Faith and Philosophy: Journal of the Society of Christian Philosophers

1-1-1997

Has Trinitarianism Been Shown to be Coherent?

E. Feser

Follow this and additional works at: https://place.asburyseminary.edu/faithandphilosophy

HAS TRINITARIANISM BEEN SHOWN
TO BE COHERENT?

E. Feser

Macnamara, La Palme Reyes, and Reyes have recently claimed to have
shown decisively that the doctrine of the Trinity is internally consistent.
They claim, furthermore, that their account does not commit them to any
exotic emendations of standard logical theory. The paper demonstrates that
they have established neither of these claims. In particular, it is argued that
the set of statements they show to be consistent in fact expresses
Sabellianism, not Trinitarianism; and that they can avoid this result only via
commitment to the (questionable) doctrine of relative identity.

It is generally acknowledged that it is extraordinarily difficult (some
would say impossible) to show the doctrine of the Trinity to be logically
consistent. Most recent attempts to do so have relied on controversial
(some would say desperate) revisions of standard logical doctrines.[1]
And these seem not to have gained a wide following even among those
who accept the doctrine. Indeed, some among the latter maintain that
no one has yet done the job.[2] But in their recent article "Logic and the
Trinity," Macnamara, La Palme Reyes, and Reyes boldly claim to have
lain to rest "once and for all" any fear that Trinitarianism is logically
inconsistent.[3] Moreover, they claim that their attempt to do so does not
commit them to any "'tampering' with the foundations of logic."[4] I hope
to show that both claims are dubious at best.

Macnamara et al. follow Cartwright[5] in taking the following seven
sentences, extracted from the Athanasian Creed, as stating the essentials
of the Trinitarian doctrine:

(1) The Father is God.
(2) The Son is God.
(3) The Holy Spirit is God.
(4) The Father is not the Son.
(5) The Father is not the Holy Spirit.
(6) The Son is not the Holy Spirit.
(7) There is exactly one God.

They also follow him in holding that, though these sentences are
acceptable as they stand, certain accounts of their logical structure are

100

unacceptable. For example, to take the "is" of (1)-(3) as expressing identity would entail either Tritheism or Sabellianism, both of which are heretical. They allow, however, that the "is" of (4)-(6) is rightly taken as expressing identity. For the purposes of this paper, I will assume that this much of what Macnamara et al. say is unproblematic.

Another construal considered by Cartwright involves taking "God" as a count noun, which, together with the interpretation of (4)-(6) already accepted, yields the following revised set of sentences:

> (1a) The Father is a God.
> (2a) The Son is a God.
> (3a) The Holy Spirit is a God.
> (4a) The Father is not identical with the Son.
> (5a) The Father is not identical with the Holy Spirit.
> (6a) The Son is not identical with the Holy Spirit.
> (7a) There is exactly one God.

Now Cartwright holds that this is an inconsistent set, on the basis, Macnamara et al. think, of the following general principle, which he takes to be "evident to the natural light of reason":

> (P) If every A is a B, then there cannot be fewer B's than A's.[6]

For if (P) is true, then since (1a)-(3a) tell us that every Divine Person is a God, it follows that there cannot be fewer Gods than Divine Persons; and (4a)-(6a) entail that there are at least three Divine Persons. It follows that there are three Gods; but this, of course, contradicts (7a). (Cartwright, incidentally, does not go on to suggest a construal of (1)-(7) that is both logically consistent and avoids heresy, and presumably does not think that anyone has (yet?) shown there to be one.)

