simply concede (and ignore) these arguments. But in fact, there is more than one way to read them. On the second reading,

thinking about time-travel suggests that they are in an unusual way unsound and invalid.

*Timelines and soundness*

For an argument to be sound, all its premises must be true at once. We see all the Rockettes at once. So of course it seems to us that (1a)-(3a) are all true at once. For that matter, we tend to think all identity-statements true omnitemporally if true at all (or at least true for all time after their subjects begin to exist<sup>46</sup>), and so again true at once (once their subjects exist). But when Jane has gone home, nothing satisfies the description "the leftmost Rockette" (though Jane of course satisfies "the person who *was* the leftmost Rockette"). If nothing satisfies "the leftmost Rockette," the description does not refer. And if the description does not refer, (1a) is not true. If we see (1a) as omnitemporally true (or as true for all time after Jane starts to exist), this is because we treat "the leftmost Rockette" as temporally rigid, picking out Jane at all times if it picks her out at any (or all future times once it picks her out at any). But we needn't. And read as involving a temporally non-rigid description, (1a) can cease to be true. This might suggest that (1a) is not "really" an identity-statement, that at some deep level it is "really" the predication that Jane is the leftmost Rockette. I take no stand on this. What's clear is that the predication can cease to be true, and on the non-rigid reading, the identity-statement is true only as long as the predication is.

With the descriptions rigid, (1a)-(4a) is sound but irrelevant: we took the descriptions as rigid in the last section. Now let us read (1a) and (2a) non-rigidly. If we do, an ambiguity emerges. (1a)-(3a) are all true at the same point in our lives. So for us, the argument is sound (though still irrelevant). But on Jane's timeline, things differ. When Jane is the leftmost Rockette, she has not yet lived through dancing in the rightmost Rockette's spot- even if she has a perfect memory, she has no memory of this. Jane then shares the stage with the rightmost. So Jane is then living through existing simultaneously in public time with her dancing in the rightmost Rockette's spot. But still, on Jane's timeline, (2a) is not yet true, because Jane has not yet done what she must to satisfy the description "the rightmost Rockette," even though (1a) and (2a) are true at once on *our* timeline. So too, when (2a) is true on Jane's personal timeline, (1a) has ceased to be true. Jane *recalls* dancing in the leftmost spot, and so qualifying for the title "the leftmost Rockette," and one can only remember what has happened in one's past. Dancing as leftmost is something she *once* did but is no longer doing- on her timeline. This is so even though Jane is then living through existing simultaneously in public time with her dancing in the leftmost spot. So on Jane's personal timeline, with its premises read non-rigidly, (1a)-(4a) *is never sound*.

This suggests that there is actually a tense involved in (1a) and (2a), at least when we treat the descriptions as non-rigid. The ordinary-language sentences (1a) renders are after all "Jane is the leftmost" or "Jane is identical with the leftmost" (and so for (2a)). In these, "is" is present-tensed. Whether non-rigid (1a) and (2a) are true at once depends on whether the present the tense brings in is Jane's own or that of the public timeline. So here is the

ambiguity: the non-rigid-description reading of (1a)-(4a) is sound (though as irrelevant as the rigid reading) if the tenses invoke the public timeline, but never sound if they invoke Jane's. If pastward time-travel can occur, it's Jane's timeline that counts: that (1a)-(4a) is sound along the public timeline is irrelevant. To show why, I now sketch another problem about time-travel.

In the same period of public time, Jane does (as rightmost) and does not (as leftmost) remember exiting the stage after the leftmost Rockette danced her number. So it seems that time-travel entails a flat-out contradiction. To avoid this, the defender of time-travel must relativize Jane's remembering somehow. One option would be to relativize to different places: Jane recalls this in the rightmost but not the leftmost spot, and it is no contradiction to recall-this-in-the-rightmost-spot at  $t$  but not recall-this-in-the-leftmost-spot at  $t$ , even though it is one to recall this and not recall this at  $t$ . But this is unintuitive, it's hard to avoid the feeling that if Jane remembers in one spot then Jane remembers *simpliciter* (which re-instates the contradiction), and it isn't sufficiently general, as it would not handle time-travelers not located in space (angels, perhaps). Another option would be to relativize to different temporal parts of Jane- the rightmost part does recall and the leftmost does not- and reject the move from Jane's part's remembering then to Jane's remembering then or else parse "Jane remembers then" strictly in terms of her temporal parts. But that Jane has temporal parts so ordered implies that Jane has a personal timeline distinct from the public timeline.<sup>49</sup> So if relativizing to Jane's timeline will solve the problem by itself, it's a cheaper solution: it doesn't commit one to temporal parts. It's better, then, to relativize to Jane's time-line, i.e. to say that there's no contradiction involved in Jane's time-travel because Jane recalls and does not recall at different points in her life. But this dissolves the problem only if Jane's personal timeline takes precedence over the public time-line: that is, only if that Jane recalls  $P$  at a point in her life coinciding with public time  $t$  does not imply that Jane recalls  $P$  at  $t$  *simpliciter*. For of course, if this did follow, the original contradiction would be re-instated. Pastward time-travel is possible only if it does not involve the contradiction above. The best way to block the contradiction is to relativize Jane's recalling to her timeline. But this works only if facts about the order of segments of Jane's own life supersede facts about the public timeline- only if, as it were, Jane while time-travelling is really in her own time even though every instant of her life coincides with some instant of public time. This last is exactly what one would expect if there can be pastward time-travel, in which individual timelines break free of the public timeline.

