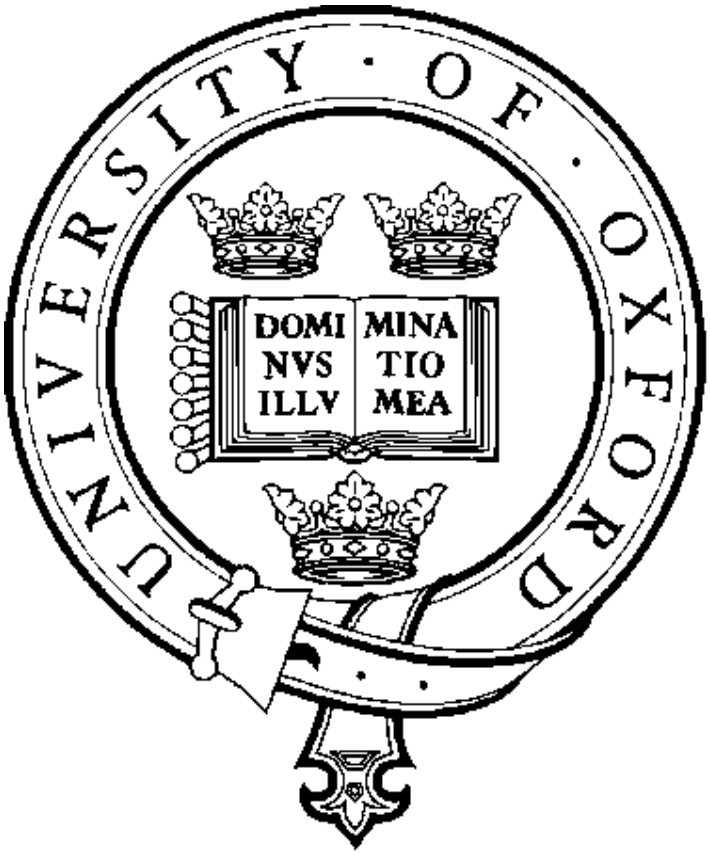
Can the Cappadocian theory of Divine Simplicity address the Modern Problems in Understanding this Doctrine?



A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Theology and Religion in fulfilment of the requirements for the Doctorate of Philosophy in Theology and Religion.

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Short Thesis Abstract

There is a debate between analytic proponents of the doctrine of divine simplicity (DDS) influenced by Aquinas, and opponents of the doctrine. Proponents of the DDS are criticised for holding untenable conceptions of God's attributes, relationship with modality, and existence as a Trinity of persons. I respond to this situation by drawing upon the insight of Radde-Gallwitz (2009) that, before Aquinas, the 4th Century Cappadocian Fathers offered a different account of God's simplicity. Using recent patristic scholarship alongside my own interpretive work, I introduce Cappadocian Simplicity to analytic theology, and argue that it resolves the current objections to the DDS predominantly derived from Thomist Simplicity. I also contribute to patristic thought by expanding the paradigm of Cappadocian Simplicity to include Gregory Nazianzen's thought and resolving Radde-Gallwitz's worries about the philosophical coherence of Basil and Gregory of Nyssa's account of simplicity.

In Chapter 1, I explain the Thomistic 'identity thesis' that the divine attributes are identical to God, before proceeding in Chapter 2 to review general theistic objections to it. A group of figures, including Plantinga and Mullins, have rejected the identity thesis account of God's attributes as incoherent and raised the 'modal collapse' objection that the DDS is incompatible with God causing and knowing contingent entities. In Chapter 3, I give an exposition of Cappadocian Simplicity, aligning with Radde-Gallwitz' view that the Cappadocians eschew the identity thesis through their understanding of the 'divine attributes' as our conceptual predicates for God derived from His activities. In Chapter 4, I argue that this account offers the resources for a cogent understanding of God's attributes and relationship with modality. In Chapter 5, I use the Cappadocian account of the Trinitarian distinctions to resolve the tensions between the DDS and the Trinity. I conclude that Cappadocian Simplicity resolves the contemporary objections to divine simplicity.

Extended Thesis Abstract

In current analytic philosophical theology, there is a controversy about the doctrine of divine simplicity (DDS), the tenet that God has no parts of any sort. Contemporary proponents and opponents of the DDS have often treated the doctrine as closely tied to Aquinas' development of the 'identity thesis' account, in which He affirms that God is identical to His attributes, identical to His mental states, and even identical to the basic reality of His existence. In response, I follow the insight of Radde-Gallwitz (2009) that there is an alternative account of divine simplicity in the Christian tradition which avoids the identity thesis account of the DDS. This alternative account is provided by the Cappadocian Fathers, Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nyssa, and Gregory Nazianzen, whose thought in the 4th Century shaped the account of the Godhead that was enshrined in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan creed of 381. I begin my thesis by expanding Radde-Gallwitz's original framework of Cappadocian divine simplicity, which was based only on Basil and Gregory of Nyssa's writings, by showing that Gregory Nazianzen's account should be considered as part of a shared philosophical paradigm of 'Cappadocian Simplicity'. More crucially, I proceed to argue throughout the chapters of the thesis that the Cappadocian account of God's nature can be translated into an analytic philosophical idiom to resolve the central objections to divine simplicity in current philosophical thought. These objections to divine simplicity are: (i) that the DDS collapses a needed distinction between God and His attributes, (ii) that the DDS leads to a 'modal collapse' because the simple God cannot bear contingent relations to creatures, and (iii) that the DDS is incompatible with the Christian doctrine of the Trinity that the one God is three persons. By using Cappadocian Simplicity to resolve these objections, I also overcome Radde-Gallwitz's original worry that the Cappadocian account would not be able to address modern philosophical problems with the DDS.

As I show, all three of the major objections to the DDS are derived from an identity thesis construal of divine simplicity which has predominated in analytic thought due to the influence of Thomist Simplicity. Whilst Plantinga (1980) seemed to treat Thomist Simplicity as *the* statement

of the DDS, recent figures such as Mullins and Byrd (2022) are aware that there is more than one account of God's simplicity, but have still tied the DDS to the identity thesis on the basis that they cannot see how the DDS *could* be maintained without the tenet that God is identical to everything that He possesses. In Chapters 1 and 2, I explain Thomist Simplicity and the contemporary analytic response to the conception of the divine attributes and modality that arises on it. In Chapters 3 and 4, I provide an exegesis of Cappadocian Simplicity and argue that it offers a cogent account of God's attributes and relationship with modality. Finally, in Chapter 5, I turn to the special concern of Christian thought with the question of the consistency of the DDS with the doctrine of the Trinity, and I argue that Cappadocian Simplicity offers the resources required for reconciling the two doctrines.

In Chapter 1, I show that Aquinas aligns with Augustine and Anselm by affirming the DDS through the claim that God *is* what He possesses. Aquinas develops this overarching claim by specifying that God is identical to His essence, attributes, existence, and action. This leads to further commitments: Aquinas proposes that the divine attributes are conceptually distinct though really identical in God, that God is *subsistent existence itself* in virtue of His essence being identical to His act of existence, and that God is *pure actuality* in virtue of possessing no potentiality components as pure existence and in virtue of being identical to His action.

In Chapter 2, I explain the dialectic that has unfolded in contemporary analytic thought whereby Aquinas' identity thesis interpretation of the DDS has been defended and scorned in equal measure. Plantinga (1980) proposes that the tenet that God is identical to His attributes commits Aquinas to the category mistake that God is a property, whilst Mullins (2013) and (2022) proposes that the tenet that God is pure act removes the possibility for God to *contingently* cause and relate to creatures. Meanwhile, Hasker (2016) argues that the notion that God, as a simple being, is intrinsically the same in all possible situations is incompatible with the reality that He knows different things depending upon which contingent objects exist. These opponents of the DDS have not gone unchallenged. Mann (1982) argued that the thesis that God is identical to His attributes

can be reconstrued as the claim that God is identical to His property *instances*, meaning that the proponent of Thomist Simplicity need not affirm that God is a property. Meanwhile, Brower (2009) has offered a reception of the DDS which eschews talk of properties entirely, proposing that the thesis that God is His attributes is to be reinterpreted as the claim that God is the *truthmaker* for all of the divine attribute predications that can be made about Him. In addition, Stump (2003), Brower (2009), Grant (2012), and others have offered accounts of God's contingent will and knowledge which they hold to be compatible with the simplicity of the divine nature. I argue that these defences of divine simplicity do not provide complete resolutions to the challenges raised about the divine attributes and modality on the DDS. Indeed, with the exception of Brower's truthmaker view which offers the *starting points* for a cogent defence of divine simplicity, I show that current analytic accounts of the identity thesis actually raise the stakes for the DDS by tying it to further metaphysical commitments that are no less controversial than the original Thomist account of the identity thesis itself.

In Chapter 3, I turn to my exegesis of Cappadocian Simplicity. I show that all three of the Cappadocians affirmed that God's simple essence (οὐσία) is unknowable, and that, whilst we have divine attribute terms which have God's divinity as their referent, the content of these names is constituted by the conceptual presentation (ἐπίνοια) of God that they offer. The positive knowledge of God afforded by divine names is that they conceptualise God's activities (ἐνέργειαι); the names offer no direct presentation of their referent, the simple divine essence itself. In my analysis of Basil's *Letter* 234, I note that Basil goes so far as to hold that the standard list of divine attributes, including mercy, justice, and wisdom just *are* our names (ὀνόματα) for God that we derive from His activities. I argue that this leads to a copernican turn in our understanding of the divine attributes. Whilst Aquinas held that the divine attributes are conceptually distinct yet identical perfections in God's essence, the Cappadocians hold that the divine attributes just *are* our distinct predicates denoting conceptualisations of God, and the salient question for them is asking what each conceptualisation tells us about God given that it *does not* pick out a property inhering in God's unknown, simple divinity. As part of this framework, the Cappadocians also

affirm that some names for God are privative, offering conceptualisations that deny that God possesses properties that are incompatible with His divinity. This Cappadocian framework allows us to eschew the identity thesis that our divine attribute terms pick out properties or perfections that inhere in God's essence and are identical to it.

In Chapter 4, I argue that, as a consequence of rejecting the identity thesis, proponents of Cappadocian Simplicity can offer a cogent account of the divine attributes and avoid the modal collapse problem. Here, the key to my argument is my proposal that the Cappadocian account of our conceptualisations of God's activities is a close parallel to contemporary functionalist approaches to our concepts for mental states, which propose that we can devise psychological concepts for a being based only on its causal relationship with its environment. To develop this proposal, I draw on elements of Alston's functionalist approach to theological predication (1989, 1993, and 2007). I propose that the Cappadocian construal of our knowledge of God derived from His activities is knowledge of God's 'psychology', functionally construed, based on our acquaintance with God's causal dispositions in His interaction with creatures. To conceptualise God as 'merciful', for example, is not to affirm that there is a property of mercy that inheres in the divine essence; rather, it is to affirm that the transcendent, simple divine essence is disposed to cause events of healing and forgiveness in the lives of creatures. On the Cappadocian framework, a plurality of psychological concepts for God are available to us, thanks to our acquaintance with the pattern of His action as it is manifest in Scripture and the experiences of divine action that are possible in the spiritual life. Once the plurality of the divine attributes is understood as the plurality of our conceptualisations of God's activities, it is no longer the case that we must affirm the identity thesis that, in reality, God is identical to His attributes.

I argue that the Cappadocian turn to our conceptualisations of God bears parallels to Brower's predication-based 'truthmaker' theory of simplicity. I argue that Cappadocian Simplicity makes an original contribution to the truthmaker paradigm by offering a rich epistemology which explains how, through the conceptualisations that we derive from Scripture, our rationally

accessible common notions (κοινὴ ἔννοια), and our spiritual experience of divine activities, our propositions formed using the divine attribute concepts can have *content* whilst having God's transcendent essence as their truthmaker. Indeed, I argue that Cappadocian Simplicity is a better foundation for truthmaker simplicity than Thomist Simplicity. Whilst Aquinas does share with the Cappadocians the posit that we have a plurality of divine attribute concepts that are derived from God's activity (for Aquinas, we form concepts for God's simple perfection using the distinct creaturely perfections that are causally derived from it), I argue that the Thomist view must also affirm that the perfections that these concepts pick out are ultimately *identical* in God, meaning that a Thomistic account of truthmaker simplicity is vulnerable to the objections to the identity thesis. In contrast, the Cappadocian essence-activity distinction allows the proponent of Cappadocian Simplicity to affirm that our divine attribute terms just designate our conceptualisations of God's activities, without picking out any intrinsic features of God's transcendent essence.

With regards to the modal collapse objection, I draw upon Wood's (2016) proposal that we can develop 'targetless' analytic models for God which assist in our contemplation of truths about God without modelling God as He is in Himself. Here, I argue that the Cappadocian account gives rise to the idea that our conceptualisations for 'God's will' and 'God's knowledge' are actually disguised representations of the causal nexus of God's activity in Creation, rather than being concepts that latch onto mental states inhering in God as He is in Himself. I argue that our conceptualisations for God's volitions and knowledge are, in effect, 'targetless': rather than picking out contingent mental states in the divine nature – which would violate the DDS – our conceptualisations just serve the role of helping us to understand that (1) with regards to 'volition', God causes certain events, and not others, and (2) with regards to 'knowledge' of any proposition P, God will always act as though P is the case if P is the case, and He will never act as though P is the case if P is not the case. I propose that this account offers the resources for an improvement upon recent 'extrinsic accounts' of divine will and knowledge offered by Brower (2009) and Grant (2012). Once I have argued that a simple being can cause diverse created effects, I affirm

that we can apply different conceptualisations for 'God's will' and 'God's knowledge' to God in different possible worlds, without this corresponding to any changing 'mental states' that God possesses.

In Chapter 5 on my Cappadocian account of the consistency of the DDS with the Trinity, I argue that the 'logical problem of the Trinity' ought to be expanded: once I show that the DDS was part of the original framework of Trinitarian orthodoxy and that it is a pre-requisite for divine aseity, I propose that Brower and Rea's set of propositions for characterising the doctrine of the Trinity:

(Tl) Each Person of the Trinity is distinct from each of the others.

(T2) Each Person of the Trinity is God.

(T3) There is exactly one God.

(Brower and Rea, 2005, p. 58)

Needs to be expanded to include the further proposition:

(T4) God has no parts.

I then show that Dolezal (2014), who offers an account of the compatibility of the DDS with the Trinity that is based on affirming a Thomistic construal of the Trinitarian relations as identical to God's essence, fails to demonstrate the consistency of (T1 – T4), for his 'identity thesis' account of (T4) fails to preserve the distinctions between the Divine persons. Next, I show that Brower and Rea's (2005) account of the compatibility of (T1 – T3), which deploys the concept of numerical sameness without identity relations in the Trinity, relies on modelling the Divine persons as hylomorphic *compounds*. This means that the model only demonstrates that three Divine persons could exist as one God if God was composed of parts, and so the model does not show that (T4) is consistent with (T1 – T3).

Next, I show that the Cappadocian account of the distinguishing marks (ἰδιώματα) of the Divine persons preserves the consistency of (T1 – T4). Basil and Gregory of Nyssa provide the resources

for showing that a simple nature can bear a plurality of relations with which it is *not* identical, which allows us to hold that the Divine persons are relationally distinct whilst possessing the same simple nature. I also argue that Basil's account allows us to hold that the Father's distinguishing feature of 'unbegottenness' is our *concept* for the absence of a causal property in His person, whereas the Son's 'begottenness' is His real causal property of dependence upon the Father, and so 'unbegottenness' and 'begottenness' belong to different categories of attribute (concepts versus causal properties), meaning that they are not directly incompatible features inhering in the simple Divine nature. Once I have demonstrated that Cappadocian Simplicity provides the resources for showing that God's nature is simple and consists in three Persons, I draw upon Pawl's (2020) account of the aseity of the Son and the Spirit to argue that the Cappadocian account of the Trinitarian distinctions also upholds the aseity of all three divine persons.

Once I have demonstrated that Cappadocian Simplicity resolves the objections to the DDS regarding the divine attributes, modality, and the Trinity, I conclude by proposing that my turn to Cappadocian Simplicity to resolve the modern analytic objections to the DDS places analytic theology in dialogue with the 20th Century movement of Patristic rejuvenation in theology known as The Ressourcement. I propose that this supports the aspiration of many analytic theologians of developing the discipline as an authentic branch of traditional Christian theology.

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Nathan

Introduction: The significance of a Cappadocian defence of Divine simplicity in contemporary analytic thought

Through my analysis in this dissertation, I aim to fulfil two purposes. My first purpose is to explore the understanding of God's simplicity developed by the three bishops and theologians who have become known as the 'Cappadocian Fathers', Basil of Caesarea (330 – 378), Gregory of Nyssa (335 – 394), and Gregory of Nazianzus (330 – 389). My second purpose is to demonstrate that the metaphysical and epistemological insights of the Cappadocians on the doctrine of divine simplicity can resolve the objections to the doctrine that have been raised by contemporary analytic philosophers of religion and theologians. These objections have primarily been formulated as responses to the account of divine simplicity given by Thomas Aquinas (1224/5 – 1274).

At the outset, I should clarify what I mean by 'divine simplicity'. A helpful gloss of the tenet that God is simple is found in Pasnau and Shields' commentary on Aquinas, in which they unpack the thesis that God is 'absolutely simple' as the commitment that God is 'without internal composition or complexity of any kind' (2004, p. 126). Thus, what is at stake with the doctrine of Divine Simplicity (the DDS) is the question of whether it is true to claim that God has no *composition*: God has no *parts*. Key figures in the traditions of Christianity, Judaism, and Islam have affirmed the DDS, thereby committing themselves to the position that God's nature is devoid of any form of internal composition. As we will see, the challenge for such thinkers is the *prima facie* tension between their affirmation that God is partless and the various other commitments of traditional theistic belief, such as that God has multiple attributes, that God wills and knows contingent things, and – in the case of Christianity – that God is *triune*: the one God is three Divine persons.

I should also begin this introduction by clarifying that, though I will be drawing upon the account of God's simplicity in the thought of the Cappadocian Fathers to address the contemporary analytic objections to the DDS, the Cappadocians themselves were not analytic thinkers. Given

that the actual theological priority of the Cappadocians was articulating an orthodox understanding of the Godhead in light of the debates that arose after the council of Nicaea in 325, the Cappadocians did not use the vocabulary or tools which frame analytic debates about the doctrine of simplicity today. Thus, when I use the resources of the Cappadocian account of God's simplicity to address contemporary concerns about philosophical implications of the DDS, what I will be offering is a 'Cappadocian-derived' model of divine simplicity which addresses the theoretical issues salient for proponents of the DDS today. As I will show throughout the thesis, when I make constructive proposals that go beyond the tenets of the Cappadocians themselves, my analytic extensions are in harmony with the fundamental commitments that structure the way that the Cappadocians think about God. My talk of a Cappadocian 'theory' of divine simplicity is best understood, therefore, as a synthesis of the original theology of the Cappadocians - their essential claims and forms of reasoning about God's simplicity – with the philosophical idiom I translate it into for the purposes of doing constructive work in analytic philosophical theology today.

Whilst my analysis of Cappadocian divine simplicity is intended to solve major challenges which are present for proponents of the DDS across the monotheistic traditions, my primary investigation concerns the coherence of affirming the doctrine of divine simplicity in the context of Christian thought. In light of this, the analysis of this dissertation will have the following structure. I begin the thesis in Chapter 1 by explaining the dominant understanding of the DDS today in analytic discussions of the doctrine, which was developed by Aquinas (I will refer to this as 'Thomist Simplicity'). Then, in Chapter 2, I analyse the central analytic objections to Thomist Simplicity concerning the general commitments of theism; these objections propose that the DDS is inconsistent with the existence of the plurality of God's attributes on the one hand, and God's contingent will and knowledge on the other. I then turn in Chapter 3 to give an exposition of the Cappadocian Fathers' understanding of divine simplicity (hereafter 'Cappadocian Simplicity'). In Chapter 4, I explain how Cappadocian Simplicity resolves the objections to the DDS that concern the divine attributes and modality; these solutions concern theism construed broadly, and

therefore they could be welcomed by proponents of the DDS across the monotheistic faiths. In Chapter 5, I turn to the special concern of Christian philosophers and theologians with the doctrine of the Trinity, and I argue that Cappadocian Simplicity offers us the resources to coherently affirm that God is both simple and a trinity of persons.

Now, I will use this introductory chapter to contextualise the DDS by elucidating the role it has in Christian philosophical theology and doctrine, and to explain my methodology when putting the account of God's simplicity in 4th Century Cappadocian thought in dialogue with both contemporary analytic discourse and Aquinas' medieval account of divine simplicity. A useful principle for introducing these considerations is as follows. The doctrine of divine simplicity can be thought of in two contrasting ways: the DDS can be construed as a *metaphysically motivated* tenet that is required for any theistic metaphysics that is committed to God's aseity, and it can also be understood as a *doctrinally motivated* principle which played a formative role in the development of the Christian creedal account of God in the early church. I will structure the Introduction according to this distinction: I will introduce Thomist Simplicity as a metaphysically motivated account of God's nature, whilst I will introduce Cappadocian Simplicity in the context of the development of the Christian doctrinal understanding of God. This framing is, of course, a simplification: on the one hand, the DDS was first stated as a conciliar doctrine in 1215 at the Catholic council of Lateran IV just prior to Aquinas' birth, whilst, on the other, metaphysical concerns are pivotal for the Cappadocians when they are articulating their understanding of God. These factors noted, my reason for introducing Thomist Simplicity as a metaphysically motivated account here is that Aquinas does not appeal to the conciliar statement of Lateran IV when articulating the DDS, and rather he explains the doctrine by appealing to the role it has in grounding a coherent theistic metaphysics. Similarly, whilst metaphysical questions play a crucial role in Cappadocian Simplicity, I will introduce this account in the context of early Church doctrine to reflect Radde-Gallwitz' observation about the role of divine simplicity in the early church:

> The doctrine of simplicity *as it was used in early Christian literature* […] was not primarily a way of articulating God's aseity and immutability in the abstract. It was not discussed by patristic authors as a 'purely philosophical' concept easily separable from exegetical and doctrinal concerns. Rather, it entered into basic debates about who God is in light of revelation.
>
> (2009, p. 7)

Radde-Gallwitz makes this claim on the basis that early church theologians appealed to God's simplicity as a hermeneutic for reading scripture according to which all of the characteristics and actions ascribed to God in revelation must ultimately be consistent (2009, p. 7 - 8). Thus, given that a distinctively doctrinal and scriptural framing of the DDS did predominate in Patristic authors, I will introduce Cappadocian Simplicity as part of the doctrinal construal of the DDS.

Thus, this Introduction will have the following structure. In Part 1 on the metaphysically motivated account of the DDS, I will begin by explaining the philosophical arguments for divine simplicity from divine aseity that are bequeathed to us by Aquinas. I will then outline Aquinas' construal of divine simplicity and the objections to this account which have arisen in current analytic philosophy of religion and theology. In Part 2 on the role of the DDS in the development of early Christian doctrine, I will explain how the DDS was key to the formation of the Christian conception of the Godhead in the early church. I will then introduce the thought of the Cappadocian Fathers and explain the nuanced sense in which my project is premised on the belief that there is a 'Cappadocian' approach to Divine simplicity.

Introduction Part 1: Divine Simplicity as a thesis of theistic metaphysics

When the DDS is treated primarily as a metaphysical thesis, it can be seen as a prerequisite for a coherent theistic ontology. The Christian writer who has bequeathed to us extensive arguments for the philosophical import of the DDS is Aquinas. Aquinas makes the case that the DDS is a metaphysical cornerstone for the commitment that God has aseity; in this section, I will argue that he is correct. Whilst I will be discussing Aquinas here, the argument for the DDS from divine aseity concerns the general tenet that God is simple rather than Aquinas' particular metaphysical

assumptions about what the DDS entails. Thus, I regard the philosophical justifications for the DDS below to be equally available for proponents of the Cappadocian account of divine simplicity.

(1.a) The argument for Divine simplicity from God's aseity

In the *Summa Contra Gentiles* ('SCG') and *Summa Theologiae* ('ST'), Aquinas gives us philosophical arguments for the thesis that God is simple, one of which indicates that God has ontological independence – that is, aseity – if, and only if, God has no parts. An entity X has aseity if it is entirely free of all relations of dependence upon other entities: X is not caused by another, no features of X are the way they are *in virtue of* some external explanatory factor, no property of X is *grounded in* some property or properties that are independent of X, and so forth[1].

In *SCG* and *ST*, Aquinas gives two parallel expressions of the argument for divine simplicity from God's aseity. In *SCG* 1.18, Aquinas proposes that: '[e]very composite…is subsequent to its components. The first being, therefore, which is God, has no components' (SCG, 1, 18, 3)[2]. Aquinas does not appeal to categories that are particular to his metaphysical framework here, nor does he in the restatement of the argument in the *Summa Theologiae*, and so he seems to be offering a philosophical justification for the DDS which could be used by any proponent of the doctrine. In Aquinas' later restatement of the argument in the *Summa Theologiae*, he brings out the issue of God bearing relations of *dependence* to parts as follows: 'every composite is posterior to its component parts, and is dependent on them; but God is the first being' (ST I, q. 3, a. 7)[3]. In what follows, I will analyse the common thread in Aquinas' arguments that the DDS allows us to

[1] This minimal characterisation of aseity is neutral regarding the question of whether aseity is an extrinsic or an intrinsic attribute. See Adams and Robson (2020) and Sijuwade (2026) for classifications of aseity as an extrinsic attribute based on the idea that predicating aseity of God seems to involve making a claim about God's relationship with other beings, even if aseity involves God's *lack* of a particular dependency relation to them.

[2] This quotation is taken from Pegis' translation of the *Summa Contra Gentiles* (1975, p. 103).

[3] All English translations of the *Summa Theologiae* used in this thesis are taken from the Second Revised Edition of the text (1920) produced by the Fathers of the English Dominican Province.

avoid the conclusion that God bears a relation of dependence to parts. In this vein, it is helpful to note that Pasnau and Shields also gloss Aquinas' argument in *SCG* 1.18.3 as primarily concerning the matter of whether God bears such relations of dependence:

> In general, suggests Aquinas, composite entities are posterior to their parts; they *depend* for their existence on their parts (*SCG* I.18.3/142). A house, for instance, in some straightforward sense depends on the existence of the bricks used to construct it and also upon, more generally, its foundation, walls, and roof.
>
> (2016, p. 125)

In the example of the house, we see that Pasnau and Shields also consider ontological (in)dependence to be the key theme of Aquinas' argument. Whilst, in Aquinas' Aristotelian metaphysics, the dependence of a house upon its constituent parts would be classified as a case of *causation* – the physical components of the house being the material cause of it – if we suppose that Pasnau and Shields' example is an accurate summary of Aquinas' intuition, what is clearly at stake is the atemporal relations of dependence that a composite can bear to its parts. When Aquinas argues in *SCG* 1.18.3 and *ST* 1.3.7 that the DDS is required, because otherwise God would be dependent upon, and subsequent to, His parts, he has clearly isolated God's ontological independence or *aseity* as a fundamental property of God that the DDS can uphold. If God had parts, He would be dependent upon them; but God has aseity, He is free of all relations of dependence upon other entities; thus, God does not have parts. In sum, God has *aseity* if, and only if, God is simple.

Now, is Aquinas right that the DDS is a metaphysical prerequisite for divine aseity? To evaluate this, let us consider Baddorf's challenge to the above reasoning. At the outset, Baddorf makes it clear that he is targeting Aquinas' argument:

> Aquinas writes that a whole is always posterior to its parts, and he presumably has some kind of grounding relation in mind (Aquinas, ST I.3.7, responsio). Unfortunately, Aquinas' argument is very compressed. It is hard to know just what kind of relation Aquinas is thinking of, and why it is impossible that God be prior to his parts in that sense.
>
> (2017, p. 410)

In response, Baddorf offers a version of the thesis that God is complex which He believes can avoid the loss of God's aseity. Baddorf's divine complexity thesis is as follows:

> Divine complexity-tropes (DC-T): God is composed (at least partly) of tropes
>
> (2017, p. 406)

In contemporary analytic thought, a trope is understood to be a property of an entity which is not an instantiation of some universal; the concrete property itself – the trope – existing in the entity is the only reality which explains why the entity is F, rather than not-F. As part of his exposition of (DC-T), Baddorf considers a particular way of understanding tropes, which is as follows: 'tropes are identical to ways their substances are' (2017, p. 411 – 412). The thought here is that the concrete properties of an object which are its tropes are not some additional realities 'inhering' in the object; rather, the very fact that the object has a certain characteristic *is the same thing as* the object possessing a specific property, a trope. Baddorf explains this idea as follows:

> A proponent of this view would not say that a brick is red because of its redness trope; instead, the brick's redness trope and the state of affairs of the brick's being red are identical. Tropes (on this view) are simply ways that substances are, not items which grant substances their character.
>
> (2017, p. 411 – 412)

Baddorf argues that, when tropes are understood in this way, God can have a plurality of tropes – and therefore mereological complexity – whilst *having* aseity on (DC-T):

> On this understanding, tropes do not threaten God's aseity. God is not dependent upon God's omnipotence trope for the way God is, for the way God is (that is, powerful) just is God's omnipotence trope.
>
> (2017, p. 411 – 412)

Baddorf's proposal is that God is mereologically complex in the sense that His nature is constituted by the distinct 'tropes' or 'ways' that God is. For example, one 'way that God is' is His being all-powerful, another is His being wise, another is His being loving, and so forth. The

plurality of tropes that God's nature possesses – the fact of His being wise, the fact of His being powerful, and so forth – are not grounded in any additional items 'inhering' in God, and so God is not dependent on constituents to possess His own nature. If God's nature is 'composite' just in the sense that there are a plurality of facts about ways that it is, and this is all it takes for God to have a plurality of constituents understood as tropes, then God can be composite without His nature depending upon parts. So, with regards to the argument for the DDS from aseity, Baddorf's challenge is that: whilst it may be the case that *God's having parts analogous to material parts* is incompatible with divine aseity, God can be complex in a different way – He can have a *plurality of tropes* – without this leading to the kind of pernicious dependence upon parts that Aquinas had in mind.

Baddorf's argument is less than compelling. Firstly, as will be apparent later in this Introduction, all of the proponents of the DDS that I will discuss – including Aquinas and the Cappadocian Fathers – are happy to affirm that God is a plurality of 'ways': God is truly wise, truly powerful, and so on. But, the major proponents of the DDS do not believe that the fact that there are many truths about ways that God is entails that God is mereologically complex. After all, if a single feature of an entity can be the truthmaker for a plurality of truths about 'ways' that the entity is, it would seem to follow that a single undifferentiated item can have a plurality of 'tropes' in Baddorf's sense[4]. To appreciate this point, consider a hypothetical simple object φ. Now, there would be many truths about φ: 'φ exists', 'φ is identical to itself', and 'φ has no parts'. According to Baddorf's use of the notion of tropes, it follows that φ has three tropes: φ is such that it exists, φ is such it is self-identical, and φ is such that it has no parts. So, on Baddorf's account, φ could be considered to be a *complex* entity just because there is a plurality of 'ways' that it is. If this is right, then the kind of 'complexity' that Baddorf proposes to be compatible with aseity is *also* compatible with mereological *simplicity*. Thus, Baddorf's argument has not severed the connection between partlessness and aseity; rather, all he has shown is that an entity can be

[4] In Chapter 4, we will see Brower deploy the contours of this idea in his truthmaker theory of the DDS (2009).

'complex' in the sense that there are many truths about ways that it is, whilst that entity simultaneously has aseity. None of the proponents of the DDS that I will consider would have a problem with affirming that a simple God is 'complex' in Baddorf's sense. Thus, what Baddorf has failed to do is engage with the deeper metaphysical point at stake in Aquinas' original argument that there is something about *having parts* – not being legitimately described as existing in a plurality of ways – which is incompatible with aseity. Unless it is demonstrated successfully that a 'divine complexity thesis' which unequivocally entails that God has parts is also compatible with divine aseity, the weight of the matter lies in favour of the DDS here: there is a strong case to be made that the DDS is a prerequisite for divine aseity.

Aquinas has offered us a convincing reason to believe that, when the DDS is treated as a philosophical tenet, we should accept the claim that God is simple because this is the strongest way to maintain the thesis that God has aseity, or 'ontological independence' from all else. Having considered the success of the argument for the DDS from divine aseity, I will now introduce Aquinas' particular account of what the DDS entails about God's nature, as well as the contemporary philosophical response to it.

(1.b) Thomist Simplicity and analytic objections to the DDS

As I will show in Chapter 1, Aquinas' account of the DDS is a continuation, and significant theoretical deepening, of the construal of God's identity with His attributes as it was articulated in the thought of his predecessors Augustine and Anselm. Because Aquinas' theory of simplicity is continuous with that of his Latin forebears, whilst having original philosophical depth, his account of divine simplicity is often treated in contemporary debates as *the* traditional understanding of God's simplicity. In Chapter 1, I will draw upon Aquinas scholarship to elucidate the foundations of Thomist Simplicity. It is necessary to include this analysis in the present thesis, for it is only possible to understand the modern difficulties with Divine simplicity in light of Aquinas' thought.

Aquinas' construal of the DDS centres around the tenet that God's partlessness centrally consists in Him being identical to anything which is intrinsic to His nature. This understanding of divine simplicity has been dubbed the 'identity thesis' by Radde-Gallwitz, who uses the term both to refer to the account of the DDS in Aquinas and in the Cappadocians' rival Eunomius; he also notes that the identity thesis has 'become an almost universal presupposition of contemporary discussions of divine simplicity among philosophers of religion' (2009, p. 5). Although Radde-Gallwitz notes the presence of the identity thesis in Aquinas' thought and contemporary debates, he does not analyse Aquinas' doctrine of simplicity itself, nor does he expand upon the modern debates over the DDS. Rather, Radde-Gallwitz uses historical and modern invocations of the identity thesis as a foil with which to contrast his patristic exegesis of Cappadocian Simplicity. To advance the contemporary engagement with the DDS in philosophical theology, however, I will put the framework of Cappadocian Simplicity fully in dialogue with Thomist Simplicity and contemporary analytic challenges to the DDS.

As we will see in my analysis of Thomist Simplicity in Chapter 1, in *ST*, I, q.3 Aquinas affirms that none of the forms of composition that exist in creatures exist in God, before proceeding to propose that, in God, those things which He does possess are identical to each other and to Himself. For example, God *is* His essence and His existence, and so God's essence and existence are identical (ST, I, q.3, a.3 - 4). Because of Aquinas' understanding that God possesses, in a supereminent way, the perfections which He causes in creatures (ST, I, q.13) whilst God is *simple*, He frequently affirms that God is *identical* to His attributes. Aquinas also draws out the epistemological and semantic subtleties of the DDS. For example, in *SCG* 1.35 he affirms that our various names for God are non-synonymous because they each signify a different concept in the human intellect, and this is the result of those concepts being derived from the diverse perfections in creatures which resemble God's unified and simple perfection.

At this stage, it will be helpful to forecast the philosophical objections to Aquinas' theory of God's simplicity which have emerged in recent decades, and will be the subject of my analysis in

Chapter 2. Contemporary analytic philosophers and theologians have offered a cascade of objections to the DDS, which – sometimes without explicit acknowledgement – only strictly apply to Thomist Simplicity. Plantinga (1980) raises the objection that the Thomist identity thesis conflates truly distinct properties of God, such as God's power and God's mercy. He also proposes that Aquinas' identity thesis entails that God is reduced to being identical to a property; for Plantinga, this is incompatible with the reality that God has personhood. A development of the first worry regarding the distinctions in God has also arisen in connection to the doctrine of the Trinity: as Hughes (2019) notes, the Thomistic construal of the posit that there are no distinctions in God's nature seems to be incompatible with the Christian commitment that there are three distinct persons in the Godhead: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Yet further along the line of objections, Mullins (2013) proposes that the Thomist simplicity thesis that God is pure act leads to 'modal collapse' because it undermines the possibility for God to perform contingent actions.

As I have already noted, a common assumption of many proponents and opponents of the DDS is that the doctrine rises or falls with Aquinas' account of it. Whilst this assumption is common, it is not universal. For example, Spencer (2017) considers the possibility that principles from Aquinas' understanding of the DDS could be unified with approaches to divine simplicity found in other theologians' thought to offer a stronger defence of the doctrine. Spencer emphasises the fruits of considering the potential underlying *unity* between Aquinas' construal of the DDS and accounts of the doctrine in the thought of the Orthodox theologian Gregory Palamas and John Duns Scotus (2017, p. 123). Spencer specifies that his project of uniting these views is given to 'develop Aquinas' account', and proposes that a conception of the DDS which 'synthesizes' Aquinas' views with those of Palamas and Scotus 'can respond more effectively to objections to the doctrine than can the traditional Thomistic approach' (2017, p. 123). Thus, though Spencer acknowledges the diversity of possible approaches to divine simplicity in the Christian tradition, his exploration of them is still wedded to the idea that an *ideal* defence of the DDS would be one which incorporates Aquinas' understanding of God's simplicity in the solution. Here, the

assumption that Thomist Simplicity should be at the core of the account of divine simplicity that a Christian defends is still manifest. Whilst Spencer's aspiration of emphasising the unity of the accounts of God's nature in different pockets of Christian tradition is a commendable ecumenical vision, his focus on unifying Thomist Simplicity with these accounts obscures the fact that the DDS can be fruitfully engaged with from entirely distinct starting points to those adopted by Aquinas.

In this thesis, I will propose that there is a traditional Christian understanding of the DDS which does not share the fundamental assumptions about God's essence and attributes which Aquinas held. This alternative understanding of divine simplicity that I will explore is that of the Cappadocian Fathers. I will show that the theology of the Cappadocian Fathers reorientates our fundamental assumptions about what the DDS entails about God. I will argue that, through this reorientation, the Cappadocian account can resolve the issues with the DDS that have been raised in modernity regarding the divine attributes, modality, and the doctrine of the Trinity. Thus, even in the face of strong objections to Thomist Simplicity – or accounts of the DDS which integrate Aquinas partially – the proponent of the DDS has not exhausted their options: the Cappadocian Fathers offer us a philosophically sophisticated theory of simplicity, which grounds robust responses to the challenges just referred to. I will now proceed to introduce Cappadocian Simplicity by turning to the second theme of this Introduction: the construal of the DDS as a theological principle that emerged in the early patristic development of Christian doctrine. This is the period in which the Cappadocians helped to articulate the understanding of the Godhead which now forms the basis of the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed still recited by Christians today.

Introduction Part 2: Divine Simplicity as a principle in early Christian doctrinal development

I will now introduce the early doctrinal role of the DDS. I will begin by showing that the DDS was regarded as part of the internal structure of Christian doctrine by the very figures who

formulated and defended the doctrine of the Trinity in the Patristic period, including the Cappadocian Fathers themselves and St. Augustine. My introduction of the theological role of the DDS will then provide a platform for me to introduce the theological missions of the three 'Cappadocians' – Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nyssa, and Gregory of Nazianzus. Once I have done this, I will outline the tenets of Cappadocian Simplicity and anticipate the ways in which I will use the account to respond to contemporary analytic objections to the DDS; I will also foreshadow the way that my analytic appraisal of Cappadocian Simplicity breaks new ground in the scholarly conversation over Cappadocian Simplicity that was initiated by Radde-Gallwitz' exegetical work (2009).

(2.a) The role of Divine Simplicity in Early Christian doctrine

In recent scholarship, it has been argued that the presence of the commitment that God is simple in the early church was merely an inheritance from the Greek philosophy that informed early Christian intellectual life. For example, Jenson characterises Augustine's commitment to the DDS as an 'unquestioning commitment to the axiom of his antecedent Platonic theology' (1997, p. 111). Now, it *is* true that the Neoplatonic thought which influenced early church theology proposed something approximating to divine simplicity. For example, Plotinus says that the first principle in reality, 'the One', is ''first' on account of its utter simplicity and 'self-sufficient' on account of its not resulting from a plurality of parts' (*Enneads* 2.9.1)[5]. In light of the conception of the DDS as an import from Neoplatonism, the doctrine is treated with suspicion by theologians as a philosophical dogma from antiquity which has no right to be considered as part of Christian orthodoxy. For example, Jenson affirms that perceived difficulties in Augustine's uniting of the DDS with the doctrine of the Trinity consist in a 'dissonance between the metaphysical principles of the Greeks and the storytelling of the gospel' (1997, p. 112)**.** I will begin by explaining why a portrayal of the DDS as an unnecessary import from Neoplatonic philosophy in early Christian

[5] Translation of the *Enneads* used is that of Boys-Stones et al. (2018).

discourse is an inaccurate account of the role that it has actually played in the development of doctrine.

As Ayres has argued, the DDS was understood as part of the essential makeup of Christian doctrine – particularly Trinitarian doctrine – and the framework of Christian thought in the early church. This is not merely a descriptive truth: it points us towards important motivations for believing that God is simple. Firstly, Ayres explains that a commitment to divine simplicity was an essential facet of the way that patristic theologians expressed God's unique ontological status and otherness from Creation. Ayres connects this point with Cappadocian thought through the case of Gregory of Nyssa, arguing that:

> Interwoven through the initial sections of Nyssa's *Refutation of Eunomius' Confession* are assertions that God is eternally immutable, indivisible, simple, and existing without participation in anything, the 'absolutely existent'. Nyssa uses these descriptions to develop an account of speech about God. […] he asserts that the divine nature is 'above every name' and hence not to be spoken of as we speak of created things.
>
> (2004, p. 286)

According to Gregory of Nyssa, the DDS shapes the rules for our theological language: because the simple God exists in a mode utterly unlike creatures, we cannot use the same language for God and for creatures. The Cappadocian account of the relationship between the DDS and our theological language will be the subject of much discussion in Chapter 3. In light of the theological role of the DDS in Gregory's thought, Ayres reasons that '[t]he conjunction of terms describing God as unique, simple, and incomprehensible thus shapes a fundamental distinction between the divine existence and the created order' (2004, p. 286). We can note here that the tenet that God is simple was part of a theology of God's distinction from Creation in early church thought. Now, recalling the metaphysical discussion earlier in this Introduction, I have already argued that the DDS should be regarded as the correct foundation for divine aseity. If we view God's aseity as an attribute which allows us to distinguish God from all creaturely existence, it follows that, in virtue of divine simplicity being a prerequisite for divine aseity, the DDS can be understood as a prerequisite for a philosophical account of the Creator-creature distinction.

What is more, key exponents of Trinitarian thought after the Council of Nicaea (325) understood the DDS to be the right foundation for affirming the unity of the three divine persons in God's nature. Ayres explores this in relation to the trinitarian thought of many figures, including the Cappadocians, the Alexandrian theologian Didymus the Blind (313 – 398), and Augustine (354 – 430). Let us briefly consider the case of Augustine before concentrating on the Cappadocian view. In *De Trinitate*, Augustine draws a striking connection between the commitment that a divine person is *one* with their attributes – an implication of his view of the DDS - and the core tenet of Trinitarian doctrine that the divine persons are one in nature. Augustine affirms that, with regards to the Divine nature, 'in that ultimate simplicity to be is not different from to be wise'; now, because the Father and the Son are both designated 'wise', we must understand them as 'one being, because there to be is the same as to be wise' (*De Trinitate* 7.2)[6]. Ayres explains this by remarking that, in Augustine's thought, 'the language of divine simplicity' actually 'demands' the unity of the persons of the Trinity: 'If the Son is wisdom itself, and the Father is wisdom itself, then … the Son's essence must be identical with the Father's essence' (Ayres, 2004, p. 379). Here, Augustine's account of the DDS as entailing that each divine person is identical with their attributes allows him to infer that, since the persons of the Trinity have the *same* attributes, their simplicity entails that they share a single essence. It is clear, then, *pace* Jenson's view, that Augustine actually took up the DDS as a theological principle which *serves* the doctrine of the Trinity by allowing one to maintain that the three divine persons are of one nature.

Whilst Augustine conceived of the DDS as a thesis about the divine attributes being identical to God's substance, we will see throughout the present thesis that the three Cappadocians have a more intricate understanding of the attributes that are shared between the Divine persons in the simple Divine nature. In particular, we will see the Cappadocians affirm the tenet that there is a set of predicates – a 'formula of being' (λόγος τοῦ εἶναι) – that uniquely refers to the Divine

[6] Quotation is taken from Hill's translation (2015, p. 220 - 221).

nature, and, subsequently, they hold that the community of essence between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit can be articulated through the more minimal claim that they each satisfy this set of predicates. Though the Cappadocians do not use the essence-attribute identity thesis, we will see that they are committed to affirming the unity of Divine simplicity and the doctrine of the Trinity; indeed, Basil's whole approach to construing the Trinitarian distinctions in *Against Eunomius* is to 'preserve the notion of simplicity and partlessness' in God's nature (*CE* 2.29)[7].

It is clear from the foregoing discussion that, in the early church, the DDS was not a passively inherited dogma from Greek philosophy, but rather it was an important theological principle which the founders of doctrinal orthodoxy used to articulate God's distinction from Creation on the one hand, and the unity of the Divine persons in the Godhead on the other. Now that we have begun to explore the DDS as a key doctrinal principal that emerged in early Christian thought, it will be helpful to introduce the profiles of the 4th Century champions of Divine simplicity and doctrinal orthodoxy that my research is based upon: the Cappadocian Fathers. This will allow me to address the following question: given that the 'Cappadocian Fathers' are actually three authors whose theologies are, though intertwined, distinct from one another, should we speak of *the* Cappadocian account of God's simplicity – one view that is common to Basil, Gregory of Nyssa, and Gregory Nazianzen – or should we speak of diverse Cappadocian *accounts* of divine simplicity?

(2b) Introducing the Cappadocian Fathers and the category of 'Cappadocian theology'

To explain the sense in which it is useful to speak of a 'Cappadocian' account of Divine simplicity, it will be helpful to have a clearer grasp at the outset of the identities of the Cappadocian Fathers and their theological missions. Basil of Caesarea, born in 330 shortly after the Council of Nicaea (325), was appointed as the Bishop of Caesarea in his midlife (Rousseau, 1998, p. 1-2). Basil

[7] References to the translation of *Against Eunomius* in this thesis are to that of DelCogliano and Radde-Gallwitz (2011). I cite the original section of Basil's text first, using '*CE*' as an abbreviation for the commonly used Latin title *Contra Eunomium*, followed by the page number of the English translation. Thus, the reference for the passage cited above is written as follows: (*CE* 2.29 | 2011, p.176).

spent much of his ecclesiastical career engaging with the theological disputes regarding the divinity of the Son and the Spirit that emerged in the aftermath of Nicaea. His chief theological opponent was Eunomius of Cyzicus, who, in light of his belief that God is 'unbegotten essence', refused to accept that the Son or the Holy Spirit could truly be God, and rather Eunomius held that the one true God should be equated with the Father. Basil died in 377/78, shortly before the Council of Constantinople of 381 which largely settled these Trinitarian disputes (Rousseau, 1998, p. 363). At the Council itself, Basil's doctrinal mission was taken up by the other two figures who have become known as 'Cappadocian Fathers', his brother Gregory of Nyssa and his ambivalent, formerly close companion, Gregory Nazianzen. The two Gregories were central figures in the conciliar debates and played crucial roles in establishing the understanding of Trinitarian orthodoxy which emerged after the Council.

Gregory of Nyssa, Basil's younger brother, was taught by Basil and referred to his older brother as his 'father and master' (Meredith, 2003, p.1-3). The brothers' close relationship in questions of orthodox faith was manifest in Basil's decision to appoint Gregory as the Bishop of Nyssa to protect his own influence in disputes about the faith (Meredith, 2003, p.4). As Zachhuber explains, Gregory proceeded in his own theological career to claim that his works were continuations of Basil's thought and defences of it:

> His important *Apology on the Hexaëmeron* and […] the much more influential *On the Creation of Humanity* are both enunciated in Gregory's preface as mere continuations of Basil's celebrated *Homilies on the Hexëmeron* [sic]. His books *Against Eunomius* are justified by Gregory's need to take up his pen in defence of Basil after his death.
>
> (2020, p. 46)

Despite this received picture and Gregory's common cause with Basil in refuting Eunomius' theology, Gregory is a highly original theologian whose metaphysical thought expanded into areas that Basil did not touch. Indeed, Zachhuber argues that Gregory's chosen image in relation to Basil's theological cause involves 'auctorial self-effacement' (2020, p. 46). Zachhuber's critical perspective does not stop him, however, from proposing that 'it is possible to understand

Gregory's philosophy as an extension of the thought of his elder brother' (2020, p. 15-16). In light of the exceptionally close relationship between Basil and Gregory of Nyssa, a phrase like 'the Cappadocian view of divine simplicity' is most easily applied to the account of the DDS which is found across their two corpuses; indeed, Radde-Gallwitz treated Basil's and Gregory's accounts of divine simplicity as a unity in his pivotal monograph on the subject (2009, p. 16). Given Gregory's deference to Basil as his teacher and theological forerunner, we can speak of a unified understanding of God's simplicity that is expressed in the continuity of the theological projects of the two brothers, even though Gregory's thought extends beyond the terminus of Basil's own reflections on God's nature.