Macnamara et al. accept (1a)-(7a) as a statement of Trinitarianism, indeed, as correctly giving the logical form of (1)-(7).[7] But they insist, against Cartwright, that these sentences are not inconsistent. Their aim is to show this by giving a model for (1a)-(7a), that is, an interpretation of the sentences on which each comes out true. They write:

> The difficult part of giving a model of the doctrine of the Trinity is to give for all the expressions used an interpretation that is in keeping with the logical principles that handle the interpretation of natural-language sentences. The interpretation need not be the natural or even the orthodox one. It must respect the logical structure of the sentences and should retain the standard interpretation of the quantifiers and sentential connectives. Such a model merely shows that the set of sentences is *capable* of a consistent interpretation.[8]

This limited strategy of merely providing a model, Macnamara et al. say, has the advantage that it enables them to avoid dealing with theological details such as the precise significance of the term "person."

The crux of their case is the rejection of (P). For (P), say Macnamara et al., forces us into an interpretation of (1a)-(3a) in terms of set-theoretic inclusion. And on such an interpretation, if every member of the set of A's is a member of the set of B's, then the members of the set of B's cannot be less numerous than the members of the set of A's, so that, indeed, there cannot be fewer Gods than Divine Persons. They argue that (P) is false, that is, that it is possible for each A to be a B, and yet there are fewer B's than A's; so that another interpretation of (1a)-(3a) is also possible.

Now Macnamara et al. introduce a rather involved technical apparatus to present their model, but the gist of it can be stated in quite straightforward language. They start by giving what they claim are everyday counterexamples to (P). Consider, for instance, that airlines commonly count passengers in such a way that the same person, if he has taken three separate flights, may be counted as a passenger three times. We have, then, a case in which every passenger is a person, and yet there are fewer persons than passengers. (The other examples given differ in no significant respect from this one.) The relation between passengers and persons, Macnamara et al. conclude, is not that of set-theoretic inclusion. Instead, it is what they call the "underlying relation," a relation which is such that one person can underlie several passengers, one student can underlie several majors, and so forth. And it is this relation, they claim, which is expressed by "is" in (1a)-(3a).

The definite descriptions "the Father," "the Son," and "the Holy Spirit" function in (1a)-(6a) like proper names, according to Macnamara et al.[9] And proper names, they say, must be interpreted relative to a kind, which is the referent of a count noun. For instance, the proper name "Jane" is interpreted relative to the kind: person (named by the count noun "person"). Similarly, "the Father," "the Son," and "the Holy Spirit" are to be interpreted relative to the kind: Divine person. That is, they pick out individuals in the kind: Divine Person; and not in the kind: God.

Given what has been said so far, Macnamara et al. present as further clarifying the logical structure of (1a)-(3a) the sentences:

(1a') Underlying the Divine Person that is the Father is a God.
(2a') Underlying the Divine Person that is the Son is a God.
(3a') Underlying the Divine Person that is the Holy Spirit is a God.

Now the Divine Persons are differentiated by distinct properties like those mentioned in the Athanasian Creed: The Father alone generates the Son; the Son alone is generated by the Father; and the Holy Spirit alone proceeds from the Father and the Son.[10] Given these distinct properties, and Leibniz's law, it follows that the three Divine Persons are distinct from one another. What, then, can keep us from inferring that there must be three Gods, each having one of these distinct properties? After all, if we know that passenger A is tall, and passenger B is short, we must conclude that there are two different persons underlying them.

"What blocks this line of reasoning, and the heretical conclusion," say Macnamara et al., "is that in the theory of kinds predicables are typed by count nouns."[11] Consider a predicable such as "dull." It denotes a dif-

ferent property depending on whether we apply it to a knife or a day. And something similar can be said about many predicables. In particular, something similar can be said about some predicables when they are used in contexts in which the underlying relation obtains: A particular person may underlie a given thief; but it does not follow that if he is a good thief, he is also a good person. Relative to the count noun "thief," "good" denotes one property, but it may not denote the same one relative to the count noun "person." When a predicable does not denote the same property relative to one count noun as it does relative to another, Macnamara et al. say that it does not "keep phase" from the one to the other. Given these notions, Macnamara et al. argue that the predicables "generates the Son," "is generated by the Father," and "proceeds from the Father and the Son" "do not keep phase as they transfer from 'Divine Person' to 'God,'" and that "[t]his logical fact blocks the threat of either Tritheism or Sabellianism."[12] The Father, for example, begets the Son, and God underlies the Father, but it does not follow that God begets the Son.