If time-travel can occur, then that  $P$  at a point in one's life which coincides with public time  $t$  does not entail that  $P$  at  $t$ . Nor does  $P$ 's being so at public  $t$  entail that  $P$  is so at every point in one's life which coincides with public  $t$ . Jane exits the stage from her leftmost position at public time  $t+1$ . So at public time  $t$ , she has not yet made the exit, and does not remember it. As Jane exits the stage after her first dancing, her timeline has not yet diverged from public time. So if her not recalling this exit at public  $t$ , before she made it, entailed that she did not recall it at every point in her life which coincided with  $t$ , then she would both recall it and not recall it as rightmost. If time-travel can occur, then, that Jane does not at public time  $t$

recall her exit does not entail that Jane does not recall this at every point in her life which coincides with *t*. Not all facts about the public timeline impose themselves on the time-traveler's timeline.

There are stages of our lives at which Jane is presently both the leftmost and the rightmost Rockette. During any such stage, (1a)-(4a) is sound. But Jane's life has no such stage. For again, as we watch the Rockettes, we see all at once events that for Jane are successive, i.e. not all co-present. On her timeline, when she is presently the rightmost Rockette, being the leftmost Rockette is in her past.<sup>50</sup> Now if time-travel can occur, facts about time-travelers' personal timelines supersede facts about public time. That (1a)-(3a) are all true at once in public time does not entail that they are all true at once during Jane's life, even though all segments of Jane's life coincide with public times. So if time-travel can occur, the fact that (1a)-(4a) is sound in public time does not matter. Along Jane's timeline it is wrong to treat (1a)-(4a) as a proof, even though we would be right to do so. Even if the argument were able (as it were) to shorten the chorus line, it would do so only if it were sound along Jane's timeline.

It would strengthen my overall case if I could show that what must be so if time-travel is possible is so- i.e. that for quite general reasons, personal timelines supersede public time. For the nonce I can only suggest something weaker. There is not (say I) some single substantival entity, Time, which passes at Newton's "uniform and equable rate." What we call time's passage is just a function of what events occur, and how they occur. Events compose all timelines, public and personal. So at the very least, there is no *a priori* reason that we should treat public time as having priority over personal, and able (as it were) to impose itself upon it. For both are wholes composed equally of the same basic parts. They simply arrange those parts differently, if they differ. Now in some cases, parts compose wholes only by composing larger parts of those wholes: players compose baseball leagues only by composing those leagues' teams, atoms compose walls only by composing bricks which compose walls. It is at least arguable that public time is really just the fusion of personal times- that events compose public time only by composing personal times which compose public time. If this is not just arguable but true, of course, then traits of personal times take precedence.

#### *Soundness and Trinitarian timelines*

In any case, the Trinitarian parallel to my treatment of Jane is clear. On my account, God's life runs in three streams. In one stream, (1) is so. In another, (2) is so. In no stream are both so. So in no stream of God's life are (1)-(4) or the generation-argument sound. For this fact to matter, pastward time-travel need not be possible- though if it is, that of course is helpful. It need only be the case that as in my treatment of the time-travel case, facts about God's personal timeline(s) supersede facts about the public timeline. I now argue that if God is atemporal, they do, while if God is temporal, it is at least coherent to maintain that they do.

If God is atemporal, as the classic Latin Trinitarians held, His life is wholly independent of time, and so the public timeline does not constrain

it. Facts about the order of events in His life supersede facts about the public timeline in almost the sense facts about Jane's timeline do. If time-travel can occur, "P at a point in one's life which coincides with public time t" does not entail "P at t," nor *vice-versa*. It's hard even to come up with a sense in which a timeless God's life would coincide with times.<sup>51</sup> But just suppose that if God is timeless, then there is *some* sense in which (1) is so at a point in God's life coinciding with all times—after all, at every time, if one asserts (1), what one asserts is true. Even so, it does not follow from this that (1) is so *at* any t. For if God is timeless, no event in His life occurs at any time. But if (1) were the case at t, this would be because an event helping make it so occurred at t: what is true then is true then because part of what makes it so occurs then.<sup>52</sup> So if God is timeless, it's not true in his case that for all P, if P at a point in His life coinciding with t, then P at t. If God is timeless, then even if P is true of Him and it is now t, it is not the case that P *at* t. Instead, P is so without temporal location.

The reverse entailment, from "P at t" to "P at some point in God's life coinciding with t," seems to fail as well if God is timeless. For at t, all and only those events before t are such that their happening is in the past. But at no point in God's life is this so. If for God anything is in the past- over, done and gone—God has a past, and so is temporal. Even if we waive this and allow that somehow, things can have happened for a timeless God, still if only *some* of time has happened for Him, then for Him, time has reached only that point- and so the rest of it lies in His future, and so He has a future and is again temporal. Moreover, if God's life does not occur in time, no facts about public time are relevant to "when" in His life claims are true. Events occur at different points in public time, but on any account of divine timelessness, they are given "all at once" for God- that is, at the same point(s) in His life. So events' order for God differs from their order in public time- though of course God knows what their order in public time is.

One might think that the public timeline imposes itself on God's this way: if God is atemporal, at every moment of time t, it is timelessly so that (1) and (2). So (1) and (2) are the case at t timelessly, and so the case at one time timelessly. However, timeless facts obtain, but not *at* any time. So "at t, it's the case that timelessly P" does not entail "it's the case at t timelessly that P." Further, suppose that (1) and (2) are the case at one time timelessly (whatever this might mean). This would not make (1) and (2) true at the same point in God's life. A parallel case can show this. Suppose God were temporal, but His personal time were simply a series of periods wholly discrete from our time- none before, during or after any period in our time. Then God's time would be related to ours just as the life of a timeless God would be, and it would be true that

- A. for each public time of ours t, at t, somewhere in God's own time, (1) and somewhere in God's own time, (2).

But (A) would not entail that (1) and (2) are true at once in God's own time. Times discrete on God's own timeline would not be collapsed into one because there is a second time to each period of which each has exactly the same temporal relation, namely none at all. If this isn't clear intuitively,

consider a spatial parallel: suppose that there is a second space, consisting of points with no spatial relations at all to ours. Then (let's say)

- B. for each place of ours  $p$ , it is the case at  $p$  that in the second space, both a dog and a cat are located somewhere.