Gregory of Nazianzus, the third 'Cappadocian Father', was a close friend of Basil's during their university studies in Athens; the two friends lived together, forming a shared way of life which involved a common vision of spirituality and learning (Gregory Nazianzen, *Or*. 43.19-22). Gregory went on to be appointed as a Bishop in 372 (Daley, 2006, p.2). This appointment was at the behest of Basil, who saw Gregory as an important ally in the struggle for orthodoxy; Gregory was unhappy with this dramatic interference from Basil, as he wished to live a more solitary spiritual life (Gregory Nazianzen, *Ep*. 47 - 49). At this point, a distance emerged between the two friends, but their joint education and original common purpose in the spiritual life had already bestowed a shared theological heritage upon them. Nazianzen had correspondence with Gregory of Nyssa (*Ep*. 1) and their ecclesial lives directly intersected at the Council of Constantinople. Like Basil and Gregory of Nyssa, much of Gregory Nazianzen's theological output, especially in the *Five Theological Orations*, was directed at refuting Eunomian theology (Beeley, 2008, p. 91). As we will see in Chapter 3, Gregory's writing on God's nature deploys some of the same categories and ideas as Basil and Gregory of Nyssa's works, although I share Zachhuber's assessment that, with regards to Nazianzen's unique theological identity, 'there is enough of divergence to guard against the kind of synthetic perspective that has too often been assumed', whereby the three Cappadocians' theologies are treated as having an entirely shared viewpoint (2020, p. 16). Zachhuber's wariness of a simplistic Cappadocian synthesis does not prevent him,

however, from positing that there is 'an intellectual project emerging from Basil's and Gregory's writings with important parallels and echoes in Nazianzen's writings', which, in his own account of 'Cappadocian philosophy', 'deserves a constructive, systematic presentation' (2020, p. 16-17). Thus, whilst Gregory Nazianzen did not position himself as a conduit for Basil's projects in the way that Gregory of Nyssa did, he can be treated as sharing, to a limited extent, a Cappadocian paradigm in virtue of the continuity of theological methodology between his works and those of the other two Cappadocians.

In this regard, it is noteworthy that Radde-Gallwitz, who only analysed Basil and Gregory of Nyssa's account of simplicity, still expressed some openness to considering Gregory Nazianzen's account of simplicity as a contribution to a shared Cappadocian paradigm:

> There are undeniable connections among the three Cappadocians. But […] Gregory of Nyssa's theology is best read first of all as a defence of Basil. The same cannot be said with as great a specificity of Gregory Nazianzen: though he opposed Eunomius, he did not write a *Contra Eunomium* to defend Basil. Including a discussion of his (admittedly theologically rich) account of simplicity and the knowledge of God would take us too far afield from the peculiarities of Basil's position
>
> (2009, p. 16)

Radde-Gallwitz's reason for omitting an analysis of Gregory Nazianzen was that the causal link between his writings and Basil's was weaker than it was in the case of Gregory of Nyssa. However, given that my task is to unearth the shared philosophical tools for understanding divine simplicity that the Cappadocians produced, rather than to map a causal nexus between Cappadocian texts, I do not need to overemphasise the relationship between Nazianzen and Basil to note that he uses similar philosophical ideas in his thought. My inclusion of Gregory Nazianzen's account of simplicity in this study will allow my analysis to extend beyond the bounds of Radde-Gallwitz' prior research: I will show that the inclusion of Nazianzen's account of divine simplicity offers a richer set of tools for engaging with objections to the DDS, and so the case for Cappadocian Simplicity can be strengthened through a consideration of his thought.

At this stage, we have seen that the three 'Cappadocian Fathers' are distinctive in that (a) they shared a significant overlap in their intellectual and theological heritage, particularly as a result of Basil first being Gregory Nazianzen's university companion and then Gregory of Nyssa's teacher, whilst (b) they had a joint mission in establishing Trinitarian doctrine in the late 4th Century against shared opponents, particularly Eunomius. In light of this, the following paradigm is helpful to express what I mean by the notion that there is a 'Cappadocian' account of God's simplicity. We can think of the three Fathers' theological outputs as distinct circles on a Venn diagram, where these three circles share a noteworthy – though by no means total – overlap which forms a shared core of ideas. My terms 'Cappadocian theology' and 'Cappadocian Simplicity' refer specifically to those posits about God's nature and our knowledge of God which are found in this shared core, whilst I wholeheartedly affirm that there are unique developments in each of the Fathers' corpuses which are distinctive to their own intellectual identities. Now, I will introduce in outline the particular commitments that structure the Cappadocian understanding of God's simplicity. This will allow me to forecast the ways that Cappadocian Simplicity involves distinctive tenets which provide original solutions to the philosophical objections to the DDS.

(2.c) Introducing Cappadocian Divine Simplicity

As I will show through my exegetical work in Chapter 3, Cappadocian Simplicity can be understood as working out the entailments of an epistemological thesis: God's simple essence (οὐσία) is, in its infinity, beyond our comprehension and the grasp of our conceptual apparatus. Thus, whilst we have divine attribute terms which have God's divinity as their referent, the content of these names is constituted by the conceptual presentation (ἐπίνοια) of God that they offer from a finite human perspective. The Cappadocians actually call God's attributes *'names'* (ὀνόματα), and for them the question raised by the DDS is the following: given that God's essence is simple and a 'divine attribute' is a *name* which designates God from the finite human epistemic position, what do our divine attribute predicates 'goodness', 'wisdom', 'mercy', and so forth *mean* if they do not pick out intrinsic features of God? As we will see, the Cappadocians hold that the positive knowledge of God afforded by divine names is that they present to us God's *activities*

(ἐνέργειαι); the names offer no conceptual presentation of their transcendent referent, the divine essence as it is itself. The Cappadocians hold that a very rich understanding of God is afforded by our understanding of His activities, which we grasp through the effects of His work in Creation. In Chapter 4, I will argue that the Cappadocian conception of divine action allows us to form functional psychological concepts that characterise God's relational dispositions towards us. A profound knowledge of God's personhood is facilitated by the fact that He has the disposition to cause events of healing, forgiveness, protection, and so forth, which, the Cappadocians affirm, is revealed to us both through Scripture and the wider events of the spiritual life. Whilst, for Aquinas, our divine attribute concepts pick out *perfections* in God's nature, for the Cappadocians our divine attribute concepts pick out the effects that God is disposed to cause in His relationship with creatures. This means that the Cappadocians can avoid the challenge presented to Thomist Simplicity of explaining how diverse properties such as goodness, justice, and power can be identical in the Divine essence.

In addition to the theological concepts that we derive from God's action, the Cappadocians affirm that some names for God, such as 'unbegotten' (ἀγέννητος), are privative: they offer us knowledge of God in the form of denying that He possesses properties that are 'incongruous' with His nature (Basil of Caesarea, *CE* 1.10 | 2011, p.105). Now, with regards to the attributes which the Cappadocians single out as unique identifying characteristics of God – called 'propria' by the exegete Radde-Gallwitz – I will follow the exegetical stance of Cross (2012) and the later Radde-Gallwitz (2019) and argue that these characteristics are best understood as conceptual *predicates* for God with a special role in our epistemic life rather than as ontological constituents of the nature of God. This notion that there is a special set of predicates or 'formula of being' for divinity yields a Cappadocian method for articulating the thesis that the three Divine Persons are of one nature. To affirm that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are consubstantial, we point out that they each satisfy the predicates that are uniquely reserved to refer to the Divine nature. As we will see in Chapter 3, this is an idea shared between Basil, Gregory of Nyssa, and Gregory Nazianzen.

Cappadocian Simplicity is distinctive in that it offers a strong distinction between God's nature and action, which is lacking in Aquinas' account (ST, I, q.45, a.3). As I will show, the root causes of the modal collapse difficulties for Thomist Simplicity stem from Aquinas' theses that God is pure act (ST, I, q.3, a.2) and that God is identical to His will and knowledge. Given that Cappadocian Simplicity avoids both of these commitments, we can circumvent the modal collapse objection to the DDS through it. In Chapter 4, I use the fruits of the Cappadocian theory of divine simplicity to refute the objections to the DDS that stem from Aquinas' conception of God's relationship with His attributes as well as the modal collapse objection.

With regards to my Cappadocian resolution of the modal collapse objection, we can note that Radde-Gallwitz expressed strong reserve regarding whether the account of divine simplicity in Basil and Gregory of Nyssa *could* address this objection. Referring to his original reading of Cappadocian Simplicity as involving the commitment that the 'propria' of the divine nature are inhering properties, Radde-Gallwitz expressed his concern that this account will not be able to address the modal collapse issue: '[i]f the 'pattern' of divine activity—God's justice, goodness, wisdom, and power—is 'concurrent' with the divine nature and not dependent on some free act of God, is God not compelled to act as God does?' (2009, p. 233). Whilst Radde-Gallwitz saw his early metaphysical reading of the Cappadocian conception of propria as being in tension with divine freedom, we have noted that he later replaced his metaphysical understanding of propria with the view that the Cappadocians understand God's distinguishing characteristics as concepts. I will show that this revised reading of Cappadocian Simplicity radically changes the conception of God's distinguishing characteristics and activity. In Radde-Gallwitz' later adoption of the 'conceptualist' reading of Cappadocian thought, he did not acknowledge that it could facilitate a reassessment of the modal collapse problem. In Chapter 4, my analysis reveals that the conceptualist approach does address the modal issues at hand, and this will mark an important development in the case for Cappadocian Simplicity in my research which goes beyond Radde-Gallwitz' discussion.

In Chapter 5, I argue that the Cappadocian account of the Trinitarian distinctions can reconcile Divine simplicity with the doctrine of the Trinity. This marks a further new development in the scholarly conversation regarding Cappadocian Simplicity, for it addresses Radde-Gallwitz' original concern that Basil and Gregory of Nyssa's view of the Trinity is not compatible with the DDS:

> It is also unclear how simplicity is at the end of the day compatible with their positive statements about the relations between the Trinitarian persons. […] in articulating their own account of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as sharing common properties and individuated by peculiar properties, they may stretch the language of simplicity beyond recognizable bounds.
>
> (2009, p. 234 – 235)

In Chapter 5, I will argue that, if we bring the tools of analytic thought to bear on the precise claims about the Trinitarian relations made by the Cappadocians, it can be appreciated that their account of the distinguishing characteristics of the Divine persons maintains God's simplicity far more successfully than Radde-Gallwitz originally thought. Thus, again, my analysis will lead to a re-evaluation of the capacity of the Cappadocian account of God's simplicity to address contemporary concerns regarding the DDS. Now, to set the stage for this task, I will turn in (2d) to explain my methodology when forming an account of the patristic theology of the Cappadocian Fathers which is appropriate for dealing with the concerns of contemporary analytic thought.

(2d) Cappadocian theology, Patristic methodology, and the demands of analytic method

With regards to my methodology, I should note that: whilst my analysis of Cappadocian Simplicity is fully in dialogue with contemporary patristic scholarship and is directly based on the primary texts of the Cappadocians in the original Greek, this dissertation is not, first and foremost, intended as a contribution to the exegetical task of patristic research on the Cappadocians. The primary purpose of my study is not to offer new exegetical theses about the Cappadocians, but rather to fulfil the second-order task of applying established readings of Cappadocian accounts of divine simplicity to the context of the debates over the DDS in analytic philosophy of religion and theology. Having said this, my exploration of the Cappadocian account

of the DDS and the Trinity in Chapter 5 focuses upon bringing interpretive clarity to complex argumentative passages of Book 2 of Basil's *Against Eunomius*, and therefore my study may help to bring greater clarity regarding the subtle philosophical moves that Basil is making in the text. On the whole, whilst scholars including Radde-Gallwitz, DelCogliano, and Zachhuber have done outstanding exegetical work on the Cappadocian account of the Godhead and the relationship it has to other understandings of God in the early Church, the lacuna in this field of patristic research, which I will address in this thesis, concerns asking how the insights of the Cappadocians can address the concerns regarding the DDS that are present in theology and philosophy *today*.

Now, given that my reception of Cappadocian thought is building upon the exegetical work of other scholars, my explanations of the Cappadocian account of God's simplicity (Chapter 3) and Triunity (Chapter 5) involve different dimensions of scholarly engagement. On the one hand, where there is a broad consensus in the analysis of a Cappadocian text in contemporary patristic research, I often use the interpretive and translation work of other authors to establish what the text is actually saying about God, and then my contribution is fulfilling the further task of explaining the theoretical implications of the Cappadocian account for a modern proponent of the DDS. On the other hand, where subtle issues of interpretation are prevalent in relation to a primary text, I carry out responsible exegetical work in conversation with the thought of leading exegetes to see what the original Greek of the text actually indicates about the views of the Cappadocian author.

Whilst scholars of the Cappadocians have not systematically engaged with the concerns of modern analytic philosophy, it is important to acknowledge that Radde-Gallwitz does offer some speculative proposals at the end of his monograph regarding how 'the transformation Basil and Gregory wrought cannot be part of the Christian *past* only, even if our context is radically different from theirs' (2009, p. 232). The fact that Radde-Gallwitz closed his text by looking to connect the fruits of Cappadocian Simplicity with contemporary discourse indicates that the present work is the natural next step of this research programme on the Cappadocian understanding of God.

My project is to do the second half of the work on Cappadocian Simplicity: I will systematically examine how Cappadocian Simplicity can resolve the problems that have arisen in studies of the DDS in the recent decades of philosophical theology. I will begin by explaining Thomist Simplicity and the analytic objections to it in Chapters 1 and 2, before turning to my Cappadocian defence of God's simplicity in Chapters 3, 4, and 5.

Before turning to these chapters, there is one final matter which should be mentioned in this Introduction, which concerns terminology. Across the writings of proponents of the DDS, a variety of terms have been used for 'that' in God which is simple, with the most common being 'nature', 'substance', and 'essence'. The Cappadocians' use of the term 'οὐσία' is frequently translated as either 'substance' or 'essence', and by it they intend to refer to the concrete being of God. In slight contrast, the term 'φύσις' is rendered as 'nature' and can have a different sense to 'οὐσία': a nature is a reality which is common to many individuals who each share it. Despite this, we will see that the Cappadocians are equally comfortable expressing the tenet that God is simple by claiming that His substance, essence or nature is simple. In the vast majority of cases, the terminological variations do not alter the central claim that is being made: that reality which God *is* is altogether free of parts[8]. Meanwhile, Aquinas usually predicates simplicity of God directly, interpreting the simplicity of God to consist in Him being identical with everything that He has, such as His essence (essentia) and being (esse). In affirming the DDS, Aquinas is at least concerned to make the same overarching claim as the Cappadocians: the concrete being of God is simple. Matters get more intricate, however, when we place this language in dialogue with contemporary analytic critiques of the DDS. In the context of analytic thought, whilst the term 'substance' retains its sense of referring to the concrete existence of an entity, the terms 'nature' and 'essence' can be used to refer to an abstract object: a conjunction of properties which a

[8] In a similar manner, Pawl (2020) notes that in the Trinitarian thought expressed across the first seven ecumenical councils, the terms 'nature', 'substance' 'Godhead', 'essence', and 'divinity' were each used to refer to *that* of which there is 'one' in God (2020, p. 105). Thus, it is apparent that the terminological variations manifest in Cappadocian discussions of God's nature reflect an overarching trend in early Christian theology whereby a plurality of terms were used interchangeably for picking out the divine nature.

concrete individual exemplifies in all possible worlds. In this context, the claim that God's substance is devoid of parts has different implications to the claim that God's 'nature' – the set of supposedly platonist properties that He exemplifies – is devoid of parts.

Thus, certain claims about God's 'nature' or 'essence' made by the Cappadocians or Aquinas could not be directly received in an analytic idiom without this resulting in confusions stemming from the modern 'platonist' connotations of these terms. Indeed, Wolterstorff proposes that Plantinga's original objections to the DDS in part stem from discrepancies between the modern platonist supposition that essences are abstract objects and Aquinas' own medieval commitment that essences are components of beings (1991, p. 547 – 548). Given that we have already noted the terminological disparities that emerge when we place distinct philosophical frameworks in dialogue, in most cases throughout this thesis we will simply need to be sensitive to the meaning of a key term which is operative in a particular context: when Plantinga talks about natures, he does not mean the same thing as Gregory Nazianzen, for instance. In some cases, however, particularly when I am placing the Cappadocians and Aquinas directly in dialogue with analytic figures, care will need to be taken to avoid equivocal uses of the terms 'essence' and 'nature' when we are analysing arguments for and against the claim that God is simple.

Now, to begin our investigation, let us turn to a study of Aquinas' account of God's simplicity in Chapter 1, as it is the account of God's simplicity that is the catalyst for the modern debates over the DDS that I will be responding to with the Cappadocian account of Divine simplicity.

Chapter 1: Thomist Simplicity and the legacy of Aquinas in analytic discussions of Divine Simplicity

In this chapter, I elucidate the foundations of the understanding of Divine simplicity which dominates discussion today: Thomist Simplicity. In (§1), I introduce the understanding of the DDS that emerged in Latin philosophical theology and culminated in Aquinas' account of God's simplicity. This view centres on the 'identity thesis': the posit, which Aquinas shares with Augustine and Anselm, that the divine attributes are identical to one another and to the divine essence. I then proceed to elucidate Aquinas' identity thesis conception of the DDS in (§2) and (§3) by exploring the two distinctive applications of the identity thesis that he makes: Aquinas proposes that God's essence and *perfections* (understood as attributes) are identical on the one hand, and he proposes that God's essence and *existence* are identical on the other. In (§2), I explain Aquinas' essence-attribute identity thesis that God is identical to His perfections, which are the super-eminent and pre-existing forms of the perfections that exist in creatures; I also consider the extent to which this thesis helps Aquinas to uphold divine aseity. In (§3), I analyse Aquinas' further 'identity thesis' that God's essence and existence are identical, and I propose that this claim is Aquinas' distinctive way of accounting for God's existence as a necessary being who is *pure actuality*. In (§4), I explain the pervasive influence of Aquinas on contemporary discussions of the DDS. My analysis of Thomist Simplicity in this chapter prepares the way for Chapter 2, in which I will show that Aquinas' conception of the DDS is vulnerable to powerful philosophical criticisms which have emerged in the recent decades of analytic thought.

(§1) Introducing the 'Identity Thesis': Augustine, Anselm, and Aquinas

It is an important feature of theism to affirm that God has certain attributes: He is omnipotent, omniscient, omnibenevolent, wise, just, generous, and so forth. These attributes may naturally be understood as belonging to God's nature itself. If a theist accepts the idea that God's nature is simple – that is, devoid of parts – they must affirm that: however these attributes belong to God's nature, the nature itself has no composition or internal complexity. Thus, once the DDS is

accepted, it becomes untenable to believe that *part* of God's nature is His power, another part is His love, yet another is His wisdom, and so on. So, how can one believe that God's nature has no distinct parts while simultaneously affirming that God's nature has a plurality of attributes? One prominent historical answer is as follows: God's various attributes, such as power and wisdom, are actually *the very same thing*, because all of the divine attributes are identical to the simple divine nature. This view is bound up with what has become known as the 'identity thesis'[9]:

(Identity Thesis)

The divine attributes are all identical to one another and to the divine nature.

In *On The Trinity,* Augustine's description of God clearly affirms the thesis:

> [F]or God it is the same thing to be as to be powerful or just or wise or anything else that can be said about his simple multiplicity or multiple simplicity to signify his substance
>
> (*On The Trinity* Bk. 6, 6)[10]

Augustine states that it is 'the same thing' for God 'to be' as to 'be' one of His one attributes; as a result, for God to be, for example, 'just' is the same thing as for Him to be 'wise'. Augustine's idea here seems to be that God having a divine attribute 'F' is the same thing as God possessing His whole simple nature. Like Augustine, Anselm also espouses the identity thesis alongside the thesis that God does not have parts. We see this in part of Anselm's prayer to God in the *Proslogion*:

> Indeed You are unity itself not divisible by any mind. Life and wisdom and the other [attributes], then, are not parts of You, but all are one and each one of them is wholly what You are and what all the others are.
>
> (*Proslogion* C. 18, 2)[11]

[9] This phrasing was introduced by Radde-Gallwitz (2009, p. 5).

[10] Quotation is taken from Hill's translation (2015, p. 209).

[11] Quotation is taken from translation of Davies and Evans (2006, p. 99).

The same pattern of reasoning is present here. Anselm affirms that, with regards to the divine attributes, 'all are one', and therefore the attributes are understood to be the same as one another. Anselm then addresses God by affirming that 'each one of them is wholly what You are'. Thus, not only are divine attributes such as life and wisdom identical to each other, Anselm also wishes to affirm that God just *is* His life, wisdom, and so forth. In these passages from Augustine and Anselm, we see that the identity thesis had already been affirmed in the patristic and mediaeval periods of Latin philosophical theology before Aquinas discussed the DDS. In this chapter, I will show that Aquinas follows Augustine and Anselm in affirming the identity thesis, but he offers unique developments of it in accordance with his metaphysical worldview.

Before we study the structure of Aquinas' discussion of the DDS in the *Summa Theologiae* and *Summa Contra Gentiles*, it will be helpful to get an initial grasp on Aquinas' conception of God's identity with his attributes by considering a sample way that he deploys the identity thesis in his reasoning:

> But since the power of God, which is His essence, is nothing else but His wisdom (potentia Dei, quæ est ejus essentia, non sit aliud quam Dei sapientia), it can indeed be fittingly said that there is nothing in the divine power which is not in the order of the divine wisdom
>
> (ST, I. q.25, a.5)[12]

Here, Aquinas claims that 'the power of God, which is His essence, is nothing else but His wisdom'. In this clause, Aquinas gives two striking identity claims:

[1] The power of God *is identical to* God's essence.

[2] The power of God *is identical to* God's wisdom.

[12] All references to the Latin of the *Summa Theologiae* are to the text as contained in Gilby (1964).

Following the same trajectory as Augustine and Anselm, Aquinas conceives of God's essence and His attributes – in this case, power and wisdom – as all identical to one another. As Mann notes, in sayings of this kind Aquinas does not affirm that God is identical to universal properties, nor does he affirm that such universals are identical in God:

> Aquinas routinely does not say, e.g., that God is Goodness. He says rather that God is *his* goodness (*Deus est sua bonitas*). In general, Aquinas' expression of instances of the DDS takes one or the other of two forms. Let me call them … *Deity-instance identities,* that is, identities of the form 'God is his F-ness'; and *instance-instance identities,* identities of the form 'the F-ness of God is the G-ness of God'.
>
> (Mann, 1982, p. 454-55)

Aquinas affirms that God is identical to *His wisdom*, and that *God's wisdom* and *God's power* are identical; this means that Aquinas does not have to hold general identity claims such as 'wisdom is the same thing as power'. The greater subtlety involved in this claim will allow proponents of Thomist Simplicity to resist certain objections to the identity thesis which will be considered in Chapter 2.

Aquinas explains the details of his account of divine simplicity in the *Summa Theologiae* and *Summa Contra Gentiles*. I will discuss both of these treatments of the DDS in tandem. Given that contemporary analytic responses to Thomist Simplicity target Aquinas' thesis that God is identical with His attributes, I will focus my study on the aspects of Aquinas' account of the DDS which involve him proposing that God is identical to the things that He possesses. Before undertaking this analysis, it will be useful to contextualise Aquinas' understanding of God's simplicity by noting the overarching role of the DDS in his metaphysics. In this regard, I will follow De Haan's proposal that Aquinas' account of the DDS in both of his *Summae* employs a 'threefold way' or '*triplex via*' inspired by pseudo-Dionysius' thought (2023, p. 107). De Haan identifies the three elements of Aquinas' *triplex via theology* (*TVT*) as follows:

> In his *Summae* Aquinas starts with God's existence known by causality (*ST* I.2; *SCG* I.13), then treats God's simplicity known by negation (*ST* I.3; *SCG* I.14-27), and then God's perfection known by super-eminence (*ST* I.4ff; *SCG* I.28ff).

(2023, p. 108)

In Aquinas' arguments for the existence of God in the *five ways*, God is known by causation: once we understand that the contingent, caused, composite entities that exist require a first uncaused cause, we know *that* God exists as the cause of the finite created order (2023, p. 109 – 110). De Haan notes that Aquinas is then able to proceed to the *via negationis* by denying that inherently creaturely forms of existence pertain to the first cause, God. In particular, since Aquinas thinks that to be composite is to require a prior cause, God cannot be composite and therefore He is simple. De Haan explains this by noting that, for Aquinas, '[m]ost fundamentally God *is not* composed of actual existence (*esse*) and essence but is subsisting existence in itself (*ipsum esse subsistens*) and thereby radically transcends all creatures which are contingent composites of *esse* and essence' (2023, p. 110 – 111). In (§3), I will explain the meaning of Aquinas' commitment that essence and existence are identical in God, whilst they are distinct in all creatures. For now, we can note that the final stage in Aquinas' *triplex via*, according to De Haan, is the *via eminentiae*, where Aquinas affirms that the perfections that exist in creatures pre-exist in God in a higher form; this allows Aquinas to explain 'how we can affirm true intrinsic and essential predications of God' (De Haan, 2023, p. 112). In summary, Aquinas first identifies the need for the posit of the existence of a first cause in reality; he then reasons that this first cause must be simple, as a composite being always requires a prior cause. Finally, Aquinas reasons that, as the cause of the perfections of all contingent beings, God must already possess the perfections that He causes in them in a higher way. Now that we have a sense of the overarching role of the DDS in Aquinas' thought, I will proceed to introduce the details of his view. I will begin by introducing the structure of Aquinas' targeted question on divine simplicity in the *Summa Theologiae* (ST, I, q.3).

Aquinas' argument for the DDS in ST, I, q.3 involves three overarching moves. Firstly, Aquinas gives arguments which 'locate' God in relation to Aristotelian metaphysical categories: since God is pure actuality, whilst matter always exists in potentiality with respect to a form, God is without

matter and therefore He is not a body (ST, I, q.3, a.2); to give another example, since entities are only contained in a genus and species in virtue of being in a state of potentiality with respect to properties possessed by other species, God is not in a genus (ST, I, q.3, a.5). Aquinas' second major move is to deny that God has any forms of composition that exist in creatures, such as essence-existence composition (ST, I, q.3, a.4) and subject-accident composition (ST, I, q.3, a.6). Thirdly, and most importantly for our analysis of the identity thesis, Aquinas affirms that, in God, those things which He does possess, such as form, essence, and existence, are identical to each other and to Himself (ST, I, q.3, a.2 - 4). With regards to the latter move, Aquinas significantly elaborates upon how he conceives of God's identity with what He possesses outside of ST, I, q.3. In particular, Aquinas explains his conception of the divine attributes as perfections that are identical in God's simple nature in ST, I, q.13, which primarily concerns his understanding of analogical predication. Given that analytic discussions of Thomist Simplicity focus upon Aquinas' 'identity' conception of God's relationship with His attributes, I will begin my discussion of the details of Aquinas' theory of the DDS in (§2) by discussing Aquinas' most explicit claims about the unity of the divine attributes in ST, I, q.13.

(§2) Aquinas on essence-attribute identity: God's perfections and the divine attribute concepts

Aquinas affirms that our divine attribute concepts refer to perfections which belong to the intrinsic character of God's essence. I will begin with the metaphysical aspect of Aquinas' conception of the divine attributes as perfections in (2.a), before turning to the epistemological and semantic entailments of this view in (2.b). In (2.c), I evaluate the philosophical role of Aquinas' essence-attribute identity thesis in helping him to uphold God's aseity.

2.a) Aquinas on the divine attributes as identical perfections in God

In Q.13 of the *prima pars*, Aquinas makes it clear that he regards God's attributes as perfections when he analyses the reference of our divine attribute terms:

> these names signify the divine substance, and are predicated substantially of God (prædicantur de Deo substantialiter), although they fall short of a full representation of Him. […] when we say, "God is good," the meaning is not, "God is the cause of goodness," or "God is not evil"; but the meaning is, "Whatever good we attribute to creatures, pre-exists in God (præexistit in Deo)," and in a more excellent and higher way (secundum modum altiorem). Hence it does not follow that God is good, because He causes goodness; but rather, on the contrary, He causes goodness in things because He is good; according to what Augustine says (De Doctr. Christ. i, 32), "Because He is good, we are."
>
> (ST, I, q.13, a.2)

Aquinas presents two strong theses here. Firstly, the finite perfections in Creation are derivative from the pre-existing presence of those perfections in God; as Aquinas explains, the proposition 'God is good' means '"Whatever good we attribute to creatures, pre-exists in God"'. Secondly, Aquinas affirms that God's perfections are supereminent in relation to creaturely perfections; he explains this when he remarks that the goodness in God exists 'in a more excellent and higher way' than the goodness found in His creatures. When explaining his account of God's pre-existent perfections, Aquinas also cites Augustine as his theological forerunner, thereby indicating that he conceives of his view of the divine attributes as continuous with that of Augustine. Aquinas situates his theses about God's perfections in the context of his commitment to the DDS in ST, q.13, a.4:

> But our intellect, since it knows God from creatures (cognoscat Deum ex creaturis), in order to understand God, forms conceptions proportional to the perfections flowing from God to creatures (conceptiones proportionatas perfectionibus procedentibus a Deo in creaturas), which perfections pre-exist in God unitedly and simply (unite et simpliciter), whereas in creatures they are received and divided and multiplied (divise et multipliciter).
>
> (ST, I, q.13, a.4)

For Aquinas, the plurality of our divine attribute concepts is derived from the plurality of perfections that exist in creatures: our intellect 'knows God from creatures' and 'forms conceptions proportional to the perfections flowing from God to creatures'. We then note that the manifold of perfections found in creatures pre-exists in God 'unitedly and simply', and so we identify the referents of the divine attribute concepts in the case of God (this is why Aquinas maintains that God *is* His power, wisdom, and so forth ST, I, q.25, a.5).

Aquinas' account of God's pre-eminent possession of the perfections that exist in creatures maps onto De Haan's account of the *via eminentiae* in Aquinas' method. De Haan explains that Aquinas' *via eminentiae* 'presumes two substantive metaphysical theses', which are that 'the positive attributes of entities are modes of perfection' and that 'causal agents must either exhibit or be sufficiently powerful to cause the perfections that exist in their effects' (2023, p. 113 - 114). It follows that God – as the ground of the existence and properties of creatures – must have a perfection which surpasses the perfections of all creatures and pre-eminently contains them (2023, p. 113 - 114). To see why Aquinas holds that God, as the cause of the perfections of creatures, must possess their perfections, let us consider his reasoning in *SCG* 1.31. Here, Aquinas argues that God's essence is the power from which all creaturely perfections flow, and powers must resemble their effects in the same way that the sun resembles the effect of heat that it produces:

> unless the power of the sun belonged to some extent to the genus of heat, the sun acting through this power would not generate anything like itself. The sun, then, is said to be hot through this power not only because it produces heat, but also because the power through which it does this has some likeness to heat. […] God is called wise not only in so far as He produces wisdom, but also because, in so far as we are wise, we imitate to some extent the power by which He makes us wise.
>
> (SCG, 1, 31, 2)[13]

According to Aquinas, the effects caused by God must *resemble* His essence on the basis that God's essence is the power that caused His effects. Here, Aquinas relies on the principle that a power will 'to some extent' be in the same genus as its effects or at least have 'some likeness' to them. Given that, for Aquinas, God is not in a genus (ST, I, q.3, a.5), he must have in mind the more limited thesis that God's essence, which is identical to the power by which He causes effects, has 'some likeness' to the created beings that God causes. So, from the existence of the perfections that are found in creatures we can infer that God's essence, as the power which caused these creatures, must possess each perfection in a supereminent way. Thus, the understanding emerges

[13] Quotation is taken from Pegis' translation of the *Summa Contra Gentiles* (1975, p. 142).

that God must possess, in a simple and perfect way, every perfection that exists in a finite form in the created realm. As De Haan explains:

> Aquinas can argue that even though God is *not like* caused and composite beings, nevertheless all such beings are *like* God insofar as they exhibit modes of being or perfection that finitely and imperfectly resemble their ultimate cause
>
> (2023, p. 113 - 114)

In sum, Aquinas holds that God, as the simple reality that causes all else to exist, must possess the perfections that He gives to the contingent beings that are causally dependent upon Him. If God lacked these perfections, He would not be able to bestow them upon the beings that are entirely dependent upon Him for their properties. Now, we know what creaturely perfections are like, so to what extent do we understand the 'divine attributes', that is, God's pre-eminent possession of the perfections that He causes in creatures? This question brings us to the epistemological and semantic entailments of Aquinas' thesis that God is identical to His perfections. I will briefly discuss these entailments here, as this will facilitate a sophisticated understanding of the relationship between Thomist Simplicity and Cappadocian Simplicity later in the thesis. In particular, we will see that Aquinas is able to (a) maintain that the simple God is incomprehensible to the finite human knower, and (b) maintain that there are real conceptual distinctions between the divine attributes. These insights will be important in later chapters, as, firstly, they will help us to avoid the inaccurate theological stereotype that Thomist Simplicity offers a 'cataphatic' account of God's simplicity in contrast to a Cappadocian 'apophatic' stance that God's essence is an unknowable mystery, and, secondly, they will help us to avoid the mistake of supposing that the Cappadocian account of the conceptual distinctions between the divine attributes has no parallel in Thomist Simplicity. By forming an accurate assessment of the areas where Thomist Simplicity and Cappadocian Simplicity are actually in agreement later in the thesis, we will be in a far better position to appreciate what is truly distinctive to the Cappadocian view when we resolve the objections to the DDS that have arisen in contemporary analytic thought.

2.b) The epistemological and semantic entailments of Aquinas' essence-attribute identity thesis

With regards to the 'manner of signification' (*modus significandi*) of our propositions which ascribe attributes to God, Aquinas notes that the subject-predicate structure of our propositions reflects our construction of thoughts about creatures, in whom substance and property are always distinct, and so this propositional structure becomes misleading when we are reasoning about the simple God that is identical to His perfections (ST, I, q.13, a.12). Aquinas reasons that, although our intellect knows God 'under different conceptions, it knows that one and the same simple object corresponds to its conceptions' (ST, I, q.13, a.12). Our intellect begins with the plurality of creaturely attribute concepts – which truly have distinct referents in creatures – and then forms divine attribute concepts from these creaturely concepts; because of the identity of God's perfections, all of our attribute concepts for God have an identical reference. It follows that, when we affirm subject-predicate propositions about God, such as 'God is wise', 'the plurality of predicate and subject represents the plurality of idea; and the intellect represents the unity by composition' (ST, I, q.13, a.12). When we form a proposition about God, such as 'God is wise', the subject term 'God' and the predicate 'wise' both refer to one and the same thing. Thus, we must constantly acknowledge that our way of reasoning and talking about God's attributes falls short of the manner in which He actually possesses them[14].

[14] For apophatically minded approaches to Aquinas' theological epistemology, see Davies (2014) and Hewitt (2020), which contrast with the cataphatic reading of Aquinas advanced by Stump (2003). A passage which captures the apophatic reserve in Aquinas' thought is as follows:

> What He is not is clearer to us than what He is. Therefore similitudes drawn from things farthest away from God form within us a truer estimate that God is above whatsoever we may say or think of Him.
>
> (ST, I, q.1, a.9)

Given that Aquinas holds that what God is *not* is clearer to us than what God is, it is reasonable to infer that he holds that God's simple perfection is more dissimilar than it is similar to creaturely perfections.

Aquinas' thesis that our knowledge of God comes through the plurality of perfections that He causes in creatures also allows him to affirm that our terms for the various divine attributes are non-synonymous. In *SCG*, Aquinas affirms that: 'in accord with its diverse conceptions our intellect devises diverse names that it attributes to God' (SCG 1.35.2)[15]. As noted, our intellect possesses diverse conceptions for God because we derive our divine perfection concepts from our understanding of the plurality of derivative creaturely perfections. Aquinas then affirms that 'a name signifies the conception of the intellect before it signifies the thing itself understood by the intellect', and therefore 'the signification' of each name for God 'is not the same' (SCG 1.35.2). Since our divine attribute terms only refer to God's simple substance via a mediation through our diverse perfection-concepts, the terms themselves are non-synonymous.

Now, we have the following picture of Aquinas' account of God's attributes on the DDS. We can form true predications using our divine attribute concepts for God's substance, and this is because these concepts refer to God's intrinsic perfections; these perfections are actually identical to one another and to God. And, whilst we possess concepts for perfections in God's essence, God's nature is incomprehensible because we do not know what it is like for God to possess His perfections in a supereminent way that is beyond creaturely perfections, nor can we conceive of the unity of these perfections in the simple divine essence. I will now consider the question of to what extent Aquinas' essence-attribute identity thesis is philosophically well-motivated by asking whether it can help him to uphold divine aseity.

2.c) The essence-attribute identity thesis and divine aseity

I will argue that Aquinas' essence-attribute identity thesis is a possible route for proponents of the DDS to uphold God's aseity; should the identity thesis itself prove untenable, however, we will have to find an alternative means of upholding the aseity doctrine. The reasoning that I will present discusses God's attribute of goodness, but this sample attribute could be replaced with

[15] Quotations from *SCG* 1.35 are taken from Pegis' translation (1975, p. 149).

any attribute which is intrinsic to God's essence. If the reasoning was sound, and it was generalised to all the intrinsic divine attributes, it would show that: if God has aseity, then God is identical to His attributes.

Let us begin by granting Aquinas the premise that God's nature is perfectly good. Let us couple this premise with the thesis that God has *aseity*. Since God's nature does not depend upon anything outside of God, the goodness of God's nature cannot depend upon anything outside of God. At this point, for *reductio ad absurdum*, suppose that God is related to goodness as a particular is related to a 'universal'- this supposition affirms that God is good in virtue of completely participating in, or instantiating, the property of goodness. If this supposition were true, God would be dependent upon an entity for His goodness: the 'universal' of goodness. But God has aseity: God's goodness does not depend upon anything outside of God. Thus, the supposition that God is related to goodness as a particular is related to a universal leads to a contradiction: granted that God does not depend upon anything outside of Himself, the supposition that God is related to a universal property 'goodness' leads to the opposite conclusion that God is dependent upon something for His goodness. To avoid the contradiction, we must reject the thesis that God is related to goodness as a particular is related to a universal. Thus, God does not bear an extrinsic relation to goodness. When entity 'α' possesses attribute F but this is not through an extrinsic relation with a universal F, we can note that the copula 'is' in the proposition 'α is F' cannot be the 'is' of a relational predication which relates a subject to a distinct property.

Now, for present purposes, let us also grant Aquinas' proposal, which I accepted in the Thesis Introduction, that God can only have aseity if He is simple, for a composite being will depend upon its parts. If God is simple, it also cannot be the case that the proposition 'God is good' is true because the predicate 'good' refers to a *part* of God, such as a trope inhering in His nature. So, if divine aseity is granted, we can discount that the 'is good' in the proposition 'God is good' is an extrinsic predication relating God to a universal, whilst when the DDS is accepted as a

further prerequisite for divine aseity, we can also rule out the idea that the predication 'is good' concerns a component of God. At this stage, a proponent of Aquinas' identity thesis could make the move of affirming that the only alternative account of the 'is' in 'God is good' available is the 'is' of identity. Thus, by process of elimination, given that the predication is neither relating God to an external property 'goodness' nor to a divine component, it must be the case that the 'is' in the proposition 'God is good' is the 'is' of identity. So, the argument concludes, God is identical to His goodness.

This reasoning could apply to God's relationship with any attribute that is intrinsic to His essence. So, if the reasoning was sound, it would push a proponent of the conjunction of the DDS with the doctrine of divine aseity towards Aquinas' identity thesis. Now, as it happens, there are premises here which are to be called into question; for example, the assumptions above about the nature of properties and the kinds of predication that exist can be challenged in multiple directions[16]. In Chapter 2, we will see why such apparently attractive reasoning about the divine attributes leads to untenable consequences for our understanding of properties. Whilst this argument that I have devised for Thomist Simplicity will ultimately be rejected later in this thesis, it is important for us to acknowledge the importance of the intuition that it represents: we should take the question of what it means for God to have His nature without depending upon anything outside of Himself very seriously. If we deem the Thomistic identity thesis implausible, we should be conscious of the costs involved in this judgement: we will have to ask afresh how God can have His attributes whilst existing *a se*.

Now, having considered Aquinas on the identity of God's perfections, I will analyse Aquinas' thesis that God's essence (essentia) and existence (esse) are identical. This is an innovative step of Aquinas' reworking of the identity thesis in his metaphysical framework.

[16] In our analysis of the Cappadocian conception of propria in Chapter 3, we will see that there is a kind of predication which allows for a sense of 'is' which is neither identity, nor relational predication, nor predication regarding components.

(§3) Aquinas on the identity of essence and existence in God

In (§3.a), we will see that Aquinas conceptualised 'existence' (esse) as a distinct component of an entity, and he proposed that God's possession of *esse* is identical to God's essence (essentia). In (§3.b), I will ask whether Aquinas' application of the identity thesis to the relationship between the existence of God and God's essence offers a coherent account of God's necessary existence as a being who is pure actuality.

(3.a) Aquinas on essence-existence identity in God

In the *Summa Theologiae,* Aquinas offers the following distinctive application of the identity thesis to the bare reality of God's existence:

> ***(Essence-existence Identity Thesis)***
> With regards to God, 'His essence [that which subsists in God] is His existence' (quod subsistit in Deo est suum esse) (ST, I, q.3, a.4).

We will see the significance of this claim in what follows. Now, there is a further thesis which belongs in a distinctive way to Thomist Simplicity which I am yet to discuss, which is that 'God is pure act' (ST, I, q.3, a.2). As I will show in (3.b) while discussing Miller's analysis of Aquinas' posit that God is 'subsistent existence', Aquinas' essence-existence identity thesis also helps to provide content for the claim that God is pure act.

Before I can unpack Aquinas' arguments for the view that God's essence and existence are identical in the *Summa Theologiae* (I, q.3, a.4), I need to explain what Aquinas means by essence (essentia) and existence (esse). As Pasnau and Shields note, Aquinas conceives of essences thus: '[t]o distinguish […] between kinds or species of being is to divide things according to their *essences.* […] Aquinas holds that the essence of a thing is that which makes it exist as a thing of

a certain kind' (2016, p. 66). Pasnau and Shields formalise the Thomistic account of essences thus:

> *x* is the essence of y = df (1) *x* makes *y* be a member of species *z* and (2) *x* is held in common by all members of *z*.
>
> (2016, p. 66)

Thus, we can think of an essence, in Thomist terms, as the unique 'species-defining' characteristics that an entity possesses and shares with all other entities of its kind. Of course, given Aquinas' view that God is not part of any genus or species (ST, I, q.3, a.5), we are limited to affirming that God's essence is simply that which makes God uniquely what He is. This aligns well with the alternative gloss of the Thomist account of essences offered by Pasnau and Shields: '[s]ince the essence of a thing defines what (*quid*) that thing is, we can also refer to the essence as the *quiddity* of a thing—literally, its *whatness*' (2016, p. 66). Whilst God is not a member of a kind, there is nonetheless a unique *whatness* (quiddity) that God possesses, and so it is coherent to speak of God having an essence. Now, with regards to the *existence* (esse) of an entity, Aquinas distinguishes existence from essence as follows in *De Ente et Essentia*:

> Whatever is not of the understood content of an essence or quiddity is something which comes from without and makes a composition with the essence, because no essence can be understood without the things which are parts of it. Now, every essence or quiddity can be understood without anything being understood about its existence. For I can understand what a man is, or what a phoenix is, and yet not know whether they have existence in the real world. It is clear, therefore, that existence is other than essence or quiddity, unless perhaps there exists a thing whose quiddity is its existence.
>
> (DEE, 5, 77)[17]

With the caveat that Aquinas notes the possibility that there could be an entity 'whose quiddity is its existence' – which will turn out to be the case with God – Aquinas' reasoning in the above passage is clear:

[17] The quotation is taken from the translation of Bobik (1965, p. 100).

(1) For any essence X, attribute Y is part of the essence if, and only if, we cannot conceive of essence X without including Y in our conception.

(2) With regards to the idea of the essence of any creature, we can understand the essence without knowing whether or not such a creature exists.

(3) [From 2] We can conceive of the essence of any creature without including existence in our conception of it.

(4) [From 1, 3] Existence is not part of the essence of any creature.

(5) [From 4] For all creatures, existence and essence are distinct.

Recall Aquinas' principle quoted above that: '[w]hatever is not of the understood content of an essence or quiddity is something which comes from without and makes a composition with the essence' (DEE, 5.77). It follows, then, from the conclusion that existence and essence are distinct in creatures that: for an actually existing creature, it is in being in virtue of existence *entering into composition* with its essence. Thus, all creatures are composites of essence and existence. We now arrive at an indication as to why Aquinas wants to identify essence and existence in God: were they not identified, God would be composite. Given Aquinas' metaphysics of essentia and esse, the stakes are high for his argument for essence-existence identity in God.

Now, let us progress to Aquinas' case for the proposal that *in God alone*, essence and existence are identical. Here is the argument from ST, I, q.3, a.4 that I will explore:

> just as that which has fire, but is not itself fire, is on fire by participation (ignitum per participationem); so that which has existence but is not existence, is a being by participation (ens per participationem). But God is His own essence (Deus autem est), as shown above (Article 3) if, therefore, He is not His own existence He will be not essential, but participated being (ens per participationem et non per essentiam). He will not therefore be the first being—which is absurd. Therefore God is His own existence, and not merely His own essence (Deus suum esse et non solum sua essentia).
>
> (I, q.3, a.4)

Aquinas' first main premise is:

(1) 'that which has existence but is not existence, is a being by participation'

(I, q.3, a.4)

Here, Aquinas speaks of a thing which 'has existence', but is not existence itself. If X has 'being by participation', Aquinas says that the case of existence here is 'just as' the case where 'that which has fire, but is not itself fire, is on fire by participation' (I, q.3, a.4). If X 'has fire' but is not itself fire, then the attribute of fire *is not part of the essence of X*. Thus, the notion of X having an attribute F 'by participation' involves positing that X is a composite of (A) its essence and (B) attribute F which is external to the essence. Thus, X has 'being by participation' iff X is a composite consisting of, firstly, *its essence* and, secondly, *its being or 'existence'*.

After giving premise (1), Aquinas repeats a thesis that he argued for in (ST, I, q.3):

(2) 'God is His own essence' (I, q.3, a.4)

Aquinas infers from (2) that (3) is true of God:

(3) 'if [...] He is not His own existence', then 'He will be not essential, but participated being'

(I, q.3, a.4)

Given that an entity has 'participated being' if it is a composite of essence and existence, the other possibility that an entity could have 'essential being' would seem to be in play if existence is intrinsic to the essence of X. Now, let us think carefully about Aquinas' inference from (2) 'God is His own essence' to (3) 'if God is not His own existence, then He will be not essential but participated being'. Firstly, since Aquinas holds that God is His own essence, this entails that: if God is not *also* identical with His existence, then – from the transitivity of identity – God's essence is not identical to His existence. Aquinas may then be reasoning that: if God's essence

and existence are not identical, then existence is not intrinsic to God's essence and rather God has 'participated being' as a composite of essence and existence. But, is the conditional that Aquinas needs here 'if God's essence is not identical with His existence, then existence is not intrinsic to God's essence' really true? It seems that this fails to account for the possibility that God's essence and existence are not identical, but existence is still 'included' in the essence of God. This would be true if God's essence was a composite of multiple attributes – such as wisdom and power – and amongst them was the attribute of existence. Of course, given Aquinas' identity thesis account of the DDS, the notion that God's essence could be non-identical to His existence while including existence alongside other attributes is inadmissible. On the prior assumption of the DDS, it must be the case that *either* God's existence is identical to the whole of His essence *or* God's essence excludes existence. Thus, if one *already* accepts Aquinas' wider schema for understanding divine simplicity, one can assent to the conditional 'if God's essence is not identical with His existence, then existence is not intrinsic to God's essence'. Once we have this conditional, we can accept Aquinas' inference from (2) 'God is His own essence' to the further conditional (3) 'if God is not His own existence, then He will be not essential, but participated being'. This shows us that, whilst a proponent of the DDS can rule out the thought that existence is a 'part' of God's essence and accept Aquinas' inference from (2) to (3), anyone who does not already believe in divine simplicity will have no reason to share Aquinas' assumption of the conditional 'if God's essence is not identical with His existence, then existence is not intrinsic to God's essence'.