The argument can be summarized, then, as follows: The copula "is" in (1a)-(3a) expresses the underlying relation. So it is possible that the three Divine Persons are distinct, and yet there is but one God. (4a)-(6a) tell us that the three are in fact distinct, and that their individuating properties do not themselves tend to show that there must be three Gods is guaranteed by the fact that the predicables denoting them do not keep phase from "the Father," "the Son," and "the Holy Spirit," respectively, to "God." (1a)-(6a), then, do not entail the falsity of (7a). So it is possible to give an interpretation of (1a)-(7a) on which each sentence comes out true. So there is a model for (1a)-(7a). So they are consistent.[13]

What should we think of this argument? Have Macnamara et al. accomplished what they set out to do? I think not. Consider first the rather startling claim, quoted above, that for the purposes of demonstrating the consistency of the sentences stating the doctrine of the Trinity, an adequate interpretation of them "need not be...even the orthodox one." It is hard to see how an unorthodox interpretation of the sentences stating Trinitarianism could still be an interpretation of *Trinitarian* sentences. Indeed, if orthodoxy is no concern, it is hard to see why we should reject the construal on which the "is" of (1)-(3) expresses identity, even though this would result in heresy, if this would give us a consistent set. Yet, as noted above, Macnamara et al. reject this construal precisely because it leads to such a result. As well they should: The sentences, thus interpreted, would not express Trinitarianism at all, and their consistency would therefore be irrelevant to the purpose of showing Trinitarianism to be consistent.[14]

At any rate, Macnamara et al. have, it turns out, good reason for making this surprising claim. For their construal of (1a)-(7a) seems itself to lead (no doubt inadvertently) to Sabellianism. Consider again their example of airline passengers. No doubt, there is a *sense* in which, say, passenger A and passenger B are different passengers, even if they are the same person (Smith, say), as is reflected in airline accounting practices. But there is also clearly a sense in which they are the same passen-

ger. For passenger A is identical to Smith, and so is passenger B; so they are the same passenger. Indeed, that this is so is also clear from ordinary language. Someone might say: "Why, that's the same passenger that flew with us last week!" As such, in these ordinary cases, whenever we find that the same A underlies different B's, we can conclude that the B's are all identical; for each B is identical to A, so they must be identical to each other as well. This is obviously true of all the examples Macnamara et al. offer. They say that a single student may major in two subjects, and so be two majors; that a single person may be the patient of both a urologist and a heart specialist, and so be two patients; and so forth.[15] Well, fine. Nevertheless, the philosophy major and the mathematics major are both identical to the same student, so they are identical to each other, and thus are, in one sense, the same major; and the urologist's patient and the heart specialist's patient are both identical to the same person, so they are identical to each other, and thus are, in one sense, the same patient.

The same thing, however, can only be said in the case of the Divine Persons and God on pain of Sabellianism. The same God is said to underlie each of the different Divine Persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. But if he "underlies" them in the same way that one thing underlies another in the ordinary cases, then we must conclude that each Divine Person is identical to God, and thus that all of them are identical to each other. The resulting (Sabellian) construals of (1a)-(3a) thus contradict (4a)-(6a), and the model fails. Macnamara et al. may wish to claim that "underlies" doesn't in this case behave logically in the way it does in the ordinary cases. But this would be nothing more than special pleading, and would at any rate be completely implausible, since the ordinary cases were themselves supposed to reveal to us the logic of the underlying relation.[16]

It might be thought that the fact that "generates the Son" does not keep phase from "the Father" to "God," etc. shows that e.g. the Father and God cannot be identical. But even if this were true, it would not undermine the point that the "underlies" reading of (1a)-(3a) *does* entail that they are identical. At any rate, it is not true: "Good" does not keep phase from "thief" to "person," yet a good thief is still a person.