But (B) does not entail that the dog and the cat occupy the same place. So if God is timeless, facts about the public timeline and about God's life's relations to it cannot supersede facts about when within God's life (1) and (2) are true. If (1) and (2) are true only in discrete parts of God's timeless life, facts about our time cannot make them true "at once."

Now if God is timeless, it is just timelessly the case that God's life has three "streams." That is, it consists of three aggregates of events each with the right internal relations to count as a single life and the right generation relations to set it off from events in the other sets.<sup>53</sup> If there is no temporal relation between these streams, and facts about our time cannot make them true at one time, then it is not the case that (1) and (2) are true at one time-period. But this is not enough to show that (1)-(4) and the generation argument are never sound for God. For suppose that there were neither time nor God- that there was only a three-dimensional space. If there is no time, no claims are true at one time. But surely the argument "this is a space; any space has dimensions; so this space has dimensions" would be sound. Again, plausibly mathematical truths are timeless. If so, none are true at one time. But even so, surely some mathematical arguments are sound. So the truth about soundness must be that an argument is sound only if none of its premises' being true is separate temporally or in some other relevant way from the rest's. In the case of mathematical truths, there is no relevant separation. In God's case, there is. (1) and (2) are true only in non-overlapping parts of God's life which are relevantly like temporal maximal episodes. This makes (1)'s and (2)'s being true relevantly separate, as does the parallel gap in Jane's life between (1a)'s and (2a)'s being true. The separation in Jane's case is discreteness along a private timeline. If God is timeless, the discreteness of episodes in His life is not along a timeline. But (I now suggest) it is enough like discreteness along a timeline in its *causal* aspects for Jane's case to be relevant to God's.

In Jane's case, the separation of what occurs all at once in public time into different segments of one life is there due to causal relations among the segments. These events' causal relations make them parts of one and the same life. They also account for the events' discreteness, for they include relations events cannot bear to their own parts. Events are discrete iff they have no parts in common. If event A causes all parts of event B, it follows that B and A share no parts, as no event causes the occurrence of its own proper parts, and so that A and B are discrete. By causing B, A accounts for B's existence and its having the parts it does. B's having just the parts it does establishes B's discreteness from A. So by causing B, A accounts for B's discreteness from A. Finally, these events' causal relations make them temporally ordered non-simultaneous parts of Jane's life (even though they are simultaneous parts of public time) if they include causation of a sort involving temporal precedence.

Now if a life is temporal, then if two of its segments are discrete, it follows that either one immediately succeeds the other or there is a temporal gap between them. Because of this, propositions can be true in one segment but not the other. So if a life is temporal and two of its segments are discrete, then due to this they stand in a relation which lets propositions be true in one but not the other. I now generalize from this, and say that if segments are discrete yet in one life, then due to this they stand in a relation which lets propositions be true in one but not the other, whether or not the life is temporal. I do so based on my brief rejection above of substantial time. For non-substantialists about times, times just are sets or fusions of co-occurring events. If so, then if truths can differ at different times, they can equally differ at different sets or fusions of co-occurring events: to relativize truths to times is to relativize them to events. If relativizing to events is fine for temporal events, why would things differ for atemporal?

If this is true, then if causal relations account for the segments' discreteness and their being in one life, they also account for the fact that propositions can be true during one of these segments which are not true during the other. Nor does time play the essential role here. By starting something new of a temporal sort, A's causal powers make time pass. It's not that A places B at a later point in time and so lets B make true truths A did not. It's rather that A brings B about, and so makes things true which were not true before, and so makes B's time a later one. Facts about time are not basic but derivative. It's causation which makes the temporal facts about A and B what they are. The real story about the relations between segments of Jane's life, the one which lets them have different properties while we watch them all at once, is causal, not temporal.

In Jane's case, all the segments occurred in one public-temporal period, but causal relations between them made them discrete segments of one life, with truths unique to each. In a timeless God's case, all the segments occur at once in the eternal present, but causal relations between them make them discrete segments of one life. Here too, then, there are truths unique to each. There is no temporal separation along a private timeline in this case. But I've suggested that it is causal, not temporal features that matter here, and in any case there is a more profound temporal disconnect, in that there are no temporal relations *at all* between the segments- only causal ones. Causation, not time, accounts for the distinctive features of Jane's case. I've claimed that the causal relations involved in Trinitarian generation are enough like those involved in time-travel that the key features of Jane's case carry over. If this is correct, arguments sound in public time need not come out sound along the "time"line of the Trinitarian lives.

The remaining question, then, is whether there is some analogue to a public timeline within timeless eternity, which might make (1) and (2) true at once for God. The short answer is: there is, but it can't, any more than the fact that the many Janes all dance at once in public time can make the segments of Jane's life we see in the chorus line simultaneous in Jane's private time (which would be to collapse them all to a single segment). Causal relations between the lives of the Persons make them both discrete as lives and yet lives of one God. This is the mystery of the Trinitarian generations; I have not claimed to crack it. That there is one eternal present is

the public timeline of eternity. That the events occur at one present does not eliminate the discreteness of the events whose one present this is any more than it did in Jane's case. Again: it is causal relations between events in Jane's life which both make them discrete- as effect from cause- and unite them into one individual's life, even if all these events are linked by time-travel and occurring at one present. So too, causal relations make the Persons' lives both discrete and the lives of one God, even if linked by Trinitarian generation and occurring at one eternal present. Causal relations so bind Jane-events that (1a)-(4a) fails, even if all the Rockettes kick at once in public time. So too, I suggest, causal relations among the atemporal events of an atemporal God's life block (1)-(4) even if the Persons share a single eternal present. If all of eternity is a single present and God's life has discrete parts, what follows is simply that God's life is relevantly like a time-traveler's, with discrete parts occurring at once in such a way as to respect the discreteness of the parts. I submit, then, that if God is timeless, (1)-(4) and the generation argument are not sound on His "time"-line. (1) and (2) are never true at the same points in God's life even if they share a single eternal present.