Having noted that Aquinas' argument tacitly assumes the DDS at the outset, let us consider the final premise he needs to set up his derivation of essence-existence identity in God:

(4) If God is not essential but participated being, then 'He will not [...] be the first being'. (I, q.3, a.4)

Why is it that God could not be the first being if He has participated being? Aquinas' answer to this question is found earlier in (I, q.3, a.4) where he argues that a being whose essence is distinct from its existence must have its existence caused by another being. Aquinas grounds this principle by beginning with the following proposal:

> (A) 'whatever a thing has besides its essence must be caused either by the constituent principles of that essence [...] or by some exterior agent'
>
> (I, q.3, a.4)

Aquinas then applies (A) to the case of the attribute of existence and says that:

> (B) 'if the existence of a thing differs from its essence, this existence must be caused either by some exterior agent or by its essential properties'.
>
> (I, q.3, a.4)

Aquinas notes that: when we consider *any* entity, the idea that the essence of X caused the existence of X must be false because 'nothing can be the sufficient cause of its own existence, if its existence is caused' (I, q.3, a.4). From the impossibility of the second option of (B), Aquinas infers that the first must apply when existence and essence are distinct: 'the thing, whose existence differs from its essence, must have its existence caused by another' (I, q.3, a.4). Thus, if God's existence and essence were distinct, there would need to have been an entity prior to God which caused His existence. Now, we understand (4): 'If God is not essential but participated being, then 'He will not [...] be the first being' (I, q.3, a.4).

Once steps (1 - 4) are secured, Aquinas purports to refute the idea that God is not His own existence as follows:

> if, therefore, He is not His own existence He will be not essential, but participated being. He will not therefore be the first being—which is absurd. Therefore God is His own existence, and not merely His own essence.
>
> (I, q.3, a.4)

I will now provide a rational reconstruction that combines Aquinas' prior reasoning about essence and existence with the above inference to show that his argument for the claim that God's essence and existence are identical is valid. Given that Aquinas assumes that the relation which God bears to His existence must be the same as that which God's essence bears to His existence, he appears to be tacitly assuming a principle approximating to Leibniz's Law that: if two entities are identical, then they must have all of the same properties, including relational properties. Thus, this principle will need to be included in our reconstruction to render Aquinas' reasoning valid. The *reductio* reasoning that Aquinas uses above will come to the fore in the final steps of my reconstruction (steps 9 – 15), with the set up for this inference (steps 1 – 8) expressing the aspects of Aquinas' reasoning about essence and existence that we explored previously. My reconstruction of Aquinas' reasoning is therefore as follows:

(1) '[T]hat which has existence but is not existence, is a being by participation' (I, q.3, a.4). (As noted, X has participated being if, and only if, it is a composite of essence and existence).

(2) If a being does not have participated being (essence-existence composition), then it has essential being (essence-existence identity).

(3) [From 1, 2] God either has essence-existence composition (participated being) or essence-existence identity (essential being).

(4) 'God is His own essence' (I, q.3, a.4).

(5) *Leibniz's law*: $\forall x \forall y [(x = y) \rightarrow (Fx \leftrightarrow Fy)]$

(6) [From 4, 5] Given that (God = God's essence) it follows that: if (God ≠ God's existence), then (God's essence ≠ God's existence).

(7) [From 3, 6] Given the disjunction between participated being (essence-existence composition) and essential being (essence-existence identity), it follows from (God = God's essence) that: 'if

[...] He [God] is not His own existence', then 'He will be not essential, but participated being' (an essence-existence composite) (I, q.3, a.4).

(8) If God has participated being, then 'He will not [...] be the first being' (I, q.3, a.4).

(9) [*Assumption for reductio ad absurdum*] God is not His own existence.

(10) [From 7, 9] God is not essential, but participated being (an essence-existence composite).

(11) [From 8, 10] God is not the first being. God needs a prior being to cause His existence and unite it to His essence.

(12) God is the first being (I, q.2, a.3).

(13) [From 11, 12] 'God is the first being' and 'God is not the first being'. *A contradiction*.

(14) [From 9, 13] The assumption (9) creating the contradiction must be false. So, the claim 'God is not His own existence' is false. Thus, God is His own existence.

(15) [From 4, 5, 14] Given that God is His own essence and our proof that God is His existence, it follows that God's essence is identical to God's existence.

Thus, Aquinas' premises enable him to arrive, through deductive reasoning, at the conclusion that God's essence and existence are identical. He can therefore conclude that God is '*ipsum esse subsistens*', that is, 'subsistent being itself' (Dolezal, 2009, p. 115). As a result of his conclusion that God is being itself, Aquinas affirms that the name 'He Who Is', the title that God reveals for Himself in Exodus, is the most appropriate name for God (ST, I, q.13, a.11). Whilst this vital Scriptural name offers evidence that Aquinas' essence-existence identity thesis is an appropriate thesis of natural theology, it is important to ask why a philosophical theologian would follow Aquinas in viewing this distinctive application of the identity thesis to be an *essential* commitment

of theism. To this end, I will now consider the reasons why one might be philosophically sympathetic to Aquinas' essence-existence identity thesis as offering a robust account of God's necessary existence and pure actuality.

3.b) The essence-existence identity thesis, and God's necessity and actuality

Firstly, it is natural to understand Aquinas' essence-existence identity thesis as his distinctive way of characterising God's necessary existence. If God just *is* His existence, whilst, as discussed earlier, God is the foundation for the existence and perfections of all creatures, God's *identity* with the very being upon which all of reality is founded is the strongest form of necessary existence that we could conceive of. Indeed, Aquinas can offer the following reductive accounts of necessity and contingency:

> X is necessary if, and only if, the essence and existence of X are identical.
>
> X is contingent if, and only if, X is composed of essence and existence.

Dolezal characterises the contingency of creatures on Aquinas' claim that essence and existence are distinct in them through the idea that 'no creature exists essentially', or 'through its essence':

> If it did so exist then we should have no need to look back of or outside of its essence for any principle or explanation of its actual existence. Its essence alone would suffice to reveal to us both *what* it is and *whereby* it exists.
>
> (2011, p. 99)

Given that Aquinas holds that existence is external to the essence of any creature, the lack of an internal component of 'existence' in the essence of any given creature suffices to explain why it exists contingently rather than with necessity. As Dolezal noted, something beyond the essence of the creature must be posited to explain why the creature exists at all. In contrast to creaturely existence, Aquinas explains God's role as subsisting being itself as follows:

> every being in any way existing is from God. For whatever is found in anything by participation, must be caused in it by that to which it belongs essentially, as iron becomes ignited by fire. Now it has been shown above (I:3:4) […] that God is the essentially self-

> subsisting Being; and also it was shown (I:11:4) that subsisting being must be one; […] Therefore all beings apart from God are not their own being, but are beings by participation. Therefore it must be that all things which are diversified by the diverse participation of being, so as to be more or less perfect, are caused by one First Being, Who possesses being most perfectly.
>
> (ST, I, q.44, a.1)

Here, Aquinas returns to the analogy of the essential and non-essential possession of the property of fire: iron can be on fire 'F' only if it *participates* in something which is essentially F, namely fire itself. Likewise, creatures can only have being if they participate in something which essentially possesses being; given that God is the only existent with essential being, it follows that creatures must participate in God to have being. Now, since the being of creatures comes from God as the cause from which they derive it, when *esse* enters into composition with an essence in a creature, the *esse* that is present here is a secondary kind of being which depends upon God's *esse*, in much the same way that a creature's possession of a perfection such as goodness is derivative from God's supereminent possession of that perfection. So, on Aquinas' metaphysical framework, God's necessary existence is not merely a modal property such as 'existence in all possible worlds'; rather, to say that God has necessary existence is to say that He is the fount of being from which all contingent beings derive their limited existence. Thus, as Dolezal notes regarding the Thomist view, God's unique existence as *ipsum esse subsistens* is of a fundamentally different kind to the derivative being, or '*esse commune*', which belongs to the creatures that depend upon a participation in God's *esse* in order to exist (2009, p. 115 – 116).

Of course, this conception of necessary and contingent existence rests on Aquinas' premise that God is subsisting being itself: God just *is* His existence. To analytic philosophers who are familiar with Frege's conception of existence, this affirmation might seem to be incoherent. In Miller's analysis of the conceptions of existence in Aquinas, Frege, and other philosophers, he sheds light on precisely where the Thomistic and Fregean understandings of existence differ. I will now draw on Miller to elucidate this distinction, although, given that my task is to explain Thomist

Simplicity rather than to defend it, I will not follow Miller in defending the claim that the notion of subsistent existence is philosophically compelling.

According to Frege, to affirm an existential proposition – to use my own example, 'blue objects exist' – is not to predicate a property of existence of certain objects. Rather, as Miller notes, it is to say that the extension of a particular concept - in my example, that of being a 'blue object' – is greater than 0; or, equivalently, the predicate 'blue' has at least one referent (2002, §1). Formally, where the predicate 'F' means 'is blue', we would express the existence of blue objects in Fregean terms as follows: ∃x(Fx); as Miller explains, the existential quantifier '∃x' here means 'there is at least one thing' such that it satisfies the concept in question (2002, §1). Here, existence is not treated as a property of concrete beings, for the predicate 'exists' is treated as a disguised statement about a concept having an extension which is not null. In contrast to the Fregean view, Miller explains that existence can be treated as a *property* of individuals, where properties are understood as 'whatever is attributed to something by a predicate' (2002, p.96). As Miller himself conceives of the property view of existence, the more expansive the properties of an individual are, the 'richer' its instance of existence is, in virtue of the fact that the instance of existence possessed by an individual just *is* the actuality of the individual and its properties (2002, p. 120-121). Miller gives the example that Leonardo Da Vinci's instance of existence, understood as the actuality of his properties, is 'richer' than the instance of existence of a speck of dust, in virtue of the fact that the latter has far fewer and less elaborate properties than the former (2002, p.153).

Now, within the context of treating existence as a property, Miller clarifies that we are not to think of Subsistent Existence – with which Aquinas identifies God – as the *'limit simpliciter'* of the property of existence, where a limit simpliciter of a property F is the maximal version of F; for instance, the limit simpliciter of the property of speed is the speed of light, because it is the fastest instance of speed attainable by an object (2002, p.137). Rather, Miller proposes that Subsistent Existence is the *'limit case'* of the property of existence, where the limit case of a property F is not itself an F, but rather is that to which the series of all Fs tends; for example, whilst a point is

not itself a line, it is the *limit case* of the infinitely descending series of line lengths (2002, p.138 - 141). Where 'F' means 'is a line', a point is not an F, but, *qua* limit case, it is 'that in which the defining characteristic of the members has been varied to the point of extinction' (2002, p.140). Thus, Subsistent Existence, understood as the limit case of the property of existence, would not itself be the maximal *instance* of existence (2002, p. 146). Rather, where instances of existence increase in richness as we move from entities with fewer to more actualised properties, the 'limit case' of existence would be something which is beyond instances of existence, but is that to which the series of ever-increasingly rich instances of existence is ordered. Now, on the supposition that an 'instance of existence' is 'that by virtue of which an individual both is the kind of entity it is and has the kinds of properties it does have', it follows that the 'limit case' of existence, Subsistent Existence, 'will be not merely rich but the limit case of such ontological riches' (Miller, 2002, p. 153). In light of this, let us consider the proposition 'God exists'. On the Fregean understanding of existence, this proposition states that the extension of the concept 'God' is greater than 0. On the Thomist understanding that God is subsisting existence itself, the proposition 'God exists' would actually be better articulated, in accordance with Miller's explanation, as 'God is the limit case of existence', or, equivalently, 'in the scale of increasingly rich instances of the property of existence, God's existence is the ultimate kind of existence which transcends this scale, and is that to which it tends'.

Now, Miller also proposes that the claim that a being is Subsistent Existence is equivalent to the claim that the being is pure act:

> Subsistent Existence has a long history of being known too as Actus Purus (pure actuality), which is perfectly correct, but which also is open to being misconceived, namely, as a being in which all potentialities are fully actualized. […] no such being could ever differ absolutely from other members of the series of which it purports to be the limit case. […] Subsistent Existence or Actus Purus cannot be marked by any potentiality whatsoever, not even by potentialities that are always fully actualized. […] it has *no potentialities at all* to be actualized. To say otherwise would be to deny that it was simple.
>
> (Miller, 2002, p.151)

According to Miller's position, the content of Aquinas' claim that 'God is pure act' (ST, I, q.3, a.2) is equivalent to the claim that He is subsistent existence. Because Subsistent Existence, as the limit case of existence, must 'differ absolutely' from the order of instances of existence, the notion of 'pure actuality' possessed by such a being must also differ in kind from the actuality that can be found lower in the ontological hierarchy. Thus, whilst, ordinarily, beings who possess actuality are those in whom some potentiality has been actualised, the notion of 'actuality' ascribed to Subsistent Existence, as *actus purus*, must be that of having '*no potentialities at all*', to use Miller's phrase. To use more familiar language to characterise the Thomistic conception of God as pure actuality, God should not be thought of as a being who has fully actualised their capacities, but rather as a being who lacks capacities at all, given that it is inherently limiting to possess mere capabilities, rather than possessing one's actuality 'all at once'.

Now, having elucidated the implications of Aquinas' thesis that God is the being in whom existence and essence are identical, I will close the chapter by giving an overview of the influence of Aquinas' identity thesis account of the DDS on contemporary discussions of divine simplicity.

(§4) The influence of Aquinas on modern analytic discussions of Divine simplicity

As I will discuss in further detail in subsequent chapters, Aquinas' 'identity thesis' conception of divine simplicity has had an immense influence on subsequent philosophical and theological debates about the DDS. Indeed, in many contexts, both proponents of the DDS and opponents of the doctrine appear to assume that the meaning of the claim that God is simple just *is* the identity thesis, particularly as it was characterised by Aquinas. In this section, I will briefly describe the ways in which the habit of conflating the DDS and *Aquinas' theory* of the DDS is manifest in the contemporary literature. My purpose at this stage is simply to display this phenomenon; the arguments of individual thinkers referred to will be tackled at later stages of the thesis.

One prominent example of the conflation of the generic doctrine of simplicity and Thomist Simplicity is in the writing of Brower, whose 'truthmaker' theory of God's simplicity will be the

subject of much discussion in Chapter 4. When Brower articulates the meaning of the DDS, he proposes that the tenet that God is simple commits one to the position that:

> (DS): If an intrinsic predication of the form "God is *F*" is true, then *God's F-ness* exists and is identical with God.
>
> (2008, p. 4)

Here, Brower's explanation of the entailments of the DDS includes the identity thesis: for him, to hold that God is simple is to affirm that the referents of predications about God are *identical* with God. Whilst, as has been discussed, the DDS is just the commitment that God has no parts, Brower does not even contemplate the possibility that this doctrine could be articulated without reference to an identity thesis of some sort. Here, the legacy of Aquinas, and his Latin predecessors Augustine and Anselm, is manifest in an implicit manner.

We also see the ubiquitous influence of Thomist Simplicity in the writings of the opponents of the DDS. For example, in Plantinga's famous arguments against the DDS, which I will survey in Chapter 2, he claims that the assumption that 'God is identical with each of his properties' leads to absurd results; from this, Plantinga concludes directly that 'the simplicity doctrine seems an utter mistake' (1980, p. 47). Here, Plantinga takes it as given that a demonstration that God cannot be identical to certain properties is, ipso facto, a demonstration that the DDS is false. Really, however, what Plantinga has in mind is *Aquinas'* understanding of divine simplicity, and his identity thesis in particular. This is manifest in Plantinga's explanation of what the doctrine of simplicity is:

> The basic idea of this doctrine is that no distinctions can be made in God. We cannot distinguish him from his nature, or his nature from his existence, or his existence from his other properties; he is the very same thing as his nature, existence, goodness, wisdom, power and the like.
>
> (Plantinga, 1980, p.27)

We see here that Plantinga treats the identity thesis interpretation of the DDS, and even Aquinas' distinctive thesis that God is identical to His existence, as entailments of the DDS itself. This is

not surprising, given that Aquinas is the primary interlocutor that Plantinga engages with when disputing the doctrine of simplicity (1980, p. 28).

The same lack of a distinction between the DDS *simpliciter* and Aquinas' theory of the doctrine is evident in Mullins. This is apparent when Mullins assumes that the DDS is inextricably bound to the idea that God is pure act: 'one should recall that as pure act God has no unactualized potential. If God has any unactualized potential, He is not simple' (2013, p. 195). Here, Mullins treats the distinctively Thomistic view that God is pure act as a commitment of the DDS itself. Mullins goes so far as to affirm that if God were not pure act, He would not be simple; here, he treats the falsity of a distinctively Thomistic thesis as directly entailing the falsity of the DDS. Clearly, Mullins is not making a distinction between the theses about God offered by Aquinas in his account of divine simplicity and the generic doctrine of simplicity itself.

Chapter conclusion

In this chapter, I have explained how Aquinas affirmed the identity thesis to maintain God's partlessness. We saw that Aquinas affirmed that God's simple perfection is the foundation for the finite perfections of creatures, whilst God *is* His possession of each perfection. We also saw that Aquinas held that God's existence (esse) and essence (essentia) are identical, which He needed to maintain to affirm divine simplicity, given his metaphysical belief expressed in *De Ente et Essentia* that existence and essence can be genuinely distinct features of entities. We then saw that Aquinas' distinctive theory of divine simplicity has set the terms for the discussions of the DDS that have unfolded in contemporary analytic theology and philosophy of religion. Now, having elucidated the identity thesis interpretation of the DDS and its culmination in Thomism, and having discussed the case for Thomist Simplicity, I will now move on to the next Chapter and discuss the modern objections to Thomist Simplicity.[18]

[18] It may be asked whether Thomist Simplicity is doctrinally authoritative in Christianity. Whilst, in the Roman Catholic Church, the DDS is authoritatively taught, the First Vatican Council declaration of the doctrine does not expound simplicity in specifically Thomist terms. When the Council affirms the DDS, it just states that God is:

> one,
> singular,
> completely simple and
> unchangeable
> spiritual
> substance
>
> (*Decrees of the First Vatican Council*, C1, 1868)

If the *Thomist* understanding of divine simplicity had absolute doctrinal authority within the Catholic Tradition, it would be reasonable to expect some sign of this in the definition of God's simplicity given by the Council. And, as we see, the Council does not state the doctrine in Thomist terms: other accounts of God's simplicity would fulfil the expression of the doctrine given by the Council. Because of this, we can say that even the Catholic Tradition is not absolutely committed to Thomist Simplicity, and therefore there is ample room for Cappadocian Simplicity to inform Catholic theology and doctrine.

Chapter 2: Modern Objections to Thomist Simplicity: the paradoxes of affirming that God is identical to His attributes, and the problem of Modal Collapse

In this chapter, I show that conceptions of God's simplicity which depend upon the Thomistic tenet that God is identical to His intrinsic features lead to untenable philosophical outcomes. Thus, an alternative account of the DDS will be needed to defend the doctrine in the context of present debates in the philosophy of religion; this required alternative account will be provided by Cappadocian Simplicity in the subsequent chapters of the thesis.

The analysis of this chapter is divided into two sections. In (§1), I analyse a family of objections to the 'identity thesis' proposal that God is identical to His attributes, which arose in light of Plantinga's critique of Thomist Simplicity (1980). Here, my analysis will show that an account of the DDS which affirms that God is identical to posited 'divine properties' will stumble into absurdities, whether one affirms that properties are abstract entities or concrete entities. In (§2), I examine the 'modal collapse' objections to the DDS, which propose that the posit that God is simple is incompatible with the reality that He bears contingent relations to created beings. Here, my analysis shows that Thomist Simplicity entails that God's action, God's will, and God's knowledge are each unchanging in every possible world, which appears to remove the possibility for him to interact with a contingent Creation. I follow this analysis with a critique of two accounts of contingent divine knowledge that are on offer in the contemporary literature, one by a supporter of divine simplicity, Grant (2012), and one by an opponent of the doctrine, Hasker (2016). I draw on Wood's study of analytic theological models to argue that the shortcomings of both accounts of divine knowledge raise important issues about the role of human conceptualisation when we posit that God has mental states that are related to creatures.

(§1) Affirming Divine Simplicity through the Identity Thesis: the Dilemma posed by a theory of Divine properties

The identity thesis states that God is identical to His attributes. In Chapter 1, we saw that Aquinas conceives of divine attributes and creaturely attributes as *perfections*, although God and creatures

possess their perfections in different ways. Whilst Aquinas holds that substance and perfection form distinct components of a creature, as reflected by propositions of the form 'x is F', he maintains that God *is identical to* His perfections. This means that, in propositions which predicate a perfection of God, the subject term 'x' and the predicate 'F' both refer to the simple divine substance. In what follows, I will use the word 'property' as a general term for both divine attributes and creaturely attributes. My argument will not deploy a substantive notion of what properties are, however, for I will show that whether we affirm that properties are abstract objects or concrete entities, the identity thesis leads to absurd results. In other words, the proponent of Aquinas' identity thesis is on the horns of a dilemma: however one thinks of the perfections with which Aquinas identifies God, significant difficulties will follow.

In (1.a), I draw upon the thought of Brower to explain that the identity thesis rests upon the attachment of the posit that God has properties to the doctrine of simplicity, which is not strictly an entailment of the DDS itself. In (1.b) and (1.c), I introduce Plantinga's objections to the DDS, which found the first horn of the dilemma for the identity thesis, corresponding to the position that properties are abstract objects. In (1.d), I analyse Mann's attempted defence of the DDS within an ontology compatible with platonism; I argue that Morris has shown that this defence fails. In (1.e), I transition to the second horn of the dilemma by analysing Mann's later conception of the DDS, which affirms that God is identical with His properties, understood as concrete 'causal powers'. I argue that: if God is identified with concrete properties, this leads to untenable consequences for our understanding of propositions which predicate these properties of creatures. Once I have presented the difficulties for the 'abstract property' and 'concrete property' versions of the identity thesis, I conclude that the best option for proponents of the DDS is to articulate a conception of the DDS which eschews the identity thesis altogether.

(1.a) The Identity Thesis as an interpretation of the DDS

Now, I will draw upon Brower to explain how the 'identity thesis' account of divine simplicity rests on the assumption that predicates which are applied to God ascribe *properties* to God; this

then gives rise to the further assumption that Divine simplicity is a doctrine about how God relates to His properties. Brower captures the general assumption that predicates are wedded to an ontology of properties in the following thesis:

> (PA): If an intrinsic predication of the form "*a* is *F*" is true, then *a's F-ness* exists, where this entity is to be understood as a property.
>
> (2008, p. 4)

The demand raised by the thesis of (PA) is that, once it is applied to God, the theist must affirm an ontology of properties to explain the truth of such predications as 'God is wise', 'God is good', and so forth (Brower, 2008, p. 4). Now, to separate the doctrine of simplicity from the commitment of (PA), Brower proposes that the actual commitment of Divine simplicity is the following:

> (DS): If an intrinsic predication of the form "God is *F*" is true, then *God's F-ness* exists and is identical with God.
>
> (2008, p. 4)

This thesis allows Brower to express the point that the DDS 'takes no stand on the precise nature of the entities with which it identifies God' (2008, p. 4). It would be a further assumption, corresponding to thesis (PA) cited above, to affirm that '*God's F-ness*' is a *property*. Now, if one affirms (DS) – which identifies God with the referents of divine predicates – and one adds to this the commitment of (PA) that the referent of a predication is always a property, it follows that one must affirm a 'Property Identity Interpretation of Divine simplicity', which can be formulated using terminology parallel to Brower's as follows:

> (PII): If an intrinsic predication of the form "God is *F*" is true, then *God's F-ness* exists, where God's F-ness is a property and is identical with God.

Once we follow Brower in acknowledging that the posit of *properties* is not strictly entailed by the DDS, it follows that: if (PII) is refuted, this is not the same thing as a refutation of Divine

simplicity. Rather, such a refutation would only show that the DDS cannot be coupled with the further thesis that divine predications posit the existence of properties in God.

With regards to Brower's articulation of the relationship between Divine simplicity and (PA), we can note that each of the scholars that I will discuss in the following sections addresses the DDS through the question of whether it is coherent to affirm that God is identical with either His properties, or His instances of properties. Once we see that these figures understand the DDS in terms of God's relationship with His *properties*, it will be manifest that they are assuming (PA), the thesis that predicates always refer to properties. Once these scholars demonstrate their reading of the DDS as concerning God's identity with His properties (or property-instances), we will see that they are actually concerned with the 'property identity' *interpretation* of divine simplicity (PII). Thus, what will be at stake in the debates below is the question of whether an *interpretation* of Divine simplicity is true, rather than the question of whether the ultimate principle of the DDS that God has no parts is true.

It is also important to note here that a reader who is familiar with Brower's truthmaker theory of divine simplicity will know that not all philosophical theologians who are sympathetic to Thomist Simplicity affirm that God is identical to properties. Brower himself rejects the understanding of the DDS as a thesis about divine properties, and instead he proposes that 'divine simplicity just amounts to the claim that God is the truthmaker for each of his true intrinsic predications' (2009, p. 113). Brower articulates this claim using the language of *identity*, affirming that 'God is identical with the truthmaker of each of the true intrinsic predications that can be made about him' (2009, p. 113). An issue of labelling arises here: a proponent of Brower's view could hold that his claim that God is the sole referent of all of our divine attribute predications is the correct expression of Aquinas' 'identity thesis' account of God's simplicity. So, it might be suggested that we change our understanding of the 'identity thesis', replacing our original definition 'the divine attributes are all identical to one another and to the divine nature' with the less metaphysically loaded definition 'God's simple nature is the single referent of all divine attribute

predications'. Whilst, by itself, this could be a reasonable adjustment, it would not suffice for the purposes of the present thesis because, as displayed in Chapter 1, my study concerns the ontologically 'full-blooded' claims that Aquinas makes about God's identity with everything that He possesses, such as the claim that God just *is* His act of existence. Aquinas isolated a series of ontological items which are truly distinct in creatures, such as perfections, form, essence, and existence, and He proposed that God just *is* His supereminent possession of each of these items. This is not only a claim about the reference of our theological terms: Aquinas affirmed that there is such a "reality" as an essence in God, and there is such a "reality" as an act of existence in God, and God really *is* His essence and His existence. For Aquinas, it is precisely *because* God is identical to His essence, existence, perfections and form, that – as Brower suggests – God is the sole referent of all of our predications about Him. Thus, for the purposes of this dissertation, the label 'identity thesis' will refer to the robust claims that Aquinas – alongside his predecessors and successors – has made about God's identity with everything that He possesses, and not just to the semantic *consequence* of his ontology that all of our predications ascribing attributes to God have the same reference.

Having clarified these terminological matters, I note here that, whilst Brower's truthmaker theory of the DDS is an important development in current discussions of divine simplicity, I will not review it in the present chapter, for my purpose in Section 1 is just to argue against the property identity interpretation of divine simplicity. I will reserve my discussion of Brower's truthmaker theory of the DDS for Chapter 4, as it will be fruitful to explore it in parallel to the account of our divine attribute concepts offered in Cappadocian Simplicity in Chapter 3. Now, having mapped out this logical space, I will begin my analysis of arguments over the coherence of divine simplicity which implicitly interpret the DDS as affirming the property identity thesis. I will begin with Plantinga's objections to divine simplicity, for they served as the catalyst for the contemporary debates over the doctrine.

(1.b) Plantinga's objections to Divine Simplicity

Both of Plantinga's central arguments against the DDS purport to show that the assumption that 'God is identical with each of his properties' leads to absurd results; from this, Plantinga concludes that 'the simplicity doctrine seems an utter mistake' (1980, p. 47). This makes it clear that Plantinga is assuming the property interpretation of divine predicates, corresponding to (PA), and from this he understands the DDS to be committed to the thesis that God is identical to His properties. Thus, at the outset we can understand Plantinga's objections to be directed at (PII), the property identity *interpretation* of divine simplicity. Now, Plantinga's first objection to the identification of God with His properties is that it is in contradiction with the reality that God's properties are genuinely manifold:

> if God is identical with each of his properties, then each of his properties is identical with each of his properties, so that God has but one property. This seems flatly incompatible with the obvious fact that God has several properties; he has both power and mercifulness, say, neither of which is identical with the other.
>
> (1980, p. 47)

In Plantinga's description of God's possession of properties, he uses the locution 'he has both power and mercifulness'. This phrasing indicates the idea that: to say that God is powerful and merciful is just to say that God *has* - or exemplifies - the universal properties of power and mercy. It is clear that in general the properties of power and mercy are distinct, since they are not coextensive in reality; it would seem that a shark has power without mercy, for instance. The premise that God exemplifies distinct universal properties entails that, just like any other entity in reality, God's power is not the same property as God's mercifulness. And, if these properties of God are non-identical, it would follow that the identity thesis is false.

Plantinga's second major objection to the identification of God with His properties is based on the thesis that properties are abstract objects. Indeed, Brower attributes to Plantinga a position he calls '*Platonic realism*', which he articulates as 'a conception of properties according to which they are a specific type of abstract entity, namely, *universals'* (2008, p. 7 - 8). We will expand

upon this notion of an abstract object in the following section; for our initial reading of the argument, all we need to consider is that an abstract object is conceived of as a causally inert entity which is non-spatial and non-temporal (Balaguer, 2016, §1). Plantinga's argument proceeds as follows:

> [I]f God is identical with each of his properties, then, since each of his properties is a property, he is a property—a self exemplifying property. Accordingly God has just one property: himself. This view is subject to a difficulty both obvious and overwhelming. No property could have created the world; no property could be omniscient, or, indeed, know anything at all. If God is a property, then he isn't a person but a mere abstract object; he has no knowledge, awareness, power, love or life. So taken, the simplicity doctrine seems an utter mistake.
>
> (1980, p. 47)

Plantinga's argument here can be understood as follows. Take any identity claim related to God and His properties, such as 'God = God's power'. Now, 'God's power' is a property, and properties are causally inert abstract objects. In contrast, God is a person, and persons are concrete beings. To identify a concrete person with an abstract object would seem to be a category mistake. If the biconditional 'x is a person ↔ x is not a property' is true and God is a person, it follows that God is not a property. Since 'God's power' is a property, it is therefore inferred that the identity claim 'God = God's power' is false.

We see here that Plantinga affirms that God's properties are genuinely distinct, whilst he proposes that identifying God with a property is, in essence, a category mistake. The source of these commitments is Plantinga's platonist understanding of properties as abstract objects. If we are to understand Plantinga's objections fully, we must understand the platonist ontology itself. It is to this task that I now turn.

(1.c) Plantinga and Platonism

Before we consider the platonist framework which underlies Plantinga's objections, note that I will be arguing that whether we conceive of properties as abstract objects or concrete objects, the identity thesis has intractable difficulties. Thus, even if Plantinga's platonist conception of

properties proves to be controversial, this does not disrupt the point that *if* properties are abstract objects, then the identity thesis is not tenable.

Since the locus of our discussion is the question of how we are to understand God and His nature, I will begin with Plantinga's explanation of what he means by a nature. Plantinga reasons that God's nature would be 'a property he has essentially that includes each property essential to him', and, in his footnotes, he calls a nature a 'conjunctive property' (1980 p. 7). We only see that Plantinga must be conceiving of a nature as an *abstract object* when we turn to consider what he thinks properties – which collectively constitute a nature – actually are. Let us see how Plantinga introduces his platonist ontology:

> Abstract objects are … naturally thought of as *necessary* features of reality, as objects whose non existence is impossible. There could have been no mountains or planets; but could there have been no such thing as the property of being a mountain or the proposition *there are nine planets*? [...] Sets of contingent objects, perhaps, are as contingent as their members; but properties, propositions, numbers and states of affairs, it seems, are objects whose non existence is quite impossible.
>
> (1980, p. 4)

Here, we see Plantinga's platonist ontology, which includes the position that properties are abstract objects whose non-existence is impossible. Now, if *natures* are conjunctive properties, and properties themselves are abstract objects, it follows that God's nature must be conceived of as an abstract object. This understanding of God's nature is important to note, since in the work of many other theists the terms 'God's nature' and 'God's substance' might be treated as synonymous. For a platonist in Plantinga's line of thinking, these two terms cannot be synonymous: whilst we can conceive of God's substance as the concrete being of God, the modern platonist understands God's 'nature' to be an *abstract object*, a set of properties which God exemplifies. Plantinga wrestles with his conception of the divine nature as an abstract object as follows:

> if God has a nature distinct from him, then there are things distinct from him on which he depends; and if the rest of the Platonic menagerie are distinct from him,

> then there are innumerable beings whose existence and character are independent of God. And doesn't it seem that this compromises his sovereignty?
>
> (1980, p. 35)

Here, Plantinga raises two worries about the way that God will be understood on his platonist framework. The first is this: if we understand God as having a nature which is constituted by a series of properties, then God will be *dependent* on these abstract objects which are distinct from him- this appears to undermine the possibility of God having *aseity*. Plantinga defines God's aseity as 'his uncreatedness, self sufficiency and independence of everything else' (1980, p. 1). If God lacks aseity, then His own being is dependent upon at least one other thing. The second worry Plantinga raises above concerns God's sovereignty, which Plantinga defines as 'his control over all things and the dependence of all else on his creative and sustaining activity' (1980, p. 1). Plantinga reasons that the independent existence of abstract objects could undermine divine sovereignty: if abstract objects are necessary beings which God has no control over, then these entities would not be dependent upon God for their existence. Now, Morris and Menzel (1986) and Leftow (2006) offer ontologies which conceive of properties as God's concepts; this allows them to affirm that the kind of entity which Plantinga treats as an abstract object is actually dependent on God, even if it necessarily exists. Whilst it is beyond my remit to analyse these views, the fact that there are accounts available of how it could be the case that properties, numbers, and so on exist necessarily whilst being causally dependent upon God indicates that Plantinga's framework cannot be disregarded on the basis that it deploys an ontology of properties which *must* violate divine aseity and sovereignty. Plantinga's central point that God cannot be identical to properties because properties are abstract objects would be equally as pressing on an ontology which maintains that God's properties are abstracta that depend upon God, rather than being objects upon which God depends.

Putting aside questions about how theistic platonists such as Plantinga should conceive of the relations of dependence between God and His properties, we can now express the crux of Plantinga's 'God is not a property objection' as follows. If one accepts contemporary platonism,

one affirms that all properties are necessarily existing abstract objects. It then follows that: to affirm that God is identical to any one of His properties is to affirm that God is an abstract object. But, God, being a person, is concrete and has causal powers, and so He cannot be an abstract, inert object. Thus, God cannot be identified with His properties, and so we lose the identity thesis. Now, I will complete my exposition of the 'abstract object' horn of the dilemma for the identity thesis by refuting Mann's attempted defence of the DDS within a framework that is compatible with platonism.

(1.d) The First horn of the dilemma consolidated: Mann's attempted defence of Divine Simplicity

In response to the dialectical situation handed to us by Plantinga, Mann looks to avoid the problem of identifying God with an abstract object by affirming that God is identical to His *instances* of properties. Drawing upon Morris, I will argue that this purported solution from Mann fails.

Mann's conception of the DDS flows from his position that Aquinas' formulation of divine simplicity actually identifies God with His *instances* of properties, rather than with properties themselves. Mann proposes that, with regards to 'phrases of the form 'the F-ness of God'', we interpret this phrase as referring to 'an instance of a property, or what I shall call a *property instance*' (1982, p. 457). Given Mann's view that the term 'the F-ness of God' invokes an ontology of properties and their instances, the property interpretation of predicates (PA) is clearly at work in his thought. With his interpretation of divine predicates as referring to God's property instances, Mann characterises Thomist Simplicity as positing:

> (1) '*deity-instance identities*', which are 'identities of the form 'God is his F-ness''
>
> (2) '*instance-instance identities*' which are 'identities of the form 'the F-ness of God is the G-ness of God''
>
> (1982, p. 454 - 455)

Since Mann takes up Aquinas' account of the DDS as the foundation of his own, it is clear from theses (1) and (2) that Mann understands the DDS to be a thesis about God's identity with His property instances, and therefore a form of the property identity *interpretation* of the DDS is at stake in his discussion. I will now unpack Mann's use of theses (1) and (2) from his reading of Thomist Simplicity, beginning with the case of instance-instance identities, as this will help us to explain the posit of deity-instance identities.

We can understand Mann's posit of 'instance-instance identities' by considering his assertion that the equation 'the life of God = the wisdom of God … is not tantamount to saying that Life = Wisdom' (1982, p. 455). When we interpret the phrase 'the life of God' as referring to the *instance* of the property 'life' in God, the equation 'the life of God = the wisdom of God' affirms that: in God's concrete being, *His* instance of one property, life, is the same thing as *His* instance of another, wisdom. But to say that a particular instance of one property happens to be identical with an instance of another is not to collapse the distinction between the universal properties themselves. To see this, let us consider an analogy: the claim that *my* running shoes are identical to *my* football shoes can be true despite the fact that the property 'running shoe' is not identical to the property 'football shoe'. Here, an *instance* of the property 'football shoe' is identical to an instance of the property 'running shoe', since the concrete particular – the pair of shoes – which is an instance of both properties is just one thing. Whilst the two properties converge here, they are not coextensive elsewhere in reality, and so we affirm that they are two distinct universals. Now, the properties of life and wisdom are not coextensive throughout reality – a shark's possession of life without wisdom is sufficient to indicate this – and so we can affirm that these two properties are distinct universals; nonetheless, we can still affirm that these two properties converge in God, where His instance of life and His instance of wisdom are just one thing. In God's case, the very same concrete reality is an instance of both properties.

Now, let us consider Mann's analysis of deity-instance identities, which correspond to such equations as 'God = the life of God and God = the wisdom of God' (1982, p. 455). These equations, which identify God with His *property-instances*, affirm the following principle: with regards to any property that God exemplifies, that in God which is His instance of the property *just is God*. Endorsing the view that God is identical to His property-instances, Mann claims that 'God is a property instance'; Mann calls the property of which God is an instance a 'rich property' (1982, p. 467). According to Mann, a rich property is 'a conjunctive property which includes all and only the essential and accidental properties of some individual thing', whilst Mann affirms that 'God has no accidental properties' (1982, p. 467). Thus, on Mann's view, God instantiates His rich property, which will include His essential properties of goodness, wisdom, and so forth, whilst God is identical with His *instance* of this conjunctive property. Here, we can note that: since instances of properties are concrete entities, the move of identifying God with His property-instances – rather than with properties themselves – ensures that the identity thesis avoids equating God with an abstract object. Thus, whilst Mann's prior posit of instance-instance identities allows him to maintain the distinction between universal properties, his posit of deity-instance identities allows him to avoid identifying God with anything abstract. Thus, Mann's reasoning would appear to entail that the identity thesis can be upheld alongside a platonist ontology of properties. In Morris' response to Mann, we see that this is a false hope, however.

Morris reasons that Mann's view that God is an instance of a rich property undermines divine aseity, for Mann's view 'allows that there is at least one property existing distinct from God as an abstract object on which God is, in some sense, dependent for what he is - an instance of that property' (1985, p. 302). The point can be put in the following way. Suppose that God is identical to His instances of certain properties. Now, a property-instance can only be 'what it is' *in virtue of* the existence of its corresponding abstract property. Thus, if God is identical to a given property-instance, He can only be what *He* is in virtue of the existence of the corresponding property of which He is an instance. Thus, on Mann's view God appears to be dependent upon

His rich property. Mann's posited 'rich property' has the role of *determining* what kind of thing God's concrete being is, and therefore he is positing something analogous to a causal relationship between God's rich property and His concrete substance. Morris' objection shows that Mann is maintaining the DDS at the cost of God's aseity, for he must place God in a secondary position to abstract objects in his ontology.

At this point, we have completed our exposition of the first horn of the dilemma for the identity thesis, corresponding to the position that properties are abstract objects. We can represent the untenability of the identity thesis on the 'abstract property' horn as follows. Suppose that God is identical to certain properties; it follows that He is an abstract object, which is a category mistake. Alternatively, suppose that God is identical to His *instances* of certain properties; it follows that God is a property-instance, and this makes Him dependent upon the abstract property of which He is an instance. Thus, so long as we affirm that properties are abstract objects which concrete entities exemplify, the identity thesis leads to absurd conclusions. Now, in the following section, I will consider Mann's alteration of his view to respond to Morris' aseity objection. Since Mann's new view posits a conception of properties as concrete entities, it introduces the second horn of the dilemma for the identity thesis.

(1.e) The Second horn of the dilemma for the identity thesis: properties are concrete objects

In his later work, Mann adjusted his conception of God's relationship with His properties to avoid the aseity problem of God being dependent on an abstract property. Mann offered the revised proposal that, in God, a property-instance is identical to the property of which it is an instance. Using the example of omniscience, Mann says that: '[w]hat I propose is to identify God's omniscience with omniscience itself' (1986, p. 352). In this equation, the term 'God's omniscience' refers to God's property-instance of omniscience, whilst the term 'omniscience itself' refers to the property of omniscience. Mann reasons that: '[i]f God and his omniscience just are omniscience itself, then there is no property distinct from God of which he is an instance'

(1986, p. 352). Now, if God is identical to His instance of omniscience, and 'omniscience itself' just is God's omniscience, it follows that the property of omniscience is identical to God. We see here that Mann's view both identifies God with His instances of properties and collapses the distinction between a property and a property-instance, at least in the case of every property which pertains to God.

Now, if Mann affirms that the *property* of which God is an instance is actually identical with God, does this not bring us back to Plantinga's problem that God, through His identity with a property, becomes an abstract object? Mann responds to this concern by rejecting the view that properties are abstract objects:

> the criticism takes effect only by its relying on an unspoken assumption, namely, that properties are abstract objects, incapable of the personal attributes essential to a traditional conception of God. I do not accept the assumption. Properties, I am inclined to believe, are causal powers. *P* is a property of an object, *x,* only if *P's* presence in *x* confers some causal power(s) on *x.*
>
> (1986, p. 352)

To appreciate that Mann is conceiving of properties as concrete entities here, let us consider his proposal about a property that '*P's* presence in *x* confers some causal power(s) on *x*' (1986, p. 352). In virtue of being a causal power, a property could not be an abstract object, since it is the hallmark of an abstract object to be causally inert. In light of this concrete conception of properties, Mann affirms that: 'if properties are causal powers and if God is a property, then he is a causal power' (1986, p. 352). Thus, Mann's identification of God with a property is an identification of Him with a concrete causal power. Now, I will explain the philosophical problems that emerge with the concrete property conception of the identity thesis.

If the referent of property concepts like 'wisdom' and 'power' just is God, we are left with the problem that ordinary sentences which predicate such properties of creaturely things require radical re-interpretation. The sentence 'Socrates is wise', for example, has to be understood as

placing *Socrates* as the subject and *God* in the place of the predicate. It turns out that whenever the properties that are identical with God are predicated of creatures, God *is* the predicated property. If the property of 'power' just is God's instance of this property, whilst God *is* His power, the sentence 'the car engine is powerful' affirms that a relationship obtains between two concrete existents: (1) the car engine and (2) a property belonging to it, which is God. Since God *is* the property of power, the car engine could only be said to possess power if it instantiates God. I will now note two severe problems with this view.

Firstly, the notion of God *being a property* possessed by creatures seems to be repugnant to traditional theism. The early Mann rejected this notion when he discussed Anselm's identification of God with His properties, reasoning that the idea that a person 'participates in God' to possess the property of justice 'sounds heretical' (1982, p. 553). Indeed, for those who are sympathetic to Plantinga's concern that it is a category mistake to assert that a person is a property, Mann's concrete property identity thesis still equates God with the wrong kind of entity, a property. The fact that, on Mann's view, *creatures* have to exemplify God-as-a-property to possess their attributes makes this problem more severe by destabilising the Creator-creature distinction.

Secondly, the notion of creatures exemplifying God as a property flies in the face of our ordinary understanding of language. If a speaker of the sentence 'the car engine is powerful' was asked what they mean by their assertion, they would not reply by affirming that they are describing a relationship between a car engine and God. But, if God just *is* the concrete property of power, there would be no way to affirm the above sentence *without* affirming that the car engine bears a direct relation to God in its possession of this property. Thus, Mann's new view culminates in the very position that he previously described as sounding 'heretical'. To avoid this conclusion, we have to abandon the claim that such concrete properties as power and wisdom just *are* God; that is, we have to abandon the identity thesis. In the context of a conception of properties as concrete entities, the identity thesis creates intractable ontological problems.

Conclusion of Section 1

In this section, I have shown that the 'identity thesis' – the claim that God is identical to His attributes or 'properties' – fails whether one regards properties to be abstract objects or concrete objects. On the 'abstract property' horn of the dilemma, the identity thesis either entails that God is an abstract object or that God is a property-instance which is *dependent* upon an abstract object, thereby losing His aseity. On the 'concrete property' horn, the identity thesis entails that creaturely predicates such as 'is powerful' actually predicate God as a property of creatures; this is repugnant both to traditional theism and to ordinary language semantics. Since both horns of this dilemma are unacceptable options for the proponent of the 'identity thesis' form of the DDS, I propose that proponents of Divine Simplicity should seek an account of this doctrine which avoids the identity thesis. In the Cappadocian theory of Divine Simplicity, we will find such a view.

Now, before the Cappadocian account of the DDS can be introduced in Chapter 3, I also need to explain the second dialectical context in the modern literature that it will address. This is the issue of the modal collapse problem with Divine simplicity. In Section 2, I will analyse the current state of this debate and show that it is in need of a copernican turn, a study of the significance of human cognition in the field of metaphysical reasoning about God.

(§2) Divine Simplicity and Modal Collapse in the contemporary literature

In this section, I will discuss the proposed difficulties for the DDS that arise from the concern of 'modal collapse'. Modal collapse arguments propose that a simple God could not bear contingent relations to created entities, because everything that pertains to a simple God – including the activity of His will and the contents of His knowledge – must be necessary. In (2.a), I begin by exploring Mullins' modal collapse argument against the DDS that is derived from his opposition to the Thomist thesis that the simple God is pure act. In (2.b), I hone in on modal questions pertaining to a simple God's *will* to perform His actions. Here, I consider Stump and Kretzmann's account of Aquinas' thesis that God wills that His creatures exist with the modal property of

contingency; I argue that Aquinas' conception of God's will as identical to His simple essence entails that God must will for the same creatures to exist in every possible world. In (2.c), I argue that parallel difficulties arise for the Thomistic account of divine knowledge, as the claim that God is identical to His intellectual activity removes the contingency of his knowledge of creatures.

In (2.d), I analyse two competing construals of contingent divine knowledge: Hasker's posit that there are conscious changes that are intrinsic to God, which undermines the DDS, and Grant's 'extrinsic' model which proposes that divine knowing can be thought of as an extrinsic relation between God and contingent entities. I argue that both of these accounts are inadequate, as they violate essential theses of theistic metaphysics and scriptural claims about the limitations of our knowledge of God. I then consider whether an alternative account of God's knowledge can be formulated using Wood's proposal that we can create models for God which help us to interpret something pertaining to God, without actually modelling God as He is in Himself.