Notice also that what has been said shows that Macnamara et al. are simply mistaken in thinking that the ordinary cases they cite are counterexamples to (P). If passenger A is identical to the person Smith, and passenger B is identical to the person Smith, then if there is a sense in which there are two different passengers, then in the same sense, there are also two different persons. Again, ordinary usage supports this. The same airline that counts passengers on different flights as different passengers may well count persons on different flights as different persons. Someone wanting to determine the total number of tickets sold might say "Tell me how many persons were on the last two flights," and his purposes would obviously be frustrated if some persons were counted only once because they were on both flights. So long as we keep the senses involved straight, there just aren't fewer persons than passengers. (P) holds in these cases as well as in all the others.

There is a way of construing (4a)-(6a) so that they do not conflict with (1a)-(3a). We could take the different Divine Persons to be different "modes" of God. They would still be distinct: The mode of being the Father is not identical to the mode of being the Son, even though the Father and the Son are the same God, in the same sense that being a professor is not the same as being a husband, even though the same person may be both a professor and a husband. But though contradiction would thus be avoided, the Sabellianism or modalism would become even more pronounced. Macnamara et al., as noted, do state that an adequate interpretation need not be orthodox. But again, the resulting sentences would seem to be, not Trinitarian, but heretical, ones; and Macnamara et al. themselves reject other such interpretations.

The Sabellian tendency of the account offered by Macnamara et al. is even more evident when we consider their brief (and not entirely clear) closing discussion of "the notion of an entity in a system of kinds."[17] They argue that "there is a definite sense in which there is only one entity or being involved in the Trinitarian doctrine."[18] Underlying the kinds: professor, student, man, woman, husband, and so forth, they say, is the kind: person. "Two members of different kinds correspond to the same entity if their underlying persons coincide."[19] For instance, if Smith is both a professor and a husband, then the persons underlying a member of the kind: professor and a member of the kind: husband "coincide," so that the members "correspond to the same entity." Likewise, Macnamara et al. say:

> In the case of the Trinitarian doctrine there is only one entity or being obtained by the following identification:

DIVINE PERSON   GOD[20]
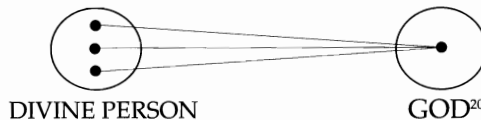
It seems very difficult to interpret all of this in any other way than as entailing Sabellianism, especially when we consider what we have seen above regarding the underlying relation. How else are we to take the analogy between a husband, professor, and person, on the one hand, and the Divine Persons and God, on the other? If the Divine Persons are to God as the roles of husband and professor are to a person, what else could they be but "modes" of God? And how else are we to take the talk of "identification" in the given diagram, other than as implying that each of the Divine Persons is identical to the "one entity" God (and consequently, to each of the others)? Given what else they say in their paper, I do not believe that Macnamara et al. intend to argue for Sabellianism. But as far as I can tell, they've managed to do so anyway.

Now there may be one move Macnamara et al. could make which would allow them to sidestep some of my objections. That is, they could

adopt the doctrine of relative identity. This is the view that statements of identity are always relative, so that, strictly speaking, they should be read not as "This is the same as that," but rather "This is the same ____ as that," where the blank is filled by some count noun. On this view, something could be the same A as something else and a different B than that something else.[21] As such, it would allow Macnamara et al. to assert that, e.g. someone could be the same person as someone without being the same passenger as that someone, and thus that (P) is false. Indeed, as the reader might have noticed already, much of what Macnamara et al. say sounds a lot like the relative identity theorist's position. But to take this position would be to "tamper with the foundations of logic," which they have claimed they need not and will not do. In fact, Macnamara et al. claim explicitly to reject any interpretation of Trinitarianism that makes use of relative identity.[22] As well they should; for the doctrine faces what most philosophers consider insuperable objections.[23] Still, given the similarity of their view to that of the relative identity theorist, their claims actually to have avoided such tampering are not entirely convincing; and, as I hope to have shown, perhaps only tampering of this sort (if only it were otherwise acceptable) would allow them to salvage their account.