Each Rockette is Jane. But in terms of Jane's personal timeline, in the way just set out, each is not Jane *while* the others are Jane. Let "while\*" be a connective relativized to a particular timeline, and making no reference to general, public time. Then Jane is not the leftmost Rockette while\* she is the rightmost, though her being both coincides with the whole of the public time her number involves. In the same way, each Person is God, but God is not the Father while\* He is the Son.

#### *What if God is temporal?*

If God is temporal, facts about His timeline might equally well supersede facts about the public timeline. A temporalist could assert that they do without argument, making it simply part of his/her particular conception of God's eternity. But some temporalists, at least, could offer an argument that this is so. For some temporalists maintain that God has made time, or that it is as it is because He is as He is: that God's being has some sort of causal priority to time's existing or having its character.<sup>54</sup> If either is true, then surely God gives time such a nature as permits Him to exist as His nature dictates. If God determines time's nature, then even if He is temporal, if God's nature is such that His life should consist of three streams related relevantly like streams of a time-traveler's life, nothing in the nature of time will preclude this.

#### *Sortals and soundness*

No infant is a man. But Lincoln was infant and man: "that infant" and "that man" picked Lincoln out at different points in his life. Now consider this argument:

7. that infant = Lincoln,
8. that man = Lincoln,

9. Lincoln = Lincoln,

and so

10. that infant = that man.

Taking the descriptions as temporally rigid, the argument is sound, but of course does not prove that someone is both infant and man at once. Taking the descriptions non-rigidly, (7) ceases to be true when Lincoln ceases to be an infant, well before Lincoln is an adult. So the argument is never sound. One might think (10) true even so. But more precisely, what's true is that the person who was that infant = the person who is that man. Strictly speaking, reading the descriptions non-rigidly, (10) is false. For an identity statement is true only if the terms flanking "=" refer to the same item at once, and if we take them non-rigidly, "that infant" and "that man" never refer to the same item at once<sup>55</sup>: nothing is a man while\* it is an infant. Let me now introduce a technical term, "phased sortal."<sup>56</sup> "Infant" and "man" are phased sortals: they pick out a substance under a description which essentially involves a particular phase of its life. Identity-statements linking temporally non-rigid descriptions involving mutually exclusive phased sortals cannot be true. So with the descriptions non-rigid, (7)-(10) is not only never sound but has a false conclusion.

In the Rockette case, "the leftmost Rockette" and "the rightmost Rockette" act as mutually exclusive phased sortals picking out Jane, if we're dealing only with Jane's own timeline. So too, on the account of the Trinity I've been suggesting, "Father" and "Son" are mutually exclusive phased sortals picking out God. (1) and (2) are never true at once\*: God is not Father while\* He is Son. And (4), like (10), cannot be true- though it is of course true that while\* God is the Son, God is the God who is also the Father.

#### *Trinitarian lives and validity*

Once temporary identities enter the picture, identity-statements are implicitly relativized to times (or something time-like). If so, then if we let "t"s refer to times on Jane's timeline, with the descriptions read non-rigidly, we really have

- 1b. ( $t_1 \ \& \ t_2$ )(Jane = the leftmost Rockette),
- 2b. ( $t_3 \ (>t_2) \ \& \ t_4$ )(Jane = the rightmost Rockette), and
- 3b. (t)(Jane = Jane).

(1b)-(3b) are all true. But what I now argue suggests that the move from them to (4a) is invalid.

Here is an argument philosophers have discussed at length<sup>57</sup>:

- 11. Necessarily, 9 is greater than 7.
- 12. 9 = the number of the planets. So
- 13. Necessarily, the number of the planets is greater than 7.

The premises are true, yet the conclusion is false, since there could have been just 6 planets. So obviously, something goes wrong here.

(11) asserts of 9 that it has a property, being greater than 7, in all possible worlds. (12) is true, but not in all possible worlds. "9" and "the number of the planets" actually refer to the same number. But they need not have. Neptune and Pluto might never have formed, or might have formed but never been caught by the Sun's gravity. So it could have been the case that there were just seven planets. If it had, "9" and "the number of the planets" would not have had the same referent. So it is possible that "9" and "the number of the planets" do not refer to the same number. (13) asserts in effect that "the number of the planets" picks out a number larger than 7 in every possible world. But as we have seen, this is not true. So this inference from necessarily  $Fx$  and  $x=y$  to necessarily  $Fy$  is invalid. One moral one might draw from this is that in a modal context (i.e. within the scope of "necessarily"), the fact that two terms "a" and "b" actually refer to the same thing (i.e. that an identity-statement like (12) is true) does not suffice to warrant substituting "b" for "a." What is required instead to have a valid inference (one which cannot take us from true premises to a false conclusion) is that "a" and "b" refer to the same thing in every possible world. For consider by contrast

11. Necessarily, 9 is greater than 7.

12a.  $9 = 3^2$ . So

13a. Necessarily,  $3^2$  is greater than 7.

"9" and " $3^2$ " refer to the same thing in every possible world. And thus both premises and conclusion are true.

Times are like possible worlds- both are items at which propositions can be true- and temporal contexts can be like modal contexts. Consider this argument:

11b. 9 is always greater than 7.

12.  $9 =$  the number of the planets. So

13b. The number of the planets is always greater than 7.

Here we go astray as in (11)-(13). For not all the planets formed simultaneously, our sun existed before it had any planets, and the universe existed even before our sun did: (13b) is false. To see why we went astray, let us parse the argument a bit more perspicuously, as involving a temporal operator which quantifies over times as " $\square$ " does over possible worlds:

11c. At all times (9 is greater than 7).