(2.a) Mullins' 'pure act' modal collapse argument against Thomist Simplicity

At the outset of our analysis of Mullins, we can note that he seems to equate the DDS with Thomist Simplicity; we see this in the way that Mullins articulates the DDS as being inextricably bound to the idea that God is pure act. Mullins reasons that 'as pure act God has no unactualized potential. If God has any unactualized potential, He is not simple' (2013, p. 195). Mullins' modal collapse arguments purport to refute the thesis that God is pure act, and he takes this to be equivalent to refuting the DDS; he concludes that simplicity is not a possible perfection of God (2013, p. 199). Here I will consider one of Mullins' distinctive arguments against the Thomist understanding of the DDS:

> Could God have refrained from creating the universe? If God is free then it seems that the answer is obviously 'yes'. He could have existed alone. Yet, God *did* create the universe. If there is a possible world in which God exists alone, God is not simple. He eternally has unactualized potential for He cannot undo His act of creation.
>
> (2013, p. 195 - 196)

Mullins does not present a formal derivation here, which makes it unclear exactly what he means by the statement '[i]f there is a possible world in which God exists alone, God is not simple'. Mullins might mean that: if there is a merely possible world where God does not create anything, this entails that God has a state of potentiality – and therefore is not simple – in the *actual world*, for he is in a state of mere potency with respect to the property of 'refraining to create'. If this is what Mullins intends, his argument requires the claim that a God who acts to create is in a state of potentiality with respect to *not performing* this creative act. It is not clear, however, whether Aquinas would accept the thought that an agent who *has* performed an action is in a state of potency with respect to not performing the action; in *SCG*, 1, 97 - 98, for example, Aquinas affirms that God is living without appearing to be troubled by the thought that this entails that God is in a state of potentiality with respect to being inanimate. Given these considerations, I will consider a more promising reading of Mullins' argument, according to which he is affirming that: in the possible world where God makes no Creation, God has a state of potency in *that* world. In such a world, God is in a state of mere potency with respect to the property of 'acting to create'. Thus, in the *w* where God does not create, God is a composite of act and potency. The key reasoning here can be represented as follows:

(1) In actuality, God chose to create the universe.

(2) There is a possible world '*w*' where God refrains from creating the universe.

(3) If a being has not performed an action but *could* perform it, then the being has a state of unactualised potential with respect to performing that action.

(4) [From 1, 2, 3] In *w*, God has 'unactualised potential': God has the unactualised potential to *create*.

(5) If God has unactualised potential, then God is not pure act. Rather, He is a composite of act and potency.

(6) [From 4, 5] In *w*, God is a *composite* of act and potency.

(7) [From 6] In *w*, God is not simple.

(8) [From 7] There is a possible world where God is not simple.

At this stage, we may raise the following question: how could Mullins get from the thesis that 'there is a possible world where God is not simple' to the claim that 'in the *actual world* God is not simple'? I believe that there *is* an argument form which would allow one to reason from the former thesis to the latter. This would proceed as follows:

1) There is a possible world where God is not simple (i.e the *w* where God has the unactualized potential to create).
2) If God is simple, then *necessarily* God is simple.
3) [From 1] It is not the case that *necessarily* God is simple.
4) [*Modus tollens* from 2, 3] It is not the case that God is simple.

This argument has the following valid formal structure:

1) $\Diamond \neg Fa$
2) $(Fa \rightarrow \Box Fa)$
3) [From 1] $\neg \Box Fa$
4) [From 2, 3] $\neg Fa$

Now, the crucial premise that is required for us to leap from the initial conclusion '(1) there is a possible world where God is not simple ($\Diamond \neg Fa$)' to Mullins' intended thesis 'it is not the case that God is simple ($\neg Fa$)', is the premise that I introduced:

(2) If God is simple, then necessarily God is simple. (Fa → □ Fa)

This premise could equally be articulated as the thesis that: if God is simple, then God is essentially simple. I believe that this further thesis that Mullins needs can indeed be established, since there is a compelling argument which shows that the DDS entails the further thesis that God's substance is exactly the same in all modal contexts. And, if the DDS entails that God's substance is exactly the same in all possible worlds, it follows from this that 'if God is simple, then necessarily God is simple (Fa → □ Fa)'. The thought here is straightforward: if the DDS entails that God has no intrinsic differences in all possible worlds, then of course the DDS entails that God is simple in all possible worlds- a God who is simple in one world but not simple in another is clearly not the same in all worlds. Now, why do I propose that the DDS entails that God's substance is exactly the same in all worlds? I will explain the answer by returning to the foundational principle that a simple substance is *partless*. I propose that any alteration of a partless substance across modal scenarios would be a replacement of the whole substance with something different.

For the same substance to be present in different possible worlds, substance S in W_1 would have to have something in common with counterpart substance S* in W_2. Now, suppose that S* had some intrinsic alteration in W_2 which S lacked in W_1. It would follow that S* has some part which S does not have. But if S and S* are simple substances, each of them could only have *one* part, namely their improper parts. For clarity, a proper part of X is a component of X which is not identical to it, whereas an 'improper part' of X *just is X*, understood as a part of itself. Given these posits, it follows that: if simple substance S* has a part in W_2 which S does not have in W_1, it is the case that S* has exactly one part in W_2, S has exactly one part in W_1, and these respective parts are non-identical. But, since each of the simple substances only has one part – namely, their improper parts – it can also be said that the *whole* of S* is different to the whole of S. The two substances are entirely different: they have *no part in common*. Thus, with respect to a simple substance S and another S*, either S and S* have exactly the same intrinsic composition, or

entirely distinct intrinsic compositions. In the first case, S and S* are identical; in the latter, they have no common part.

Thus, the simple substance of God in W_1 would have *no* common part with a posited simple substance 'X' in W_2 unless that substance was *exactly the same* as God in W_1 in terms of its intrinsic composition. Either God and 'X' have exactly the same intrinsic composition, or entirely distinct intrinsic compositions- there is no middle ground when the substances in question each only have one part (their improper parts). In the first case, God and X are identical; in the latter, they have no common feature. Thus, if God is simple, His substance cannot vary across worlds at all: God's simple substance is either present in a given W with no alteration, or else God's substance is not present in that W at all. Now, we can construct the following argument:

1) [*Proof about the identity of simple substances*] If God is simple, then His substance is exactly the same in all possible worlds.

2) [From 1] If God is simple, then God is simple in all possible worlds.

3) [From 2] If God is simple, then *necessarily* God is simple. ($Fa \rightarrow \Box Fa$)

4) [*Mullins' thesis*] There is a possible world where God is not simple (the *w* where God has the unactualized potential to create). ($\Diamond \neg Fa$)

5) [From 4] It is not the case that necessarily God is simple. ($\neg \Box Fa$)

6) [*Modus tollens* from 3, 5] It is not the case that God is simple. ($\neg Fa$)

This argument is valid, and I have offered independent reasons for us to accept steps (1 – 3) as true. If Mullins' thesis, step (4), happened to be true, then the above argument would be a sound deductive proof that the DDS is false. Now, before we conclude that Mullins has offered the resources which – once coupled with my own sub proof – devastate the case for the DDS, we

should revisit his thesis (Premise 4). Remember that premise (4) that there is a *w* where God is not simple is inferred from the fact that there is a *w* where God does not create. Mullins, deploying the Thomist metaphysics of act and potency, appeared to reason that: in a world where God does not create, God is in a state of potency with respect to the act of creating, and therefore God is a composite of act and potency in that world. At the outset, we should note that: a philosophical theologian who does not require the Aristotelian-Thomist metaphysics of act and potency in their account of God's essence would not need to characterise the *w* where God does not create as a scenario where God possesses a 'state of potentiality'. Whilst this line of response will offer us a crucial defence of a non-Thomist account of the DDS against Mullins' argument, I will only be able to introduce it once we have uncovered the resources for offering an account of God without the metaphysics of act and potency. Since such an account will be found in Cappadocian Simplicity in Chapter 3, a complete defence of the DDS against Mullins' modal collapse argument will only be possible once the Cappadocian account of God's nature has been explored. For now, however, let us concentrate on the case of Thomist Simplicity and consider Mullins' characterisation of a possible Thomist response to his argument that there is a *w* where God is not simple because there is a *w* where God is not pure act.

Mullins, understanding that a proponent of Thomist Simplicity must maintain that God is pure act in all possible worlds (rather than a composite of act and potency), notes that the defender of the thesis that God is pure act in every world may offer the following reply to his argument:

> One could avoid this problem by allowing for a modal collapse. One could say that everything is absolutely necessary. Necessarily, there is one possible world-this world. Necessarily, God must exist with creation. [...] There is no such thing as contingency when one allows a modal collapse.
>
> (2013, p. 196)

This response to the original argument makes the move of rejecting the premise that there is a possible world where God does not create. Mullins also makes the proposal that the proponent of the DDS should maintain that the actual world is the 'one possible world'; this would allow us to

rule out the thought that, in actuality, God has the potentiality to make alternative creations in an unactualised state, and so He is not pure act. Whilst this element of Mullins' anticipated Thomist reply should be noted, I will focus on how he handles the move a proponent of Thomist Simplicity could make of denying that there is a W where God does not create.

If one denies that there is a W where God creates nothing, one avoids claiming that there is a W where God has the capacity to create in a state of potentiality. By avoiding the 'no Creation scenario' in which God is a composite of act and potency, one can affirm that God is pure act in every possible world. The proponent of Thomist Simplicity can then maintain that *necessarily* God is simple, for *necessarily* God is pure act. Once the Thomist has embraced the move of holding that the 'no Creation scenario' is not even a possible world, they do not face the prospect that there is a *w* where God is not simple. Then, steps (1) and (3) of the argument against the DDS vanish:

1)		◊ ¬ Fa	[there is a possible world where God is not simple]
2)		(Fa → □ Fa)	
3)	[From 1]	¬ □ Fa	[it is not the case that necessarily God is simple]
4)	[From 2, 3]	¬ Fa	

Once (1), and therefore (3), are lost, we can no longer infer, via a *modus tollens* on step 2 (Fa → □ Fa), that God is not simple in actuality (¬ Fa). So, the Thomist proponent of the DDS could avoid the blow of Mullins' argument if they are willing to affirm that there is no possible world where God refrains from creating. As we have seen, Mullins characterises this option as 'allowing for a modal collapse' and affirming that 'God must exist with creation' (2013, p. 196). Is this modal collapse option a viable position for the proponent of Thomist Simplicity? According to Mullins, it is not: the view that God 'is not free to exist without creation' is 'deeply repugnant to Christian thought which holds that God is perfect in Himself and can exist without creation'

(2013, p. 196). There are strong reasons to agree with Mullins here, and in particular with his further point that the modal collapse position 'denies of God His infinite creative freedom and sovereignty over creation' (2013, p. 196). The idea that God *has* to create undermines divine freedom: if God must exist with Creation, then God is not free to choose whether or not Creation exists. This, in turn, undermines God's sovereignty: if Creation has necessary existence, then the fact that Creation exists is a reality which is beyond God's control. The option of allowing for a 'modal collapse' and affirming that there is no *w* where God exists without Creation is indeed, as Mullins proposes, an unacceptable option for a theist who believes in God's freedom or sovereignty.

Thus, ultimately, Mullins has placed the proponent of Thomist Simplicity on the horns of a dilemma: either (1) affirm that there is a *w* where God does not make creation, or (2) affirm that the actual world in which God makes our creation is the only possible world. If option (1) is chosen, this entails that there is a *w* where God is not simple, for God is a composite of act and potentiality-to-create in the world without creation. It then follows – with the additional premise (God is simple → □ God is simple) – that God is not simple in actuality. Now in response to this problem, suppose that we choose option (2) and affirm that there is no world where God does not make our Creation. If this route is taken, one is implicitly rejecting the commitments that God has absolute freedom and sovereignty, for He cannot choose whether or not to make our Creation.

With regards to Mullins' tendency to treat the distinctive tenets of Thomist Simplicity as commitments which are common to all accounts of the DDS, it should also be noted that, in a recent paper co-authored with Byrd (2022), he has explicitly claimed that the theses that God is pure act and that God is identical to His action are essential commitments of the DDS. Mullins and Byrd make this clear when they explain why they reject solutions to modal collapse objections

which treat the contingent elements of God's action, will and knowledge as 'extrinsic' to the simple divine nature[19]:

> the extrinsic model of divine action entails a denial … that God's actions are identical to each other such that there is only one divine act, and this one divine act is identical to God's existence. This renders the extrinsic model of divine action a non-starter for any attempt to defend DDS. Again, we advise that a defence of DDS should not deny the fundamental claims of DDS.
>
> (2022, p. 44 – 45)

Here, Mullins and Byrd characterise the thesis that God is an act as a 'fundamental' claim of the DDS, thereby continuing to frame the modal collapse problem with the assumption that the DDS is inescapably bound to the pure act thesis. Mullins and Byrd also explain that they regard the thesis that 'God is an act' to be a direct entailment of the DDS because of the further commitments of 'classical theism' that (a) God's properties are 'identical with His essence' and 'identical with God's existence' and that (b) 'God is His act of knowing, doing, and being' (2022, p. 24 – 25). Thus, even though Mullins and Byrd's reason for holding that the pure act thesis is essential to the DDS is not "because Aquinas said so", it is clear that they treat the pure act thesis as an entailment of the DDS because of their assumption that the DDS is bound to Aquinas' applications of the *identity thesis*, which I explained in Chapter 1. In particular, Mullins and Byrd share with Aquinas and contemporary recipients of his thought like Miller the understanding that the pure act thesis is entailed by the essence-existence identity thesis: if God just *is* His existence, then God must be essentially pure actuality. Whilst I have already indicated that Cappadocian Simplicity is not committed to the Aristotelian-Thomist metaphysics of act and potency, I will also show in Chapters 3 and 4 that Cappadocian Simplicity has the resources to eschew all forms of the identity thesis rendering of divine simplicity, and this allows us to avoid Mullins and Byrd's position that the pure act thesis is entailed by the DDS in virtue of the applications of the identity thesis to which Aquinas' classical theism is bound.

[19] I will explain Grant's 'extrinsic' treatment of God's contingent knowledge shortly in (§2.d).

In our engagement with Mullins, we have explored the implications of Aquinas' thesis that God is pure act for the modal characteristics of His action. Now, we usually conceive of action as being preceded by volitional mental states or 'willing': Mullins' argument does not directly address the matter of how proponents of Thomist Simplicity would conceive of a simple God's *will to act*, even if it is conceded that the pure act thesis makes it difficult to conceive of how such action could be anything but necessary. In light of this, I will turn now to study Stump and Kretzmann's exploration of the Thomistic account of the simple God's will to create contingent beings. Here, we will see these authors articulate Aquinas' idea that the simple God wills that creatures exist in a 'mode' of contingency. I will argue that Aquinas' conception of divine willing has modal problems that parallel those that arise from His understanding of God as pure act.

(2.b) Stump and Kretzmann on the Thomistic account of the simple God's will

In part of Stump and Kretzmann's joint paper on Divine simplicity, they explore Aquinas' conception of divine willing, and in particular the notion that God can directly 'will' the modal status of the objects that He creates (1985, p. 374). They quote the following passage from Aquinas' *Summa Contra Gentiles*:

> God wills everything that is required for a thing that he wills, as was said. But some things have a nature in accordance with which they have to be contingent, not necessary, and for that reason God wills some things to be contingent. The efficient causality of the divine will requires not only that what God wills to exist exists, but also that it exists in the mode God wills it to exist in.... And so the efficient causality of the divine will does not preclude contingency.
>
> (Aquinas *SCG*, 1, 85 in Stump and Kretzmann, 1985, p. 374)

Stump and Kretzmann then explain their interpretation of this idea thus:

> Thomas's own suggestion seems to be that God wills to create things with components that guarantee their contingency (SCG I 85). [...] by one means or another it seems open to an omnipotent being to specify not just the things whose existence he brings about but also the manner in which they exist, including the mode of their existence.
>
> (1985, p. 374)

Stump and Kretzmann conclude from this that 'there is no incompatibility between holding all God's acts of will to be necessitated, whether absolutely or conditionally, and maintaining that at least some features of the world are contingent' (1985, p. 374). On this account, God can simply will that creatures have the modal property of being contingent; the property of contingency is understood as the 'mode' that each creature exists in. Now, as discussed in the previous chapter, a proponent of Thomist Simplicity has a clear account of the contingent 'mode' of existence enjoyed by every creature: whilst God's necessary existence is grounded in the identity of His essence and existence, the contingency of each creature is grounded in its being a composite of essence and existence. So far so good. The challenge arises, however, when we consider God's *will to make creatures* itself. Is this state of will contingent or necessary?

With regards to the two possibilities of God creating and not creating, Stump and Kretzmann say 'which logical possibility is actualized and which logical possibility is left unactualized depends on nothing other than God's will' (1985, p. 368). Problems with this move arise, however, if we consider Aquinas' affirmation that 'the will of God is His essence' (ST, I, q.19, a.1). We have already seen that a simple being cannot undergo any intrinsic alteration across possible worlds without losing its cross-world identity. It follows that: if God's will is identical to His simple substance, His will could not undergo any change across possible worlds, for such a change would replace God's simple substance with something entirely distinct, something not identical to God. It follows that there is no possible world whatsoever where God's substance exists and His will varies at all. Thus, even when we survey *logical possibility*, God's will as it is in actuality – a will to make the particular creatures that exist in our world – must be understood to be *identical* to God's substance in all possible worlds. Since God wills to create in actuality, this ontology then has the unacceptable implication that God wills to create the creatures of our universe in every possible world. But, in a manner parallel to Mullins' modal collapse problem concerning the implications of the pure act thesis for the necessity of divine action, the notion that God wills with necessity to create the actual creation undermines both God's freedom and the theistic commitment that Creation is contingent. Thus, even if we accepted Stump and Kretzmann's

proposal that God can will that creatures exist with the modal property of being contingent as essence-existence composites, Aquinas cannot escape the tenet that God is actually constrained by His simplicity to will to make the particular creatures that happen to exist in every possible world. On this outcome, it is not clear what God 'willing' that creatures exist with a composition which gives them the 'mode' of contingency actually amounts to. Thus, Stump and Kretzmann's Thomistic account of the simple God's will leads to a further modal collapse problem regarding God being constrained to *will* the existence of the creatures that happen to exist in actuality.

Now, to factor in the apparent truth that God wills different things across possible worlds, Stump later proposed that God must have been able to choose a timeless act of will other than the one He in fact has chosen:

> in the actual world, God wills to create with a will that cannot change over time, and he knows with a similarly unchangeable knowledge that he wills to create. But in a possible world without creatures, God does not will to create, and he knows that he does not will to create; and in that world, neither his intellect nor his will can change over time either.
>
> (2003, p. 117)

In this passage, Stump affirms that God could have chosen a different timeless act of will. The problem with this view stems from the fact that, as mentioned, Thomist Simplicity is also committed to the identity claim 'God = God's will'. Stump's account here entails that, timelessly, there are different ways that the Divine nature could have been. Stump cannot maintain this in accordance with the Thomist view, however, because there is only one way that a truly simple substance could be. As I have shown, if S only has one part in W_1 – namely, its improper part - whilst a supposed counterpart substance S* has a different single part in W_2, it follows that S in W_1 and S* in W_2 are entirely distinct: they have no part in common, for a simple substance can only have one part. So, if the will of God did vary across possible worlds, it would follow from the identity (God = God's will) that God's one part – namely, God's improper part - varies across possible worlds, meaning that God in W_1 is not actually the same being as His supposed

counterpart in W_2. Thus, if God is simple and identical to His will, God's will could not vary across possible worlds.

Now, having seen that Thomist Simplicity seems to entail that both God's action and God's will are the same in all possible worlds, I will turn to consider the case of Aquinas' conception of the simple God's knowledge. I will argue that a further modal collapse difficulty arises here, for the Thomistic construal of the DDS does not yield a satisfactory account of contingent divine knowledge.

(2.c) The Thomistic account of God's contingent knowledge

I will now uncover a further modal collapse problem for Thomist Simplicity which shows that Aquinas' view of God's knowledge cannot account for contingent divine knowledge. Aquinas affirms that God's knowledge of Creation is embedded in God's self-contemplation, saying that: 'He sees other things not in themselves, but in Himself; inasmuch as His essence contains the similitude of things other than Himself' (ST, I, q.14, a.5). Aquinas also holds that God's act of contemplation is identical to God, as he affirms that 'the act of God's intellect is His substance' (ST, I, q.14, a.4). At a first glance, it seems to follow from the commitments that, firstly, God knows creatures through His self-contemplation and, secondly, that God is identical to His act of contemplation, that God's knowledge of Creation is identical to the unchangeable Divine essence. The problem here would be the familiar one that: if God's act of knowing the contingent Creation is identified with God's necessarily unchanging essence, this act of knowing could not truly be contingent, and therefore it turns out that the object of God's knowledge, Creation, would also have to be necessary. The Thomist has a good reply to this initial line of argument, however, which can proceed as follows. With regards to God's knowledge of Creatures, Aquinas actually says that 'He sees other things not in themselves, but in Himself' (ST, I, q.14, a.5). Here, the object of God's knowledge is actually His own substance, and so the contingent Creation is not – strictly speaking – an object of God's knowing. There is no 'act of knowing' that is a real relation between God and Creation; rather, there is only God's act of knowing Himself, and this is

sufficient for Him to know Creation. In sum, the identity (God = God's act of knowing) does not entail (God = God's direct act of knowing Creation) because, for Aquinas, there is no such thing as God's direct act of knowing Creation.

Once it is affirmed that the only content of God's knowledge state is Himself and God knows all other things through their similitude with His own essence, the Thomist can also affirm that: through His self-knowledge, God knows all of the different ways that contingent reality could be. Now, the following reasoning can be offered:

1) The content of God's single knowledge state includes knowledge of all of the possible worlds.

2) [From 1] Comparing the actual world 'W' and a merely possible world 'W*', in either world the content of God's knowledge state includes all of the possible worlds.

3) [From 2] God's knowledge state in W = knowledge of all possible worlds (including W*)
God's knowledge state in W* = knowledge of all possible worlds (including W)

4) [From 3] Whichever world is actual, the content of God's knowledge state does not vary.

5) [From 4] God's one knowledge state is unchanging across possible worlds.

Once we have (5) regarding the cross-world identity of God's knowledge state, it can be affirmed that God's single knowledge state *is identical to* God's simple essence which does not change across possible worlds.

Whilst this argument looks promising, a problem arises when we note that, even with regards to God's knowledge of contingent beings, having knowledge of all possible worlds would be *insufficient* for omniscience. This is because, in order to have complete knowledge, God would

need to be such that: if W is actual, God has the knowledge that 'W is actual', and if W* is actual, God has the knowledge that 'W* is actual'. Thus, the following inference can be made:

1) God's knowledge state in W = complete knowledge of all possible worlds (including W*), but with additional content 'W is actual'.

   God's knowledge state in W* = complete knowledge of all possible worlds (including W), but with additional content 'W* is actual'.

2) [From 1] Across possible worlds, the content of God's knowledge state *varies* with respect to His knowledge of one proposition: 'W_ is actual'.

Let us consider the implications of this for the Thomist notion that God's essence is identical to His knowledge state. Suppose that W is the actual world. On the Thomist account, it would have to be affirmed that: through His self-knowledge, God knows that W is the actual world. Now, suppose that W* is the actual world. Again, it would have to be affirmed that: through His self-knowledge, God knows that W* is the actual world. But, it then follows that the content of God's self-knowledge is different in W and W*. Thus, the content of God's self-knowledge varies across worlds, and therefore God's knowledge state has contingency. But, as has already been demonstrated, God's simple essence cannot intrinsically vary across possible worlds. It follows that God's knowledge state, with its real element of contingency in relation to the actual Creation, cannot be identified with the simple Divine essence.

Now, to continue with the theme of asking how we can account for the compatibility of divine simplicity with the truth that God knows contingent creatures, I will analyse two competing accounts of the nature of contingent divine knowledge: Hasker's anti-simplicity proposal that God's knowledge of creatures is constituted by conscious changes that are intrinsic to Him, and Grant's pro-simplicity model of God's knowledge as an extrinsic relation between Him and creatures. I will show that both of these accounts of divine knowledge face ontological and

epistemological difficulties. This will lead us to a reconsideration of what we take ourselves to be doing when modelling divine mental states from the human epistemic position.

(2.d) Hasker's objection to the DDS from contingent divine knowledge, and Grant's extrinsic model of divine knowledge

To introduce his account of contingent divine knowledge, Hasker proposes that: '"Knowledge" that involves no distinctive intrinsic state of the knower is, it seems to me, simply unintelligible' (2016, p. 712). Ultimately, Hasker will use the posit that knowledge involves a 'distinctive intrinsic state' of the knower to attempt to show that God's intrinsic composition must vary across modal scenarios, because He would know different things in different possible situations. Recall my demonstration that the intrinsic composition of a simple being cannot vary at all across worlds: if the composition of a simple being changes *in part*, this is the same thing as the simple being *changing entirely* and becoming something else, for a simple substance can only have one – improper – part. Thus, if Hasker can show that God has intrinsic knowledge states that can vary, this would indeed undermine the DDS. Furthermore, Hasker's very claim that God has a multiplicity of intrinsic knowledge states would by itself be sufficient to entail that God is composite. Hasker's argument begins by appealing to an understanding of what it means to be a 'conscious mental subject'. Here are the first four premises:

1. God is a conscious mental subject. (Premise)
2. A subject's conscious mental states are intrinsic to that subject. (Premise)
3. A subject's consciously knowing some object of knowledge *O* involves a conscious mental state of that subject. (Premise)
4. If a subject's conscious mental state does not differ in any way whether or not *O* obtains, that subject does not consciously know whether *O* obtains or not. (Premise)

(2016, p. 712)

Premises (1 - 4) combined offer a picture according to which God is a being who has conscious states which are intrinsic to Him, such that when He knows some object of knowledge, this

involves a particular *intrinsic* conscious state corresponding to that object. Now, let us see how Hasker uses this account as he proceeds with the final two steps of his argument:

5. If God consciously knows *O*, then God is in a mental state different than God would have been in if *O* did not obtain. (From 1, 4)
6. God is intrinsically different if God consciously knows *O* rather than that *O* does not obtain. (From 2, 5)

(2016, p. 712 - 713)

This argument is valid: if it is true that knowing an object involves an intrinsic change in a conscious subject (steps 2, 3, and 4), and God is a conscious subject (1), it follows that God knowing some object involves an intrinsic change in God (steps 5 and 6). Whilst this argument is valid, the conception of conscious subjects and mental states in general, and God's inner life in particular, that it rests upon is suspect.

Firstly, let us consider premise (2) 'A subject's conscious mental states are intrinsic to that subject'. This suggests a conception of mental states which – even with regards to human mental states – might be challenged within contemporary philosophy of mind. Many current philosophers demarcate mental states by their *intentionality*, that is, by their *directedness* towards objects in the world. On this account, the sense in which mental states could be considered to be 'intrinsic' to a subject would have to be qualified in such a way that it could be affirmed that mental states are inherently relational, being at least partially constituted by extrinsic relations with objects external to the knower. Furthermore, in connection with this framework, there is a lively debate amongst philosophers of mind and language, and epistemologists, as to whether 'narrow' mental content that is entirely intrinsic to the mind even exists[20]. So, Hasker's stated view of mental states as intrinsic to conscious subjects is more tenuous than it first seems. Thus, the inclusion of premise (1) that 'God is a conscious mental subject' means that Hasker is committed to an account of

[20] For example, Block and Stalnaker (1999) argue against the view that narrow mental content exists.

God's mind which is just as substantial – and open to challenge – as his conception of mental states is in general.[21]

There is more to say about Hasker's first premise that 'God is a conscious mental subject' (2016, p. 712). Does Hasker intend for us to conceive of God as a conscious mental subject in the same sense in which human beings are conscious mental subjects? If, for Hasker, God and creatures are conscious subjects in the same sense, we appear to end up with a conception of God as a 'conscious mental subject' who is not clearly distinguishable from the order of creaturely conscious subjects. Now, an account of God which does not adequately distinguish Him from the created order is contrary to a traditional theistic understanding of God as entirely distinct from creatures. Hasker may respond to this challenge by arguing that God is a conscious mental subject, but not in quite the same way that we are. Whilst the idea of analogical predication is in the air here, the problem that Hasker would face with this approach is quite straightforward and does not require a discussion of analogy. Suppose Hasker affirmed that a divine conscious subject is different from a creaturely conscious subject in some respects. Now, we are left wondering why the following premises – which appear to be modelled on human conscious states – would apply to God's distinctive subjectivity:

2. A subject's conscious mental states are intrinsic to that subject. (Premise)

4. If a subject's conscious mental state does not differ in any way whether or not O obtains, that subject does not consciously know whether O obtains or not. (Premise)

(2016, p. 712 - 713)

When applied to God, premise (2) entails that divine mental activity entirely consists in intrinsic states of God, but should we be confident that God's subjectivity is like this? After all, Grant will give us an alternative conception of God's knowledge as a *relational* state that involves God's

[21] Hasker acknowledges the work of Grant, who offers an account of God's knowledge as an extrinsic relation between God and created beings. Without discussing Grant's arguments, however, Hasker states that 'I do not see, however, that Grant provides any resources for answering the argument' that he offers (2016, p. 713, footnotes). I will engage with Grant's account, but only once I have exposed the problems in Hasker's argument first.

activity upon creatures. Now, when we apply premise (4) to God, it entails that God's knowledge of contingent beings demands that God's intrinsic state varies depending on what obtains in Creation. Again, should we be confident that God's subjectivity is like this? Aquinas' position that God's knowledge of creatures is derived from His self-knowledge would offer an alternative model of divine subjectivity- one for which (4) would not hold. Of course, I have already given an objection to the Thomistic view just mentioned, but this does not disrupt the point that the model of God's inner life that is in Hasker's premises is far from an uncontroversial move of philosophical theology.

Now, temporarily putting these diverse metaphysical accounts of God's knowledge aside, there is still an *epistemological* problem that is not being addressed in Hasker's argument. For Hasker's argument to work, we need to be assured that God's subjectivity is such that, for each entity that exists, God has a discrete conscious state which composes His knowledge of its being actual. But, for us to know that God's subjectivity involves a discrete conscious state for each entity that He knows to obtain, we would need to *know* what God's inner life is like. What are our epistemic foundations for claiming this positive knowledge of how God's intrinsic life 'works'? This is tantamount to a claim to direct knowledge of God, which is highly problematic in a traditional Christian context, given the apparent position of scripture regarding our unknowing with respect to God as He is in Himself. As John 1:18 says, 'No one has ever seen God'[22]. To summarise this difficulty, suppose that Hasker affirms that theses like the following apply to God:

4. If a subject's conscious mental state does not differ in any way whether or not O obtains, that subject does not consciously know whether O obtains or not. (Premise)

In the move of applying (4) to God – via the first premise that God is a conscious mental subject – Hasker needs it to be the case that God has subjective experiences that vary depending on what is happening in reality beyond God. But how could Hasker *know* whether or not God's

[22] All references to scripture in this dissertation are taken from 'New Jerusalem Bible Reader's Edition' (1990).

subjectivity requires such a change for Him to know a given state of affairs? Once a gap between the nature of human conscious subjects and God's inner life is affirmed, the notion that God's subjectivity follows the same laws and causal relations as human subjectivity seems to be guesswork on Hasker's behalf. Furthermore, if God *wills* the objects that are external to Him into existence, it is not clear that His knowledge would need to follow the pattern of receptive conscious awareness that we find in human conscious subjects. To explore this theme further, I will now turn to Grant's extrinsic model of divine knowing.

Grant on extrinsic models of divine knowing

Grant (2012) offers three different models on which it is the case that God's contingent knowledge *does not* involve an intrinsic state in God. Now, if it can be maintained that God's knowledge of contingent beings does not require an intrinsic change in God, it can then be maintained that God's intrinsic composition is changeless in all possible worlds. Once this position is reached, the commitment of the DDS that God is identical in all possible worlds can be maintained. In what follows, I will consider Grant's third model for upholding the DDS through a conception of God's knowledge as an extrinsic relation to creatures. This model warrants specific attention because it unites an understanding of divine knowing as extrinsic with an account of God's creative activity. Grant calls this account 'the Agency Model', explaining that it draws upon the notion from Miller that 'God knows his effects "in the very act of creating them"' (2012, p. 271). The Agency Model is articulated by Grant in the following claims:

> (l) A divine causal act consists in a causal or bringing about relation to an effect.
>
> (m) This relation does not involve any intrinsic state of God that would be otherwise were the relation not holding, were God not so causing.
>
> (n) God's activity is inherently cognitional: he knows what he is doing in the doing of it, what he is bringing about in the act of bringing it about.
>
> (o) God is the cause of all contingent entities.
>
> (p) So, in knowing what he is doing, God knows all contingent entities.'
>
> (2012, p. 271)

It is helpful to consider this model by taking claims (l), (m) and (o) first. Collectively, these three claims affirm that: God gives rise to causal acts with contingent entities as their effects, and He does this without any intrinsic change in Himself. We have here the following posited causal relation:

Acting subject	**Extrinsic causal act**	**Effect of causal act**
God	Creates	Contingent entities

Now, take the other key claim of the model:

> (n) God's activity is inherently cognitional: he knows what he is doing in the doing of it, what he is bringing about in the act of bringing it about.

This implies that one and the same act of God's causing created things is His act of knowing them. Thus, the representation of God's causal activity is *simultaneously* a depiction of God's knowing according to Grant's model:

Knowing subject	**Extrinsic knowing act**	**Effect of knowing act**
God	Creates	Contingent entities

The sense of knowing here is very different to that of receptive conscious awareness. Recall that Hasker proposed that the mental state of knowing in both God and creatures involves a subject undergoing an intrinsic change in response to the presence of some external object 'O'. Grant's conception of the divine causal act of knowing is in sharp contrast with Hasker's view. On Grant's

account, God's knowing O looks to be *the same thing* as God's activity of causing O. Here, the direction of receptivity is reversed: O exists *because* it is known by God. Where 'O' refers to any contingent object, we can express Grant's reversed paradigm as follows:

1. If God ceases to cause the existence of O by knowing it, then O ceases to exist

2. [From 1] If God causally knows O, then the contingent Creation contains a different set of beings than it would if God did not causally know O.

3. [From 2] The contingent Creation is intrinsically different if God causally knows O rather than if God chooses to not causally know O.

We see here that the receptivity that was posited to be *within God* on Hasker's account is entirely relocated here: on Grant's agency model, all receptivity and malleability can be located within the contingent universe. Now, before accepting this, let us consider some possible objections to Grant's notion of God creating beings in the very act of knowing them, or, equivalently, knowing beings in the very act of creating them. Firstly, the idea of God creating beings in the very act of knowing them is radically counterintuitive. In the created order, knowledge is a state that is *caused by* the existence of objects, rather than a state that *causes* them. In reply, it can be answered that this unexpected result in the case of God's knowledge is the right outcome. We have identified a way in which God's form of knowing differs from that of creatures, and this allows us to uphold rather than compromise the distinction between Creator and creature. In contrast, Hasker's attribution of receptive conscious awareness to God – which appeared to be based on the case of human knowing – had the consequence of blurring the distinction between God's inner life and that of creatures.

There is a second, far more pressing, objection available against the agency model of divine knowing. We have seen that Grant construes God's knowledge as an extrinsic relation between

God and the contingent entities that He causes. The reminder can be raised, however, that God's knowledge is something *belonging* to God; God's knowledge is akin to a feature of God's mind. Now, when Grant conceives of divine knowing as God's active relation of causing creatures, he is conceiving of God's knowledge as *involving* creatures as components of this mental state. But, if creatures are part of the structure of God's state of knowing, it follows that God's knowledge state bears a form of dependency to creatures- it supervenes upon their existence. This is incompatible with the thesis of divine aseity that God is absolutely independent in His being from all things outside of Himself.[23] Thus, it can be affirmed that Grant has presented a model of divine knowing which is strictly incompatible with God's aseity. In its most pressing form, the objection could go a step further: if it is affirmed that God's knowledge is truly an aspect of God's mind, then Grant's notion that creatures are part of the very structure of God's knowledge entails that creatures are intrinsic to God's mind. This seems to wind up in a form of panentheism whereby God's mental life is actively constituted by mere creatures; from the traditional theistic perspective, this must be mistaken.

Now, what can be said in the face of this second objection to the agency model of God's knowledge? I propose that it shows that Grant's *metaphysical* model of God's knowledge as an extrinsic relation of causing creatures goes too far. Instead, this account, if it is to be useful at all, could only have a *representational* significance as a model. That is to say, it may be possible for us to reinterpret the model and see it as describing how God's knowledge is represented from the standpoint of human cognition, instead of us seeing in the model a plausible ontology of God's knowledge as it really is. In what follows, I will draw upon Wood's analysis of the theological limitations of analytic models of God, as well as his suggestion of the concept of a 'targetless' or 'apophatic' model (2016, p. 54). This will help me to outline a possible reappraisal of Grant's extrinsic model of divine knowing as a conceptual tool, rather than a metaphysical framework.

[23] It can be noted that Hasker's model of God's knowledge is also incompatible with divine aseity, since he affirms that God undergoes conscious changes that supervene upon events in Creation.

Firstly, let us consider Wood's account of an understanding of theology that leans into the thought of Rowan Williams, one which characterises the discipline as a 'mystery discerning enterprise':

> To say that theology is a mystery discerning enterprise is to say, with Williams, that theology must always discipline itself against its constant tendency to claim the "total perspective" in matters divine. God infinitely transcends all that we can think or say. The more we come to know God in faith, the more we realize that God necessarily surpasses all understanding.
>
> (2016, p. 53 - 54)

Wood's reasoning here uses a distinctive ontological premise: 'God infinitely transcends all that we can think or say'. This premise indicates that the mode of God's existence is beyond all reality that human concepts are fit to grasp. If God's being is beyond human concepts, this entails – at the very least – that human thought cannot 'claim the "total perspective" in matters divine'. Indeed, we may wonder whether the thesis that God infinitely transcends our thought leads to the stronger position that human conceptual activity lacks *any* perspective on the being of God. Bracketing this for now, we can note that the affirmation of God's infinite transcendence beyond our concepts plausibly entails the further thesis, which emerges in Wood's reasoning, that any representation formed by the human mind – including a model – will fail to demarcate God as He is in Himself (2016, p. 55).

On the basis of this account of the relationship between God and theology-as-a-conceptual-activity, Wood notes the worry that '[t]he practice of model-building seeks to dispel divine mysteries and so (it seems) remains inappropriate for genuine theology' (2016, p. 54). A well-functioning model should assist its human interpreter in understanding something about a phenomenon in reality (2016, p. 45 - 46). God cannot be grasped by human thought at all; thus, it might be reasoned, models are inappropriate as a conceptual resource for theology. Now, however, drawing on his account of scientific modelling – which involves 'models that do not even purport to have real-world targets' – Wood notes that even an apophatic theologian should be willing to accept 'models that are explicitly intended as hypothetical or targetless models'

(2016, p. 54). That is, those who emphasise God's transcendence and ineffability should be willing to canvas models which are such that they 'do not even purport to map onto God as God really is' (2016, p. 54). Wood proposes that targetless models which do not refer to God 'do not impede, but rather aid, the task of discerning the mystery of God', and he goes on to suggest that they could be called 'apophatic models' (2016, p. 54). Now, if a model – a human representation – is offered to help us to understand God whilst *explicitly* failing to refer to God, what benefit could it offer us? We need to answer this question both to understand Wood's idea, and to articulate my position that Grant's model of God's knowledge might be beneficial to philosophical theology even though it falls into absurdities as an account of God's knowledge as it really is.

Wood offers more than one reason to think that targetless models are beneficial to our understanding of God, even though they explicitly fail to refer to God. The proposal that I will take up here is Wood's suggestion that models can offer representations of *doctrines* about God, rather than representations of God Himself. Wood develops this idea in the aftermath of his analysis of Brower and Rea's hylomorphic model of the Trinity, which I will discuss in Chapter 5 when I turn to an analysis of the relationship between the DDS and the Trinity (2016, p. 47 - 52). A model which shows how it can be the case that something is counted as one entity, whilst also involving three distinct identities, would help us to see how the propositions which constitute the doctrine of the Trinity can be jointly true (2016, p. 55). For Wood, it is apparent that the act of giving a model which displays that the series of statements about God which constitute the *doctrine* of the Trinity are jointly consistent is not the same thing as the act of giving a direct model of the transcendent God Himself (2016, p. 55).

Now, how do Wood's proposals about the value of targetless models help us to understand Grant's extrinsic model of divine knowing? Recall that Grant's model of God's knowledge is that it is a relational structure that obtains between the simple, unchanging Divinity of God and the contingent creatures that He causes. I argued that this model ultimately breaks down: in the best

case scenario, it entails that an aspect of God – His knowledge – is dependent upon the creatures that are part of the structure of God's act of knowing, and in the worst case it appears to entail a form of panentheism in which creatures are part of the mind of God. Thus, I proposed that Grant's model cannot actually refer to the reality which is God's knowledge. Now, despite these flaws, I propose that Grant offers us a model which helps us to represent what God's knowledge *does*. Let us return to our diagram of the model:

Knowing subject	**Extrinsic knowing act**	**Effect of knowing act**
God	Creates	Contingent entities

Now, we should relativise this model so that it becomes a description of God *from the human point of view*. A straightforward justification for this initial adjustment is the moderately apophatic epistemological stance that emerged in my critique of Hasker and in Wood's discussion of Rowan Williams' thought. This stance is captured in the scriptural passage 'No one has ever seen God' (John 1:18). I do not know what God's intrinsic nature is, for I have never seen God as He is in Himself. Thus, my understanding of God's knowledge must be conditioned by my mode of knowing God. What I can conceive, on the basis of such sources as Scripture and rational reflection, is that God both made and knows the finite things that exist. I have no representation of what God's inner life is like with respect to His creating and knowing contingent entities, but I can form the general conception that God is active in such a way that He continually sustains creatures in existence and knows the beings that He is so sustaining. Thus, I can conceptualise God as having an activity of causing and knowing creatures. I can let such conceptualisations as 'God's causing Creation' and 'God's knowing Creation' be designations for that activity of God – whatever it may be in itself – of holding creatures in existence and contemplating them. I can

even construct a functional model of God's relation of causing and knowing creatures, where I let the first two stages of this model be hidden 'unknowns':

Subject	**Activity**	**Recipient object**
God	Creates and knows	Contingent entities
Intrinsic nature unknown	*Objective nature of act unknown*	*Known*

With regards to the case of the concept of 'God's knowledge', this model offers a functional presentation of God's knowledge as *whatever that active relation is* whereby God contemplates the beings that He has made. Here, Grant's extrinsic model of God's knowledge is reinterpreted as a model of what 'God's knowledge' *does*, rather than as an account of what God's knowledge is as it is in itself. Furthermore, even as a description of what God's knowledge 'does', Grant's model would be a description of what God's knowledge does from the human point of view.

Now, staying with matters of theological epistemology, recall that I proposed that Hasker's conception of God as a receptive conscious subject violates the epistemological principle of the unknowability of God's inner life. Now, however, I have retained Grant's model on the basis that it can offer a model with cognitive significance: it can be seen as a helpful functional description of God's activities of causing and knowing creatures, from the human point of view. The challenge may now be raised that: if we are willing to retain Grant's model as having the limited use of describing God from the human standpoint, is it fair for me to absolutely reject Hasker's model in the present analysis? After all, it might be proposed that Hasker's 'knowing conscious subject' model also offers a helpful account of God from the human epistemic position. In response, I maintain that there is an objective distinguishing feature of Hasker's account which makes it implausible as a targetless model for God. Hasker's reasoning does something which

Grant's model avoids: Hasker attempts to model what the *intrinsic* nature of God is like. His conception of God as a conscious subject who undergoes changing mental states is an attempt to model God as He is in Himself. Grant's model did not stumble into this terrain: whilst he did attempt to give us an ontology of God's knowledge, the account he offered only described God *in relation to* Creation. In concerning himself with God's extrinsic relations, Grant did not enter into the field of giving a theory of God's intrinsic nature. This is precisely why accounts like his can retain a significance once we undergo a copernican turn of understanding certain theological concepts as referring to God from the human epistemic position.

Now, recall that our discussion of models of God's knowledge is situated within our analysis of the modal collapse objection to the DDS. Grant's original model had the significance that it offered an extrinsic account of divine knowing, and this made sense of the commitment that God's intrinsic nature is simple whilst He has knowledge of contingent entities. Once we have relativised the significance of this model and affirmed that it is only plausible as a functional description of God from the human epistemic standpoint, does the model lose its effectiveness as a defence of the DDS against the difficulty of modal collapse? In part, my answer is *yes*: the model cannot supply a satisfactory metaphysics of God's knowledge, and it is better conceived of as a 'targetless' model that helps us to represent God from the human vantage point. This should not be a cause of despair for the proponent of the DDS, however, not least because my epistemological objection to claims about the intrinsic characteristics of God is a double-edged sword. If the modal collapse arguments against the DDS *also* rely on metaphysical frameworks that attempt to model God as He is in Himself, then it can be argued that these objections require premises that no human intellectual activity can supply: premises about what God is like as He is in Himself. Indeed, we have *already* seen the act of purporting to represent God's intrinsic nature in two of the modal collapse arguments. In Mullins' argument, the premise that there is a possible world where God is not simple rests upon an account of God's intrinsic nature, according to which this nature has internal constituents which are act or potency states. The issue is similar in Hasker's case: Hasker claimed that God's intrinsic nature is that of a receptive conscious subject, and on

this basis he proposed that God's knowledge of contingent beings is composite, passible, and therefore not simple.

Since two of the major modal collapse arguments that I have considered did indeed require a model of God as He is in Himself, there is optimism for the defence of God's simplicity in our Wood-inspired move of turning towards seeing our representations for God as having a *cognitive significance* as models of God, rather than as representations that are adequate to represent the transcendent nature of God. Indeed, this cognitive turn, which will be supported by our study of Cappadocian Simplicity, will offer a direct response to the modal collapse objection in the chapters that follow.

Chapter Conclusion

In this chapter, I have presented the two serious difficulties for the identity thesis interpretation of the DDS regarding the general commitments of theistic belief. Firstly, I argued that all accounts of the DDS which involve the tenet that God is identical to posited divine properties are exposed to serious philosophical trouble. If one affirms that God is identical to properties understood as abstract objects, it follows that – as Plantinga originally reasoned – God becomes a causally inert abstract object. On the other hand, if one affirms that God is identical to properties understood as concrete entities, such as the 'causal power' properties posited by Mann, it follows that creatures have to possess *God* as a property to instantiate their properties. Thus, whether one affirms that properties are abstract or concrete entities, the identity thesis interpretation of the DDS falls into serious difficulties.

Next, I argued that Thomist Simplicity faces three distinct modal collapse problems. Firstly, with regards to Aquinas' thesis that God is pure act, Mullins successfully argued that *either* (i) God is pure act and cannot refrain from making the actual Creation or (ii) God is free to refrain from creating, but He is a composite of act and potency. In the first case, the DDS is preserved and our commitment to divine freedom and the contingency of Creation is lost; in the second, divine

freedom and the contingency of Creation is preserved while the DDS is lost. Thus, Mullins demonstrated that the thesis that God is pure act is inconsistent with divine freedom and the contingency of the created order. Further to this challenge, I argued that Aquinas' thesis that God is identical to His will leads to a parallel modal collapse, for the unchanging nature of a simple substance across possible worlds entails that God's will could not vary across worlds either. Next, I argued that Thomist Simplicity cannot account for God's contingent knowledge either, for the thesis that God's knowledge state is the same in all possible worlds entails that God cannot know which states of affairs are actual.

In connection to the question of contingent divine knowledge, I progressed to an analysis of the models of God's awareness of creatures that have been taken up by Hasker – an opponent of the DDS – and Grant, a defender of the DDS. I argued that both of these figures presented models of divine knowing which failed to account for the epistemic limitations of our concepts for God and our inability to understand God's inner being, given that it transcends our epistemic vantage point. Drawing upon Wood's analysis of targetless models for God, I then argued that the discussion of modal collapse issues should be reshaped by a careful attention to the matter of what our concepts for divine mental states were originally devised to do in the first place. I will address this issue in the coming chapters as I analyse the thought of the three archetypal proponents of a cognitive turn in theological method and the sources of the interpretation of Divine simplicity that my study is based upon: the Cappadocian Fathers. It is to the exposition of their metaphysically and epistemologically sophisticated account of God's simplicity that I will now turn.