It would seem, then, that the claim of Macnamara, La Palme Reyes, and Reyes to have shown "once and for all" that the doctrine of the Trinity is coherent is, to say the least, greatly exaggerated; and that even their claim to have avoided tampering with the foundations of logic is also (though perhaps slightly less) dubious. But their attempt perhaps serves as confirming evidence for a saying of an old professor of mine: If you think you've "figured out" the problem of the Trinity, you've probably fallen into some heresy or other.[24]

University of California, Santa Barbara

NOTES

1. See e.g. A.P. Martinich, "Identity and Trinity," *The Journal of Religion* 58 (1978), 169-181; and P. van Inwagen, "And Yet They are not Three Gods but One God," in T.V. Morris, ed., *Philosophy and the Christian Faith* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988). Both of these authors appeal to the doctrine of "relative identity," which will be discussed briefly below.

2. See e.g. S.T. Davis, *Logic and the Nature of God* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1983), p. 140.

3. John Macnamara, Marie La Palme Reyes, and Gonzalo E. Reyes, "Logic and the Trinity" *Faith and Philosophy* 11 (1994), 3-18, p. 17.

4. Ibid., p. 5.

5. Richard Cartwright, "On the Logical Problem of the Trinity," in his *Philosophical Essays* (Cambridge, Mass.: Bradford/MIT Press, 1987), p. 188.

6. Macnamara et al., "Logic and the Trinity," pp. 6-7. Cartwright discusses (P), without labeling it as such, on p. 196 of his paper (the most relevant portion of which is quoted on p. 5 of the Macnamara et al. paper).

7. Macnamara et al., "Logic and the Trinity," p. 15.

8. Ibid., p. 4.
9. Ibid., p. 8.
10. Ibid., p. 10.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid., p. 11.
13. Some readers may find the argument of Macnamara et al. developed in the last few pages puzzling, as an anonymous reviewer did. For it might seem, as it did to this reviewer, that the set (1a)-(7a) is inconsistent as it stands, irrespective of (P), since it appears to be of the form:

(1a*) Gf
(2a*) Gs
(3a*) Gh
(4a*) f ≠ s
(5a*) f ≠ h
(6a*) s ≠ h
(7a*) ∃x∀y(Gy≡x = y)

and (1a*)-(7a*) are clearly inconsistent. (P) would be more clearly relevant to the question of the consistency of a formulation of Trinitarianism, the reviewer suggests, given an alternative statement of the doctrine having the form:

(1b) Df
(2b) Ds
(3b) Dh
(4b) ∀x(Dx⊃Gx)
(5b) f ≠ s
(6b) f ≠ h
(7b) s ≠ h
(8b) ∃x∀y(Gy≡x = y)

where 'D' stands for "is a Divine Person" and 'G' stands for "is a God." For (4b), understood as purporting to give the logical structure of "Every Divine Person is a God," and the following instance of (P):

> (P') If every Divine Person is a God, then there cannot be fewer Gods than Divine Persons.

together entail the proposition that there cannot be fewer Gods than Divine persons; and this proposition, (1b)-(3b), and (5b)-(7b), together entail the negation of (8b). So clearly, if (P) is true, (1b)-(8b) are inconsistent. Macnamara et al., the reviewer suggests, should therefore perhaps be understood as claiming that the "is" in some statements of the form "Every A is a B," and in particular in "Every Divine Person is a God," expresses the underlying relation, and in these cases, (P) can fail. That is, they might be understood as denying, in effect, that (4b) correctly gives the logical structure of "Every Divine Person is a God," and as offering an alternative account of the logical structure of this statement in terms of the "underlying relation," namely:

> (4b') ∀x(Dx⊃∃y(Gy & Uxy))

where 'U' stands for "is underlain by." And if (4b') is substituted for (4b),

(1b)-(8b) would no longer be inconsistent, for (4b'), unlike (4b), does not license the inference from (P') to the proposition that there cannot be fewer Gods than Divine Persons.