12.  $9 =$  the number of the planets. So

13c. At all times (the number of the planets is greater than 7).

The problem is that while (12) is true, it is not true at all times. As the problem parallels that above, one can draw a parallel moral. In a universal-temporal context, even if "a" and "b" now refer to the same thing, it is valid to substitute "a" for "b" only if "a" and "b" always (i.e. at all times)

refer to the same thing. This explains the invalidity of the move from (1b)-(3b) to (4a).

I now suggest that the identities in (1) and (2) do not license the universal inter-substitution of terms denoting the one God- that is, that the move from (1), (2) and (5) to (6) is invalid. To move from Jane's case to the Trinity, we need just note that on non-substantival theories of time, times just *are* sets or mereological fusions of events.<sup>58</sup> So if it makes sense to index propositions to times (i.e. treat times as items at which propositions can be true), it can also make sense to index propositions to sets or fusions of events. This (I now submit) is what we must do on the present account of the Trinity. On this account, whether or not God is temporal, there are items *like* times in God's life- sets or fusions of events in God's life at which propositions are true. These are the sets or fusions of just the events of each Person's life.

The generation argument, again, moves from

1. the Father = God
2. the Son = God, and
5. the Father generates the Son,

to

6. God generates God

(5) is true at all Trinitarian lives: it is the Trinitarian equivalent of a necessary or omnitemporal truth. But (1) and (2) are like (12). As (12) is true only at some possible worlds and times, (1) and (2) are each true only at some Trinitarian lives. So though (1) and (2) are true, they do not make it valid to substitute "God" for "the Father" and "the Son" in (5), for reasons akin to those operative in the modal and temporal arguments above. The basic point of the Rockette analogy is that one should approach the Trinity by asking in what ways God's life is free from ordinary temporal relations. I suggest that it is free enough from ordinary temporal ordering that we can say that God lives His life in three streams at once, index Trinitarian truths to appropriate sets of events, then use this indexing to block the move to (6). Of course, one can also block the move to (4) this way.

### *The menace of Modalism*

Accounts of the Trinity must skirt the Scylla of tri-theism and the Charybdis of modalism. Tri-theists so emphasize the separateness of the Persons as to wind up affirming three separate Gods, not three Persons in one God. Modalists so emphasize the unity of God as to wind up affirming one God who has three modes of appearing or of dealing with us, not one God in three Persons. Or so we think. It is no easy thing to say just what Modalism *was*, or exactly why it was rejected, as the Church Fathers who fought it seem to have suppressed all copies of the works they deemed heretical. Still, scholars have pieced together some sense of it from quotes, allusions and (perhaps biased) descriptions which survive in non-Modalist works, and at least on the depictions of Modalism one finds in

standard theological dictionaries, my account seems comfortably far from it.<sup>59</sup> Such works describe Modalism as holding that all distinctions between Persons are impermanent and transitory<sup>60</sup>, or “are a mere succession of modes or operations,”<sup>61</sup> that

the one God becomes Trinitarian only in respect of the modes of His operation *ad extra*<sup>62</sup>,

that

God is three only with respect to the modes of His action in the world<sup>63</sup>,

that

the one God... has three manners (modes) of appearance, rather than being one God in three Persons.<sup>64</sup>

and that for Modalism,

the three Persons are assigned the status of modes or manifestations of the one divine being: the one God is substantial, the three differentiations adjectival... the Modalist God metamorphosed Himself to meet the changing needs of the world<sup>65</sup>,

and so there is

a Trinity of manifestation, not even a Trinity of economy, still less a Trinity of being.<sup>66</sup>

Nothing in my account of the Trinity precludes saying that the Persons' distinction is an eternal, necessary, non-successive and intrinsic feature of God's life, one which would be there even if there were no creatures. If one asserts all this, one asserts a “Trinity of being,” with no reference to actions *ad extra* or appearances to creatures. Further items on an anti-Modalist checklist: does the view set out here entail that the Father is crucified? No, though the God who is the Father is crucified- at the point in His life at which He is not the Father, but the Son. Can the view deal adequately with the anti-Modalist texts cited above? On the present view, the Son cannot token truly “I am the Father,” though He can token truly “I am the God who is (at another point in His life) the Father.” Nor can the Son say truly that

14. I am at one point in my life the Father and at another the Son,

since at no point in the Son's life is He the Father. The Son can say truly that

15. I am the God who is at one point in His life the Father and at another the Son,

i.e. that He is God, and God is both Father and Son. But this is so on any Latin view of the Trinity. A natural question here is, "if the Son just *is* God, can't the Son use 'I' to refer to God, not to the Son, and if He does, can't He assert (14) truly?" But if the Son so uses "I," what He asserts is in effect (15), not (14). On any Latin approach, for a tri-personal God, "I" cannot be purely referential, a term whose contribution to the content of a sentence is simply an individual to whom God refers. For if there is just one individual, God, in the three Persons, then a purely referential "I" would always contribute simply God to a sentence's content. No Person could speak as "I" and refer to Himself as a Person; the Son could not say with truth, "I am not the Father," for His "I" would refer to God, and God *is* the Father. So on any Latin approach, if Persons can speak as themselves, and the Son can know that He is not the Father, God's "I" always includes a mode of presentation, a sense under which the speaker conceives and refers to Himself. When the Son speaks as the Son, He presents Himself to Himself as the Son, and so the Father is never other than another "I," who as such has His own mind and will. This is enough to make adequate sense of the texts, given the way my view guarantees the real distinctness of Father and Son.<sup>67</sup> And this is why if the Son uses 'I' to refer to God, what He asserts comes out as (15): the "I"s mode of presentation builds "the God" etc. into the content of His claim.