Chapter 3: Cappadocian Divine Simplicity

As I discussed in the Introduction to the dissertation, the Cappadocian Fathers are a group of three closely related theologians whose discussions of the doctrine of God and our knowledge of divinity display unity in terms of certain key commitments, as well as diversity with respect to points of emphasis and detail. Unlike Aquinas, the Cappadocians were not writing theology textbooks; rather, they were responding to the theological issues raised by the doctrinal disputes of their era. Many of their texts were written in response to the theology developed by their shared theological opponent, Eunomius of Cyzicus[24]. As we proceed in our study of key Cappadocian writings, it is important to keep this context in mind: the Cappadocians propose core tenets of their doctrine of God, and key arguments for their view, with the purpose of establishing doctrinal orthodoxy and refuting an opponent. Thus, we should expect their writings to offer a family of converging forms of reasoning about God in accordance with their dialogical exchange with Eunomian theology, rather than a self-contained systematic whole[25]. This context noted, I will proceed to offer an analysis of the central commitments of Cappadocian Simplicity which are manifest throughout the writings of the three Fathers. In subsequent chapters, I will draw upon the resources of analytic thought to articulate the fruits of the Cappadocian account of God's simplicity for contemporary discussions of the DDS.

I begin in (§1) by outlining the account of God's nature and our knowledge of God advanced by Eunomius; this is the theological viewpoint that the Cappadocians, led by Basil of Caesarea, were responding to. In (§2), I explain Basil's account of the unknowability of God's essence (οὐσία) and his account of the nature of our concepts for God in his theory of conceptualisation (ἐπίνοια). Crucially, Basil introduces his thesis that our names designate concepts first and entities second,

[24] It is uncontroversial that Cappadocian theology was forged in this polemical context: both Basil and Gregory of Nyssa have works titled *Against Eunomius*, whilst Beeley proposes that the Eunomian controversy formed the background for Gregory Nazianzen's *Theological Orations* (2008, p. 91).

[25] This reflects the interpretation of the category of 'Cappadocian theology' that I argued for in the Thesis Introduction when engaging with Zachhuber's category of 'Cappadocian philosophy' (2020, p. 16) and Radde-Gallwitz's account of the overlapping agendas of Cappadocian writings (2009, p. 16).

which cuts against Eunomius' proposal that names – including names for God – directly refer to, and reveal, the natures to which they apply. In (§3), I further my analysis of the Cappadocian account of the nature of our concepts for God by uncovering the sources of our divine attribute notions in Cappadocian epistemology. Here, we will see that, in addition to the role of Scripture, our rationally accessible common notions, and the process of conceptualisation (ἐπίνοια) itself, the Cappadocians can also include God's activities (ἐνέργειαι) and spiritual experience as sources of our concepts for, and understanding of, the simple God.

In (§4), I transition to an analysis of the metaphysical underpinnings of the Cappadocian account of our concepts for the simple God. Here, I will first explore the Cappadocian distinction between God's substance (οὐσία) and God's activities (ἐνέργειαι). Next, I will study the Cappadocian posit that God has certain unique identifying characteristics – referred to by the early Radde-Gallwitz as divine 'propria' – and I follow the 'conceptualist' argument of the later Radde-Gallwitz and Cross by arguing that the Cappadocians understand these characteristics to be conceptual realities rather than constituents of the nature of God. Finally, I turn to the implications of our Cappadocian study for the relationship between the simplicity of God and the doctrine of the Trinity.

(§1) Eunomius and the heterousian account of divinity

Eunomius, following his teacher Aetius, proposed that the defining characteristic of God is that He is unbegotten (ἀγέννητος), that is, that He is from no prior cause (*Apology* 7 in Vaggione, 1987, p. 41)[26]. Eunomius professed that his understanding of God as unbegotten was direct knowledge of God's essence (*Apology* 7 – 8 | 1987, p. 41 - 43). As a result of the thesis that the essence of God is that He is 'the Unbegotten' (τὸ ἀγέννητον), Eunomius affirmed that the Son, as 'the Begotten' (τὸ γεννητόν), does not have the essence of God (*Apology* 7 - 9, 1987 | p. 41 - 43). The collective approach of Eunomius and his teacher Aetius amounts to what is known as the 'heterousian' position within fourth century trinitarian debates; this name is derived from the

[26] All references to the Greek text and English translation of Eunomius' *Apology* in this chapter are to the text as contained in Vaggione (1987).

Greek for *different essence* 'heterousios', which captures the position that the Father and the Son are not of the same essence (DelCogliano, 2010, p. 8).

We might ask why Eunomius and Aetius insisted that there was a particular term, 'ἀγέννητος', that uniquely designated God's essence and provided knowledge of it. From their perspective, this position avoided the dangerous alternative that theology fails as an enterprise: either we have language that can refer to God's essence, or else the language of Christian doctrine is meaningless; either we have knowledge of God's divinity, or else we are ignorant of God. DelCogliano captures the heterousian stance as follows: '[i]f the divine names do not objectively refer to the divine substance, then knowledge of God is impossible and theology is a mere game played with meaningless words in futility' (DelCogliano, 2010, p. 34). Heterousian theology is based upon grasping the first option in the dilemmas just mentioned: we must have language that both refers to God's essence and provides us with insight into the nature of God. Now, let us consider the developed theology of Eunomius, the foremost rival of the Cappadocians, in greater detail. To begin this, we need to understand why Eunomius believed that there is a *single* term, 'unbegotten' (ἀγέννητος), that is uniquely revelatory of God's essence. We can discern the origins of this view through a consideration of natural theology.

In the context of Eunomius and Aetius – that is, Greek theological discourse in the second half of the fourth century – the distinction between an entity being unbegotten in the sense of 'having no prior cause' and being unbegotten in the sense of 'having no parent' was only gradually being made; in general, when the heterousians wished to use a word to designate the uncaused first being, who alone is God, they used 'ἀγέννητος' (DelCogliano, 2010, p. 97 - 98)[27]. Eunomius argues that the term 'ἀγέννητος' has a unique role as a name for God because the term can only apply to the first being. He reasons as follows:

[27] Gradually, the 'no parent' meaning was denoted by 'ἀγέννητος' whilst the 'no prior cause' sense was denoted by 'ἀγένητος' (DelCogliano, 2010, p. 98).

> a thing cannot exist before or after itself, nor anything else at all before God. If it did, it would surely be the first which had the dignity of Godhead rather than the second; for after all, anything which can be said to come into existence by the action of another […] has itself to be placed among created beings, and must properly be ranked among things which have come into existence by the action of God. So then, if it has now been demonstrated that God neither existed before himself nor did anything else exist before him, but that he is before all things, then what follows from this is the Unbegotten (τὸ ἀγέννητον), or rather, that he is unbegotten essence (οὐσία ἀγέννητος).
>
> (*Apology* 7 in Vaggione, 1987, p. 41 - 42)

When we take the term 'ἀγέννητος' to mean 'without a prior cause', we can understand the rationale of Eunomius. God's status as the first being distinguishes Him from all else: God is uncaused, whilst everything which is not God is posterior to Him and is dependent upon His creating and sustaining activity. Thus, if the predicate 'ἀγέννητος' only applies to a being that is without a prior cause, it turns out that the only possible referent of this predicate is the first being in existence; God, then, is the only referent of the term 'ἀγέννητος'. When we take 'ἀγέννητος' to mean 'without a prior cause' and acknowledge that God is the first being, Eunomius is right that 'unbegotten' has a unique role as a term for God.

Now, following DelCogliano, we can note that the developed heterousian theology of Eunomius and his predecessor Aetius rests on a theory of names, a theological epistemology, and an avowal of the doctrine of divine simplicity (2010, p. 38). The central commitment of the heterousian theory of names is that our names designate essences (and different names refer to different essences), whilst the central commitment of heterousian theological epistemology is that essences are revealed by names (DelCogliano, 2010, p. 34 - 35). In the above argument from Eunomius, his conclusion displays this close association between names and essences: 'what follows from this is the Unbegotten (τὸ ἀγέννητον), or rather, that he is unbegotten essence (οὐσία ἀγέννητος)' (*Apology* 7 in Vaggione, 1987, p. 41 - 42). God is called the Unbegotten (τὸ ἀγέννητον), and this corresponds to his nature as unbegotten essence (οὐσία ἀγέννητος). Thus, the term that is used to refer to God is just the term that precisely signifies his essence. Eunomius has a straightforward

theory of language in this regard: the meaning of a term is just the essence that it designates, and so to understand a term is just to know the essence which it refers to.

Now, the heterousian account of names and theological epistemology is wedded to a particular form of the doctrine of divine simplicity. Radde-Gallwitz characterises the heterousian account of divine simplicity by noting that it is constituted by an avowal of the 'identity thesis': the view that each attribute of God is identical (2009, p. 97). We see this in the following reasoning from Eunomius:

> When spoken of the Unbegotten, does 'light' signify an entity other than that signified by 'the Unbegotten', or does each word signify the same entity? If there are two separate entities, then it is obvious that the thing made up of these entities is also composite, and what is composite is not unbegotten! […] If, then, every word used to signify the essence of the Father is equivalent in force of meaning to 'the Unbegotten' because the Father is without parts and uncomposed, by the same token that same word used of the Only-begotten is equivalent to 'offspring'.
>
> (*Apology* 19 in Vaggione, 1987, p. 59)

In this passage, Eunomius identifies the Father with the Unbegotten, and affirms that every term ascribed to the Unbegotten is identical in reference. Eunomius also explains that this identification of the reference of all terms for God is the only way to preserve divine simplicity: if 'light' and 'the Unbegotten' had different referents, then 'the thing made up of these entities is also composite, and what is composite is not unbegotten!' (*Apology* 19 in Vaggione, 1987, p. 59).

Now, we can understand how Eunomius was led by his affirmation of the 'identity thesis' to the position that to know God's unbegottenness is to comprehend His essence (Radde-Gallwitz, 2009, p. 97). If attribute 'F' is identical to God's essence, then knowledge of God's F-ness amounts to knowledge of God's essence. It follows from this that knowledge of God's attribute of unbegottenness is the same thing as knowledge of God's essence. Furthermore, once the term 'ἀγέννητος' has the status of designating the first being, we can also understand how the 'identity thesis' form of divine simplicity combines with this thesis to produce the view that a being who is *begotten* cannot be God. For a heterousian proponent of the DDS, it is the case that: if an

attribute term ‘F’ refers to God’s simple essence, it refers to God’s essence in its entirety. This follows because of the commitment that all of the divine attributes are identical with God’s essence. Now, we can see how, within the internal logic of heterousian thought, it is the case that:

(1) the predicate ‘unbegotten’ refers to the simple divine essence.

Entails that:

(2) anything to which the predicate ‘begotten’ applies cannot be of the simple divine essence.

According to the heterousian theses that meaning *is* reference and that the term ‘unbegotten’ refers to God’s essence, it follows that any name which implies the denial of the unbegottenness of its referent cannot refer to God’s simple essence. Now, the affirmation that a being is ‘begotten’ entails the denial that the being is ‘unbegotten’. Thus, the name ‘begotten’ cannot apply to God’s essence so long as the term ‘unbegotten’ does. It then follows that any being to which the name ‘begotten’ applies is not God. Indeed, Eunomius, espousing his view that distinct names correspond to distinct essences, argues that the application of the term ‘begotten’ to the Son must designate a different essence to that of the ‘unbegotten’ Father:

> We do not understand his essence to be one thing and the meaning of the word which designates it to be something else. Rather, we take it that his substance is the very same as that which is signified by his name, granted that the designation applies properly to the essence. We assert, therefore, that this essence was begotten – not having been in existence prior to its own coming to be – and that it exists, having been begotten before all things by the will of its God and Father.
>
> (*Apology* 12 in Vaggione, 1987, p. 49)

Here, Eunomius reasons that the Son’s essence is begottenness, since the term ‘begotten’ is used to designate Him. Now, if one accepted Eunomius’ thesis that the essence of God is designated by the term ‘unbegotten’, it would follow that the Son, as the ‘begotten’ (τὸ γεννητόν), is of a distinct essence to that of God (*Apology* 7 - 9, 1987 | p. 41 - 43). We can thus understand Eunomius’ position that the Son is external to the Divine essence, which is οὐσία ἀγέννητος.

How could this theological reasoning be resisted? As we saw, the heterousian view of names is that each name designates an essence, and so distinct names refer to distinct essences. Heterousian epistemology is a straightforward extension of this account: to know the name for an essence is to understand the underlying reality of that essence itself; thus, to know that the name 'unbegotten' designates God's essence is to comprehend God's essence. Basil of Caesarea's starting point in his rejection of heterousian theology is to challenge Eunomius on both of these principles: distinct names may refer to the *same* essence, and, whilst a name provides knowledge of its referent, this is not in the form of revealing the essence of the referent. It is to Basil's account of these matters in his doctrine of conceptualisation (ἐπίνοια) that I now turn.

(§2) Basil on the doctrine of conceptualisation (ἐπίνοια)

Basil of Caesarea offered a wholesale rejection of the heterousian theory of names, theological epistemology, and understanding of the doctrine of divine simplicity. I will begin by considering Basil's account in *Against Eunomius* of the purpose of names in his doctrine of ἐπίνοια. Here, we will encounter Basil's position that, rather than directly revealing essences, our names primarily demarcate *concepts*. For Basil, a group of non-synonymous names can refer to a single essence because each distinct name in the group may have a distinct *sense* corresponding to a particular *concept* of the essence.

Basil on the process of conceptualisation: our formation of concepts about God

Let us commence our study of Basil's account of how humans form concepts for God and His attributes through the process of conceptualisation (ἐπίνοια) in *Against Eunomius* Book 1. Here, Basil is responding to the account that Eunomius put forward of 'conceptualisation'. Eunomius proposed that conceptualisation is a form of cognition which involves a subject producing a term for some entity X which does not truly apply to the substance of X. Eunomius says in his *Apology* that a conceptualisation ceases to exist immediately after it has been produced:

> Expressions based on invention (ἐπὶνοιαν) have their existence in name and utterance only, and by their nature are dissolved along with the sounds [which make them up]
>
> (*Apology* 8 in Vaggione, 1987, p. 43)

Presumably, for Eunomius, the reason that a conceptualisation has this immediately passing existence is that it fails to refer to its target referent. Given Eunomius' thesis that the term 'unbegotten' directly reveals the essence of God, he holds that when God is called 'unbegotten', His very essence – rather than a concept about the essence – is being directly disclosed by the name. In what follows, Basil will reject both Eunomius' view of conceptualisation and – eventually – Eunomius' understanding of the meaning of the term 'unbegotten' as it is applied to God. To oppose Eunomius, Basil will affirm that the activity of conceptualisation is a fruitful operation of the human mind as it seeks to deepen its understanding of reality.

Conceptualisation in *Against Eunomius* 1.6

Basil considers 'the term "conceptualization"' from the standpoints of both the 'customary usage of language' and 'the divine oracles' (*CE 1.6* | 2011, p. 97). With regards to 'common usage', Basil gives the following account of conceptualisation:

> [W]hatever seems simple (ἁπλᾶ) and singular upon a general survey by the mind, but which appears complex and plural upon detailed scrutiny and thereby is divided by the mind - this sort of thing is said to be divided through conceptualization (ἐπινοίᾳ) alone.
>
> (*CE* 1.6 | 2011, p. 97)[28]

Basil provides the following example of conceptualisation in the sense just outlined:

> For example, at first glance the body may seem to be simple, but when reasoning is used it reveals that the body is complex, dissolving it through conceptualization into the things out of which it is constituted: color, shape, solidity, size, and so forth.
>
> (*CE* 1.6 | 2011, p. 97 - 98)

[28] All references to the Greek of *Against Eunomius* are to the text in *Sources Chrétiennes* (2022), whilst all quotations in English are from the translation of Radde-Gallwitz and DelCogliano (2011).

There is something noteworthy about this example. When Basil spoke of reason 'dissolving' the body into its constituents, we might have expected him to say that reason divides a body into its material parts. Actually, however, the constituents of the body which Basil lists are *not* straightforward material parts: his sample constituents are 'color, shape, solidity, size'. Crucially, these constituents are mutually inseparable: in an ordinary body, colour, shape and size, for example, cannot be taken apart from one another. So, when Basil speaks of reason 'dissolving' entities through conceptualisation into constituents, what *are* these constituents if they are not material parts? We get a response to this in Basil's example of our conceptualisations of grain:

> [T]he concept (νόημα) of grain exists in everybody as something simple, by means of which we recognise grain as soon as we see it. But when we examine grain in detail we come to consider more things about it and use different designations (προσηγορία) to indicate the different things we have conceived. For the same grain can be called at one time 'fruit', at another time 'seed', and again at another time 'nourishment'. It is 'fruit' as the result of farming that has been completed, 'seed' as the beginning of farming to come, and 'nourishment' as what is suitable for the development of the body of the one who eats it. Now each one of the things mentioned is considered by way of conceptualisation (ἐπινοία).
>
> (*CE* 1.6 | 2011, p. 98)

The same grain can be called 'seed', 'fruit', and 'nourishment'. Here, each of the names corresponds to a different notion we have of the same underlying essence: grain. We call grain 'seed' to denote our understanding of grain at the beginning of a farming process, 'fruit' to denote our knowledge of grain at the outcome of its growth, and 'nourishment' to denote our understanding of grain as appropriate food. An initial reaction to Basil's proposal here may be that our three names for grain, 'seed', 'fruit', and 'nourishment', are actually referring to three different stages in the life-cycle of grain; thus, it might be thought, the three names actually have three different referents, and so there is no reason to think that the names denote three different conceptualisations of exactly the *same* referent. Basil clearly chose his example of grain carefully, for it can be shown that this objection mischaracterises the case at hand. Let us consider the grain *corn*. To grow corn, we plant a kernel of it in the ground; thus, the designation 'seed', when applied to the grain corn, refers to a kernel. Now, the *end result* of the farming process of corn is

also kernels; thus, the designation ‘fruit’, when applied to this grain, refers to a kernel. Finally, when we eat corn, we consume kernels of corn; thus, the designation ‘nourishment’, when applied to corn, also refers to a kernel. Basil’s insight, therefore, is that we can identify a single object of the kind ‘grain’ – say, an individual kernel of corn – and the three designations ‘seed’, ‘fruit’ and ‘nourishment’ will *all* apply to the very same instance of grain, albeit for different reasons. The grain is ‘seed’ in that it can be planted, ‘fruit’ in that it is already the end-result of farming, and ‘nourishment’ in that it can be eaten. Thus, Basil is right that a cluster of names may have the very same referent, whilst each name presents that referent in a different way.

DelCogliano proposes that Basil’s approach to the meaning of names involves a basic step towards the sense-reference distinction that would later be articulated by Frege (DelCogliano, 2010, p. 21). In Frege’s famous example, the names ‘the Morning Star’ and ‘the Evening Star’ both have the same referent, Venus, but a person might be surprised to find this out, since the two names present the same referent differently (Frege, 1993, p. 24). Now, on Basil’s account of grain, the names ‘seed’ and ‘nourishment’ both have the same referent, and we can imagine a person who was given the produce of the grain-farming process being *surprised* to find out that what they considered under the concept ‘nourishment’ was the same substance as what is considered under the concept ‘seed’. The fact that we can be surprised that two terms in our vocabulary have the same reference demonstrates that the terms must have content over and above their mere reference; otherwise, it would surely not be possible to understand the meaning of two words and *discover* that they have the same referent. This Fregean insight is in harmony with Basil’s theory of language: as DelCogliano notes, for Basil there is a ‘notional’ level between names and their referents (2010, p. 185). Here, we can grasp that Basil has introduced an account of names which is at variance with Eunomius: whilst Eunomius affirmed that names directly correspond to essences, Basil has retorted that names correspond to *conceptualisations* first, and the referents of those conceptualisations second. As DelCogliano phrases it, Basil’s theory of names is one according to which ‘names signify notions primarily and things secondarily’ (2010, p. 181). When we have a plurality of terms for the same entity, each name offers a distinct conceptualisation of

the referent that we can arrive at through rational reflection. We can also follow DelCogliano in noting that, in the example of grain, Basil displays his commitment to the philosophical thesis shared by Stoics and Epicureans that we have rationally accessible common notions or 'κοινὴ ἔννοια' (DelCogliano, 2010, p. 155). Common notions are universally shared concepts that offer the basic furnishings of our grasp of the world; our concept of grain is a common notion, and we develop further notions from it through rational reflection (2010, p. 155-157).

Basil affirms that the concepts which we arrive at through conceptualisation are not momentary productions of the mind which immediately pass away: 'rather the concepts remain settled in the soul of the one who has conceived them' (*CE* 1.6 | 2011, p.98). This remark is a direct rejection of Eunomius' dismissal of conceptualisations as fleeting fancies of cognition; it also indicates Basil's conviction that conceptualisations provide real knowledge of their objects. The knowledge that a conceptualisation yields about its referent object remains in the mind, embedded in the newly formed concept. This raises the question of what kind of knowledge of a substance is captured in our concepts formed through the process of ἐπίνοια. In this regard, we can consider DelCogliano's emphasis that, in Basil's grain example, our conceptualisations do not reveal the underlying nature of grain:

> The conceptualizations of grain are ways in which grain is viewed at different stages of its existence (the source or end-result of farming) or how it relates to human beings (food). Such aspects say nothing about grain *qua* substance.
>
> (2010, p. 168)

This helpfully prepares the way for Basil's application of 'conceptualisation' to God and His attributes, for we see that the affirmation that one has real knowledge of X through a conceptualisation is consistent with one not having direct knowledge of the substance or 'essence' of X. Now, let us proceed to consider Basil's application of his theory of conceptualisation to our theological language in *Against Eunomius* 1.7. As we have seen, Basil affirms that our names designate different conceptual presentations of some referent. We will now see how he deploys this view in his study of the names of Christ and in his account of divine attribute terms.

Basil on Christ's names in *Against Eunomius* 1.7

After giving his analysis of the 'common usage' of conceptualisation, Basil proceeds to study the use of conceptualisation in Scripture. Basil affirms that: with regards to the various names for Christ which are introduced in the Gospel, each name, whilst referring to Christ's simple divinity, reveals a different noetic apprehension of Christ. Basil reflects upon the series of names that Jesus used to refer to himself: 'He called himself 'door', 'way', 'bread', 'vine', 'shepherd', and 'light', even though he is not a polyonym' (*CE,* 1. 7 | 2011, p. 99). In the context of Basil's study of these names, he places a strong emphasis on the divinity of Christ: Basil refers to the times when Jesus 'spoke about himself to make known … the Divinity's love of humanity' and he refers to Christ's 'relation to the objects of his divine benefaction' (φιλανθρωπίαν τῆς θεότητος) (*CE,* 1. 7 | 2011, p. 99). In the midst of this focus on the divine nature of Christ, Basil gives the following interpretation of the names that Jesus used to refer to himself:

> Though our Lord is one in substrate, and one substance, simple and not composite (μία οὐσία καὶ ἁπλῆ καὶ ἀσύνθετος), he calls himself by different names (ὀνομάζει) at different times, using designations that differ from one another for the different conceptualisations (ἐπινοίαις).
>
> (*CE,* 1. 7 | 2011, p. 99)

Given Basil's focus on the divine nature of Christ, it is clear that this passage is a statement of Divine simplicity. Basil's assertion that 'our Lord is one in substrate, and one substance, simple and not composite' is an affirmation that the Divine nature of Christ is simple. In this vein, DelCogliano explains Basil's thought here by straightforwardly saying that, with regards to Christ, 'Basil believes [He] is immaterial and simple' (2010, p. 169). Basil goes on to affirm that the different conceptualisations we have for Christ's simple Divinity are derived from His different divine activities: '[o]n the basis of his different activities (ἐνεργειῶν) and his relation to the objects of his divine benefaction, he employs different names for himself' (*CE,* 1. 7 | 2011, p.

99) [29]. In this context, Basil offers a reading of the name 'bread' for Christ which may be understood as only concerning the Divinity of Christ:

> And 'bread' because he turns out to be a rational being's most appropriate nourishment, since he maintains the soul's constitution, preserves its distinguishing mark, and, always filling up from himself what is lacking, does not allow it to be dragged down to the weakness that enters it from irrationality.
>
> (*CE,* 1. 7 | 2011, p. 99 - 100)

Here, the name 'bread' for Christ is derived from certain of His divine activities (ἐνέργειαι); for example, one ground for Christ's name 'bread' is that 'he maintains the soul's constitution'. In this section of *Against Eunomius*, Basil has argued that each of the names for Christ has the same referent, the simple divinity of Christ, but there is a different conceptual presentation of Christ's divinity corresponding to each name. Basil has affirmed that each name tells us something different about Christ's relation to the objects of His divine benefaction (*CE,* 1. 7 | 2011, p. 99). Thus, there is an emphasis that different divine names correspond to different conceptual presentations of God's relationship with creatures.

At this point, Basil has already refuted the Eunomian thesis that each name refers to a distinct essence. Basil has shown us that a cluster of non-synonymous names can have the same referent, because the variety amongst the names can be understood through a study of the different conceptual presentations of the single referent that each name offers. Now, we can appreciate that a group of names for a nature do not even need to convey some positive 'cataphatic' conceptual knowledge of their referent, such as knowledge of activity. Rather, Basil reasons that some names for God are capturing conceptualisations which *deny* that certain qualities are possessed by God.

Basil on privative names applied to the Godhead

[29] I follow DelCogliano in noting that the approach Basil takes of reading Christ's titles in the gospels as designations for various conceptualisations of him is a manoeuvre that was already present in Origen's approach to scriptural exegesis (DelCogliano, 2010, p. 174). Nonetheless, Basil's account of conceptualisation is distinctive, for, as I will argue, his theory of conceptualisation extends beyond Scripture to all human rational reflection about God.

Basil affirms that certain names refer to God, whilst the conceptualisations of God that they offer are *privative*. Basil notes that there are divine attribute terms which tell us 'what is not present' to God; these negative attributes give us 'the denial (ἀρνήσεως) of what is incongruous with him' (*CE* 1.10 | 2011, p.105). For example, the name 'incorruptible' has God as its referent, and yet the conceptual presentation that this name offers is the *denial* of what is not present to God; for Basil, when we call God 'incorruptible', we are just saying that God is not 'subject to corruption' (*CE* 1. 10 | 2011, p. 105). There is no immediate property of God that is signified by the designation 'incorruptible'; rather, it is God's non-possession of the property of being subject to corruption that is specified by the name. Similarly, the divine name 'invisible' demarcates the conceptualisation that God lacks the property of being visible and 'immortal' demarcates the conceptualisation of God that He lacks the property of having a life that comes to an end (*CE* 1. 10 | 2011, p. 105).

Basil transitions from this group of privative names to the central term for God in Eunomius' theology: 'unbegotten' (ἀγέννητος). For Basil, this is the manner in which the unbegottenness of God is to be understood: 'whenever we call him 'unbegotten' (ἀγέννητον)', we are affirming '"Do not believe that the being of God depends on any cause or principle"' (*CE* 1.10 | 2011, p.105). When we say that God is unbegotten, we are saying that God *lacks* the property of being dependent upon a prior cause. Basil says that ''unbegotten' is indicative of what is not present. For it reveals that there is no begetting present to God' (*CE* 1.10 | 2011, p.105). Now, Basil notes that a name which signifies the *denial* that a substance possesses a particular property cannot possibly contribute to an understanding of what that substance is like in itself; this is because a substance consists in the presence rather than the absence of being. Basil reasons that: 'the substance is not one of the things not present, but is rather the very being of God; indeed, it is the pinnacle of insanity to count it among that which does not have being' (*CE* 1.10 | 2011, p.105).

Basil gives an example to explain that the notion of 'unbegotten' cannot offer a positive characterisation of God's essence. He uses the analogy of human genealogy in Scripture: if you

tell me the parental origins of a person, you tell me nothing about the person themself. Basil affirms that:

> just as being 'from someone' is not the substance when we are talking about human beings, so too when we are talking about the God of the universe it is not possible to say that 'unbegotten' (which is equivalent to saying 'from no one' (ἐξ οὐδενός)) is the substance.
>
> (*CE* 1.15 | 2011, p. 114)

Thus, the designation 'unbegotten' just tells us that God lacks a particular relational property – that of being dependent upon another – but a description which tells us that God lacks a particular relation tells us nothing about God's intrinsic properties or nature.

Finally, we can follow Radde-Gallwitz and DelCogliano in noting that, like the rationally accessible notions that we have of grain, Basil treats the predicate 'unbegotten' as it is applied to God as a 'common notion' which all people can grasp by reason alone (CE 1.5 | 2011, p. 92, footnote). Likening Eunomius to a man who explains to people at midday that the sun is the brightest star in the sky, Basil reasons that Eunomius, in his attempt to justify the application of the term 'unbegotten' to God, is at fault for asserting what is rationally self-evident:

> Now if someone who uses rational argumentation to prove what is already quite well known through sense perception is considered to be utterly absurd, how could the person who teaches what common preconceptions (κοιναῖς προλήψεσιν) enable us all to agree upon not be considered guilty of the same foolishness?
>
> (CE 1.5 | 2011, p. 92)

Of course, Basil affirms that Eunomius is mistaken in his *use* of this divine attribute term because of his failure to see that it only has privative content. What we can observe here, however, is that Basil's classification of 'unbegotten' as a predicate for God which all people can grasp by natural reason is noteworthy, for it demonstrates that Basil believes that a partial conceptual understanding of God is available for all human beings even aside from divine revelation.

At this point, Basil has offered us a cogent model of theological language and epistemology which allows him to reject the heterousian paradigm of Eunomius. We can summarise the state of the debate at this stage as follows. Eunomius proposed that the meaning of a name just is its referent, and, because of this, it is the same thing for us to understand a name and to know the entity to which it corresponds. In his application of this paradigm to the case of our names for God, Eunomius identified the word 'unbegotten' as having a unique role in referring to God: since the name 'unbegotten' can only apply to a being that is without a prior cause, and God – as the first being – is the only being without a prior cause, it must be the case that the name 'unbegotten' refers to God's essence and uniquely reveals the ultimate nature of God. It is then a consequence of this view that the Son, as a 'begotten' being, cannot possess the Divine essence, since the essence of God is *unbegottenness*.

Now, Basil is able to respond to the Eunomian position as follows. Firstly, it is *not* the case that the meaning of a name just is its referent; rather, a name picks out a referent while offering a particular conceptual presentation of that referent. Thus, if we understand a name for an entity, all this guarantees is that we grasp a particular conceptualisation of that referent; for example, if I know the designation 'nourishment' for an individual grain, I know that the grain is appropriate food, but, as DelCogliano notes, this does not secure for me knowledge of the underlying substance of the grain itself. When Basil applies this framework to our names for God, he notes that each word for God provides a unique conceptualisation of God: for example, the name 'invisible' tells us that God cannot be seen, whilst the term 'providence' tells us that God cares for His creatures. So, if we understand a name for God, all this entails is that we grasp a particular conceptual presentation of God, but this does not provide us with knowledge of the underlying nature of God, His essence. To deliver the final blow to Eunomius' view, Basil treats the term 'unbegotten' and notes that, like 'invisible', this name offers us a conceptualisation of what is *not present* in God. The word 'unbegotten' only reveals to us what God does not have: He has no prior cause. Thus, the name that Eunomius invested with the significance of capturing the very substance of God is actually a word which only tells us that God lacks a particular relational

property: the term does not have content which characterises the intrinsic nature of God. Far from Eunomius' view that the term 'unbegotten' discloses God's essence, Basil has, in a sense, given the polar opposite stance that 'unbegotten' is a valuable term for God because it discloses precisely what God's essence *is not*- it is not a substance with a prior cause.

In light of our analysis of Basil's account of conceptualisation, we should note that Basil has unearthed a series of sources of our concepts for God. We have seen Basil appeal to Scripture as a source of the designations for Christ, which in turn present conceptualisations of the simple divinity of Christ to us. We have also seen Basil deploy the principle that we have common notions that are naturally accessible to reason, and conceptualisations can be derived from them; here, we saw Basil treat 'unbegotten' as such a notion. Now, in Cappadocian theological epistemology there are two further sources of our concepts and understanding of God which may be quite intertwined. These are *Divine action* and *spiritual experience*. It is to an analysis of these grounds for our grasp of God's attributes that I now turn.

(§3) Further sources of our concepts and understanding of the simple God: Divine action and spiritual experience

In this section, I will begin with a study of the role of divine action in our acquisition of divine attribute concepts in Basil's '*Letter* 234' and Gregory of Nyssa's '*On not three Gods*'. Next, I will turn to an analysis of the role of spiritual experience in the theological epistemology of Gregory Nazianzen's '*Second Theological Oration*'. I will show that: not only is it the case that the posit of God's activities (ἐνέργειαι) is central to Basil and Gregory of Nyssa's accounts of the divine attributes, it is also plausible to see God's ἐνέργειαι as the source of our knowledge of God in spiritual experience in Gregory Nazianzen's writing. This uncovering of the importance of divine activity in Cappadocian epistemology provides the bridge between the Cappadocian account of our concepts for God in (§2) and the metaphysics of Cappadocian Simplicity in (§4).

Divine action as a source of concepts of God: Basil's '*Letter* 234' and Gregory of Nyssa's *'On not three Gods'*

In *Letter* 234, we find Basil argue that God's activities are a primary source of our notions about God's attributes; here, we see a similar emphasis on divine activity to that we discovered in Basil's analysis of the names for Christ in *Against Eunomius*. The argument of *Letter* 234 is distinctive, however, for Basil explains his activity-based understanding of God's attributes in the context of arguing against the *identity thesis* account of divine simplicity. In this letter, Basil argues against the view that God is identical to each of His attributes on the basis that each divine attribute name has a different meaning, corresponding to the plurality of God's activities in Creation. We will see these themes emerge in our analysis of the text.

In the letter, Basil begins by representing his account of God's essence and attributes as a response to an interlocutor's questioning; the interlocutor is clearly representative of Basil's rival Eunomius and his epistemology (Radde-Gallwitz, 2009, p. 123-4). As we have noted, Eunomius professed that his understanding of God as unbegotten was direct knowledge of God's essence. Against this view, Basil maintains that he knows God without knowing His essence. Here is how Basil introduces the Eunomian accusations against this position:

> Do you worship what you know or what you do not know? If we answer: "What we know, that do we adore," straightway is the retort from them: "What is the substance of that which is adored (Τίς ἡ οὐσία τοῦ προσκυνουμένου)?" And if we confess that we are ignorant (ἀγνοεῖν) of the substance, again turning around to us they say: "Then you adore that which you do not know."
>
> (*Letter* 234 | 1926, p. 371)[30]

We see here an instance of the dilemma mentioned in connection to heterousian thought in (§1): either we assent to Eunomius' principle that we can know God's essence as unbegotten substance, or we must concede that we do not know God. In response to the epistemological dilemma, Basil affirms two things about his understanding of God: (1) 'What we know, that do we adore' and (2) with regards to 'the substance of that which is adored' – that is, the substance of God – 'we confess

[30] All references to the Greek text and English translation of *Letter* 234 are to the text as contained in Deferrari and McGuire (1926).

that we are ignorant of the substance'. At this stage, Basil acquires the task of explaining how he can know God without knowing God's substance. We see the beginnings of Basil's explanation in his response to the accusation that he does not know what he worships:

> But we say that "knowing" has many meanings. For instance, we say that we know the greatness of God, and His power, and His wisdom, and His goodness, and His providence whereby He cares for us, and the justice of His judgment, not His very substance (οὐκ αὐτὴν τὴν οὐσίαν). Therefore the question is captious. For he who says that he does not know the substance has not confessed that he does not know God, since the concept (ἐννοία) of God is gathered by us from the many attributes which we have enumerated.
>
> (*Letter* 234 | 1926, p. 370 – 373)

Here, Basil affirms that we have knowledge of God in the form of knowing certain of His attributes, whilst he also says that this is not knowledge of God's substance[31]. Thus, the picture is beginning to emerge that Basil has a firm distinction between God's substance and attributes such as 'power' and 'wisdom'; whilst the former remains unknown, the latter can be known. At this point, Basil anticipates a reply that his interlocutor will give:

> "But," he says, "God is simple (ἀλλ᾽ ἁπλοῦς, φησίν, ὁ Θεός), and every attribute that one enumerates of Him as knowable is of His substance." But this is a sophism that involves countless absurdities.
>
> (*Letter* 234 | 1926, p. 373)

Here, Basil is not declaring that the affirmation that God's substance is simple is a sophism; rather, Basil is rejecting the proposal that, with regards to God, 'every attribute that one enumerates of Him as knowable is of His substance'. Basil wants to affirm that God's knowable attributes do not reveal God's substance. Before proceeding, we can note that Basil – through his rejection of the

[31] Basil does not use a term which literally translates as 'attributes' here: in the original Greek, he simply says 'from the many things which we have enumerated' (ἐκ πολλῶν ὧν ἀπηριθμησάμεθα). Nonetheless, Deferrari and McGuire's translation of Basil as referring to 'attributes' is fitting because he is directly invoking his list of divine characteristics from the previous sentence. Basil also omits a term for 'attributes' in the next passage where he outlines his Eunomian opponent's appeal to divine simplicity when accounting for the divine attributes; again, Basil just directs us to his list of God's characteristics, referring to 'every *thing* that one enumerates of Him as knowable (πᾶν ὅπερ ἂν αὐτοῦ ἀπαριθμήσῃ γνωστόν)'. As we will see in a moment, however, Basil will clarify that he considers the items of this list to be divine *names* (ὀνόματα).

tenet that knowing one of God's attributes is equivalent to knowing God's substance – is opposing Eunomius' view that to know God's attribute of unbegottenness is to comprehend God's essence. As discussed, Eunomius was led by his affirmation of the identity thesis to this position: if attribute 'F' is identical to God's essence, then knowledge of God's F-ness amounts to knowledge of God's essence. It would follow from this that knowledge of God's unbegottenness is the same thing as knowledge of God's essence. Now, whilst agreeing that God's substance is simple, Basil sets out to respond to the Eunomian position by rejecting the essence-attribute identity thesis: Basil argues that certain attributes of God are not 'of His essence'. Basil's initial move here is the giving of two questions:

> The things which have been enumerated being so many, are all these names of one substance (πότερον ταῦτα πάντα μιᾶς οὐσίας ὀνόματα)? And are His awfulness and His benevolence equivalent to each other (ἰσοδυναμεῖ ἀλλήλοις), His justice and His creative power, His foreknowledge and His requiting, His magnificence and His providence?
>
> (*Letter* 234 | 1926, p. 372 – 373)

In this passage, the crucial factor is revealed that, for Basil, the 'divine attributes' are actually what we may call '*attributions*': they are names (ὀνόματα) for God. In the quotation above, Basil asks if the divine attributes that have been enumerated are 'names of one substance (μιᾶς οὐσίας ὀνόματα)'. Basil is conceiving of divine attributes as *names*, rather than as metaphysical constituents of God. Radde-Gallwitz' reading of Basil's second question concerning the equivalence of God's attributes concurs with this point: 'Basil charges his opponents with holding that the attributes listed are synonymous, that they "mean the same thing as one another" (ἰσοδυναμεῖ ἀλλήλοις). For Basil, by contrast, the various terms that we know of God, the 'that' that we know, are non-synonymous' (2009, p. 125). Here, we see that Basil's challenge is semantic: the divine attributes do not have synonymous *meanings*. Clearly, the divine attributes are understood by Basil as linguistic and conceptual realities, rather than as metaphysical parts of God. Now, the thesis from Basil that the 'divine attributes' are our names for God will help us to understand the tenability of his thesis that there is a distinction between God's simple essence and His attributes.

Returning to the linear progression of Basil's argument, we can note that he raises his rhetorical questions regarding the matter of whether the divine attributes are all names of one substance on the one hand, and the question of whether they are synonymous on the other, immediately after referring to the 'absurdities' in the Eunomian view that he rejects. It is manifest, then, that Basil clearly believes that the answer in both cases is 'no'. Thus, Basil thinks that (1) the attributes of God are not 'all names of one substance', and (2) God's various attributes (that is, names) are not all synonymous and 'equivalent' to one another. Now, let us consider the rest of Basil's reasoning about God's attributes in *Letter* 234:

> Or, indeed, whatever of these things we say, do we explain His substance (τὴν οὐσίαν δηλοῦμεν)? For if they say this, let them not ask if we know the substance of God, but let them learn of us if we know the awfulness of God, or His justice, or benevolence. These things we confess to know. But if they say substance is something else, let them not mislead us by citing its simplicity (τῆς ἁπλότητος). For they themselves have confessed that substance is one thing and each of what was enumerated was another. "Nay, the activities are varied and the substance is simple." But we say that from His activities we know our God (ἡμεῖς δὲ ἐκ μὲν τῶν ἐνεργειῶν γνωρίζειν λέγομεν τὸν θεὸν ἡμῶν), but His substance (οὐσίᾳ) itself we do not profess to approach. For His activities descend (καταβαίνουσιν) to us, but His substance remains inaccessible (ἀπρόσιτος).
>
> (*Letter* 234 | 1926, p. 372 – 373)

In the passage, Basil states that we know God to have the attributes of 'awfulness', 'justice' and 'benevolence'. With regards to knowing God, Basil affirms that 'His activities (ἐνέργειαι) descend to us, but His substance (οὐσία) remains inaccessible' (*Letter* 234 | 1926, p. 372 – 373). Within Basil's paradigm that every divine attribute name has God as its referent whilst each name differs in that it offers a different conceptual presentation of God, how can we interpret Basil's saying? The answer is clear: whilst our many divine attribute names refer to God, none of them offers a conceptualisation which reveals the underlying reality of God's essence. Rather, the distinct conceptual presentation of God which is wedded to each name reveals something about God's *activity* in His relationship with us as creatures. We can know that God is 'just', for example, because He gives to each their due; to know this divine name and its corresponding conceptual

presentation of God does not amount to knowing the "inner being" of the referent of this name: that is, the infinite essence of God[32].

Basil's key move here is his thesis that the 'divine attributes' are names (ὀνόματα) that have their reference towards God by deriving from His activities (ἐνέργειαι). Now, whilst the following consideration is not explicit in Basil's argument, it is also to be noted that: since Basil has conceived of the divine attributes as *names*, it would be a category mistake to suppose that these linguistic items – names for God – are the same thing as God's activities. The only intelligible thesis about Basil's connection of the knowability of God's attributes with the knowability of God's activities is that the divine attributes are the names which refer to God by characterising His ἐνέργειαι. This aligns with the reading of Radde-Gallwitz: he proposes that, according to Basil, the divine attributes have the function that '[t]hey name diverse activities of God, from which we come to know him' (Radde-Gallwitz, 2009, p. 125). Thus, when Basil proposed earlier in the letter that 'substance is one thing and each of what was enumerated [the divine attributes] was another', we will interpret this in the following way. The reality which is God's unknown and simple substance is distinct from God's 'attributes', because the attributes are the names that reveal God's activities.

Basil proceeds in the letter to explain how he avoids making the inconsistent claims that (1) God's οὐσία is completely unknown, whilst (2) Basil knows general truths about God's οὐσία, such as that it exists. Basil addresses this by noting that:

> I do know that He exists, but what His substance is I consider beyond understanding. […] that is to be worshipped which is comprehended, not as to what its substance is, but as to that its substance exists.
>
> (*Letter* 234 | 1926, p. 375)

[32] Later in the letter, Basil cites John 1:18 'No one has ever seen God' before noting that the only begotten Son has revealed God through the *power* shown in His activities (*Letter* 234 | 1926, p. 375 – 376).

Here, Basil suggests that he does comprehend God in the very minimal sense that he knows that God's substance exists, whilst he affirms that he does not know *what* God's substance is in itself. I regard Basil to be making a distinction here between (1) knowing the truth that some entity 'x' exists and (2) having any kind of direct acquaintance with, or cognitive access to, 'x'. Whilst Basil is ignorant of the intrinsic character of God's essence, he can know a very limited range of true predications about God's essence, such as that it exists, because such predications do not concern the intrinsic character of this essence. In my reception of the apophatic claims about God's essence that all three Cappadocians make, I will regard this to be the only coherent rendering of the thesis that God's essence is unknown. Whilst we can know true propositions about God's essence, such as that it exists, and that it is the cause of activities within Creation, we do not have direct cognitive access to what this essence is like in itself. Thus, we can have no comprehension of propositions which use concepts that purport to represent the intrinsic character of God's essence.

Now, having articulated Basil's account of conceptualisation and the divine attributes, I can introduce the model of a *copernican turn* to characterise the Cappadocian theological method that is emerging in our study. Basil has reorientated our reflection about God's essence and His attributes away from the pretence of purporting to understand God as He is in Himself. Rather, Basil has situated the meaning of the notion of a divine attribute within the finite bounds of human noetic life in relation to God. When we followed the understanding of divine attributes as 'inherent properties' in Chapter 2, we had to engage with the following theological question:

> [1] If God's essence is simple, how can He have the inherent properties 'goodness', 'wisdom', 'mercy', and so forth?

In contrast, with Basil's copernican turn in the understanding of the divine attributes as *names* (ὀνόματα), question [1] is replaced with:

[2] Given that God's essence is simple and a 'divine attribute' is a name which designates God from the human point of view, what do our attribute predicates 'goodness', 'wisdom', 'mercy', and so forth *mean* if they do not pick out intrinsic features of God?

And, as we have seen thus far, the divine attribute predicates provide us with either a conceptual presentation of God's activities (ἐνέργειαι) or the denial of properties that are incongruous with God. Basil has been emphatic that none of our terms for God have a content which reveals to us God's essence (οὐσία); whilst Basil has presented to us a convincing model for interpreting our divine attribute concepts in accordance with the thesis that God's simple essence is unknown, we have not seen an argument to justify the foundational posit that there is something about God's essence which places it beyond our conceptual apprehension. To address this space in Basil's theology, let us consider the supplementary thought of Gregory of Nyssa which gives us a reason to believe that the divine attribute concepts are inadequate as tools for providing knowledge of God's essence.

Gregory of Nyssa on the incomprehensibility of God's essence in 'On Not three Gods'

In his letter to Ablabius, Gregory of Nyssa reasons about the inability of our divine attribute terms and concepts to capture the nature of God's essence. He pursues this reasoning in the following analysis:

> [W]e, believing the Divine nature to be unlimited and incomprehensible, conceive no comprehension of it, but declare that the nature is to be conceived in all respects as infinite: and that which is absolutely infinite is not limited in one respect while it is left unlimited in another, but infinity is free from limitation altogether. That therefore which is without limit is surely not limited even by name.
>
> (*On not three Gods*)[33]

[33] Translation used is that of Wilson (1893).

According to Gregory, we only have a name that conveys the nature of some entity if that entity can be comprehended and has *limitation* in some sense. Now, God's essence is 'unlimited and incomprehensible'. Because of this, no name – even a name for a divine attribute – could characterise the Divine essence. Gregory's reasoning here is straightforward: names have finite content; the divinity of God is infinite; thus, none of our names reveals the nature of God's essence. Now, in continuation with his view that no designations capture the nature of God's divinity, Gregory goes so far as to affirm that the term 'Godhead' *does not* characterise the incomprehensible and unlimited Divine essence:

> In order then to mark the constancy of our conception of infinity in the case of the Divine nature, we say that the Deity is above every name: and "Godhead" is a name. Now it cannot be that the same thing should at once be a name and be accounted as above every name.
>
> (*On not three Gods*)

For Gregory, the only way to be truly consistent with the principle that any name would imply limitation in the Divine essence is to hold that: even the name 'Godhead' does not offer us a grasp of the Divine essence. Now, earlier in his text, Gregory provides an etymological justification for his conviction that the term 'Godhead' – and with it the term 'God' – is actually used to characterise a divine *activity* rather than the nature of the Divine essence:

> Since, then, as we perceive (κατανοοῦντες) the varied activities (ἐνεργείας) of the power above us, we fashion our appellations (προσηγορίας) from the several activities that are known to us, and as we recognize as one of these that activity of surveying and inspection, or, as one might call it, beholding, whereby He surveys all things and overlooks them all […] we suppose that Godhead, or θεότης, is so called from θέα, or beholding, and that He who is our θεατής or beholder, by customary use and by the instruction of the Scriptures, is called θεός, or God.
>
> (*On Not three Gods*)[34]

[34] Greek text used is from *Gregorii Nysseni Opera* (GNO.3.1: 45.7 - 12). Wilson's translation used with my own slight adjustments.