In response to all of this, it should first be noted, in fairness to Cartwright, that despite what Macnamara et al. suppose, it is not clear that it is his acceptance of (P) that leads him to deny the consistency of (1a)-(7a). For in "On the Logical Problem of the Trinity," Cartwright first discusses (P) only *after* denying the consistency of (1a)-(7a) (which he does on p. 192), in the context of considering yet *another* construal of (1)-(7), wherein (4) is reformulated as:

(4c) The Father is a different Divine Person from the Son.

and (5) and (6) are also reformulated in a similar way. Cartwright says explicitly only that (P) undermines *this* construal of (1)-(7) (p. 196), and in this case, (P)'s relevance is more apparent. So Cartwright himself may well accept the anonymous reviewer's claim that (P) is irrelevant to the consistency or otherwise of (1a)-(7a).

At any rate, whatever Cartwright's view is, Macnamara et al. do think that (P) is relevant to the issue of the consistency of (1a)-(7a). In light of the anonymous reviewer's comments, are they mistaken in thinking so? They are indeed if the former is right to say that (1a*)-(7a*) capture the logical structure of (1a)-(7a). But the logical structure of (1a)-(7a) is, as we have seen, precisely what is at issue for Macnamara et al., and given the construal of (1a)-(3a) they suggest, namely (1a')-(3a'), it is evident that they would deny that he is right to say this. Furthermore, on this construal, the relevance of (P) appears clearer. And the set of sentences that results when (1a')-(3a') are substituted for (1a)-(3a) appears to express, albeit in a slightly different way, precisely what (1b)-(8b) do when (4b') is substituted for (4b). So it is hard to see what advantage is to be gained by formulating the issue in terms of the latter set of sentences rather than the former. Macnamara et al. (and we) have reason to prefer the former set in any case, since it more clearly represents an attempt to reveal the logical structure of (1)-(7), which Macnamara et al. have rightly been taking as a paradigmatic statement of Trinitarianism (since these sentences are extracted from the Athanasian Creed).

14. In line with his (or her) comments dealt with in the previous note, the anonymous reviewer suggests that, since (1a)-(7a) (read in terms of (1a*)-(7a*)) and (1b)-(8b) are inconsistent as they stand, no model or consistent interpretation at all, orthodox or heretical, is possible for either set of sentences. As such, the reviewer suggests that we can perhaps instead regard Macnamara et al. as arguing, in effect, that the replacement of (4b) with (4b') in (1b)-(8b) will give us a set which can be given a model, and thus be shown to be consistent. The reviewer acknowledges that some possible models (e.g. those in which 'U' is interpreted as "loves" or "is distinct from") hardly seem relevant to a defense of Trinitarianism, and so to this extent agrees with what I have argued above. But he (or she) suggests that perhaps the main contention of Macnamara et al. is just that their model, on which 'U' is interpreted as expressing the underlying relation, *is* relevant, "reasonable," and "reasonably orthodox."

None of this, of course, is quite what Macnamara et al. themselves say, but it perhaps represents a way of restating the essence of their project without committing them to the problematic claim that a model for the sentences expressing the Trinitarian doctrine "need not be the natural or even the

orthodox one." Nevertheless, as I argue in what follows, their account still appears to lead them into unorthodoxy anyway.