The question is sure to come, though: aren't your Persons still "modes," if not modes of appearance, "adjectival" rather than "substantial"? One reply is that on the present account, each Person is as substantial as the one God is, since each Person is God in a different "part" of His life. If an infant isn't a mode of a substance, neither is a Son. Again, arguably a person could be a substance despite having identity-conditions that depend on events: Locke, for instance, rested the identity-conditions for persons on certain relations among mental events, and while he has of late been charged with many things, turning persons into events, accidents or modes has not been among them. Most latter-day Lockeans see persons as substances which are also material objects, or at least supervenient on them.

God's life is not constrained by time. If it is at least as free from time's bonds as a pastward time-traveler's would be, this provides a way to make sense of the doctrine of the Trinity- orthodox sense, or so I've argued. Note that in this last statement, pastward time-travel serves only as a model for the Trinity. While I have used pastward time-travel as a model, my view is not hostage to whether such travel is possible. My account is metaphysically possible if pastward time travel is, and I have in fact suggested that time travel is possible. If time travel is not, my account is still at least as conceivable as time travel is, and the impossibility of time travel may not count against my account's possibility, even as the impossibility of intuitionist logic does not count against the possibility of an indeterminate future. There is more to say here- in particular, about *why* God is a Trinity, and what sort of persons Persons are. But this will have to do for now.<sup>68</sup>

## NOTES

1. *The Book of Common Prayer* (N.Y.: Seabury Press, 1979), 864-5.
2. Others start from the threeness of the Persons, and try to say just how three Persons can be one God. I discuss these in "Anti Social Trinitarianism," in Steven Davis and Daniel Kendall, eds., *The Trinity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 203-48.
3. LT's partisans up to Scotus all accept a strong doctrine of divine simplicity. So while they acknowledge that Father and Son stand in the generative relations of paternity and filiation, they deny that these relations are *constituents* of the Persons. Aquinas, for instance, asserts that the Father is identical with the relation of paternity just as God is with the divine nature, deity (*ST Ia* 29, 4). While divine simplicity no longer commands the wide assent it did, we would still not incline to see relations as constituents of particulars standing in them- save on "bundle" theories of substance, which few now favor.
4. *Common Prayer*, 865. So also Barth: "in... the inner movement of the begetting of the Father, the being begotten of the Son and the procession of the Spirit from both... God is once and again and a third time" (Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics* II: 1, tr. G. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1957), 615. At the back of this is of course *John* 1:1, "the Word was with God, and the Word was God." If the Word is God and is with God, God is with God- and so (it seems) we have God twice over.
5. Quoted in Cornelius Plantinga, "Social Trinity and Tritheism," in Cornelius Plantinga and Ronald Feenstra, eds., *Trinity, Incarnation and Atonement* (Notre Dame, In.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1989), 21.
6. S. Thomae de Aquino *Summa Theologiae Ia* (Ottawa: Studii Generalis, 1941) 39, 5 ad 2, 245a. My translation. See also Edmund Hill, *The Mystery of the Trinity* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1985), 103.
7. For Thomas, talk of tropes is not strictly appropriate here, since in fact God is identical with the divine nature (so e.g. Aquinas, *ST Ia* 3, 3). For the nonce this need not concern us.
8. Plantinga, "Social Trinity," 40.
9. A common constituent of three things which never existed save as included in one of them might to philosophers seem a fourth thing in addition to any of the three though included in all. But the language of the New Testament sits ill with this. References to "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" and "God the Father," or to God simply as Father, are too numerous to list. These would not be appropriate if God were something like a part of the Father. Again, according to *John* 1:1, the Word *was* God. This does not suggest that God was part of the Word.
10. Henceforth I will not discuss the Spirit where the points to be made exactly parallel those made about the Son.
11. So e.g. *John* 1:1 and 20:28; *Romans*. 9:5; *I Corinthians* 16:22 ; *I John* 5:20.
12. So e.g. *Isaiah* 44:24 "I am the Lord, who has made all things," *Romans* 11:36: "from Him and through Him... are all things," and the Nicene Creed's statement that orthodox Christians believe in "one God... creator of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible" (*Common Prayer*, 358)(putative uncreated items presumably are visible or invisible).
13. There is one other alternative, that the son be divine, uncreated, and distinct but not discrete from God. If the son is not discrete from Gd, the son overlaps God. If he overlaps God but is distinct from God, either (a) God has a constituent the son lacks, but every constituent of the son is a constituent of God, or (b) the son has a constituent God lacks, but every constituent of God is a constituent of the son, or (c) God and the son share a constituent but each

also has a constituent the other lacks, or (d) they overlap despite sharing no constituents. Or (a) the son is part of God: God is a whole composed of persons. As parts are basic and wholes derived on (a) the three are basic, the one derived: (a) is not a version of LT. (B) was rejected in n. 9. (C) is a form of polytheism. (D) would assert a primitive constitution relation between God and the son. I am skeptical that there is such a relation.

14. So e.g. Mark Heller, *The Ontology of Physical Objects* (N.Y.: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

15. Even if Jane later in her life knows what Jane earlier in her life is going to say to her, this need not unfit the analogy for Trinitarian purposes. It is hard to see how one Person could surprise another.

16. See e.g. Edwin Taylor and John Wheeler, *Spacetime Physics* (San Francisco: W.H. Freeman and Co., 1963), 89, and J. Hafele and Richard Keating, "Around-the-world Atomic Clocks: Predicted Relativistic Time Gains and Observed Relativistic Time Gains," *Science* 177 (1972), 166-70.

17. So John Earman, "Recent Work on Time Travel," in Steven Savitt, ed., *Time's Arrows Today* (N.Y.: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 268-310.