We can note here that Gregory affirms the same pattern of thought that we found in Basil's *Letter* 234. Gregory affirms that we 'perceive' the plurality of God's activities, and that we 'fashion our appellations' – the divine attribute names – on this basis. Gregory then remarks that the term 'Godhead' (θεότης) is derived from our understanding of the activity of beholding, and thus he reasons that even the term God (θεός) – which stems from θεότης – is implicitly a description of one of the divine activities that 'are known to us'. Clearly, Gregory shares in Basil's view that, with regards to God, 'His activities descend to us, but His substance remains inaccessible' (*Letter* 234 | 1926, p. 372 – 373). Gregory's addition to this schema is his radical thesis that even the term 'God' follows the pattern of other divine attribute terms such as 'benevolence' and 'providence'. Gregory followed Basil's framework for understanding our divine attribute language as presenting to us God's activities, but he regarded our language for the deity of God to be no exception to the general rule: if we speak of 'God', we are – perhaps without noticing it – invoking one of the divine ἐνέργειαι [35].

Spiritual experience as a source of our understanding of God: Gregory Nazianzen's *Second Theological Oration*

In this section, I will uncover the Cappadocian idea that spiritual experience can offer us material for our understanding of the simple God through a study of Gregory Nazianzen's discussion of the theme of knowing God in his *Second Theological Oration* (*Or.* 28). As we will see, the distinction between God's essence and activities which underlay much of Basil and Gregory of Nyssa's account of the divine attributes also appears to be essential to Gregory Nazianzen's account of our knowledge of God in the spiritual life. Here is the opening of a key passage of *Oration* 28, where Gregory explores the nature of his encounter with God:

> III. What is this that has happened to me, O friends, and initiates, and fellow-lovers of the truth? I was running to lay hold (καταληψόμενος) on God, and thus

[35] Even Aquinas accepts that our term 'God' is derived from one of God's operations, but he maintains that the name is still capable of designating God's substance. For him, the origin of our term for God does not determine the scope of its reference (ST, I, q.13, a.8).

> I went up into the Mount, and drew aside the curtain of the Cloud, and entered away from matter and material things, and as far as I could I withdrew within myself (εἰς ἐμαυτὸν ὡς οἷόν τε συστραφείς). And then when I looked up, I scarce saw the back parts of God (Θεοῦ τὰ ὀπίσθια); Exodus 33:23 although I was sheltered by the Rock, the Word that was made flesh for us.
>
> (*Or*. 28)[36]

Here, Gregory portrays the theme of seeking to know God through the paradigm of 'running to lay hold (καταληψόμενος) on God'. The term 'κατάληψις' and its derivatives refer both to 'direct apprehension, perception, with the mind' and the 'capturing' or 'taking possession' of some entity (The Brill Dictionary of Ancient Greek, 2015). Thus, Gregory is exploring the idea of seeking to know God entirely and 'capturing' God within human awareness. As Beeley notes, Gregory's language of seeking to fully capture the knowledge of God is a rhetorical parody of Eunomius' claim to have fully comprehended God's essence in the tenet that God is unbegotten substance (Beeley, 2009, p. 92 – 93). We see here that the Eunomian controversy is the background context for Gregory's discussion of theological epistemology. Now, as part of his spiritual progress towards encountering God, Gregory gives the crucial description that 'as far as I could I withdrew within myself' (εἰς ἐμαυτὸνὡς οἷόν τε συστραφείς). The term 'συστρέφω' means 'to twist, contort, bend, contract' (The Brill Dictionary of Ancient Greek, 2015). Thus, Gregory is discussing the theme of 'twisting inwards' or turning in on oneself: the person who looks to encounter God seeks to focus on something that is happening *within themself*. Thus, I will interpret Gregory as describing what is happening when a person seeks to encounter God in their *inner experience*. Now, let us consider the movement that immediately follows Gregory's interior turn: 'And then when I looked up, I scarce saw the back parts of God; Exodus 33:23'. Here, Gregory has some form of awareness of the reality of God within his interior life. I will explore the significance of this in what follows.

[36] Greek text used is the *Sources Chrétiennes* edition (2022). English translation is that of Browne and Swallow (1894).

Slightly later in the passage, Gregory relates that even upon entering his interior awareness to access God, he still could not encounter God as He is in Himself:

> And when I looked a little closer, I saw, not the First and unmingled Nature (φύσιν), known to Itself — to the Trinity, I mean; not That which abides within the first veil, and is hidden by the Cherubim; but only that Nature (ὅση), which at last even reaches to us.
>
> (*Or.* 28)

Here, it appears that, for Gregory, a human encounter with God does not involve direct experience or knowledge of the divinity of God, which Gregory refers to simply as 'the Trinity'. This is a close parallel to Basil's teaching in *Letter* 234 that God's substance 'remains inaccessible'. Now, Gregory proceeds to specify that which he *can* encounter in this heightened state of interaction with God. He says that he saw 'only that Nature (ὅση), which at last even reaches to us' (*Or.* 28). Here, it is important for us to note a matter of translation. Whilst the Browne and Swallow translation uses the language of 'nature' to refer both to the Trinity and to the second divine reality which reaches creatures, Gregory's original Greek reserves the term φύσις (nature) for 'the Trinity', whilst it uses the term 'ὅση' to refer both to the Trinity and to the reality pertaining to God which comes down to creatures. Beeley, who is sensitive to Gregory's choice of terms here, offers an alternative rendering of the passage, translating Gregory as saying that, with regards to the Divine nature, he saw not 'that part of it (ὅση) that abides within the first veil and is hidden by the cherubim […] but only that part of it (ὅση) that is posterior and comes down to us' (*Or.* 28 in Beeley, 2008, p. 90). Beeley renders 'ὅση' as 'part', which we can note is *also* an inadequate rendering of the term since the term 'ὅση' is from 'ὅσος', which means 'amount' (The Brill Dictionary of Ancient Greek, 2015). Beeley's translation of 'ὅση' as referring to a 'part' of God is inadequate: the rendering of 'ὅση' as 'part' has excessively mereological connotations and obscures Gregory's background commitment to God's simplicity. To appreciate Gregory's commitment to the DDS, we can note that, in *Oration* 30, he affirms the simplicity of the Father and the Son when he articulates his understanding of the Son as 'the Image' of the Father:

> For such is the nature of simple Existences (τῶν ἁπλῶν φύσις), that it is not correct to say of them that they are Like in one particular and Unlike in another; but they are a complete resemblance, and should rather be called Identical than Like.
>
> (*Or.* 30.20)

Given Gregory's commitment to the simplicity of the Father and the Son here, we should interpret his account of God having a hidden amount and a revealed amount in spiritual experience in *Oration* 28 in accordance with his commitment to divine simplicity, rather than following Beeley's rendering of the text which implies that Gregory thinks that the divine nature has two parts. At this stage, then, all that is clear is that Gregory's use of the term 'ὅση' is expressing the notion that there is an 'amount' of God which is hidden from our spiritual sight ('within the first veil…hidden by the cherubim') and an 'amount' of God which 'comes down to us'. To begin to clarify what is going on here, we can note that Gregory's language of the knowable aspect of God *descending* to us strongly evokes Basil's contrast between the unknown essence of God and the knowable activities of God which come down to us. To see how far this parallel goes, let us consider Gregory's full description of the amount 'ὅση' of God which reaches us:

> And that is, as far as I can learn, the Majesty, or as holy David calls it, the Glory which is manifested among the creatures, which It has produced and governs. For these are the Back Parts of God (Ταῦτα γὰρ Θεοῦ τὰ ὀπίσθια), which He leaves behind Him, as tokens of Himself like the shadows and reflection of the sun in the water, which show the sun to our weak eyes, because we cannot look at the sun himself, for by his unmixed light he is too strong for our power of perception.
>
> (*Or.* 28)

Gregory has already told us that he has 'entered away from matter and material things', and so it is plausible that his description of our 'weak eyes' and 'power of perception' refers to the 'eye' of the inner perception of the soul that experiences God, rather than to the bodily eyes. Now, when Gregory compares 'the Back Parts of God' to 'the shadows and reflection of the sun in the water', we can again transcend the physical symbolism: here, the 'sun' is God, and, given our context of inner spiritual awareness, it is plausible that the 'water' is the human soul which is experiencing

God[37]. Gregory Nazianzen's imagery bears strong resonances with Basil and Gregory of Nyssa's accounts of the *activities* (ἐνέργειαι) of God here. His comparison of God's manifest Glory to 'the shadows and reflection of the sun in the water' is an image which invokes the idea of an active entity (the sun) causing changes in a lower ontological order (the water); here, the wider Cappadocian posit of God's activities of causing effects in the world perfectly maps on to Gregory's image of the plurality of effects produced by God in the human soul. Indeed, in Gregory Nazianzen's descriptions of God's relationship with humanity elsewhere in his corpus, he assigns the ἐνέργειαι of God a significant place. In *Or* 30.21, Gregory affirms that the ἐνεργείᾳ of Christ's divine nature sanctify anointed human beings (*Or*. 30, *Sources Chrétiennes*, 2022). In *Or* 41.3, Gregory refers to the gifts of the Holy Spirit listed in Isaiah 11:2, such as wisdom and the fear of the Lord, as ἐνεργείας of the Spirit (*Or*. 41, *Sources Chrétiennes*, 2022). Given that Gregory describes God's activities as both sanctifying humanity and *being* the gifts of the Holy Spirit, it is plausible to entertain the hypothesis that the posit of God's activities is also at work in Gregory's discussion of the 'amount' of God which reaches us in the spiritual life in *Or.* 28.

In contrast to my proposal of seeing the Cappadocian posit of God's activities at the heart of Gregory's account of his encounter with God, Beeley reads Gregory Nazianzen's theological epistemology as affirming that a form of knowledge of God's *nature* is attained in spiritual experience:

> [A]lthough he does not "comprehend" God, Gregory tells us that he does "see" God; he attains a real knowledge of God, even if it is less than full comprehension. […] Gregory does see God's nature "to some extent": he sees "that part of it (ὅση) that is posterior and comes down to us" (28.3). Here again Gregory has been misinterpreted in an overly apophatic direction, as if he were saying that he did not see God's nature at all. While he does not see all of God's nature, he does see the part of it that extends toward creation, the "tokens of himself" by which God is known by creatures and which the Bible calls God's "majesty" or "glory."
>
> (2008, p. 101)

[37] In a similar vein, Gregory refers to the soul as a mirror of God when in prayer (*Or*. 2.7; *Or*.12.4; *Or*. 20.1). This lends support to my reading of the water in *Or.* 28.3 as the soul which bears the impression of God upon it in spiritual experiences.

Here, we see Beeley bemoan the 'apophatic' interpretation of Gregory which reads him as affirming that he has no sight of God's nature, and he insists in response that Gregory sees 'the part of it that extends toward creation'. In response, I propose that Beeley's insistence that Gregory is describing a partial access to God's nature is based on an overly literal way of interpreting Gregory's language of seeing an aspect of God which reaches creation, as well as on a mistranslation of ὅση as 'part' rather than 'amount'. Whilst Beeley's account of Gregory knowing 'part' but not 'all' of God's nature falls foul of the DDS, he discusses, in his footnotes, Wickham's rendering of Gregory's description of God: '[t]he phrase could also be translated to mean God's nature "*as* it abides within the first veil" and "*as* it reaches us," as Wickham does, in which case the divine nature is still the referent of both statements' (Beeley, 2008, Chapter 1 footnotes). Wickham's translation suggests a more promising reading of the passage than Beeley's interpretation, for the possibility of affirming God's simplicity is more apparent in his reading. On this translation, we could understand Gregory's distinction between the hidden ὅση of God and the revealed ὅση of God to be an *epistemological* distinction between God as He is in Himself and God as He is encountered by us.

Gregory is affirming that he cannot see God's divinity as it is in itself, but he can know God as He is manifest to us in our interior experience. If, as I have proposed, we consider this distinction as closely tracking the οὐσία - ἐνέργειαι distinction given in Basil's *Letter* 234, then our concept of God's activities can be enriched by Gregory's discussion of spiritual experience in the following ways. God's activities need not be conceived of as a series of distinct structures in mind-independent reality that are produced by God; rather, they could be understood as the plurality of ways that God is *experienced* by creatures. Here, the plurality of ἐνέργειαι would be a diversity located in the realm of our phenomenology, which would allow us to avoid thinking of the divine activities as a real plurality inhering in God's essence, which would undermine God's simplicity. This suggestion only needs us to entertain the idea that it is possible for God to cause different forms of encounter with Himself in different subjects, and so the possibility of

God having many ἐνέργειαι is, in effect, the same thing as the possibility for God to cause a variety of theophanies.

Now, to continue our exploration of the metaphysics underlying the Cappadocian posit of God's activities, along with the other ontological questions that have arisen in our study of the Cappadocian account of God's nature, I will turn to a study of the metaphysical commitments of Cappadocian Simplicity in (§4).

(§4) Cappadocian Ontology: the metaphysical roots of our concepts for the simple God

In this section, I will discuss the metaphysical implications of the Cappadocian account of the sources of our concepts and understanding of the simple God. In (i), I will analyse the ontology of the *ousia-energeiai* (essence-activities) distinction. In (ii), I will analyse the posit that knowledge of God amounts to knowledge of God's *propria* or 'unique distinguishing characteristics'. Here, I will argue that Radde-Gallwitz's original reading of the Cappadocian posit of God's propria as entailing that there are knowable intrinsic properties in the Divine *ousia* falls foul of the wider commitments of Cappadocian Simplicity. Thus, I will argue that the Cappadocian posit of God's propria is far better interpreted as a theory about predicates for God, rather than a theory about God having a substance with certain features. In (iii), I will expand upon this argument to offer a preliminary discussion of the entailments of Cappadocian Simplicity for an account of the Trinity.

The metaphysics of Cappadocian Simplicity (i) The essence-activity distinction

Recall Basil's statement that the divine ἐνέργειαι are 'varied', are such that 'we know our God' from them, and are such that they 'descend to us' (*Letter* 234 | 1926, p. 372 – 373). Basil also explicitly contrasted the reality that the ἐνέργειαι are varied with the reality that God's οὐσία (that is, 'substance' or 'essence') is simple (*Letter* 234 | 1926, p. 372). If God's substance is simple whilst His activities are manifold, we must consider how this posited *plurality* in relation to God is part of a theology that is consistent with the DDS. The Cappadocian framework must avoid the

absurdity of positing that: whilst God's essence is simple, there is a second 'part' of God – constituted by His activities – which is manifold and complex. This would be incoherent because, clearly, it is self-contradictory to hold that a simple being has a 'simple part' and a 'complex part'. This view would actually posit that God is composite in two different ways: (1) He would be a composite of His essence and activities, and (2) the aspect of God which is constituted by His activities would be a further composite made up of each distinct activity. Given the strict incompatibility between the commitment that God is simple and the idea that God's activities constitute a second component of God which is conjoined to His essence, we must assume that the Cappadocians cannot have meant that the plural activities of God are to be thought of as constituents of the nature of God. To uphold the consistency of Cappadocian thought on the simplicity of God and the existence of God's activities, I will now explore what the Cappadocian posit of God's ἐνέργειαι really is by looking further into the writings of Gregory of Nyssa.

Gregory of Nyssa on God's activities as exertions of the simple Divine nature

Gregory of Nyssa sheds light upon his conception of God's ἐνέργειαι in his text '*Against Eunomius*'. Firstly, when engaging with Eunomius' account of energies and the divine existence, Gregory explains that a proponent of divine simplicity cannot affirm that an activity/energy inheres in the simple divine nature:

> I do not think that he would affirm that we should consider the being of God to be something heterogeneous and composite (σύνθετον), having the energy (τὴν ἐνέργειαν) inalienably (ἀχώριστον) contained in the idea of itself, like an 'accident' in some subject-matter (συμβεβηκὸς ἐν ὑποκειμένῳ)
>
> (*Against Eunomius* 1.17)[38]

Here, we see Gregory teach that the idea that ἐνέργειαι are somehow within the Divine nature itself leads to a violation of divine simplicity, for the inherence of an energy in God would make His substance complex. For Gregory, to affirm that an energy is intrinsic to God would be to posit the

[38] Greek text used is the *Sources Chrétiennes* edition (2022). Translation used is that of Moore, Wilson and Ogle (1893).

existence of an accident inhering in the Divine nature. Gregory then expands upon this when he engages with Eunomius' claim that an energy of the Father produced the Son. Gregory characterises the activity of the Father as distinct from His being: Gregory says that, with regards to the first divine person, an energy is 'not its very nature, but only the exercise of its nature (φύσεως κίνησις)' (*AE* 1.17). Here, we see Gregory characterise the essence-activity distinction as concerning the distinction between a nature and the 'exercises' or movements of the nature; clearly, Gregory thinks that an activity of God itself is not part of His substance, for otherwise God would be composite.

Elsewhere in his analysis, Gregory makes it clear that he conceives of activities as being relational in nature, and involving an agent and a patient:

> when one mentions the energy, one comprehends in the idea that which is moved with the energy, and when one mentions the worker one implies at once the unmentioned energy. […] We say a man works in iron, or in wood, or in anything else. This single expression conveys at once the idea of the working and of the artificer, so that if we withdraw the one, the other has no existence.
>
> (*Against Eunomius* 1.17)

In harmony with Gregory's account here of activities as involving a 'worker' and a substrate in which they work, it is manifest that all of the examples of divine ἐνέργειαι which we have seen the Cappadocians use are relational activities within the Creation: think of Basil's use of such examples as providence and judgement in his list of God's activities, Gregory of Nyssa's account of God's activity of beholding (θέα) creatures as being the origin of our term for divinity, or Gregory Nazianzen's likening of the knowable amount of God to the effects of the sun on water. In light of this, it is natural to understand Gregory of Nyssa's account of God's ἐνέργειαι as the exercises of His simple nature as concerning the exercises of God *in the created order*. To further the case for this, I will now argue that, in Gregory's second work against Eunomius, he makes it clear that he only ascribes necessary and eternal existence to God's nature itself; this implies that the activities of God do not exist alongside the divinity of God from eternity.

In a brief passage, Gregory asserts that only God's nature has existence outside of creation. The passage in question, in which Gregory is refuting Eunomius' interpretation of the notion of God the Father's speech, is as follows:

> What, then, are we to suppose is the medium which conveys the Father's voice to the hearing of the Son? It must be created (Κτιστὸν) or uncreate (ἄκτιστὸν). But we may not call it created; for the Word was before the creation of the world: and beside the Divine nature there is nothing uncreate (ἄκτιστον δὲ πλὴν τῆς θείας φύσεώς ἐστιν οὐδέν).
>
> (*Answer to Eunomius' Second Book*)[39]

Here, we encounter Gregory's explicit affirmation that 'besides the Divine nature there is nothing uncreate'. The class of uncreated existents only contains one reality: God's nature. Thus, God's activities, as exertions *of* God upon creatures, cannot have 'uncreate' or necessary existence. Clearly, in Gregory's ontology, only God's simple nature has eternal and uncreate existence, whilst each activity of God is external to this simple nature, being the movement or exercise (κίνησις) of it upon creatures. Whilst we have just seen Gregory espouse the principle that the Divine nature is the only uncreated reality, it is surprising to note that Bradshaw, referring to *Summa Theologiae* I, q.28, a.2, proposes that this is a distinctively *Thomist* view. He reasons as follows:

> If, as Aquinas holds, "everything which is not the divine essence is a creature," then there is no room for the divine *energeiai* as realities that are neither identical to the divine essence nor ultimately due to the act of creation.
>
> (2004, p. 165)

This passage is part of Bradshaw's proposal that *Thomistic* concerns motivate lower readings of the Cappadocian conception of ἐνέργειαι, according to which they are 'activities or operations' in the created order (2004, p. 165). Against this reading, Bradshaw looks to interpret Cappadocian

[39] Greek text used is the *Sources Chrétiennes* edition (2022). English translation is that of Day (1893).

ontology as affirming a high view of God's ἐνέργειαι, according to which God's activities are God:

> [F]or Gregory of Nyssa the divine names are not merely derived from the *energeiai* but are names *of* the *energeiai*. The natural conclusion to draw is that the *energeiai* are not merely activities but must in some sense be God Himself
>
> (2004, p. 165)

Bradshaw's reading of Gregory as affirming that the divine ἐνέργειαι are somehow God Himself is undercut by two considerations. Firstly, we have seen Gregory explicitly affirm that God's ἐνέργειαι are distinct from His simple nature in *Against Eunomius*. Secondly, we have just identified textual evidence that, far away from Thomistic discourse, Gregory independently espoused the view that God's nature is the only uncreated reality in his *Answer to Eunomius' Second Book*. Thus, the reply can be made to Bradshaw that our interpretation of the Cappadocians as conceiving of God's οὐσία as the sole eternal reality on the one hand, and God's ἐνέργειαι as distinct from God in virtue of being His impermanent exertions on creatures on the other, is a reading which meets the Cappadocians within the internal coherence of their own works, rather than one which imposes a Thomistic framework upon their texts[40].

The metaphysics of Cappadocian Simplicity (ii) Properties or predicates? The unique identifying characteristics (propria) of the divine essence in interpretations of the Cappadocians

With regards to the Cappadocian conception of what we can say about God's simple essence itself, I will argue here that Basil and Gregory of Nyssa are best understood as positing that the unique characteristics (propria) of the simple God are *conceptual realities*, as Cross (2012) and the later Radde-Gallwitz (2019) have argued. This reading stands in contrast to the view that the unique characteristics of the Divine essence are real ontological constituents or inherent properties of the essence, as the earlier Radde-Gallwitz (2009) maintained. Alongside analysing the

[40] Radde-Gallwitz also rejects Bradshaw's claim that Gregory should be read as identifying the divine energeiai with God (2009, p. 223 – 224).

exegetical issues that arise here regarding Cappadocian texts, I will also offer the philosophical argument that the 'inherent properties' conception of propria that the early Radde-Gallwitz proposed is strictly incompatible with the metaphysics of the DDS.

To commence our discussion, we should look to Radde-Gallwitz' early work to uncover what he meant by his suggestion that Basil posits the existence of 'propria' in the Divine essence. Radde-Gallwitz explains that propria are 'features peculiar to a common nature that distinguish that nature or shared substance from others' (2009, p. 133). Thus, Divine propria are properties which are unique to God's nature and inseparable from it, distinguishing God's nature from all other natures. As we will see, even though divine propria are conceived of as inseparable from God's nature, they are thought to be neither identical to it nor parts of it. Now, following Radde-Gallwitz, we can see a potential articulation of the idea of God's propria in Basil's *Against Eunomius* 2.29:

> But if we were to posit, on the one hand, the light or the life or the good as the substance of God, claiming that the very thing which God is is life as a whole (ὅλον ὅπερ ἐστὶ ζωὴν ὄντα), light as a whole (ὅλον φῶς), and good as a whole (ὅλον ἀγαθόν), while positing, on the other hand, that the life has unbegottenness as a concomitant, then how is the one who is simple in substance not incomposite? For surely the ways of indicating his distinctive feature (ἰδιότητος αὐτοῦ) will not violate the account of simplicity.
>
> (*CE,* 2.29 | 2011, p. 176)

Let us consider the 'ontological' interpretation of what Basil is saying here about God's essence. Basil takes each of 'light', 'life', and 'good' to be a 'distinguishing feature' (ἰδιότητος) – which Radde-Gallwitz alternatively translates as 'proprium' - of God (2009, p. 156). The early Radde-Gallwitz articulates what he considers to be happening in Basil's text by noting that predicating the propria of God's substance *as a whole* 'does not mean that the divine substance is a whole' in a compositional sense (2009, p. 157). Instead, according to Radde-Gallwitz, Basil's language 'means that these names do not refer to one aspect' of God's essence 'while failing to refer to another' (2009, p. 157). Radde-Gallwitz thus describes God's propria as 'coextensive properties predicated of the divine substance' (2009, p. 158). He also notes that Basil uses the term 'concurrent' to describe God's goodness - one of the supposed propria - in *On the Holy Spirit*; in

this text, Basil says the 'goodness of will … is concurrent with the substance' (*On the Holy Spirit* 8.21.3-4 quoted in Radde-Gallwitz, 2009, p. 158). I will return to the question of the precise meaning of these descriptions of the divine propria as 'coextensive' and 'concurrent' with God's substance later in this section. For now, I will draw on Radde-Gallwitz to clarify the notion of 'propria' through an elucidation of three theses which he connects to the Cappadocian use of this concept.

Firstly, it can be affirmed that propria are unique identifying properties of an essence. This point can be appreciated by acknowledging the connection that Radde-Gallwitz notes between the Cappadocian understanding of propria and that of the philosopher Porphyry. With regards to a reference in Gregory of Nyssa's corpus to the sample propria of 'neighing' and 'laughing', Radde-Gallwitz notes that '[t]he examples he gives of propria are the examples of propria in the strict sense in Porphyry's *Eisagôgê*' (2009, p. 201). Radde-Gallwitz then quotes Porphyry's whole account of propria; here is the crucial selection of this for our purposes:

> 'alone and all and always' coincide (as laughing … of man). For even if man does not always laugh, he is said to be laughing not in that he always laughs but in that he is of such a nature (πεφυκέναι) as to laugh—and this holds of him always, being connatural (σύμφυτον), like neighing … of horses. And they say that these are properties in the strict sense, because they convert: if horse, neighing; and if neighing, horse.
>
> (Porphyry *Eisagôgê* 12.13-21 in Radde-Gallwitz, 2009, p. 201)

We can capture Porphyry's notion of propria as follows: with regards to a kind of essence F, the propria of F are those properties [G, H …] which are possessed by *every* instance of F *and* are not possessed by any other essence. For example, with regards to the essence 'horse', the property 'neighs' (or 'has the capacity to neigh') is a proprium of the essence because *every* horse neighs and the property 'neighs' is not possessed by any other essence. Thus, we get Porphyry's observation that horsehood entails neighing, and neighing entails horsehood. In more formal terms: for an essence 'F', property 'G' is a proprium of the essence just when $\forall x [Fx \leftrightarrow Gx]$.

The second thesis that constitutes the posit of propria is this: to know the propria of an essence is not to know the essence itself (Radde-Gallwitz, 2009, p. 201). We can demonstrate this point using the examples at hand. To know that neighing is a unique identifying property of horses is not to know the essence 'horse'. Whilst most people know [horse ↔ neighing], it is plausible that very few people comprehend the essence 'horse'. With the exception of zoologists perhaps, most of us are unable to give an explanation of the essence 'horse' which would answer such questions as 'What exactly is it about the nature of a 'horse' which distinguishes it from the nature of a 'cow?' If knowing the proprium [horse ↔ neighing] entailed that one fully knew the essence 'horse', then one would be able to answer such a question about the nature of a horse. Given that we can *know* the proprium [horse ↔ neighing] whilst being ignorant of a complete answer to questions about the essence 'horse', our knowledge of the proprium [horse ↔ neighing] is clearly not the same thing as full knowledge of the essence 'horse'. Thus, to know the propria of an essence is not to know the essence.

The third thesis connected to propria is that: with regards to a particular essence, there is a real distinction between one proprium and another of the essence (Radde-Gallwitz, 2009, p. 168). In the animal kingdom, the properties of 'having the capacity to laugh' and 'having the capacity to use language' are each (1) unique to humans and (2) universal in humans. Thus, there are at least two propria of humans: [human ↔ laughing] and [human ↔ using language]. Now, obviously, laughing and using language are different properties; we have here two propria of human beings that are really distinct. Thus, with regards to an essence, we can see that there is a real distinction between one proprium of the essence and another.

At this point, we can capture Radde-Gallwitz' reading of the concept of propria by affirming the following: propria are unique identifying properties of an essence; to know the propria of an essence is not to know the essence; and, with regards to a particular essence, there is a real distinction between one of its propria and another. Now, let us advance towards a yet clearer understanding of propria by comparing two different interpretations of the notion that the divine

propria are coextensive and concurrent with God, which I will call the 'logical' and 'metaphysical' interpretations of the concept of propria.

The 'logical' and 'metaphysical' interpretations of the concept of propria

Consider the proposition 'the divine propria are coextensive and concurrent with God's essence'. This could be interpreted in more than one way. Firstly, the proposition can be read as a 'logical statement' which tells us that God's propria are unique to God. The 'logical' reading is expressed thus: 'the properties (F, G, H) are coextensive and concurrent with God's essence in that $\Box \exists x (Fx \& Gx \& Hx) \& \forall x [(Fx \vee Gx \vee Hx) \rightarrow (x = God)]$. We should note that, on an initial interpretation of this rendering of the posit of propria, the existence of divine propria is actually *compatible* with the identity thesis: there could be a set of special properties which are unique to God's essence – that is, logically coextensive and concurrent with God – whilst they are actually identical to God's essence. I will argue in the next section, however, that a refined articulation of this thesis should posit that certain *predicates* are uniquely applicable to God, not that there really is a set of special properties inhering in God's simple essence.

Secondly, the proposition 'the divine propria are coextensive and concurrent with God's essence' can be read as a 'metaphysical' statement which affirms that the divine propria are properties which are not identical to God's nature, whilst they are inseparably united to it. On this reading, the posit of divine propria is a radical break from the identity thesis: there is a set of special divine properties which are not identical to God's essence, whilst they are inseparably connected to the essence. We could say here that the divine propria are 'metaphysically' concurrent with God's essence. It is manifest that this metaphysical account of God's propria is the view offered by the early Radde-Gallwitz (2009, p. 158 – 161). Radde-Gallwitz uses the classical example of fire and its properties of light and upwards motion to illustrate the relationship between propria:

> In each case, the two items stand in a necessary relationship, such that if one exists, so does the other. If there is fire, there is light; if (ex hypothesi) there is light, there is fire. The relation is also simultaneous: there is no moment when fire does not illuminate or

> travel upwards. But, despite this close relation, it would be mistaken to say that 'being fire' and 'being light' or 'being the element that moves upwards' are the same properties. They always go together, but they are not identical with one another.
>
> (2009, p. 160)

Similarly, to use a prior example, the proprium of 'neighing' is inseparably connected to the nature of a horse, and yet there is a real distinction between a horse and its capacity to neigh. In the case of God's essence, then, the posit of 'metaphysically distinct' divine propria would amount to the claim that whilst, for instance, God and His light exist in an inseparable union, there is a distinction in reality – and not just in our concepts – between God and His light.

Now, with regards to this metaphysical notion of propria, I propose that it is strictly incompatible with Divine simplicity. This can be seen through the following reasoning. Consider the propria of God (F, G, H). Now, if it is affirmed that the properties (F, G, H) are truly intrinsic to God whilst being distinct from the Divine essence, it would follow that there are two kinds of existence in God: there is the simple Divine essence and the plural propria properties. Firstly, this results in the posit of a form of intrinsic complexity within God: there is the composition of essence and propria. Secondly, we are supposed to understand the divine propria of light, life, and goodness as having an analogous relationship to God as the sample propria we considered in the case of Porphyry's account. Here, when we consider the proprium property of neighing that belongs to the essence *horse* and the proprium property of laughing from the essence *man*, we see that both of these examples of propria are dependent properties that arise from the essence (in the terms of Thomistic-Aristotelian metaphysics, they would appear to be *per se* accidents)[41]. Thus, in the case of God's propria, the posit that 'light', 'life' and 'goodness' are inherent properties of God's essence which supervene upon it actually leads us into the mistake of imagining that there is a form of *dependence* in God's essence. As the property of neighing is dependent upon the essence horse, God's property of light would supervene upon the Divine essence. Thus, with regards to

[41] Radde-Gallwitz warily acknowledges the thought that Cappadocian ontology could be read as affirming that propria are *per se* accidents (2009, p. 165).

the example of God and His light, we see that: not only would there be a *composition* of essence and property here, but there would also be a dependence relation of supervenience between the arising property and its 'host' essence. For the proponent of the DDS, both of these entailments of the metaphysical conception of God's propria are untenable. For this reason, it is inappropriate for one to defend the DDS by using an ontological reading of the Cappadocian posit of propria; if a proponent of Cappadocian Simplicity is to make use of the notion of propria, it cannot be in the form of interpreting this posit as an attempt to characterise the intrinsic character of the simple Divine essence.

In light of this analysis, I propose that the Cappadocian theology of Divine Simplicity could only plausibly maintain a version of the 'logical' conception of divine propria. That is to say, the divine propria are *logically unique* to God: there are certain attributes which are such that it can only be affirmed that they belong to the divinity of God. As we will now see, there is a *predication based* version of this reading of the notion of propria that makes far more sense of the original Cappadocian context for the idea: the demand on the Cappadocians to give a Trinitarian account of God's simple nature. The logical conception of divine propria is not only a more tenable philosophical thesis: a careful study of key writings reveals that a form of this conception of propria was the original intention of the Cappadocians themselves.

The metaphysics of Cappadocian Simplicity (iii) Propria as divine predicates, and the 'formula of being' of the Trinity

Now I will argue that the Cappadocian conception of propria is actually to be understood through the idea that there is a set of predicates which collectively constitute the 'formula of being' (λόγος τοῦ εἶναι) for divinity. To articulate the reality that the Divine Persons are of one nature, the Cappadocians affirm that this set of predicates applies to each of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit in the same sense. Thus, a conception of propria as unique predicates or concepts that apply to God's divinity has a purpose in the Cappadocian articulation of the doctrine of the Trinity. We see elements of this aspect of Cappadocian thought emerge through Zachhuber's analysis of Basil

(2020), Ayres' discussion of 'appropriation' in Gregory of Nyssa (2004), and the conceptualism of Cross (2012) and Radde-Gallwitz (2019). I will first study the role of propria as unique predicates for God through an engagement with Zachhuber's analysis of Basil; here, the interpretation of propria as predicates makes sense of Basil's ascription of attributes such as 'light', 'life', and 'goodness' to God's essence in *Against Eunomius*.

Zachhuber argues that Basil articulates the understanding that the Father and the Son are of the same substance (homoousios) by affirming that they share the same *predicates*. Zachhuber discusses this point in relation to Basil's description of the shared nature of the Father and the Son in *CE* 1.19. Here, Basil reasons thus:

> But if someone takes the commonality of the substance to mean that one and the same formula of being (τὸν τοῦ εἶναι λόγον) is observed in both, such that if, hypothetically speaking (ὑπόθεσιν), the Father is conceived of as light in his substrate, then the substance of the Only-Begotten is also confessed (ὁμολογεῖσθαι) as light, and whatever one may assign to the Father as the formula of his being, the very same also applies to the Son. If someone takes the commonality of the substance in this way, we accept it and claim it as our doctrine. For this is how divinity is one. Clearly, their unity is conceived to be a matter of the formula of the substance. Hence while there is difference in number and in the distinctive features (ἰδιότησι) that characterize each, their unity is observed in the formula of the divinity (λόγῳ τῆς θεότητος).
>
> (*CE,* 1.19 | 2011, p. 120)

In his account of this passage, Zachhuber notes that 'Basil emphatically affirms that the foundation of trinitarian language is predication' (2020, p. 36). Indeed, when we look at Basil's use of the term 'light' in the passage, it is apparent that Basil is subtly invoking human predication in what initially looked like an ontological characterisation of God's substance. In the passage, Basil does not say that the Father's substance *possesses* a metaphysical property of light; rather, he says that if the Father's substance is 'conceived of as light', then we would apply the same conception to the substance of the Son. We can note here that Basil explains the 'commonality of the substance' of the Father and the Son in terms of their having 'the same formula of being' (*CE,* 1.19 | 2011, p. 120). Basil's point is that we can identify that the Father and the Son have the same Divine essence by noting that the same set of predicates – the same 'formula of being' – applies

to the Father and the Son, and in the same sense; here, as Zachhuber notes, Basil's deployment of the notion of a 'formula of being' is an inheritance from Aristotle's *Categories* (1a 1–12) (2020, p. 36).

Given this trinitarian theological context, I propose that we affirm the logical conception of divine propria in our reading of the Cappadocians. Initially, I articulated this notion by affirming that there is a set of properties which are such that: if a being has them, then that being must be God. In light of our appreciation that Basil is actually concerned to identify the unique *predicates* that apply to God, it is more fitting to affirm the logical conception of Divine propria thus:

> ***Divine predicates conception of propria***
>
> Where 'Fx' means 'predicate F is true of x', the *predicates* (F, G, H) are coextensive and concurrent with God's essence in that $\Box \exists x (Fx \,\&\, Gx \,\&\, Hx) \,\&\, \forall x [(Fx \vee Gx \vee Hx) \rightarrow (x = God)]$.

In less formal terms, the 'divine predicates conception of propria' affirms that there is a set of predicates such that: *necessarily*, the predicates are satisfied by a particular being, and that being is God. This understanding of the Cappadocian posit of propria then makes perfect sense of Basil's use of the notion of shared predicates to affirm that the Father and the Son have the same essence. To say that the Father and the Son are *homoousios* is to say that: there is a set of predicates (e.g 'light', 'life', 'good') such that *only* God satisfies these predicates, and *both* the Father and the Son satisfy these predicates. Thus, the Father and the Son share the same formula of being and therefore they have a common essence.

Now, we can note that this reading of the role of divine predicates closely tracks the 'conceptualist' reading of the Cappadocians advocated by the later Radde-Gallwitz. The understanding of God's distinguishing attributes as *concepts* rather than as *intrinsic features* is a view that Radde-Gallwitz (2019) accepted upon encountering Cross' (2012) critique of his

original reading of Gregory of Nyssa. Radde-Gallwitz articulated his new conceptualist thesis in his analysis of Gregory of Nyssa's '*Against the Macedonians on the Holy Spirit'*. One key passage in Gregory's letter is the following:

> the Holy Spirit is single and simple in every respect equally. This is allowed by all; the man who denies it does not exist. If, then, there is but one simple and single definition of His being, the good which He possesses is not an acquired good; but, whatever He may be besides, He is Himself Goodness, and Wisdom, and Power, and Sanctification, and Righteousness, and Everlastingness, and Imperishability, and every name that is lofty, and elevating above other names.
>
> (*On the Holy Spirit*)[42]

We can note that the list of divinity-indicating characteristics that Gregory of Nyssa ascribes to the Holy Spirit here are referred to as 'names', whilst this list is given to elaborate upon Gregory's affirmation that the Holy Spirit has 'one simple and single definition of His being'. It appears that Gregory is concerned with the *formula of being* for the Holy Spirit, and his ascription of the 'lofty' names to the Spirit is intended to indicate that the formula of predicates that applies to the Spirit is that of the Divine nature. Radde-Gallwitz connects the themes in this passage with Gregory's subsequent affirmation that:

> For this reason, it is altogether necessary to grasp these two, each along with the other: the divine nature together with the fitting belief about it and the pious notions in connection with the divine and transcendent nature.
>
> (Gregory of Nyssa *On the Holy Spirit* in Radde-Gallwitz, 2019, p. 461)

Commenting upon this statement, Radde-Gallwitz remarks that '[t]he necessity Gregory refers to here is akin to the necessity linking a subject with its definitional parts' (2019, p. 461). It is apparent that we have here in Gregory the understanding that: one can affirm that the Holy Spirit is God just by specifying the set of predicates, or 'definitional parts', which the Holy Spirit

[42] Translation used is that of Moore and Wilson (1893).

satisfies, and then acknowledging that this set is precisely the formula of being for the divine nature.

We find a similar appeal to the formula of being for divinity when Gregory Nazianzen is discussing the divinity of the Son in *Oration* 29.13. Here, Gregory Nazianzen reasons as follows:

> Our position, however, is, that as in the case of a horse, or an ox, or a man, the same definition (λόγος) applies to all the individuals of the same species, and whatever shares the definition has also a right to the Name; so in the very same way there is One Essence of God, and One Nature, and One Name (Θεοῦ μίαν οὐσίαν εἶναι, καὶ φύσιν, καὶ κλῆσιν); although in accordance with a distinction in our thoughts (ἐπινοίαις) we use distinct Names and that whatever is properly called by this Name really is God; and what He is in Nature, That He is truly called — if at least we are to hold that Truth is a matter not of names but of realities.
>
> (*Or*. 29. 13) [43]

Here, Gregory Nazianzen first makes the point that: in the case of the kinds *horse*, *ox*, and *man*, anything which satisfies the definition (λόγος) of the kind has the name of the kind applied to it. Gregory then uses the same principle in the case of God: if a being shares the definition of God, then the name of God applies to that being. Gregory then clearly affirms that if a being has the name of God, it shares in the essence of God: 'there is One Essence of God, and One Nature, and One Name'. Gregory offers a detail which harmonises with Basil's account of conceptualisation: we use different names for God to signify our different thoughts (ἐπινοίαις) about Him. Thus, in the formula of being for divinity, the plurality of terms that we have for a single referent, God, corresponds to the plurality of our conceptualisations for God. As we discussed in our analysis of Basil's account of conceptualisation (ἐπίνοια) in (§2), our plurality of terms for God have the same referent, God, but a different conceptual presentation corresponding to the different concepts for God that they contain.

[43] The Greek text cited is the *Sources Chrétiennes* edition (2022). The English translation is that of Browne and Swallow (1894).

At this stage, we have seen that the Cappadocian posit of God's propria is actually best understood as the affirmation that there is a set of conceptual items, human predicates, that apply exclusively to God. This finding harmonises with the Cappadocian copernican turn that I articulated earlier in this chapter. As we have seen, even when defending the foundational posit of Trinitarian orthodoxy that the Father and the Son are distinct Persons who have the same Divine essence, Basil's method of proceeding in his reasoning was an account of how our predicates apply to the Father and the Son. With the Cappadocian employment of the notion of the *formula of being* for God, we do not need to affirm that: with regards to God as He is in Himself, there is a distinctive intrinsic property of 'light' which inheres in the simple Divine essence and it is the case that the persons of the Trinity share this property. Rather, the Cappadocian method is to affirm that: whatever the hidden Divinity of God is in itself, we can understand the community of essence between the Divine Persons by applying the same 'divinity-identifying' predicates to each of them in exactly the same way. The latter approach sits far better with the Cappadocian apophatic thesis that God's essence is unknown. Whilst God's divinity as it is in itself is a hidden mystery, we can articulate Trinitarian orthodoxy by affirming that the same predicates apply to each of the Persons of the Trinity in the same sense.

Now, we can strengthen the position that the posit of a particular set of predicates – the divine propria – which exclusively apply to God does not require a positive ontology of the intrinsic nature of God's essence. Here, we need only consider one of the conceptualisations of God which is a negative divine attribute. To this end, let us consider *Letter* 38 in Basil's canon (the letter is of contested Cappadocian authorship, given the possibility that it was written by Gregory of Nyssa)[44]. At one juncture, the Cappadocian author of this letter mentions two privative characteristics of the Divine essence which are shared in common between the Divine Persons:

[44] Whilst *Letter* 38 is contained in the canon of Basil's writing, Zachhuber notes that it cannot be straightforwardly attributed to him; whilst some scholars still believe that the letter is Basil's work, a strong case can be made that it was written by Gregory to elaborate upon Basil's trinitarian thought around the time of Basil's death (Zachhuber, 2020, p. 47-48).

> [t]he account of the uncreate and of the incomprehensible is one and the same in the case of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. For one is not more incomprehensible and uncreate than another.
>
> (*Letter* 38.3)[45]

Now, suppose we follow the author of *Letter* 38 in affirming that the Divine Persons each satisfy the predicate 'uncreate' whilst this predicate only applies to God. This is equivalent to the affirmation that the predicate 'uncreate' is part of the set of predicates or 'formula of being' which identifies the Divine essence. When we affirm that the predicate 'uncreate' applies to the Divine Persons in a univocal sense, this constitutes part of the affirmation that they are of one essence. But, of course, the predicate 'uncreate' specifies God's *non-possession* of the characteristic of being created. Thus, our account of a unique predicate that identifies God's essence does not automatically entail a positive conception of the Divine essence, and so the Cappadocian apophaticism about God's οὐσία can be maintained.

At this stage, we can summarise the contribution of the *Divine predicates conception of propria* to a Trinitarian account of God's simple nature as follows. Suppose one follows in the footsteps of Basil and one affirms that if the Father is unbegotten light, then the Son is begotten light; now, suppose one maintains that the term 'light' has a univocal sense in both cases. Since one has posited a common predicate 'light', and affirmed that it can refer to the Father and the Son in a univocal sense, one has – by this very act – affirmed that the existence of the Father and the existence of the Son are on an ontological par. Once it is affirmed that the Father, as unbegotten light, is God, it follows from the application of the term 'light' in a univocal sense to the Son that the Son also is God[46]. Now, this conceptual framework can be maintained without the need of the idea that 'light' is some kind of distinctive intrinsic property of the simple divine essence as the

[45] Translation of *Letter* 38 used here is that of Jackson (1895).

[46] This is a close parallel to Ayres' consideration of Gregory of Nyssa's use of 'appropriation': the method of understanding a divine attribute as a single reality pertaining to each of the Divine Persons (2004, p. 297 - 299).

early Radde-Gallwitz proposed (2009, p. 156 - 8). Rather, it can be maintained that 'light' is a human concept and predicate that is reserved for referring to God, and that this conceptualisation of God is mentioned equally in connection to the Father and the Son.

Chapter Conclusion

In this chapter, we have seen that the Cappadocians, led by Basil of Caesarea, affirmed the unknowability of God's simple essence (οὐσία). Whilst we have divine attribute terms which have God's divinity as their referent, the content of these names is constituted by the conceptual presentation (ἐπίνοια) of God that they offer. The positive 'cataphatic' knowledge of God afforded by divine names is that they conceptually present to us God's activities (ἐνέργειαι); the names offer no presentation of their referent, the divine οὐσία. Some names for God, including Eunomius' choice term 'ἀγέννητος', are privative: they offer us real knowledge of God in the form of denying that He possesses properties that are 'incongruous' with His nature (Basil of Caesarea, *CE* 1.10 | 2011, p.105).

When we explored the metaphysical underpinnings of Cappadocian Simplicity, we saw that the distinction between God's substance (οὐσία) and God's activities (ἐνέργειαι) has a central role in Cappadocian ontology. Whilst God's οὐσία is simple, God's ἐνέργειαι – that is, God's various works within the finite bounds of Creation and human awareness – are manifold. Furthermore, with regards to the unique identifying characteristics of God's divinity – the divine 'propria' – we saw that these characteristics are best understood as predicates for God with a special role in our epistemic life rather than as constituents of the nature of God. We then saw that the Cappadocian account of the conceptual 'propria' of God's nature yields a method for articulating the thesis that the three Divine Persons are of one nature. Now, in Chapter 4, I will draw upon the resources of Cappadocian Simplicity to respond to the objections to the DDS concerning the divine attributes and modal collapse that we canvassed in Chapter 2. Then, in Chapter 5 I will use the Cappadocian discussion of God's simplicity and Triunity to elucidate how a proponent of the DDS can affirm the doctrine of the Trinity.

Chapter 4: Cappadocian Simplicity and the resolutions to objections to the Doctrine of Simplicity regarding the Divine Attributes and Modality

In this chapter, I explain how Cappadocian Simplicity can resolve the analytic objections to the DDS that concern the divine attributes and modality. In (1a), I show that Cappadocian Simplicity resolves Plantinga's original objections to the DDS which he gave in response to Aquinas' account of the divine attributes. Then, in (1b), I proceed to analyse one of the strongest contemporary defences of an account of the divine attributes in accordance with the DDS: Brower's truthmaker theory of divine simplicity. In my analysis, I show that, despite having many merits, Brower's theory has the difficulty of lacking an explanation of how our propositions formed with the divine attribute concepts can have content, given that they have God's epistemically inaccessible essence as their truthmaker. This leads into (§2), where I argue that a proponent of Cappadocian Simplicity can remedy this difficulty with Brower's truthmaker theory.

In (2a – b), I show that the Cappadocians give us the framework for affirming that, through our concepts derived from God's activities, we have meaningful propositions which have God's unknown essence as their truthmaker. To display this, I show that the Cappadocian account of our concepts for God based on divine action is a close parallel to the account given in functionalist philosophy of mind of the concepts for mental states that we can form through the observation of the behaviour of creatures. When forming my functionalist construal of the Cappadocian account of the conceptual knowledge of God which we obtain through His activities, I draw deeply upon Alston's functionalist account of theological predication. In (2c), I close the section on God's attributes by addressing the worry that the account of God's action and our divine attribute concepts offered by Cappadocian Simplicity is not as much of a break from Thomist Simplicity as I have treated it as being. Here, I show that: whilst there are limited parallels between the Cappadocian and Thomistic accounts of our capacity to derive concepts for God from His created effects, the underlying posits about the reference of our theological concepts are very different on

the two views, and therefore the distinctive role that I have assigned to Cappadocian Simplicity when solving objections to the DDS should be maintained.