15. Macnamara et al., "Logic and the Trinity," p. 8.

16. An anonymous reviewer has objected to the claim that the underlying relation entails identity in every case, or even in the examples Macnamara et al. give. Consider again the passenger example. We may, the reviewer says, plausibly and literally identify passengers with "actual records in an airline database," and then say that "a single person can underlie numerous records in the sense that she can be the 'referent' of numerous distinct passenger records." If it is objected to this that in ordinary language, airline employees refer to their patrons, and not just to records, as "passengers," the reviewer responds that this could be regarded as a matter of metonymous reference. That is, just as a waiter might point to a customer and say to another waiter "He is the poached eggs," meaning, not that the customer is identical to the order of poached eggs, but, in effect, that he "underlies" that order, so too, when an airline employee refers to someone as a "passenger," he is saying that the person underlies a certain passenger record, not that he is identical to it. And just as one person can, in this sense, "underlie" different food orders, so too can a single person "underlie" different passenger records. Similarly, in the Trinitarian case, we can say that one God "underlies" the different Divine Persons in that he is referred to metonymously via each of them (e.g. as "God the Father," "God the Son," and "God the Holy Spirit"). And this would, of course, be consistent with God's not being identical to each of them.

Whatever can be said for or against this strategy, it is not what Macnamara et al. have in mind. Not only do they at no point appeal to the notion of metonymous reference to elucidate the underlying relation, but they develop their examples in a way that tells against any interpretation of them in terms of it. For instance, they speak of passengers as "travelling" on airplanes ("Logic and the Trinity," p. 9), of philosophy majors as being "begotten" (p. 11), and so forth. So when Macnamara et al. speak of passengers, philosophy majors, and the like, they clearly don't mean "passenger records," "records of philosophy majors," or anything of that sort, since records are not the sorts of things that travel on airplanes or are begotten. Given the way Macnamara et al. themselves characterize the underlying relation, then, my objection stands.

But might the reviewer's suggested formulation provide a way of salvaging their account? I don't think so. Granted, the reviewer's construal of the underlying relation doesn't, on its face, commit us to identifying any entities related by it, but it is hard to see how it can be understood in a way that doesn't ultimately lead to either Sabellianism or polytheism when applied to the case at hand. For if, say, (1a)-(3a) (or (1a')-(3a')) just say that God underlies the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in the way that a restaurant patron underlies an order of poached eggs and can be referred to metonymously via it, then the Divine Persons and God would seem to be distinct in a way that is incompatible with orthodoxy. We could, on the one hand, take the Divine Persons to be *modes* of God, distinct from him in the way the "mode" of being a husband is distinct from any particular person who might be a husband, and via which God can be metonymously referred to. But this would nevertheless entail that the Divine Persons are each identical to God (as a husband is identical to a particular person), and thus to each other, which would contradict (4a)-(6a). On the other hand, we could take them to be distinct deities who bear some relation to a further deity called "God" which allows us to refer metonymously to the latter via them. But

this would contradict (7a), in its monotheistic spirit, if not in the letter. (Surely, (7a) isn't intended to assert merely that there is only one deity going by the name "God"!) Either way, we are left with unorthodoxy and inconsistency. And these readings of (1a)-(3a), Sabellian and polytheistic respectively, seem to be the only sort possible if God underlies the Divine Persons in the way one thing underlies another in the examples the anonymous reviewer gives. One might wish to say that "underlies" doesn't in this case behave logically in the way it does in ordinary cases. But this, like the similar suggestion considered earlier in regard to the construal of "underlies" Macnamara et al. give, would appear to be special pleading, since the ordinary cases were themselves supposed to reveal to us the logic of the underlying relation.

17. Ibid., pp. 15-17.

18. Ibid., p. 15.

19. Ibid.

20. Ibid., p. 16.

21. See e.g. P.T. Geach, "Identity Theory," in his *Logic Matters* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1972).

22. Macnamara et al., "Logic and the Trinity," p. 5.

23. See e.g. John Perry, "The Same F" *The Philosophical Review* 70 (1979), 181-200.

24. I thank an anonymous reviewer for comments on an earlier version of this paper.