18. So e.g. Richard Swinburne, *Space and Time* (N.Y.: The MacMillan Co., 1968), 169.

19. Earman, "Recent Work," 281.

20. This doesn't take away Jane's agency or freedom. For both can figure in every *local* explanation along the loop. That divine conservation is compatible with creaturely agency and freedom is non-negotiable for Western theists. Arguably conservation differs from creation only in that we call the same divine action creation when what God causes begins to exist and conservation when it continues to exist (so e.g. Scotus, *Quodlibet* 12). If this is true, the compatibility of creation and libertarian freedom/agency is equally non-negotiable, and I could as easily have spoken of God as creating the loop.

21. Keith Ward speculates that a temporal God may be free from the usual temporal ordering (*Rational Theology and the Creativity of God* (N.Y.: The Pilgrim Press, 1982), 164-70); Philip Quinn advances the same notion in some detail in unpublished comments given at the 1993 APA Central Division meeting. Swinburne (*Christian God*, 137-44) and Alan Padgett (*God, Eternity and the Nature of Time* (London: The MacMillan Press, Ltd., 1992)) suggest His freedom from other aspects of time.

22. In saying this I use an ordinary, intuitive concept of an event. On some theories of events (e.g. Kim's), such things as God's being divine and God's being omniscient count as events. (For Kim's theory, see Jaegwon Kim, "Events as Property-Exemplifications," in Douglas Walton and Myles Brand, eds., *Action Theory* (Dordrecht: D. Reidel, 1980), 159-77.) If you hold such a view, modify this claim to: the strands have in common only those events involved in God's bare existence and having His nature, not any events composing His conscious life or involving His agency. Any other modifications to accommodate theories of events would not (I think) affect the basics of the view I am setting forth.

23. For now I do not take up just what makes this so.

24. If we are reincarnated, we have lives which consist of other items which count as complete lives. So the Trinitarian claim is at least as coherent as belief in this sort of reincarnation.

25. If so, Jane's life fails to be continuous. It is not even dense, as there is no time, public or Jane-private, between Jane's life at public time's last instant and her life's next instant. On the other hand, there is no temporal *gap* between Jane at the last instant and Jane's next either. If Jane's life always has three segments ongoing, then it consists of three discrete segments with zero duration

between them. In that sense, the segments' endpoints are closer together than any two points in a continuous stretch of time. No qualms about Jane's identity between time's last instant and her next ought to arise, then. If we found that time was universally discrete in the small, consisting of chronons (as some have argued), we would not conclude that no-one is identical over any long duration. We would adjust our account of identity over time to allow for this, speaking of not-quite-continuous duration where we used to speak of continuous. We can do the like for Jane.

26. In principle then, as a referee pointed out, Jane could live an infinite life by looping back endlessly through a finite period of public time. (She'd need infinite space to do this, as otherwise she would eventually run out of room—the whole universe would be filled nothing but time-travelling Janes. But there's no reason to think infinite space impossible.) But this does not entail that public time is infinite. Its properties arise out of the properties of all personal/private times. Even given Jane's peculiar life, all personal times might have the following trait: either they end no later than a particular instant—say, the Big Crunch— or they continue through that instant to some instant which as of the Big Crunch has already been occupied.

27. An anonymous referee raised this.

28. David Lewis, "The Paradoxes of Time Travel, in David Lewis, *Philosophical Papers*, v. 2(N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 1986).

29. *Op. cit.*, 73.

30. So e.g. Trenton Merricks, "There Are No Criteria of Identity," *Nous* 32 (1998), 106-24.

31. It's not enough to have Jane that the atoms making her up at  $t$  be those which made her up just prior to  $t$ . There is also a causal condition, that her atoms be moving in ways their prior motion directly accounts for. A Star Trek transporter beam story can make this clear. One can suppose the beam to work by disassembling us into our constituent atoms, accelerating these to a destination, then rebuilding someone looking just like us from them there. Most people, given this description, will think of the transporter as a way to get killed, not a way to be transported: we do not survive being smashed into our constituent atoms, even if something is rebuilt from them later which looks like us. Now let's modify the case: suppose the disassembly is literally instantaneous, and the transporter sends one's atoms to their destination so fast that there is no time between our standing here whole and something looking just like us standing there whole at destination. I suggest that even so, our intuition that we don't survive the process doesn't change. For what matters here is our belief that we don't survive being disassembled into atoms, not any fact about how fast the bits are reassembled. Disassembly and smashing are precisely situations in which there is massive interference with the movements our atoms would otherwise be making, and given the intervention of the beam, the positions, motion etc. of Jane's atoms prior to teleportation don't directly cause those of the duplicate's atoms at the destination point. So (I claim) the transporter story supports the text's claim that it defeats a claim of continued existence that the positions, motion etc. of the atoms constituting Jane's body don't directly cause those of the duplicate's atoms.

32. The causation here is "immanent," not "transeunt." See Dean Zimmerman, "Immanent Causation," *Philosophical Perspectives* 11 (1997), 433-71.

33. When Jane is the rightmost Rockette, she *used to be* the leftmost, even though she is rightmost and leftmost during the same period of public time. So strictly, she could say both that she is and that she used to be the leftmost, depending on whether she tensed the verbs to the public or to her personal timeline. But as we see in greater detail below, if time-travel is possible, the

personal timeline takes precedence. I suggest below that something similar holds in the Trinitarian case.

34. Even if the Father reads the Son's mind, He reads it "from without."

35. Aquinas, *ST Ia 27*, 1, 182a2-3.

36. Thomas' story about the Spirit's proceeding is the same in all respects that matter to my point. So I needn't go into it here.

37. As Thomas sees it, this act is by nature rather than choice (*ST Ia 41*, 2). But that it is not in all respects free does not entail that it is not something God does. Even coerced acts are acts.

38. Though as Eleonore Stump pointed out to me, Thomas likely does not have a single concept that does the work of our event-concept.

39. *Summa Contra Gentiles IV*, 11.