In (§3), I draw upon my Cappadocian-functionalist account of our concepts for God to respond to the 'modal collapse' objections which purport to show that we cannot uphold the existence of any contingency in God's will or knowledge on the DDS. I develop my Cappadocian model for solving the modal collapse objection regarding God's will in dialogue with Brower's solution based on his 'agent-causal' model of divine volition, and I argue that Brower's model has the difficulty that it appears to posit that God's contingent volitions are composite mental states. I present my Cappadocian-functionalist solution as a refinement and development of Brower's model, which renders our talk of God willing things contingently entirely compatible with God's simplicity. I then offer a parallel Cappadocian-functionalist model for understanding God's 'knowledge' in accordance with the DDS to address the objection that a simple God could not know contingent truths. Finally, I close the chapter by showing that the Cappadocian principle that our concepts cannot represent God's nature as it is in itself allows us to avoid the Thomist thesis that the concept 'pure act' applies to God's nature. This, in turn, allows us to escape Mullins' modal collapse objection, since he argued that it is the thesis that God is pure act which is incompatible with the existence of contingency in God's action.

(§1) Cappadocian Simplicity and contemporary difficulties with the divine attributes

Let us begin by analysing how the Cappadocian distinction between God's simple essence and the plurality of His 'activities', understood as His diverse effects within the created order, helps us with the problems regarding God's relationship with His attributes discussed in Chapter 2.

(1a) Cappadocian Simplicity and Plantinga's objections to the DDS based upon the divine attributes

As we saw in our study of Plantinga's response to the DDS, Thomist Simplicity has the difficulty of explaining how the divine attributes, understood as *properties*, are identical in God (Plantinga, 1980, p. 47). The first problem that Plantinga raised with the Thomist identity thesis was that it requires us to conceive of all of God's attributes as identical to one another, and this undermines our wider theoretical commitments about the exemplification of properties, according to which the conditions for exemplifying one property that God possesses – say, power – are entirely distinct from the conditions for exemplifying another of his properties, such as mercy. Now, the Cappadocian theory avoids this problem because it posits that the divine attributes are not properties at all: the divine attributes are our *conceptual predicates* for God, and our intellect forms attribute concepts in response to our diverse encounters with the effects of God's action in Creation. Thus, the Cappadocians can agree with Plantinga that the strong distinction between such divine attributes as 'mercy' and 'power' can be maintained, in accordance with the distinct epistemic ground for these attribute concepts that we have in our plurality of conceptualisations of divine activities.

Now, Plantinga holds that the distinction between God's attributes is grounded in the distinction between abstract properties that God exemplifies; the Cappadocian account will reject this explanation of the distinction between God's attributes, as the Cappadocians hold that God's attributes are only *predicates denoting distinct concepts*, and these each have a distinct epistemic ground in the distinct effects of God's action in Creation- God is not exemplifying universals of any kind. Given this, the Cappadocians can avoid the challenges of Plantinga's platonist commitment that the divine attribute concepts pick out distinct abstract properties which have a necessary existence which equals that of God. On the Cappadocian view, the distinct grounds of the various divine attribute concepts are the created effects of God's action- of course, these are not ontologically prior to, or co-necessary with, God's essence. It is clear, then, that the Cappadocians can affirm that: (1) our plurality of concepts for divine attributes faithfully represent reality (the concepts present to us God's activities, conceptualised on the basis of His manifold created effects); and, (2) the ontological grounds for our divine attribute concepts do not

undermine God's status as the first being, because the concepts derive from the created effects of God's action, and these are *posterior* to God's essence.

Furthermore, the Cappadocian distinction between God's essence and God's attributes, where divine 'attributes' are understood as conceptual predicates derived from God's activities, gives us a strong solution to Plantinga's 'God is not a property' objection. Recall Plantinga's proposal that the Thomist identity thesis equates God's essence with His properties, as well as equating all of God's properties with one another; Plantinga notes that this leads to the conclusion that God is identical to a property (1980, p. 47). Now, for Plantinga, this is unacceptable because, according to his platonist theses, to identify God with a property is to affirm that He is an abstract object, and this would be incompatible with God being a person (1980, p. 47). Cappadocian Simplicity can resolve Plantinga's difficulty. Without even needing to settle the question of whether 'x is a property' really entails that 'x is not a person', the Cappadocians can appease Plantinga's concern because the Cappadocian distinction between the simple Divine essence and the plurality of our activity-derived attribute predications removes the idea that God is identical to properties in the first place. Since Basil explicitly affirms that God's essence and His attributes (i.e conceptual predicates) are *non-identical*, whilst there is no ontology of abstracta invoked in the Cappadocian account, there is no problem that God's personhood will be equated to a divine attribute understood as an abstract property. In light of this analysis, it is clear that the Cappadocian account of God's simplicity resolves each of Plantinga's original objections to the DDS which were entirely based upon a response to Aquinas' account of God's attributes.

(1b) Enriching a current view of God's attributes: the lacunae in Brower's truthmaker model of the DDS and the epistemology of the Cappadocian 'Copernican Turn'

Now, I will explain a conception of the DDS in the modern literature which has affinity with the Cappadocian account of God's simplicity and the posit that the 'divine attributes' just are our conceptual predicates for God: Brower's 'truthmaker' theory of simplicity. Whilst I will argue

that Brower's view shares with the Cappadocian theory the merit of avoiding the perils of the property-identity conception of the DDS, I will show that a challenge arises for a proponent of Brower's truthmaker theory resulting from a lack of a positive epistemology. Brower's account of divine attributes maintains silence regarding the question of how we acquire divine attribute predicates and the question of how they can have any content as predicates. Having proposed a reorientation of our understanding of the divine attributes around human cognition, Brower does not offer an account of this cognition. My discussion of this issue brings to light the way that Cappadocian Simplicity can offer the epistemological supplement needed to make Brower's theory work.

Brower (2009) offers a 'truthmaker' theory of how to understand the divine attributes in accordance with the DDS. Brower's account flows from the following general thesis:

> (TA) If an intrinsic predication of the form 'a is F' is true, then a's F-ness exists, where this entity is to be understood as the truthmaker for 'a is F'.
>
> (2009, p. 113)

Brower proceeds to explain his understanding of the DDS and the divine attributes in accordance with this thesis:

> Interpreted in light of TA, the doctrine of divine simplicity entails that God is identical with the truthmaker of each of the true intrinsic predications that can be made about him [.] Thus, if God is divine, he is identical with that which makes him divine; if he is good, he is identical with that which makes him good; and so on in every such case.
>
> (2009, p. 113)

Brower therefore affirms as a consequence of his theory that 'divine simplicity just amounts to the claim that God is the truthmaker for each of his true intrinsic predications' (2009, p. 113). The upshot of this theory is that the divine attributes are reduced to being predications about God in cognition, whilst God is the only extra-mental posit needed to explain the truth of these

predications. The ontology of God and His attributes is reduced to the posit of the simple Divine essence alongside the possibility of making a plurality of true descriptions of this essence.

Now, the 'truthmaker' understanding of God's attributes has some affinity with Basil's understanding of the divine attributes in his theory of conceptualisation. Basil affirms that we have a plurality of divine attribute concepts which refer to a simple substance; and, these concepts provide the basis for a plurality of true descriptions of God, as displayed by Christ's many acts of self-naming in the Gospels through which we discover the conceptualisations of God (*CE* 1. 7). Truthmaker theory could even be coupled with Basil's view: we could understand our plural predications for God such as 'God is just' to be propositions that are derived from our manifold of concepts formed by conceptualisation. Now, whilst there are these parallels between Brower's truthmaker theory and Basil's 'conceptualisation' theory of the divine attributes, I believe that there is a difficulty with Brower's view which, as I will ultimately show, Cappadocian Simplicity can solve. To expose this problem, let us consider Brower's response to the question: 'can a single thing really be the truthmaker for many conceptually distinct truths?' (2009, p. 116). Brower responds to this as follows:

> This objection would have some force if truthmakers were intended to provide conceptual content or meaning of predications. But they are not. Indeed, it is part-and-parcel of contemporary truthmaker theory to deny that truthmakers stand in one-to-one correspondence with the predications they make true.
>
> (2009, p. 116)

I believe that a challenge follows from this claim in Brower's account. Brower posits that God is the single truthmaker for the divine attribute predications, whilst he denies that truthmakers 'provide conceptual content or meaning of predications' (2009, p. 116). Now, even if we supposed that God's essence is knowable, Brower's view that God's essence does not - *qua* truthmaker - 'provide the conceptual content' for the divine attribute predications leaves us wondering how these predications that apply to God have any content. Brower does not explain this. Suppose, furthermore, that we pay attention to such scriptural truths as 'No one has ever seen God' (Jn

1:18) and the description that God's 'home is in inaccessible light' and God is He 'whom no human being has seen or is able to see' (1 Tm 6: 16). In light of this scriptural evidence, we are justified in affirming that God's essence is unknown, and so we can raise the further worry of theological epistemology that, if the divine attribute predications are supposed to tell us about God's essence, they *could not* have content for us insofar as God's essence is epistemically inaccessible to us. Not only is it the case that Brower denies that God's essence provides the conceptual content for our divine attribute predications (thereby seemingly leaving the divine attribute concepts devoid of content), but – given the unknowability of God's essence – it would seem that the divine attribute concepts are *in principle* without content. A proponent of truthmaker theory might seem, then, to end up in the position that the divine attribute concepts lack content which corresponds to the reality that they purport to describe, whilst that reality itself, God's substance, is beyond our epistemic access. If we are to defend truthmaker theory, we must avoid the theoretical outcome that our divine attribute predications do not, and *could not*, provide us with an understanding of God.

Before proceeding, we should note that Pawl (2017) has defended Brower's truthmaker theory against Saenz' (2014) proposal that truthmaker simplicity must be false because, ontologically speaking, a simple God lacks the required intrinsic structure to 'explain' why the propositions about Him are true (Pawl, 2017, p. 67 – 68). Pawl proposes that Brower is only committed to the metaphysical thesis that God's simple nature 'explains' the truths about Him in the sense that His nature is that 'in virtue of which' the propositions are true, rather than being committed to the *epistemic* thesis that God's nature 'explains' the truths about God by rendering these propositions 'intelligible' (Pawl, 2017, p. 68 – 69). I share Pawl's reading of Brower's truthmaker view, whilst I also affirm that Brower is right to avoid claiming that God's divinity renders propositions about God *intelligible*; indeed, the issue that I actually see with truthmaker simplicity is based on the idea that God's nature is beyond our epistemic ken. The *real* challenge I see for Brower's account does not lie in the matter of what explains why propositions about God are true, but rather with the question of how true propositions which involve the divine attribute concepts can have

content, if they target God's transcendent divinity. My concern is that the divine attribute concepts are going to turn out to be contentless on Brower's conception of God as the truthmaker for propositions using them, especially when we take into account that God's essence is beyond our epistemic access. Where could propositions formed using our divine attribute concepts get their meaning from, if we have never been acquainted with God?

Now, we should ask whether my worry that our propositions about an epistemically inaccessible truthmaker will be devoid of content is a real difficulty, or whether a careful study of the mechanics of philosophical conceptions of truthmakers can alleviate the problem. In what follows, I will consider two philosophical accounts of truthmakers, that of Mulligan, Simons and Smith (1984) and Rodriguez-Pereyra (2005), and I will show that both of them posit that we do indeed require epistemic access to truthmakers in order for our propositions about those truthmakers to have content. Both of these expositions of truthmaker theory are works that Brower includes as references in his writing on truthmaker divine simplicity, and so they are very salient to our inquiry into this apparent difficulty with his model.

(1c) Epistemic access to truthmakers as essential to the meaning of propositions in truthmaker theory

Firstly, we see a clear emphasis on our epistemic access to truthmakers in Mulligan, Simons and Smith (1984). The authors are discussing truthmaker theory in the context of their ontological posit of 'moments' – which, in most cases, can be thought of as Aristotelian accidents – as the truthmakers for many of our ordinary propositions about things in the world (1984, p. 14). In the midst of their analysis, the authors emphasise our epistemic access to truthmakers:

> Since we are realists in respect to moments, and regard their investigation as a substantial, often as an empirical matter, we hold it to be perfectly normal for us to know that a sentence is true, and yet not know completely what makes it true.
>
> (1984, p. 23)

Whilst it may be noted that the authors are clear that we need not have perfect or total access to truthmakers – we may 'not know completely' what makes a given proposition true – it is clear in the above passage that moments qua truthmakers are understood to be subject to an 'investigation', which is often 'empirical' (1984, p. 23). The authors go on to explore the relationship between truthmakers and sentential meaning: 'one can, surely, envisage understanding a sentence (knowing its meaning), whilst at the same time having only partial knowledge of the nature of its possible truth-makers' (1984, p. 23). The authors claim here that it is possible to know the meaning of a sentence whilst having partial knowledge of its candidate truthmakers; it appears, then, that a limited epistemic access to truthmakers is what is required to grasp the content of a sentence. At an initial glance, however, it might be thought that this passage indicates that there is hope for Brower's account: perhaps we can be quite in the dark about a truthmaker – in our primary case, God - and yet still grasp the meaning of sentences about that entity? As the authors expand upon their idea with an example, however, it becomes clear that this is a false hope: even in the case of us lacking full acquaintance with a truthmaker, the meanings of our terms for that truthmaker are nonetheless inextricably tied to the partial epistemic access to it that we *do* have.

Let us consider the authors' example of our grasp of the term 'hepatitis': '[t]hose who used the term 'hepatitis' before the discovery of its varieties did not fail to understand the term; they were simply (partly) ignorant about hepatitis' (1984, p. 23). Here, we have a case where the meanings of sentences using the term 'hepatitis' are understood by the linguistic community, and yet the relevant language users lack full empirical acquaintance with hepatitis as a medical condition. It is clear, however, that the contrast here is between having limited epistemic access to a truthmaker (that sufficient to know about hepatitis as a condition) and having a more detailed knowledge of the nature of the truthmaker (that sufficient to know that there are multiple varieties of hepatitis). Thus, it is clear from the authors' chosen example of our ability to grasp the meaning of propositions without a total knowledge of their truthmakers that our acquaintance with the meaning of such propositions is dependent upon whatever empirical access to those truthmakers

we *do* have. The meanings of our propositions, and the concepts that compose them, do not 'float free' of our epistemic access to the truthmakers that they purport to describe. Thus, it is inadmissible that, in the case of God, the truthmaker for propositions about God, the Divine nature, is *entirely* beyond our knowledge and yet we grasp the meaning of propositions that target this truthmaker. Rather, if we follow the theory of truthmakers advocated by Mulligan, Simons and Smith, the truthmakers that our propositions target must be *at least partially* epistemically accessible to us if we are to grasp the meaning of sentences describing them. Indeed, the authors consolidate the importance of epistemic access to posited truthmakers when they explain why their posit that things (objects) as well as moments (qualities of objects) are truthmakers contributes to their theory being more plausible than rival conceptions of truth:

> if we are convinced for other reasons that things and moments exist, and if – as we shall argue below – we can be said unproblematically to be acquainted with them, for example perceptually, then the resultant theory of truth-makers is both more economical and stronger than rival theories whose truth-makers are less firmly tied into our ontology and epistemology.
>
> (1984, p. 26)

In this passage, it is the fact that 'we can be said unproblematically to be acquainted with' things and moments 'for example perceptually' which makes them plausible candidates as truthmakers. Again, it is clear that epistemic access is at the heart of what these early pioneers of truthmaker theory consider to be an essential feature of appropriate truthmakers for our propositions. Now, it can be noted here that, whilst it is clear from Mulligan, Simons and Smith's account that we require epistemic access to the truthmakers of our propositions in order for us to grasp their meanings, this account does not fully explain *why* this is so. We are left with this question: what exactly is it about having at least partial epistemic access to an object which allows our predications about that object to have content? Now, we get a clearer insight into this matter in a later development of a truthmaker account in Rodriguez-Pereyra (2005). It is to a consideration of this view that I now turn.

Rodriguez-Pereyra clearly proposes that epistemic access is a crucial feature of truthmakers as the posited grounds for the truth of our propositions. What is noteworthy in his articulation of truthmaker theory is that he expands more thoroughly upon the mechanism whereby our epistemic access to an object facilitates our formation of meaningful propositions about it. To explain the way that the features of an object can be the truthmakers for propositions about that object, Rodriguez-Pereyra uses the example of the qualities of a rose:

> One way the rose is, is to be red; another way the rose is, is to be light, and so on. Once we have distinguished different ways the rose is, we can say that the proposition that the rose is red is true in virtue of the rose's being a certain way, namely being red, while the proposition that the rose is light is true in virtue of the rose's being a different way, namely being light. If so, what makes true a certain predication of the rose is a certain way the rose is.
>
> (2005, p. 23)

A crucial feature of Rodriguez-Pereyra's account here emerges in his description of the order of the process by which we arrive at a true predication about the rose. It is 'once we have distinguished different ways that the rose is' that 'we can say that the proposition that the rose is red is true in virtue of the rose's being a certain way'. Our epistemic access to a property of the rose is what facilitates our capacity to affirm a predication about the rose with that property as its truthmaker. What is beginning to emerge here is a notion of *cognition*: our original mental act is a 'distinguishing' of the features of an object, and it is this very act which forms the basis for us affirming propositions about that object.

Rodriguez-Pereyra's emphasis on epistemic access is expanded when he explains how we are able to grasp the grounds – or 'ways' the rose is – for truths about the rose: '[b]ut to distinguish ways presupposes that we can identify them, count them, and quantify over them […] if one can identify, count, and quantify over ways, then ways exist' (2005, p. 23). Here, our capacity to articulate truths about the rose presupposes that we are acquainted with the conditions which make each proposition about the rose true: we must be able to 'distinguish' the ways that the rose is, which means that we are able to 'identify them, count them, and quantify over them'. Rodriguez-

Pereyra's account here indicates that there is a two-stage process to the cognition involved in forming a proposition: we first have cognitive contact with an object and its qualities, and then we form propositions about the object which express what was discovered in the cognition of it. With this in mind, we can return to our prior question: what exactly is it about having epistemic access to an object which allows our predications about it to have content? Rodriguez-Pereyra's underlying conception of cognition explains this by uncovering that it is our epistemic access to truthmakers which allows our predications to be *about* something in the world. When we form propositions about objects, we are talking about structures that our minds have had cognitive contact with, and we are recording the features of reality disclosed by this cognitive contact. If we lacked epistemic access to the truthmakers for our predications, our propositions could not serve the function of recording the features of an object disclosed by our cognition of it. In the latter scenario, a mind which forms predications about a truthmaker without epistemic access to it would, in effect, be purporting to offer a representation of a reality which it could not actually represent. In such a situation, the mind which formed the proposition could not grasp the content of it, in much the same way that a camera could not produce a photograph of a room if the lens of the camera was covered- such a 'representation' of the room would be utterly devoid of content.

Now, despite what we have uncovered in our study of truthmaker theory, could a proponent of Brower's truthmaker conception of divine simplicity still hold on to the view that we *can* form meaningful propositions about a truthmaker – the Divine nature – even without having epistemic access to it? When considering this possibility, there are two important matters for us to consider. Firstly, Brower is presenting his truthmaker view of divine simplicity as being in continuity with the philosophical literature on truthmaker theory; thus, if he *did* defend a 'no cognitive contact' account of the meaning of propositions, he would be diverging from the truthmaker theories that his account is building upon. Secondly, suppose a proponent of Brower's view is willing to accept this and depart from the consensus of proponents of truthmaker theory. If such a path was taken, we would need an explanation of how a proposition which has God as its truthmaker could have

content, despite our lack of cognitive contact with this truthmaker. I will now consider, and reject, such a candidate explanation.

A proponent of such a 'no cognitive contact' view could offer the following reasoning. I have never been to Samoa, and yet, based on the reports of people who *have* been, I can understand propositions such as 'Samoa has beaches', 'Samoa has a warm climate', and so forth. Now, if it really were the case that epistemic access to a truthmaker is a prerequisite for grasping the content of propositions about it, I simply could not understand the meaning of the proposition 'Samoa has beaches'. Given that I *can* grasp the meaning of this proposition, it would appear that epistemic access to a truthmaker is not a requirement for grasping propositional content after all. So far, so plausible. The argument to this point is misleading, however. Whilst I have not been to Samoa, I *have* been to beaches. When I grasp the meaning of 'Samoa has beaches', I am not representing Samoan beaches in my understanding of this proposition; rather, I am forming the concept of a generic beach based on my prior perception of beaches, and I am letting this provide the content for my grasp of 'Samoa has beaches'. This kind of 'derived' cognition works well when it comes to propositions about physical states of affairs; we can use our prior perception of properties of physical objects as the basis for our grasp of propositions about physical phenomena with which we lack direct acquaintance. Now, there is an overwhelmingly strong reason why something analogous is *not* available in the case of our comprehension of propositions about God's nature. There is *no* second divine nature for us to have cognitive contact with, from which we could derive the materials to grasp the meaning of propositions about the hitherto inaccessible Divinity of God. In the case of God's epistemically inaccessible nature, we lack both direct cognitive contact with it and the possibility of the sort of derived cognition which facilitates our grasping of propositions about unfamiliar physical states of affairs. There is one reality in the category 'Divine nature', and the cognitive contact we have had with entities of this kind is null. In the case of representing God as the truthmaker for our propositions about Him, then, we are in an analogous position to a camera which produces photographs whilst having a covered lens.

Now, we have seen that the truthmaker theorists whose work Brower has drawn upon clearly tie the role of truthmakers as grounds for the truth *and meaning* of propositions with our – at least partial – epistemic access to them, and so it is clear that my worry regarding Brower's view is justified. Whilst God's substance is *beyond* our epistemic access, Brower posits that God is the truthmaker for propositions that use our divine attribute concepts. Now, in our analysis of truthmaker theory, it was clear that our grasp of the *meaning* of propositions describing truthmakers is dependent upon us having at least partial epistemic access to said truthmakers, and this is due to the fact that the representational capacity of propositions cannot function when we lack either a direct or 'derived' cognition of what the proposition is about. Thus, it follows from the epistemic inaccessibility of the Divine nature that we are going to have *no grasp* of the meaning of concepts involved in propositions which purport to have God as their truthmaker. Our worry regarding Brower's account remains in full force.

(1d) Introducing the Cappadocian solution to Brower's problem

At this stage, I will begin to remedy this problem by outlining my proposal for the way that Cappadocian Simplicity can address this difficulty for the truthmaker view. I propose that the Cappadocian theologian can affirm Brower's theory in the face of the above challenge by showing how it is possible for us to have a conceptual grasp of such attributes of God as His mercy and justice in our creaturely lives. As we have seen, Basil proposes that God's attributes are known through immanent divine activities that are personally knowable to us: 'His activities (ἐνέργειαι) descend to us, but His substance (οὐσία) remains inaccessible' (*Letter* 234)[47]. In light of this, a proponent of Cappadocian Simplicity could bolster Brower's theory by affirming that our knowledge and understanding of the divine attribute predications is grounded in God's *relational activities* within Creation. Furthermore, the proponent of Cappadocian Simplicity can agree with Brower that the Divine essence is the *truthmaker* for the divine attribute predications. To maintain that God's divinity itself is the truthmaker for our predications, the Cappadocian theologian can

[47] The Greek text and English translation is again that of Deferrari and McGuire (1926, p. 372 – 373).

affirm that: as the *cause* of the divine activities, God is the truthmaker for the attribute predications, even though the content of the attribute predicates is derived from God's activities.

If Basil of Caesarea is right that the content of our divine attribute concepts is derived from God's activities, it surely follows that this content consists in our understanding and awareness of such activities. Thus, whilst the *referent* of our propositions formed with the divine attribute concepts is God rather than His activities, it is apparent that the *sense* of these propositions is derived from the awareness of God afforded by the divine activities. Given this initial glance towards my Cappadocian solution to the difficulty with Brower's theory – a solution which I will rigorously explain and justify in far greater detail below – it is promising that Basil's fundamental posits may be able to offer the necessary supplement to truthmaker theory by explaining how our predications about God have content whilst having God's unknown nature as their truthmaker.

Before offering a full analytical exposition of my proposed Cappadocian solution to the challenge I identified with truthmaker divine simplicity, it is worth noting that the contemporary analytic literature has already contained gestures towards the view that our predications for God can only have content if we have an experiential awareness of God's activity. At the end of his paper 'Analogy Today', Sherry reasons as follows:

> In the case of creatures we ascribe moral attributes in virtue of actions: our evidence for saying that someone is loving and forgiving by nature is that he does love and forgive. Hence if we are to ascribe such attributes to God we must be able to *identify* examples of divine activity and thereby give concrete content to our predications. There is no point in describing God as merciful, loving and so on unless we can at least envisage what it is for Him to *act* with mercy, love and forgiveness. This point also, I think, applies to many other kinds of attributes, e.g. 'wisdom' or 'power'. We cannot drive a sharp wedge between God's nature and his activity or 'energies' in such cases.
>
> (1976, p. 446)

The parallels between the account that Sherry calls for here, but does not explore further, and the Cappadocian view that I am offering are striking. Indeed, we can note that Sherry connects our knowledge of God's action with the *content* of our divine attribute predications: 'if we are to

ascribe such attributes to God we must be able to *identify* examples of divine activity and thereby give concrete content to our predications' (1976, p. 446). Given Sherry's thesis that our divine attribute predications can only have content if we have a grasp of God's activities, it appears that our proposed Cappadocian solution regarding the content of divine attribute predications is providing a view of theological predication that is being cried out for in the contemporary literature.

Now, whilst the prospects of our Cappadocian supplement to the truthmaker conception of divine attribute predications are promising, at this stage I have not yet done all this is required to show that Cappadocian Simplicity 'completes' the epistemology of the truthmaker account, and this is for one clear reason. The major challenge that I identified with the truthmaker view is this: God as He really is, His divinity itself, is beyond our epistemic access, whilst our propositions formed using divine attribute concepts purport to have God's divinity as their truthmaker. Now, as our study of truthmaker theory showed, the content of these propositions must depend, at least in part, on whatever epistemic access to their truthmaker, God's divinity, we do have. Now, the Cappadocian Fathers have not said *anything* to change our mind about whether God's essence is epistemically accessible for us; indeed, they are the most emphatic proponents of the view that we are ignorant of the Divine nature as it is in itself. Rather, what the Cappadocian theory *has* done is supply us with an account of how our divine attribute predications, nonetheless, have content: our propositions formed using divine attribute concepts have content because we have experiential contact with God's action, and our non-privative divine attribute concepts were just representing God's action in the first place (for example, 'God is merciful' means 'God acts mercifully'). What is yet to be offered, however, is a robust explanation of how our noetic grasp of God's *action* affords us any kind of foundation for affirming anything about God as He is in Himself, the Divine nature. What I will do in the following section is offer a substantial account of how it is the case that our knowledge of God's action really does provide a foundation for us to make true predications about God's hidden essence. I will offer this account by drawing upon

functionalist approaches to our concepts for mental states, which allow us to affirm that we can form concepts for a person's mind whilst only having epistemic access to their action and the causal effects of it.

(§2) Introducing principles from functionalist concepts of mental states to explain the Cappadocian conception of cognitive contact with God

In this section, I will construct a functionalist explanation of how we can possess a limited repertoire of concepts pertaining to God's nature, in accordance with the account of divine action affirmed by the Cappadocian Fathers. I will develop this functionalist construal of our divine attribute concepts in tandem with a study of Alston's functionalist treatment of theological predication (1989, 1993, and 2007). I will begin with a discussion of Alston's groundwork regarding a functionalist account of divine attribute concepts, before proceeding to my Cappadocian construal of functionalist concepts for God.

(2a) Alston on divine action and functionalism

Before looking at the details of Alston's thought, we should note that he, like Sherry, affords a central role to divine action in his understanding of the divine attribute concepts. We see the general contours of Alston's approach when he outlines his perspective on the possibility of literal 'positive attributions' about God:

> Consider "God *comforts* us and *strengthens* us in adversity, *forgives* the sins of the truly repentant, *communicates* to us how we should live." […] The main case for taking them to be literal is that, for the most part, the attributions have to do with results of divine action in the world, rather than seeking to give details about the divine agency itself. Thus, "God comforted me in my distress" reports an effect on my state of mind of something God did without seeking to go into more detail as to just what it was that God did to bring this about.
>
> (2007, p. 239)

Alston notes that the positive attributions about God are usually concerned with 'the results of divine action in the world', using the example that describing God as giving comfort 'reports an effect on my state of mind of something God did' (2007, p. 239). Here, it is apparent that Alston

sees the content of this positive attribution about God as being concerned with the *created effects* of God's action, rather than with some kind of direct insight into the inner life of God: one can know that God has comforted oneself, without knowing 'just what it was that God did to bring this about'. Now, let us consider how such an encounter with God's action can facilitate the formation of functional mental concepts for God. To begin this task, I will need to explain both what a functionalist account of mental states *is* and analyse Alston's groundwork regarding the details of how a functionalist approach to theological predication can work.

Whilst figures including Lewis (2011) and Block (2013) offer analyses of all of the implications of functionalist philosophy of mind for our understanding mental states such as beliefs and desires, the general features of a functionalist approach to the mind are summarised helpfully as follows by Levin:

> Functionalism is the doctrine that what makes something a thought, desire, pain (or any other type of mental state) depends not on its internal constitution, but solely on its function, or the role it plays, in the cognitive system of which it is a part. More precisely, functionalist theories take the identity of a mental state to be determined by its causal relations to sensory stimulations, other mental states, and behaviour.
>
> (Levin, 2023, §1)

Thus, a mental term such as 'pain' is understood as referring to a state that *plays a distinctive role* within the causal nexus of the cognitive life of an organism and its relationship with its environment (Levin, 2023, §1). For a functionalist, the mental term does not refer to a particular intrinsic qualitative property; rather, it refers to a formally defined internal state 'x' – with which we may lack direct acquaintance - that is intrinsic to an organism and ultimately yields its response to its environment. The point can be put thus: I do not know what it is like, in terms of subjective experience, to be a cat in pain; I do know, however, that there is some state in a cat which, when combined with the rest of the cat's inner states, ultimately leads to it producing distressed behaviour when its body is wounded. My use of the word 'pain' when applied to a cat seems to be referring to that part of the cat's inner functioning – whatever it may be – that is connecting its

input of bodily damage and the rest of its inner life with the behavioural output of meowing, limping, and so forth.

Now, Alston notes an important distinction between two ways of construing a functionalist approach to mental states. Functionalism can either be taken as 'a theory of the meaning of psychological terms' –where 'meaning' is wedded to our concepts for mental states – or as a *metaphysical* account of the 'nature of psychological states and processes' themselves; Alston specifies that he is concerned with the former, conceptual and semantic, approach when offering a functionalist account of our concepts for God (1989, p. 67). Alston explains his functionalist thesis about psychological concepts as follows: 'the concept of a belief, desire, or intention is the concept of a particular function in the psychological economy, a particular "job" done by the psyche' (1989, p. 67). I share this starting point with Alston: given that the Cappadocian account concerns the way in which we are able to form action-based *concepts* that can be meaningfully applied to God, there is no need for us to tie our analysis to a particular ontology of mind and maintain a controversial thesis about what mental states are in themselves, be they divine or human.

Given that functional concepts are concerned with the causal relations, rather than any intrinsic characteristics, of mental states, Alston notes that functional mental state terms and concepts can be applied to entities with very different natures:

> psychological concepts are functional in the same way as many concepts of artefacts, e.g., the concept of a loudspeaker. A loudspeaker is something the function of which is to convert electronic signals to sound. Its composition, its internal mechanism, and its external appearance can vary widely so long as it has that function.
>
> (1989, p. 68)

The thought here is the following: if I am forming a concept for a particular causal role 'R' that could be played by entities *x, y,* and *z,* the question of what the various non-relational properties of *x, y,* and *z* are is irrelevant, in so far as I am forming a concept for them as entities that instantiate

role R, that 'play the R role' in a causal nexus. This is true whether I am forming a concept for a mental state which plays the role of pain in a creature's mental life, or I am forming the concept of a device which plays the role of a loudspeaker at a concert. Alston applies this understanding of functional concepts to mental states related to knowledge and desire, proposing that we could form concepts for knowledge and desire that could apply to human beings and *to God*: '[t]he same functional concept of knowledge that *p*, or of purpose to bring about R, could be applicable to God and to man, even though the realization of that function is radically different' (1989, p. 71). Alston's thought here is as follows: if we construe our *concepts* of the psychological states of 'knowing' that something is the case or 'purposing' (i.e 'intending') for something to be as concepts that pick out that aspect of a being's inner functioning – whatever it is in itself – that yields its disposition to *cause* certain events, then we can apply these concepts to God and to human beings. For example, if all I mean when I say 'X intends that Y' is that person X has some aspect of their inner functioning that gives rise to the disposition to cause Y, given the obtaining of relevant conditions, it would appear to be the case that I could apply this concept of an intention to God and to humans. For example, there is something about God which makes it the case that He has the disposition to forgive people when certain conditions obtain, whilst human beings also have an inner life which yields the disposition to forgive under certain conditions. If we construe our concept of the 'intention to forgive' as referring to that intrinsic aspect of a being – whatever it is like in itself – that causes its disposition to forgive people under certain circumstances, it does appear to be possible that we could apply this concept both to God and to humanity.

Now, it is important to note that there are differences between God's mode of existence and our own, and because of this Alston introduces conditions that would have to be satisfied before a functional concept could be applied both to God and to human beings. Alston proposes that we could remove the references to a physical medium of action so that our functional psychological concepts could apply both to us, with our physical properties, and to God who is non-physical. He explores this with an example by comparing the way that the language of 'willing to part the waters' could be applied both to humans and to God:

> My parting the waters is not just a matter of my moving my arms and hands in a certain way. There is also my willing to do so for the sake of the waters being parted, as well as the actual resultant parting. […] God's lack of a body does not prevent his willing a certain external result to bring about that result and thereby doing so, just by willing it.
>
> (2007, p. 234 - 235)

Given that human beings and God diverge in terms of their natures, we will have to strip our human functional psychological concepts of any content which relates to bodily conditions such as being spatial before they could be applied to God. In Alston's example, we can form a functional psychological concept 'willing to part the waters' that refers both to human beings and to God, but we have to construe the action involved in this concept in a way that avoids explicitly bodily conditions of acting. Indeed, it is apparent to me that: whilst human action essentially pertains to causing effects within space and time, this is no bar to us applying action-based functional concepts derived from human action to God because God *also* causes effects within space and time. Indeed, *all* of the divine action that we are acquainted with has causal consequences within space and time- after all, that is how we are aware of it.

A further distinctive aspect of Alston's account is his proposal that we can apply functional concepts *univocally* to God and human beings: 'functionalism can help us to reconcile a degree of univocity with the radical otherness of the divine. […] a functional concept of X is noncommittal as to the intrinsic nature, character, composition or structure of X' (1989, p. 70 - 71). Alston is suggesting that, on the assumption that the content of one of our concepts for God is concerned with His causal output, there is no obvious reason why such a concept would have to be radically different to the concept we would apply to a human being whose mental life has the same causal effects. To give my own example, suppose that when I call a doctor a 'healer', I just mean that the doctor can repair the body; in this scenario, there seems to be no obstacle to me addressing God with the same term 'healer' in a context where all I mean is that He can repair a body, perhaps with a miraculous action. Whether we consider the creaturely action of a doctor or the action of God, the term 'healer' is adequate to apply to both beings, given that the term is

being considered only insofar as it conveys the information that the being in question can heal a human body. Thus, the univocity in our functional psychological concepts for God and human beings is based in the fact that one and the same concept for having the disposition to cause events within space and time can apply to God and to human beings, because both God and human beings have the disposition to cause events within space and time. Now, Alston later called this form of univocity 'partial' (2007, p. 235). Why is it only *partial*? The answer is that there is no metaphysical feature of the *sources* of action that are producing these effects that is common between God and human beings. For example, human beings are extended within space, whilst God is not; indeed, on the DDS, we would also affirm that humans are composite whereas God is mereologically simple.

At this stage, we have explored the resources from Alston that will help me to express my understanding of a functionalist reception of the Cappadocian account of our concepts for God that are based upon divine action. In turn, this will allow us to explain how our concepts for God derived from His action can permit us to make true and meaningful predications which have God's unknown essence as their truthmaker, and this will address the lacunae in Brower's truthmaker account of divine simplicity. It is to my functionalist construal of the Cappadocian view of divine attribute concepts that I now turn.

(2b) A Cappadocian functionalist view of divine attribute concepts to bolster truthmaker theory

As we have seen, according to the Cappadocians, our divine attribute concepts like 'benevolence' and 'providence' can be used to describe God because they describe the created effects of God's action towards us. Now, I propose that the hidden essence of God – God as He is in Himself – can be conceived of in analogous terms to the hidden mental state 'x' in an organism that is playing a particular causal role, whilst God's activities are analogous to the observable causal outputs of an organism. We can say truthfully, for example, that 'the dog is excitable' just because there is some internal state in the dog that yields the disposition to enact excitement behaviour;

similarly, we can say that God is 'merciful' just because God, in His hidden nature, is disposed to cause events of healing the sick.

Furthermore, it can be noted that: in accordance with functionalism, my ability to form concepts for a being's mental states presupposes some form of access to their observable behaviour. For example, I could only form a functional concept for the state of 'contentment' if I could characterise that state as tending to cause particular observable behaviours, such as facial expressions and spoken words of gratitude. Thus, it needs to be the case that we have some form of *access* to God's action before we would be able to form concepts for God's 'mind', functionally construed[48]. We have seen that the Cappadocians have the resources for affirming that we encounter God's action through His created effects in the broad framework of the universe, whilst a more personal encounter with God's action was captured in Gregory Nazianzen's articulation of the encounter with God which occurs in prayer (*Or.* 28). We saw Gregory affirm that our encounter with God consists in what 'He leaves behind Him', which includes the direct interaction He has *within* us in our interior awareness in spiritual experiences (*Or.* 28). When we studied Gregory's account of interior experience, we considered the notion that God's activities just *are* the plurality of ways that God is experienced by us. If the plurality of God's activities is a diversity located in the realm of phenomenology, we need not be committed to the existence of a real plurality of actions that proceed from God. This thought could also apply to our account of the effects of God's action in the broader cosmos: when I call God 'providential' because he provides sustenance to all living beings and 'merciful' because He cares for the sick, I do not need to hold that God has a distinct 'act' of providing and another 'act' of being merciful. A single divine

[48] There is a potential difference between the way that a 'functionalist' approach would apply to the case of divine attribute concepts and to ordinary mental state concepts. Our functional concept of a mental state in an organism is that of a state which occurs in response to a received input and then, in combination with other internal states, causes a cognitive output. In contrast, according to the understanding of many traditional theists, God is not acted upon by Creation, but only acts upon it. Thus, a functional concept applied to God, such as 'benevolence', will only be understood as characterising God's causal activity, not as referring to God receiving any causal influence. Alston also posits that, whilst creatures have mental states that involve a causal receptivity to their environment, God's timelessness and other characteristics prohibit this in His case (1989, p. 68).

creative act can produce multiple effects, which we conceptualise using different terms depending on our vantage point: I conceptualise the discovery of a new substance which helps to cure my loved one's illness as an act of God's mercy, whilst the scientist who found it conceptualises the discovery as 'providential' because it allowed them to fulfil their hopes for their medical vocation. This conceptualist framing of divine action is particularly helpful if we feel that an explanatory burden would fall to us if we affirmed that the simple God produces a real plurality of distinct acts.

Now, we can use our functionalist reception of the Cappadocian account of our divine attribute concepts to explain how our concepts for God derived from His action can permit us to make true and meaningful predications which have God's *nature* as their referent and truthmaker. Firstly, in the case of human beings, we can devise a functional concept that refers to a person's mind, even though all we have access to are the causal outputs of that mind. Here, the example of 'intending' states that we discussed in relation to Alston's thought was particularly clear. If all I mean when I say 'X intends that Y' is that person X has some aspect of their inner functioning that gives rise to the disposition to cause Y, given the obtaining of relevant conditions, I can apply this concept of an intention to God, even though I do not know what God is like in Himself. I know that there is something about God which makes it the case that God has the disposition to forgive people when certain conditions obtain, even though God's divinity as it is in itself is hidden from me. Now, when the functional psychological concept of 'intending' to forgive refers to that aspect of a being – whatever it is like in itself – that causes its disposition to act to forgive under certain circumstances, I can clearly apply this concept to the Divine nature, since God's nature is the *cause* of divine action. Thus, without knowing what God, in His simple divinity, is like in Himself, my functional psychological concepts truly apply to God's divinity, and provide me with conceptual understanding relating to it, by allowing me to understand God's 'causal attributes', to coin a phrase.

My central point here is that, in accordance with the Cappadocian view, there is a clear sense in which God's unknowable essence should be understood as providing the content for our functional concepts, and for being the truthmaker for propositions that use them, given that these concepts and the propositions that they compose are describing what *God's* causality is like. For example, God's divinity is the truthmaker for the proposition 'God is merciful', and this is because God has the causal attribute of causing events of healing and forgiveness. God, in His hidden and unknown nature, is the truthmaker for the relevant proposition because the proposition is referring to God's causal dispositions. Furthermore, the concept of being 'merciful' has content here when construed as a functional psychological concept: the Cappadocians will affirm that believers have direct epistemic access to God causing events of healing and forgiveness, whilst even persons who do not claim to have direct acquaintance with the effects of divine action will be able to *understand* such a concept, provided that they are acquainted with human beings with the disposition to cause events of healing and forgiveness. Thus, functional psychological concepts – with the partial univocity they have across cases of divine and creaturely action – provide us with true and meaningful predications which have God's unknown, simple Divinity as their referent and truthmaker.

Now, once we deploy a functionalist account of psychological concepts, the Cappadocian account of action-based divine attribute concepts can 'complete' the epistemology and semantics of Brower's truthmaker account of the DDS by showing that our concepts for God, and the propositions that use them, have content. The major issue that I identified with Brower's truthmaker theory stemmed from the realisation that predications which use the divine attribute concepts purport to have God's divinity as their truthmaker, whilst, as our study of truthmaker theory showed, the content of these predications must depend on whatever epistemic access to their truthmaker, God's *hidden* divinity, we have. Now, with the functionalist construal of the Cappadocian theory of our concepts for God, we have understood how our awareness of God's action provides the foundation for us making meaningful predications about God's unknown and

simple essence: our divine attribute predications tell us about God's essence by telling us about its *causality*.

In (§3), I will show that we can use this Cappadocian-functionalist understanding of divine attribute concepts to address issues pertaining to the modal collapse objections to the DDS. Before doing this, however, we should consider the possibility that a proponent of Thomist Simplicity might propose that the fruits of the Cappadocian understanding of God's activities and our divine attribute concepts are fruits which are already contained in Thomist Simplicity, and therefore our Cappadocian model is not adding something distinctive to our understanding of the DDS. In (2c), I will show that, whilst there are certain parallels between Cappadocian Simplicity and Thomist Simplicity regarding the accounts of God's action and the divine attribute concepts that they offer, there are deep underlying differences between the two models, and therefore my proposal that Cappadocian Simplicity is offering new solutions to the objections to the DDS should be maintained.

(2c) Comparing action-based divine attribute concepts on Cappadocian Simplicity and Thomist Simplicity

Now, before crediting Cappadocian Simplicity with the insight that our divine attribute concepts are concerned with God's actions within Creation, we should note that Aquinas also connects our understanding of God's attributes with God's acts of causing created effects. In Chapter 1, we saw Aquinas affirm that: since God's essence is the power which causes the existence of all creatures and their perfections, whilst a power always resembles its effects, it follows that God's essence must possess each perfection found in creatures in a supereminent way (SCG 1, 31, 2). In light of this, a reader might ask whether the Cappadocian thesis that we derive our concepts for God from His activities is actually a distinctive Cappadocian tenet, or whether this is also contained within Thomist Simplicity. It is clear, however, that the Cappadocians and Aquinas have very different understandings of what is revealed by divine activity. For Aquinas, the divine attribute concepts that we derive from God's action are concepts for perfections in creatures that

pre-exist in the simple divine nature. In contrast, the Cappadocian Fathers do not posit that the finite properties of creatures resemble the simple divine essence in any respect; rather, they propose that the knowledge of God that we arrive at through His actions is simply knowledge of the events that He causes within the created order. Thus, on Cappadocian Simplicity, there is no transfer of our notions of perfections from creatures to God. By knowing that God causes events of healing, protection, and so forth, we know *what God does*: propositions such as 'God is merciful' and 'God is providential' do not ascribe intrinsic properties to the simple divine nature, but rather they tell us about God's causal dispositions in the functionalist sense already outlined.

Now, given that Aquinas holds that we arrive at concepts for God's essence which are derived from His created effects, it might be proposed that Aquinas also provides the resources for a defence of Brower's truthmaker theory of the DDS on the basis that our grasp of creaturely perfections provides some limited content for our divine attribute predications. There is an important reason, however, why such a move within Thomist Simplicity will not be as successful as that offered by Cappadocian Simplicity. As we saw in Chapter 1, Aquinas holds that our concepts for God's perfections have content based on our acquaintance with the creaturely perfections that God causes; and, to apply our creature-derived perfection concepts to a simple God, we must affirm that the referents of all such concepts are identical in God. Thus, Aquinas can only deploy the idea that our concepts derived from God's action of causing creaturely perfections provide us with knowledge of God's essence by affirming the *identity thesis* that the perfections which are manifold in creatures are identical in God. But, once the identity thesis is affirmed, the objections to God's identity with His attributes canvassed in Chapter 2, as well as the modal collapse problems derived from God's identity with His knowledge and will, instantly arise. Thus, a Thomistic proponent of the DDS can only ascribe content to our divine attribute concepts by holding that God's perfections are identical, and, as we have seen, this identity thesis lands Thomist Simplicity in hot water.

We can also consider the hypothetical objection that the account of our theological concepts themselves which is offered by the Cappadocian theory of conceptualisation is actually present in Thomist Simplicity. In Chapter 1, we saw Aquinas affirm that each of our divine attribute terms 'signifies the conception of the intellect before it signifies the thing itself understood by the intellect', which entails that our various terms for God are non-synonymous, since they signify different perfection concepts whilst referring to God's simple substance (SCG, 1, 35, 2). Now, in Basil's theory of conceptualisation, he also affirmed that, whilst each of our divine attribute terms refers to God, they each signify a distinct conceptual way of presenting God in accordance with God's diverse activities and the privations that pertain to Him. So, is the Cappadocian thesis that each of our divine attribute names offers a different conceptual way of presenting God an idea that is also found in Thomist Simplicity? In response, I affirm again that the role of our divine attribute concepts is very different on Cappadocian Simplicity and Thomist Simplicity. Aquinas' thesis that we have a diversity of concepts for the simple God is based on his thesis that our plurality of perfection-concepts, derived from creatures, can be applied – in an analogous way (SCG, 1, 34) – to the simple perfection of God. This account rests on the problematic identity thesis that the referents of those concepts are identical in God. In contrast, the Cappadocian view avoids the identity thesis because it accounts for the distinction in our concepts on the basis that they present to us the diverse *effects* that God causes within Creation and the negations that can be made about God.

In sum, Thomist Simplicity shares with Cappadocian Simplicity the following theses: (1) we have concepts for God derived from His action, and this entails that (2) we have non-synonymous terms for God which signify distinct concepts in our intellect prior to referring to God. What I have shown, however, is that Thomist Simplicity can only uphold (1) and (2) by appealing to the identity thesis: our concepts derived from God's action are concepts for diverse perfections in creatures which are ultimately identical in God, and therefore these diverse concepts each have the same reference in virtue of God being identical to His perfections. On Thomist Simplicity, the posit that we have diverse concepts for God derived from His action is ultimately subject to the

objections which plague the property-identity interpretation of the DDS. In contrast, the Cappadocian view that we can form a conceptual understanding of God through the events that He causes offers us a rich, and even univocal, functionalist grasp of divine attribute terms which preserves the DDS.