40. *Ibid.*

41. *ST Ia 41*, 1 *ad 2*.

42. Some would rejoice: for Thomas, the Word's existing, caused or not, is atemporal (*ST Ia 10*, 1 *et 4*). So it can't count as an event. Well, if that's right, a timeless God can't act, either. For a case that a timeless God can, see my *Time and Eternity* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1991), 291-7. For a more general case in favor of non-temporal events, see my "The Eternal Present," in Gregory Ganssle and David Woodruff, eds., *God and Time* (N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 2001), 21-48. In any case, that Thomas believes that some acts are atemporal is irrelevant to the fact that his Trinity-account is act-based, and so event-based.

43. *Ibid.*

44. Actually, things get a bit more complex than this. Due to the impact of his doctrine of divine simplicity, there are really two accounts of the Trinity in Thomas. I've given one; in the other, it might be better to say that the Persons are events in God's inner life.

45. See e.g. *Compendium of Theology I*, 41. The explanation has a surprising feature: while we might think the doctrine of divine simplicity a hindrance to the doctrine of the Trinity (how can a simple God contain Triune complexity?), Aquinas argues that the reason God is a Trinity and we are not is precisely that God is simple and we are not.

46. Here is at least a gesture at a different explanation. Suppose that as Aquinas thought, there are just three discrete maximal episodes in God's life: three events such that everything God does, thinks or experiences is part of just one of these. Then if God is timeless, these events are somehow all *there*, timelessly. They do not cease to occur. Neither does one take another's place. Yet as they are discrete, they do not overlap: one does not occur *within* another. What there timelessly is to the reality of God, then, is God in one episode, and in the second, and in the third. God might differ from episode to episode, as Father differs from Son. As events are natural causal relata, it would not be surprising if (say) God in one episode had causal relations He did not have in others, e.g. becoming incarnate in just one episode. Perhaps, in short, God's timelessness plus an assumption about God's life can generate a Latin Trinity-given the tenability of the notion of an atemporal event.

47. This is of course the pattern of generation-relations Western Christians posit between the Persons.

48. Thus it is a case of immanent, not transeunt causality.

49. But even here, one has to wonder. Is it really still true that Lincoln = Lincoln? "Lincoln = Lincoln" is after all a more precise rendering of "Lincoln is Lincoln." The latter is present-tensed. Perhaps if Lincoln no longer exists, nobody has any longer the property of identity with Lincoln.

50. If Jane had just one temporal part at public time *t*, she would be like the

rest of us. Her personal timeline would not diverge from public time at *t*. If Jane has distinct temporal parts at public *t*, then one of them is in the other's past along Jane's timeline. But along the public timeline, whatever is at *t* when *t* is present is present. So if Jane has distinct temporal parts at public *t*, her timeline diverges from that of public time.

51. Another angle on the same fact: on Jane's timeline, there are times between the leftmost and the rightmost Rockettes' arrivals onstage. There are none in our timeline- for us, all Rockettes step onstage at once.

52. If *P* is present-tense and true, an improper part of its truthmaker is at *t*. If *P* is past-tensed and true, a proper part is: that Casar crossed the Rubicon is true due to an event now over (the crossing) and one now going on, which makes it later now than the crossing and so makes it correct to use the past tense. The life is so if *P* is future-tense and true. If God is timeless, "God knows that  $2 + 2 = 4$ " has no temporal tense at all. Its truthmaker thus lies entirely outside time.

53. Stump and Kretzmann's ET-simultaneity is one attempt (Eleonore Stump and Norman Kretzmann, "Eternity," *Journal of Philosophy* 78 (1981), 429-458).

54. Talk of atemporal events may cause pain here; see *ops. cit.* n. 37.

55. See e.g. William Craig, "Timelessness and Omnitemporality," and Alan Padgett, "God the Lord of Time," in Gregory Ganssle, ed., *God and Time* (Wheaton, Ill.: Intervarsity Press, 2001).

56. How about "remember that infant I pointed out to you years ago? That man over there, the President, is that infant"? This is loose speech for "that man *was* that infant," i.e. "the person who is that man was that infant."

57. See e.g. David Wiggins, *Sameness and Substance* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1980), 24ff.

58. Its *locus classicus* is W.V. Quine, *From a Logical Point of View* (N.Y.: Harper and Row, 1961), 147-8.

59. Such theories face a variety of philosophical problems. Many can be treated along lines laid out in Graeme Forbes, "Time, Events and Modality," in Robin Le Poidevin and Murray MacBeath, eds., *The Philosophy of Time* (N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 1993), 80-95, and Jan Cover, "Reference, Modality and Relational Time," *Philosophical Studies* 70 (1993), 251-277.

60. The more extended account one finds in J.N.D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines* (N.Y.: HarperCollins, 1978), rev. ed., 119-126, merely validates the briefer dictionary descriptions quoted below.

61. F.L. Cross, ed., *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 1997), 1097.

62. *Ibid.*, 1102, in an account of Patripassionism, which overlapped Modalism.

63. Karl Rahner and Herbert Vorgrimler, *Dictionary of Theology* (N.Y.: Crossroad, 1981), 312.

64. J. Komonchak, M. Collins, D. Lane, eds., *The New Dictionary of Theology* (Wilmington, Delaware: Michael Glazier, Inc., 1987), 668.

65. Donald McKim, *Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Pres, 1996), 176.

66. H.E.W. Turner, "Modalism," in Alan Richardson and John Bowden, eds., *The Westminster Dictionary of Christian Theology* (Philadelphia, Pa.: Westminster, 1983), 375.

67. *Ibid.*

68. In the *John* 17 text cited, the Son prays to the Father. This is like one Rockette's talking to another.

69. My thanks to Jeff Brower, Paul Reasoner, Eleonore Stump, Dale Tuggy, Dean Zimmerman and an anonymous referee for comments.