Now, having shown that the Cappadocian account of our divine attribute concepts is distinct from, and, in the present context, more promising than, the position advanced by Thomist Simplicity, I will turn in (§3) to show that my Cappadocian-functionalist construal of the divine attribute concepts allows us to resolve the modal collapse objections to the DDS.

(§3) Cappadocian Simplicity and Modal Collapse objections to the DDS

Now, I will draw upon my functionalist development of the Cappadocian understanding of our psychological concepts for God to address issues pertaining to the modal collapse objections to the DDS. To get this analysis underway, we can note that, in Chapter 2, I demonstrated that the following three beliefs form an inconsistent triad:

1) God's will is free in the sense that there are possible worlds where He wills different states of affairs.

2) God is simple

3) God is identical to God's will

As we saw, Thomistic proponents of the DDS such as Stump struggle to accept that it is possible to hold (2) without holding (3). Now, in sections (3a) and (3b), I will consider two accounts which make this very move: Brower's agent-causal model of divine volitions, and my Cappadocian proposal that 'God's will' is a functional psychological concept that we apply to God, but there is not actually a divine mental state that corresponds to this concept.

Both my account and Brower's account posit that the term 'God's will' does not refer to an intrinsic feature of God; it follows from this that the terms 'God' and 'God's will' do not have an identical reference, and so the purported Thomist identity claim 'God = God's will' is false. In (3a), I explain why Brower's version of this proposal in his 'agent-causal' model of divine volition struggles to construe God's volitions in a way that avoids the tenet that God has composite mental states. In (3b), I seek to hone and evolve Brower's account by using my Cappadocian-functionalist account of divine attribute concepts to offer a model for regarding our posit of God's 'will' as a functionalist concept which does not refer to a 'volition' of God at all. In (3c), I offer a parallel Cappadocian-functionalist explanation of our concepts for God's contingent knowledge which allows us to preserve the DDS. In (3d), I show that Cappadocian Simplicity is also free from modal collapse issues derived from the Aristotelian act-potency metaphysics that shapes Thomist Simplicity.

(3a) Brower's 'agent-causal' account of God's contingent volitions

Brower treats the modal collapse problems concerning the existence of God's contingent will and knowledge as stemming from the idea of attributing certain mental states contingently to God. Brower notes that theists across the Abrahamic faiths 'believe that God possesses certain of his mental states contingently' in that they hold that 'he could have chosen to create a universe different from the actual one (or none at all), and hence could have known different things than he actually knows' (2009, p. 117-118). Brower notes the challenge for the DDS here: 'in order to will or know something different, it would seem that God himself would have to be different. But divine simplicity requires that he be the same across all possible worlds' (2009, p. 117-118). In light of this challenge for the DDS, Brower considers the question of how the following two propositions are to be treated:

> (G6) God freely chooses to create the universe.
>
> (G7) God knows that *p*, where *p* is a contingent truth.
>
> (2009, p. 118)

In what follows, I will analyse Brower's treatment of (G6) concerning God's contingent volition. With regards to (G6) and other propositions 'which involve the ascription of contingent divine volitions', Brower reasons that 'it is natural to think of such volitions as intrinsic features of God, especially if we are thinking of them on the model of contingent human volitions'; he remarks, however, that 'this is not the only way to think of them' (2009, p. 118). Brower proposes that we conceive of volitions on an 'agent-causal-model', which posits that 'volitions are the irreducible products of free agents'; on this account, agents are understood to have the power to directly cause distinct volitions. The posit that an agent directly and 'irreducibly' causes its volitions entails that 'there are no intrinsic differences in virtue of which *A* causes its volitions' (2009, p. 119). The only difference between a free subject in a possible world who chooses one option and the same subject in another possible world who makes a different choice is the volition that is caused by the subject in each world. The difference in volitions in the two scenarios is not explained by any more basic element of the intrinsic nature of the subject. Brower explains this idea thus: 'if we want to distinguish worlds *w*1 and *w*2, we have no choice but to appeal to the immediate effects of A's agent-causal activity in these worlds—namely, volitions *V*1 and *V*2' (2009, p. 119). At this stage, though there is a primitive causal capacity for A to cause *V*1, *V*2, or any number of distinct volitions, Brower notes that his model has been treating these volitions as 'intrinsic features' of the subject (2009, p. 119). To apply the model to a simple God, Brower proposes that God's volitions are distinguished by their causal effects alone, rather than with reference to an intermediate internal volitional state that causes these effects. He explains this as follows:

> let us suppose […] that the connection between the objects of our agent-causal activity and their effects is non-contingent. In that case, it will be possible to kick away the volitions and thus to revise our original account of the difference between worlds *w*1 and *w*2 as follows: In *w1 A* directly causes *E*1 whereas in *w*2 *A* directly causes *E*2, where *E*1 and *E*2 are what we might earlier have described as the immediate effects of *V*1 and *V*2
>
> (2009, p. 119)

Whilst the initial intrinsic volitional states are removed on this revised model, Brower characterises it as a case where the volitional states of the subject are identified with their causal activity: '[r]ather than deny that *A* has any volitions or choices on this model […] we can instead simply identify A's volitions or choices with A's direct acts of agent causing' (2009, p. 120). Thus, Brower has combined the following two theses in his 'revised agent-causal model':

(1) A free agent *A* directly choosing volition *V*1 or *V*2 does not obtain in virtue of anything more primitive.

(2) Agent *A*'s volition *V* is *identical* to the state of affairs of *A* causing an effect '*E*'.

These two theses entail that a free agent *A* directly choosing effect *E*1 or *E*2 does not obtain in virtue of anything more primitive or internal to agent *A*. At this point, Brower is able to apply his model to the case of the DDS and God's contingent volitions. He returns to predication (G6):

(G6) God freely chooses to create the universe.

Now, Brower reasons that:

> this predication turns out to be straightforwardly extrinsic. To say that God freely chooses to create the universe is just to say that he stands in a certain relation to something wholly distinct from himself—namely, the relation of *agent causation.* But as we have seen, this is a relation in which an agent can stand to different things in different worlds, despite any lack of intrinsic differences across those worlds.
>
> (2009, p. 120)

The predication is extrinsic because Brower's model characterises a volition as a state of affairs where an agent causes an effect, rather than as an internal state in the agent. Thus, to predicate the volition of 'choosing' to God is just to say that 'he stands in a certain relation to something wholly distinct from himself', that is, the object of His causal activity (2009, p. 120). Brower calls this relation 'the relation of agent causation' (2009, p. 120). Since the volition is characterised externally in this way, it follows that a change in volition across possible worlds does not involve any change internal to the agent. Thus, God can have contingent volitions in different possible worlds whilst remaining identical in all respects in his simple nature.

Crucially, however, Brower proposes that distinct divine volitions are *identified* with the complex states of affairs which consist in God causing certain effects. The fact that Brower's proposal is ontological in nature is seen when he makes the following proposal: 'rather than deny that *A* has any volitions or choices on this model […] we can instead simply identify A's volitions or choices with A's direct acts of agent causing' (2009, p. 120). Clearly, Brower is proposing a metaphysical thesis: a divine volition *is* God's causing an effect. Brower is committed to the existence of contingent divine volitions: they just have to be held to be identical with the right kind of external relation. I believe that significant problems arise for Brower's view here as a result. Recall our analysis of Grant's extrinsic model of divine knowing in Chapter 2. Grant identified God's knowledge with God's extrinsic causal relationships with the objects that He knows. I argued that this model failed, as it identified a posited feature of God with a relation involving both God and creatures. Grant's model seemed to make God's mental states dependent upon the existence of creatures, which both compromises divine aseity and our capacity to affirm the tenet that God's nature is wholly free from creaturely properties. Now, returning to Brower's model of God's agency, he argues that God's volitions *are* God's extrinsic relationships with the objects that He causes. This appears to open up the same challenge as that we found in Grant's model: on Brower's account, God's volitional states appear to involve the existence of creatures, which may compromise divine aseity and make God's 'mental states' reliant upon creaturely properties. Brower's 'ontological' approach has to grapple with the same difficulty as Grant's model.

Now, as it happens, Brower identifies a potential way around this issue. When analysing the candidate truthmakers for the proposition 'God freely chooses to create the universe', Brower reasons as follows:

> there is a truthmaker ready to hand, if one is wanted—namely, God, the universe, and the relation of agent causation. Nor is there any danger of this truthmaker's violating divine aseity, since both the universe and God's relation to it contingently depend for their existence (or obtaining) on God rather than the other way around.
>
> (2009, p. 120)

The thought here is as follows: God's posited state of volition is not dependent upon the existence of creatures, because the creatures themselves and God's relation to them are both dependent upon God in the first place. The dependence relations here are as follows:

God's volition → (depends upon) the universe and God's relation to it → (depends upon) God

Brower is right that his agent-causal model does not make God's contingent will dependent upon creatures, for the creatures themselves are dependent upon God. Ultimately, God's volitional states are only dependent upon God Himself here. The question can be raised, however, whether this picture sufficiently preserves God's volitional states as wholly free from creaturely properties. On Brower's model, to say that God wills *x* is to say that God stands in the agent-causal relation to *x*, whilst this relation and *x* itself are *constituents* of God's volitional state. In the case of God and the contingent universe, Brower's model treats the universe as a *constituent* of God's volitional state, even while the universe is dependent upon God. This appears to entail that certain features of God's life – His posited volitional states – are partially constituted by creatures. The worry of collapsing into panentheism is present. Furthermore, if God's 'volitions' are structures consisting of the complex relation 'God → agent-causes → contingent effects' it appears to follow that God's volitions are mereologically composite. Here, God has a mental state – a volition – which has three components: God, His causal activity, and the contingent effect caused by God. Thus, Brower's model actually appears to entail that God has composite mental states. To address the modal collapse problem, Brower ultimately creates difficulties for the thesis of divine simplicity itself.

Now, in Chapter 2, when I addressed Matthew's Grant's model of contingent divine knowledge, I drew upon Wood's discussion of targetless analytic models to propose that: whilst Grant's model failed to offer a satisfactory metaphysics of God's knowledge, it was better regarded as a 'targetless' apophatic model which has the *cognitive significance* of supplying us with a

representation of God from the human epistemic standpoint. Now, I propose that, if we receive Brower's account in a similar way, the problems connected to his thesis that God has volitions which are identical to His causal relations with creatures could disappear. Suppose we propose that the concept of a divine 'mental state' of volition is a concept which merely helps us to track what God is doing, rather than being a concept which picks out a feature of God's mental life. Now, the concept can be 'targetless': if we suppose that God does not actually have volitional mental states with a relational structure, our agent-causal *concept* of a divine mental state of volition just has the role of helping us to present to ourselves notions of God that assist in theological reflection. Here, our relational predication 'God wills *x*' just tracks the truth that God causes *x* rather than not-*x*; the concept of 'will' here does not target a volitional mental state, it just tells us about what God's causal effects are like. I will now propose my 'Cappadocian-functionalist' model of divine volition as a development of this proposal.

(3b) A Cappadocian-Functionalist model for regarding our posit of God's 'volition' or 'will' as a functional psychological concept

Now, I will propose my 'Cappadocian-functionalist' thesis that the *concept* of 'God's 'volition' or 'will' can be helpfully construed as a functional psychological concept. This account can evolve Brower's agent-causal model by avoiding the metaphysical claim that God has volitions which are identical to His acts of causing creatures. Rather, I propose that we have functional psychological concepts for God that describe God's causality, and the role of the *concept* of God's 'volition' is that of describing how God acts. Thus, on a Cappadocian-functionalist analysis, we can apply the concept of 'volition' to God without this committing us to the posit that God has volitional mental states. In a manner parallel to Brower, let us suppose that the concept 'God's volition' refers to the following functional state:

God → *causes* → [W containing C_1, or C_2, or C_3 ….]

Here, I agree with Brower in affirming that 'God's volition', as a concept, does not refer to an intrinsic state of God, and rather it refers to the whole causal nexus represented above, where God causes a particular creation. Across the worlds where God creates C_1, C_2, C_3 …., what we call God's 'volition' varies in each of these worlds, but this variation is not a variation in God's intrinsic nature. Now, I propose that the term 'God's volition' simply refers to the reality of *God's causing C_1,* or *God's causing C_2,* or *God's causing C_3*. Thus, the proposition 'God wills that C_1 exists' is identical in reference to 'God creates C_1'. Whilst the terms 'wills' and 'creates' differ in sense, the two propositions actually refer to the very same state of affairs where God causes C_1. There is no additional structure in reality that the term 'wills' is latching onto: God's causing activity is the sole referent of both propositions. Furthermore, whilst being careful to remind ourselves that 'God wills x' only refers to the state of affairs where God causes x, we can note that, *conceptually speaking*, we conceptualise variations in God's 'volition' on the basis of the diverse effects of God's causal activity, rather than on the basis of intrinsic states in God.

Now, crucially, we need not literally believe that God has mental states called 'volitions' that are *identified* with God's causing activity. This was Brower's mistake: he identified God's volitional mental states with God's acts of causing, thereby accidentally committing Himself to the existence of composite divine mental states. Whilst Brower's account rests upon a *metaphysical* claim about the nature of divine volition, my account will only be committed to the existence of our functional conceptualisations for God, and the task of dealing with the question of contingent divine volition is the task of asking what the role of our concept 'God's volition' was supposed to be in the first place. The answer is that the proposition 'God wills X', and the concept of 'willing' invoked in this proposition, is exhausted in its content by the functional notion that God has caused an event.

Now, a challenge that could be levelled against either my account or Brower's account is as follows: is it possible for God to cause different creations without there being a corresponding intrinsic change in God? A proponent of Hasker's composite conception of God's consciousness,

discussed in Chapter 2, might argue that variations in God's causal activity must be preceded by variations in inner 'conscious states' in God. On such a view, it might be proposed that God's 'volition' is just the inner conscious state of God which precedes his action, and varies prior to it across different possible worlds. Now, there are two prongs to my response to this challenge through the Cappadocian-functionalist account of God's 'volition'.

My first response is as follows. According to the Cappadocian-functionalist account of psychological concepts that I have proposed in harmony with Alston's view, we can include any number of diverse intrinsic states in various beings under the *same* functional psychological concept, and this is in virtue of the fact that the diverse internal states of these beings can play the same causal role 'R'. It follows that we form our *concept* for a psychological state (e.g 'willing') on the basis of the functional role that a state can have in yielding a being's causal response to its environment. This means that I *agree* with the proposal that we should apply different mental state concepts to a being when that being causes different effects, but, simultaneously, I can reject the idea that the being's behavioural changes must be preceded by internal conscious changes. This is because, on the Cappadocian-functionalist view, we determine which functional psychological *concept* applies to a being solely on the basis of its behavioural output. On this theory, what it would take for us to conceptually classify X as being in a different 'psychological state' in W_1 and W_2 would just be for X to cause a different event in W_1 and W_2. So, to say that 'God wills C_1' or 'God wills C_2' is not to invoke the principle that God has undergone conscious changes. Rather, we conceptualise *God's willing* E_1 and *God's willing* E_2 as different 'mental states', just because these two situations involve God being related to different effects. That is all that is meant by the conceptualisation that God has 'a different mental state' in the two scenarios in the first place. Thus, there was never any conceptual content pertaining to God having conscious experiences involved in the concept of 'willing' in the first place.

Now, to uphold this proposal, I must defend the idea that one and the same entity can cause different events whilst remaining intrinsically the same, as this would allow me to hold that God

could satisfy different functional psychological concepts across possible worlds without undergoing any intrinsic changes[49]. I propose that it is highly plausible that one and the same entity can play more than one functional role. For example, the sound of an ambulance siren in the neighbourhood can simultaneously play the functional roles of informing an injured person that help is close at hand, of waking up a baby, and of making a dog bark. We can apply three different functional concepts to the siren as a result of it causing these diverse events, such as 'the medical notifier', 'the baby waker', and the 'dog agitator'; it is clear here that our application of this plurality of functional concepts to the ambulance siren on the basis of its functional role need not correspond to any change in an internal property of the siren itself. Thus, if an unchanging siren can play the functional role of causing multiple different events, the diverse functional concepts, such as 'God's willing E_1' and 'God's willing E_2', could apply to the very same reality, the simple Divine essence, in a parallel way.

I will now turn to my second rejoinder to the claim that God must have a varying conscious state that precedes Him causing distinct effects. Here, I will challenge the coherence of the notion of 'conscious states' that is deployed in this proposal. Suppose that God creates planet Earth, and there is a beach with a billion grains of sand upon it: does God have a distinct conscious 'intention' corresponding to the existence of each grain of sand? If so, God will have a series of inner conscious states that are as complex as the cosmos itself. One response to this difficulty that a Haskerian could take would be to suggest that perhaps God's inner conscious 'intention' in relation to the whole of a creation that He makes is just a single inner state; another response, which I view to be correct, is that there is something awry in the attempt to understand God as

[49] Recent treatments of the modal collapse issue, including those of Schmid (2022) and Waldrop (2022), have noted that the DDS requires the claim that God is the same in all worlds and yet can cause different contingent effects in each *w*. It is notable, however, that these authors share with Mullins the assumption that the DDS is bound to the pure act thesis. Both Schmid (2022, p. 13 – 17) and Waldrop (2022, p. 168 – 177) evaluate the prospects for the DDS as hinging on the question of whether God could be identical to the same *act* in all worlds and yet still cause different contingent effects. In contrast, at the end of the chapter I will argue that Cappadocian Simplicity is not bound to the thesis that God is an act, and therefore the Cappadocian resolution of the modal collapse issue involves eschewing the pure act thesis entirely.

having subjective conscious 'intentions' in the first place. Our Cappadocian account can go a step further here. Scripture affirms that God's intrinsic nature is unknown and beyond our comprehension: 'No one has ever seen God' (John 1: 18). Thus, we should offer no theory of the antecedent reality in God that proceeds His creating a particular Creation, nor can we apply from creatures to God the posit that distinct creative acts must be preceded by distinct intrinsic conscious states. According to the Cappadocian model, the application of a creaturely process – such as a conscious interaction of intellect and desire preceding activity – to God is a category mistake: we are applying our creaturely concepts for conscious experience to a mode of existence which is beyond the capacities of these concepts.

Whilst God's simple essence is hidden from us and beyond our conceptual grasp, we can know God and conceptualise things pertaining to Him through our acquaintance with His causal relationship with Creation. Our functional concepts of *God's willing E_1* and *God's willing E_2* are conceptualisations of God being related to different contingent effects. What is happening 'within' God prior to his causing E_1 or E_2 is beyond our ken. How could one posit that diverse inner conscious states precede God's causal acts, without purporting to have grasped the inner life of God? Thus, the objector who proposes that the events *God's causing E_1* and *God's causing E_2* must each be preceded by distinct conscious events in God, such as His *conceiving of E* and *desiring to cause E*, is at fault for affirming that creaturely conscious experiences have a direct counterpart in God.

Having proposed that our concepts for divine volitions were only ever tracking changes in God's causation of events, rather than representing any supposed changing states in God Himself, I will now propose that a parallel solution can be offered regarding our conception of God's knowing contingent states of affairs.

(3c) A Cappadocian-Functionalist model for understanding God's 'knowledge' in accordance with the DDS

In keeping with my Cappadocian-functionalist account, I propose that: when we affirm that 'God knows that P', we are actually applying a functional psychological concept to God which characterises His behavioural dispositions. On this account, to say that 'God knows that P' is to affirm that God *acts* as though P is the case. For example, let us consider the account of God feeding the Israelites in the desert in Exodus (Ex 16:4 – 36) and the proposition 'God knows that the Israelites in the desert require food'. On the functionalist model, the conceptualisation 'God knows that the Israelites require food' would apply to God if God *acts as though* the Israelites are in need of food. When God repeatedly causes bread to miraculously appear overnight next to the camp of the Israelites, He acts as though it is the case that the Israelites in the desert require food. Furthermore, God causes no events which one would expect on the supposition that the Israelites are not in need of food.

Now, recall that: when I treated our concept for God's volition, I proposed that: to say that 'God wills X', is just to offer the conceptualisation that God has caused an event, which implies nothing about God having conscious experiences related to that event. Similarly, I propose that: when we affirm that 'God knows that the Israelites need food', we are only devising the conceptualisation that God causes events which a rational agent who acts as though 'the Israelites need food' would cause. And, just as I proposed that the phrase 'wills X' in 'God wills X' does not refer to any phenomenal content, but rather is identical in reference to 'creates X' or 'causes X' , I propose that the term 'knows' in 'God knows the Israelites need food' does not refer to any intrinsic conscious change in God, but rather is identical in reference to 'acts as though it is the case that the Israelites need food'. Thus, we do not need to posit that there are contingent intrinsic conscious states in God which correspond to an awareness of contingent events, as Hasker proposed in Chapter 2.

Now, I propose that a simple being can cause events which are consistent with acting as though P is the case and acting as though not-P is the case. Let us consider the case of God causing bread to miraculously appear in the desert. In Exodus, it is said that God did not make bread appear

overnight before each Sabbath so that the Israelites would avoid harvesting bread on the Sabbath day and thereby break the duty of refraining from work. On the night before a Sabbath, God's action could be construed thus: 'God refrains from acting in the desert, and lets nature take its course'. Now, what is interesting here is that God's refraining from action does not entail that He is acting as though it is not the case that the Israelites require food. Rather, God's refraining from action here actually implies a *more* intricate knowledge state than that implied by His miraculously producing bread. When God *does nothing* on the night before the Sabbath, God acts as though two states of affairs are the case:

1) The Israelites need food in the desert.
2) The Israelites need to observe the Sabbath.

In contrast, consider God's refraining from producing bread in the desert in the weeks before the Israelites arrived there. Again, God's action could be characterised as follows: 'God refrains from acting in the desert, and lets nature take its course'. In this context, however, God is not acting as though (1) above is the case. What this demonstrates is that our conceptualisation of divine knowledge is deeply bound up with our comprehension of the causal nexus of God's actions. The particular pattern of events that God causes provides us with objective grounds for using knowledge concepts to describe God. In the Sabbath example, God's *refraining* from producing bread having previously done so allows us to apply a more intricate knowledge-based concept to God than we would have been able to derive had God continued to supply bread. Thus, with regards to our functional psychological concepts, we ascribe knowledge states to God on the basis of His behavioural dispositions as revealed in the events that He causes. Now, given that God's inner nature is entirely beyond our awareness, it would make little sense to suppose that our conceptualisations of God's 'knowledge' were ever intended to capture anything *over and above* God's acting as though certain states of affairs are the case. I have already argued that a simple being can cause a plurality of different events, and so this account of our concepts for God's

knowledge simply hinges on the existence of God's distinct causal effects in exactly the same way as the functional psychological account of God's will in (3b) did.

Now, on this functional account of psychological concepts, what would be said about the notion that God is omniscient? The answer is straightforward. To conceptualise God as an omniscient being is to affirm that: with regards to any state of affairs P, God will act as though P is the case if P is the case, and God will not act as though P is the case if P is not the case. Here, to apply the conceptualised attribute of 'omniscience' to God is to make an empirical claim about God's behavioural dispositions: God always acts as though states of affairs that actually obtain do obtain, and He never acts otherwise. Here, the notion of 'omniscience' is defined entirely with reference to God's behavioural dispositions as conveyed in the events that He causes, which is no different to applying the concept 'all merciful' to God because He always acts to cause as much healing as possible.

In sum, in a manner directly parallel to our application of 'willing' concepts to God, our application of 'knowing' concepts to God was only ever tracking changes in God's causation of events, rather than representing any supposed changing states in God Himself. Thus, to affirm that 'God knows contingent truth P' is not to affirm that the simple Divine essence changes in any way, but rather it is to just to affirm that the simple Divine essence has caused particular effects. Here, the actual role of our concepts for God's knowledge turns out to be that of modelling God's actions from the finite human epistemic standpoint, in a manner resembling the account of theological models in Wood's analysis in Chapter 2. In a sense, our concept for God's contingent knowledge is 'targetless': we do not need to believe that there is such a thing as a contingent mental 'knowing state' in God's essence that our concept is latching onto. Rather than allowing us to describe the inner nature of God, our concepts for contingent divine knowledge seem to allow us to model God's behavioural dispositions. And, as the Cappadocians affirm, thanks to Scripture and the insights of the spiritual life, we *are* well acquainted with God's activities which reveal these behavioural dispositions to us.

(3d) Escaping Thomistic problems: Cappadocian Simplicity as free from the modal collapse issues derived from the thesis that God is pure act

Once our divine attribute concepts have been understood as Cappadocian-functionalist concepts for God's disposition to cause certain kinds of effects or events, a conceptual gap is forged between what pertains to God's essence and what pertains to the activity that the essence yields. At this point, we can use the Cappadocian thesis that our concepts *cannot* represent the intrinsic nature of God's essence to respond to the issues that Mullins derives from the thesis that God is pure act.

Mullins proposed that any notion of God having contingent acts is untenable on the Thomist thesis that God is pure act. In sum, his argument proceeded as follows: if God is pure act, all of His action follows with necessity from His essence, for God could not be in a state of potentiality with respect to an action (such potentiality would lead to God being composite). Now, if all of God's action follows with necessity from His essence, God cannot have contingent actions. Thus, on the premise that God is pure act, it follows that He cannot have contingent acts. So, all divine action is necessary, and therefore God's act to make the actual Creation is necessary on Thomist Simplicity.

Mullins' modal collapse objection can be responded to with the Cappadocian account as follows. Even if it is true that God being pure act is incompatible with contingent divine acts existing, all this proves is that a distinctive *Thomist* simplicity thesis – that God is pure act – is incompatible with the posit that contingent divine acts exist. But the Cappadocian account is not committed to the 'pure act' thesis in the first place. I do not mean to say that the Cappadocians would posit potentiality in the Divine essence; rather, the proponent of Cappadocian Simplicity should resist the original assumption that the concepts of 'act' and 'potency' can be appropriately applied to God's essence at all. With a firm commitment to the thesis that the intrinsic nature of God is

beyond all conceptions, the proponent of Cappadocian Simplicity can affirm that the notions of 'act' and 'potency' should only be applied to what *is* conceptualisable of God, namely His *activities*. Indeed, once the Cappadocian theologian proposes that the concepts of 'act' and 'potency' could only be applied to God's conceptualisable activities rather than to His unknown essence, we actually arrive back in the position to make a distinction between necessity and contingency as it relates to God. For example, we can understand the conceptualisation of a 'contingent divine causal act' as picking out any effect caused by God which is not necessarily 'in act'. In sum, the Cappadocian thesis that we lack a concept with content that represents God's essence allows us to avoid affirming that the concept of 'being pure act' applies to God's essence, whereas Mullins' objection only gets off the ground on the Thomist assumption that such a concept can be applied to God. Once this Thomist assumption is avoided, Mullins' objection to the DDS is no longer in effect.

Now, it might be objected that a proponent of Cappadocian Simplicity cannot escape the pure act thesis so easily. Given that my Cappadocian solution relies on affirming a distinction in reality between God's unknowable essence and God's activities, it might be proposed that this makes God out to be a *composite* of essence and activities. So, my proposal that we should only apply the concepts of act and potency to what *is* conceptualisable of God, namely His activities, might be rejected on the grounds that this divides God into two parts of 'essence' and 'activity'. Now, the objection would proceed, to avoid positing composition in God here, we need to hold that the Divine essence is *identical* to the divine activities. But, as Mullins and Byrd pointed out, God *is* an act if 'God is His act of knowing, doing, and being' (2022, p. 24 – 25). If we apply the identity thesis to God's essence and activities, in turns out that the necessarily existing God is identical to His action after all, and this rules out the possibility of contingent divine action all over again. There is an overwhelmingly strong reason, however, why the Cappadocian theologian should reject this application of the identity thesis to the relationship between God's essence and activities, which I will now explain.

Recall the Cappadocian insights about our conceptualisation of God's activities that I considered in Chapter 3. Firstly, Gregory Nazianzen's account of spiritual experience in *Oration* 28 suggested the promising thesis that we understand the 'divine activities' as the plurality of ways that God is *experienced* by creatures. On this suggestion, the distinction between God's essence and activities is a distinction between the simple, transcendent divine essence and the plurality of ways that God can be *experienced by us* in the spiritual life. Here, to posit the existence of a plurality of 'divine activities' is just to make the uncontroversial claim that a plurality of theistic religious experiences exist. Now, it would be a straightforward metaphysical error to hold that God is identical to a particular set of human experiences; on Gregory Nazianzen's portrayal of divine activities as our experiences of God, it is obvious that we should deny the identity thesis claim that the unknown divine essence is identical to the 'divine activities'.

Furthermore, in Chapter 3 we also saw Gregory of Nyssa propose that Eunomius would be mistaken to hold that God's activities inhere in the simple divine essence, as this would be to posit 'an 'accident' in some subject-matter', thereby making God 'composite' (*AE* 1.17). Gregory proceeded to account for divine activities as the 'exercises' or 'movements' of God's nature (φύσεως κίνησις) upon contingent objects (*AE* 1.17). Here, Gregory indicated that what we conceptualise as 'divine activities' just *are* the events where God affects a contingent object. In a manner similar to Gregory Nazianzen's account, Gregory of Nyssa indicates that to posit the existence of a plurality of 'divine activities' is just to claim that a plurality of contingent effects exist that depend upon God. Now, it is obviously false to claim that God's essence is *identical* to a set of contingent objects and effects produced by God; so, Gregory's account again indicates that we should eschew the identity thesis claim that God's simple essence is identical to His plural 'activities' or 'contingent effects'. Thus, given Mullins and Byrd's derivation of the pure act thesis from the further claim that God is identical to His acts, it is clear that the Cappadocian theologian is well equipped to reject the claim that God is identical to what we conceptualise as God's activities, as our conceptualisations for 'divine activities' refer to the contingent *creaturely experiences* and *effects* that are produced by God, and it would be violation of the Creator-creature

distinction to hold that God is identical to these. Thus, the proponent of Cappadocian Simplicity is truly able to eschew the pure act thesis by avoiding the identity claim that God is identical to His activities. So, any implications for modality that stem from the thesis that God is an act will not touch Cappadocian Simplicity.

Chapter conclusion

In this chapter, I have shown that Cappadocian Simplicity resolves the analytic objections to the DDS that concern the divine attributes and modality. The proponent of Cappadocian Simplicity can agree with Plantinga that there is a real distinction between such divine attributes as 'mercy' and 'power', because there is a unique epistemic ground for each divine attribute concept in a distinct divine activity, where a 'divine activity' is understood as God's causation of a created effect. Furthermore, with regards to Plantinga's objection that the identity thesis entails that God is identical to a property and properties cannot be persons, the proponent of Cappadocian Simplicity can affirm that: since divine attributes are actually our conceptual predicates derived from God's activities rather than constituents of God, God's essence and 'attributes' are *non-identical*, and so the simple God is not identical to any properties in the first place.

Next, we considered Brower's truthmaker theory of divine simplicity, and we saw that this account requires the assistance of Cappadocian Simplicity to ensure that propositions formed using our divine attribute concepts can have content while having God's unknown essence as their referent and truthmaker. Once we deploy a functionalist account of psychological concepts, the Cappadocian account of action-based divine attribute concepts can 'complete' the epistemology and semantics of Brower's truthmaker account of the DDS by showing that our concepts for God, and the propositions that use them, have content. Here, we saw that our awareness of God's action provides the foundation for us making meaningful predications about God's unknown essence: our divine attribute predications tell us about God's essence by telling us about its *causality*.

Next, I drew upon my Cappadocian-functionalist account of our concepts for God to show that we can uphold the contingency of God's 'will' on the DDS. I used my Cappadocian-functionalist account to propose that we *conceptualise* the state of God's causing C_1 and God's causing C_2 using different functional psychological concepts of 'God's willing C_1' and 'God willing C_2'. Now, whilst our psychological conceptual scheme works this way, we need not actually suppose that God has mental states called 'volitions'. My Cappadocian-functionalist account is only committed to the existence of our conceptualisations for God; and, as I demonstrated, there is no need to believe that an entity has to undergo intrinsic changes in order to play different functional roles. The thesis that God is simple and changeless across worlds can be maintained once we realise that our concepts for 'God's will' were only tracking changes in God's causal effects in the first place, rather than mapping onto any divine mental states.

I then proposed a parallel solution regarding the case of God's contingent knowledge. I argued that our description 'God knows that P' is really a conceptualisation for a truth about God's action: God acts as though P is the case. This then allowed me to affirm that our concepts for divine knowledge were only ever tracking changes in God's causation of events, rather than representing any changing composite states in God Himself. Finally, I showed that the combination of the essence-activity distinction with the Cappadocian apophatic principle that our concepts cannot represent God's essence allows us to refrain from affirming the Thomist thesis that the concept 'pure act' applies to God's essence. This, in turn, facilitates an avoidance of Mullins' modal collapse objection, which derives entirely from the application of this concept to God's nature.

Chapter 5: Cappadocian Divine Simplicity and the Doctrine of the Trinity

In this chapter, I will argue that the Cappadocian account of God's simplicity and the shared nature of the Trinitarian Persons facilitates a resolution of the tensions between the DDS and the doctrine of the Trinity. I begin by explaining the challenges involved in holding the DDS alongside the doctrine of the Trinity, before proceeding to elucidate the Cappadocian solutions that are available in this area of doctrine.

In (§1), I frame my discussion by explaining that any plausible account of the Trinity in contemporary philosophical theology must show how the logical problem of the Trinity – introduced into analytic thought by Cartwright – is to be addressed. This is the problem of showing how the tenet that there are three distinct Persons who are each God is compatible with the commitment of monotheism that there is exactly one God. I introduce this problem by drawing upon Brower and Rea's framing of it. In (§2), I expose the difficulties for maintaining the DDS alongside monotheistic accounts of the Trinity in current philosophical theology. In (2.a), I show that Dolezal's attempt to affirm the DDS alongside a Thomistic conception of the Trinitarian relations as identical to the Divine nature collapses into modalism: the erroneous position that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are identical. In (2.b), I review Brower and Rea's hylomorphic model of the Person-essence relations in the Godhead and their concept of 'numerical sameness without identity'. I argue that the authors' insight that God's nature is numerically one with each Divine person is essential for upholding the thesis that the Trinity is compatible with monotheism, but their 'hylomorphic' model of the divine persons as compounds of form and matter inescapably models God as a composite being. Now, for proponents of the conjunction of divine simplicity and the Trinity – including Brower himself – it will not completely suffice to appeal to models of *composite natures* to explain how the Trinity can be one God, as such models only show that the one God can be three Persons if God is composite. Thus, the challenge for the DDS that requires a Cappadocian solution in this chapter is clear: how can it be the case that a *simple* nature is constituted by the three distinct identities that we know as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit?

In (§3), I explain the Cappadocian account of a simple Trinity through an exploration of the posit of the relational distinguishing marks (ἰδιώματα) of the Divine persons and the features of their common nature. I begin in (3.a) by elucidating the metaphysics of the relational distinguishing properties of the Divine persons as it is given in the Cappadocian *'Letter* 38'. Next, in (3.b) and (3.c) I turn to Basil's *'Against Eunomius'* and Gregory of Nyssa's '*On not three Gods*', which offer accounts of how the Trinitarian distinctions are compatible with divine simplicity and monotheism. In (§4), I take up Brower and Rea's posit that God's nature is numerically one with each Divine person, but replace their model of 'hylomorphic forms' with the Cappadocian account of relational distinguishing marks to uphold the compatibility of the DDS with the Trinity. In (§5), I explain how the Cappadocian account of the Trinity also upholds divine aseity.

(§1) Uniting the Trinity with Divine simplicity in the context of the logical problem of the Trinity

Since Cartwright (1987) outlined the 'logical problem of the Trinity', analytic theologians have sought to demonstrate that the propositions which constitute Christian trinitarian orthodoxy form a logically consistent set. The propositions which form the set which proponents of Trinitarian monotheism must affirm have been characterised in different ways, but for the sake of consistency throughout this chapter I will use the propositions given by Brower and Rea in their attempt to address the 'problem of the Trinity':

> (Tl) Each Person of the Trinity is distinct from each of the others.
>
> (T2) Each Person of the Trinity is God.
>
> (T3) There is exactly one God.
>
> (Brower and Rea, 2005, p. 58)

The apparent challenge for proponents of the joint truth of these propositions is that the conjunction of (T1) and (T2) entails that there are three distinct Persons who are each God, but (T3) affirms that there is only one God. The difficulty here is that the Trinitarian theist must

simultaneously affirm that there are three divine beings and exactly one divine being. Brower and Rea characterise this numerical problem as an identity problem: the propositions 'imply that three distinct beings are each identical with one being (since each of the Persons is God, and yet there is only one God)' (2005, p. 59). When I explore the details of this problem throughout the chapter, I will refer to the conjunction of (T1 – T3) as 'the doctrine of the Trinity' with the caveat that the full historical and doctrinally authoritative account of the Trinity is to be found in the creeds of the Ecumenical Councils of the Christian tradition, rather than in such a concise abstraction.

When analysing (T1 – T3), we should note that these propositions leave certain details of Trinitarian doctrine implicit; for example, it is not explicitly stated that the doctrine commits one to the view that the Godhead consists of exactly three persons. Thus, it is important to note that (T2) above is actually a concise summary of three further propositions: the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God. An important question regarding these further propositions is the matter of which sense of the term 'is' is used in them: in saying that 'the Son is God', for instance, is the Trinitarian theist affirming that the Son is *identical* to God, or is a weaker sense of 'is' intended? Also, on the assumption that the term 'God' in these propositions refers to the Divine essence – the unique nature of God – propositions of the form 'Person X is God' can be read as affirming that a Divine person bears a distinctive relation to the Divine essence. Throughout my analysis, I will refer to a theologian's answer to the question of what kind of relation is posited by propositions of the form 'Person X is God' as an account of the 'person-essence relations in the Godhead'.

Now, my purpose in framing this chapter with the propositions used to formulate the logical problem of the Trinity is to propose that the deposit of Trinitarian orthodoxy actually requires a further proposition, and therefore we must demonstrate that (T1 – T3) is part of a larger consistent set of propositions. Trinitarian monotheists who are committed to the doctrine of Divine simplicity – such as Brower himself – need to show that (T1 – T3) is also compatible with the following proposition:

(T4) [Divine simplicity] God has no parts.

Indeed, given that we saw in the Introduction of this dissertation that the original patristic formulators of Trinitarian orthodoxy, including the Cappadocian Fathers and St. Augustine, considered the DDS to be inseparable from the doctrine of the Trinity, one might say that a defense of the 'original' doctrine of the Trinity will require demonstrating the joint consistency of (T1 – T4):

(Tl) Each Person of the Trinity is distinct from each of the others.

(T2) Each Person of the Trinity is God.

(T3) There is exactly one God.

(T4) God has no parts.

Here, the DDS is not represented as a further doctrinal commitment tacked on to Trinitarian orthodoxy, but rather as part of the deposit of that orthodoxy itself. Now, once I have demonstrated that key contemporary authors with a vested interest in affirming (T1 – T4) together – namely, Dolezal (2014) and Brower and Rea (2005) – have not provided the resources for demonstrating that these propositions are jointly consistent, I will show that the Cappadocians have the resources to show that (T1 – T4) *do* constitute a logically consistent set.

In the previous chapters on Cappadocian Simplicity, we have seen that the usual Cappadocian strategy for overcoming difficulties for the DDS is to re-interpret predications about God as primarily signifying our conceptualisations of God. On this approach, pluralities pertaining to God, such as the plural divine attributes, or the plurality of possible divine volitions, are understood to be grounded in our cognitive apparatus, our way of presenting God under different conceptualisations. In the case of defending the union of the DDS and the Trinity, however, the usual Cappadocian turn to conceptualisation will *not* address the issues at hand. A proponent of (T1 – T4) must affirm that the Godhead consists in three *ontologically* – not *conceptually* – distinct Persons: the idea that the distinctions that we ascribe to the Godhead are really disguised

distinctions in our concepts would collapse the distinctions between the Divine persons. Thus, if we are to use the resources of Cappadocian Simplicity to show that (T1 – T4) are jointly consistent, the theory of conceptualisation will be of limited use in the present context. Despite this, it is important to note that the Cappadocian account of the Trinitarian distinctions is multifaceted. The Cappadocians argue that the Divine persons are distinguished by their unique properties or 'distinguishing marks' (ἰδιώματα), and, as I will show in (§3), a distinguishing mark has two dimensions. On the one hand, there is the 'ontological' facet, whereby each Person is distinguished from the other two Persons on the basis of their unique causal relationships in the Godhead; on the other hand, there is the *epistemic* or 'conceptual' facet of a distinguishing mark, whereby it is noted that the *concept* for the Divine person is distinct from the concepts for each of the other two Persons. Indeed, whilst an appeal to a distinction in our concepts cannot ground an account of how three distinct persons exist in the one Godhead (as expressed in T1 – T3), we will see that the Cappadocians assign conceptualisation a role in explaining how some of the Trinitarian properties that we ascribe to God do not compromise the unity of God's simple essence (as expressed in T4).

Now, having outlined the logical problem of the Trinity, and the further task of uniting the doctrine of the Trinity (T1 – T3) with divine simplicity (T4), I will turn in (§2) to show that recent analytic accounts of the Trinity offered by proponents of the DDS fail to provide the resources for demonstrating the joint consistency of (T1 – T4).

(§2) Challenges for uniting the DDS with the doctrine of the Trinity in current analytic thought

In (2.a), I begin my analysis of the issues involved in affirming the DDS alongside the Trinity by arguing that Dolezal's account of the Trinitarian distinctions on his Thomist construal of the DDS fails to preserve the distinctions between the Divine persons. In (2.b), I turn to consider Brower and Rea's 'hylomorphic' model of the Person-essence relations and I argue that, despite the fruits of the model for demonstrating the compatibility of the Trinity with monotheism, it only shows

that the Trinitarian distinctions could exist in one God if God were composite. Once these issues have been exposed, I will turn to the resources of Cappadocian theology in (§3 - 4) to demonstrate the consistency of the DDS and the Trinity.

(2.a) Dolezal on the identity of the Divine persons and their relations

Whilst Dolezal affirms an understanding of the Trinity which is largely based on Aquinas' view (ST, I, q. 27 - 43), my purpose here is not primarily to investigate Aquinas' account, but rather to show that a particular account of the Divine person-essence relations offered by a modern analytic theologian fails to demonstrate the compatibility of the DDS with the Trinity. I will argue that the locus of the problem with Dolezal's account of the union of the Trinity with the DDS is his identity thesis interpretation of divine simplicity.

With regards to the Divine persons, Dolezal affirms that: '[f]or each person to be (*qua* person) is to be in relation to the other two' (2014, p. 93). Dolezal proposes that, since the very being of each Divine person is its relation to the other two Persons, it follows that the Persons 'cannot be distinguished by really distinct acts of existence' (2014, p. 93). Dolezal expands on this as follows:

> Nor is this trinitarian act with its various relations really distinct from the one simple act of God's existence. For God to be is for him to be subsisting in three persons.
>
> (2014, p. 93)

We can note here that Dolezal maintains that the three Divine persons do not have distinct acts of existence, and rather there is a single relational 'trinitarian' act of existence which is the same as 'the one simple act of God's existence' (2014, p.93). As a proponent of a broadly Thomistic construal of the DDS, why might Dolezal be insistent that there is not a plurality of acts of existence in the Godhead, and rather there is a single relational act of existence in it? It would seem that the metaphysics of God's *esse* (existence) and *essentia* (essence) might be at work here. Suppose we affirmed that each Divine person has its own distinct act of existence. It would follow

that each Person consists of (1) the Person's distinct act of existence and (2) the Divine essence to which it was united; thus, in each Person there would be a distinction between their essence and their existence. Now, suppose there is this essence-existence composition in each of the Persons; it follows, in accordance with the Thomistic distinction between *esse* and *essentia* discussed in Chapter 1, that the Divine persons are not simple. Since each Divine person is God, the proposition that each Person has essence-existence composition entails that God has composition. So, to avoid this conclusion, Dolezal must affirm that each Divine person does not have their own act of existence, and hence he proposes that there is one act of existence shared between all three Persons in the Godhead.

As we saw in Chapter 1, Thomist Simplicity involves the posit that God's existence is identical to God's essence. Given Dolezal's thesis that the 'trinitarian' act of existence with its distinct relations is actually identical to the act of existence of the Divine essence, it would seem to follow on the Thomistic essence-existence identity thesis that the trinitarian act of existence is *also* identical to the Divine essence. Indeed, this is what Dolezal affirms, whilst he also proposes that the Divine persons are identical with their relations:

> Just as God's simplicity requires the real identity of the divine essence and relations, it also requires that we conceive these relations as subsistent and each of the divine persons as identical with his distinct relation. This identity means that the persons *qua* persons are non-composite.
>
> (Dolezal, 2014, p. 91)

Let us begin by considering Dolezal's first affirmation here that the DDS entails 'the real identity of the divine essence and relations'. Taking for granted Dolezal's Thomism, there are four relations that he is equating with the Divine essence: in addition to the distinctive relations belonging to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, which Aquinas named Paternity, Filiation, and Procession (ST I, q.28), the Thomistic account also posits a fourth relation, called 'Spiration' by Aquinas, which is the Father and the Son's bringing forth of the Spirit (ST, I, q.28, a.4). Now, Dolezal's claim that the DDS entails that these Trinitarian relations are identical to the Divine

essence appears to be an iteration of the identity thesis account of divine simplicity that I explained in Chapters 1 and 2. To appreciate this, we just need to extend the range of the 'attributes' or 'properties' that God's essence is identified with to include the relations in the Trinity, and extend our account of the referents of divine predicates to include the referents of Trinitarian predicates. Now, we get:

> Identity Thesis Trinity (ITT): God is identical with the Trinitarian relations, which are the referents of Trinitarian relational predicates (e.g 'Paternity').

Now, Dolezal's affirmation of (ITT) with his claim that the DDS entails 'the real identity of the divine essence and relations' is potentially ambiguous. Whilst Dolezal clearly holds that the DDS requires that the Divine essence is identical to the Trinitarian relations, it is unclear whether he is affirming: (A) the Divine essence is identical to the *sum* of the divine relations, or (B) the Divine essence is identical to each divine relation taken individually. Thus, where R_n stands for a divine relation, Dolezal could either be read as saying that:

(A) The Divine Essence = $(R_1 + R_2 + R_3 + R_4)$

Or

(B) The Divine Essence = $R_1 = R_2 = R_3 = R_4$

Let us take each of these possibilities in turn. Firstly, thesis (A) that the Divine Essence = $(R_1 + R_2 + R_3 + R_4)$ looks to be impossible for a proponent of divine simplicity to affirm, for the notion that the simple Divine essence just *is* a conjunction of four non-identical relations would seem to entail that the Divine essence is a *composite* made up of each distinct relation. Given that Dolezal is cashing out his identity account of the Trinitarian relations to make sense of God's simplicity, I will proceed on the assumption that he does not hold that the Divine essence is a composite of four distinct relational parts. Given this, let us consider the other available reading of Dolezal's essence-relation identity thesis, captured by thesis (B) that the Divine Essence = $R_1 = R_2 = R_3 =$

R_4. For the sake of ease, let us consider just the relations of Paternity, Filiation and Procession here (that is, the distinctive relations belonging to each Divine person individually). If by the phrase 'the real identity of the divine essence and relations', Dolezal means thesis (B), he is affirming that the DDS entails that:

1) The Divine Essence = R_1 = R_2 = R_3

Now, consider Dolezal's further affirmation that the DDS requires that we take 'each of the divine persons as identical with his distinct relation' (2014, p. 91). We then get:

2) The Father = R_1

   The Son = R_2

   The Holy Spirit = R_3

But the conjunction of (1) and (2) entails:

3) The Divine Essence = The Father = The Son = The Holy Spirit

And (3) obviously entails:

4) The Father = The Son = The Holy Spirit

And (4) is modalism[50]. Now, to understand the problem that has emerged here with Dolezal's application of the identity thesis to the Trinitarian relations (ITT), let us return to the propositions which constitute the union of the doctrines of the Trinity and Divine simplicity:

[50] Hughes, commenting upon Aquinas' account of the Trinity, also notes that the person-essence relation cannot be identity, whilst proposing that the DDS is an obstacle to avoiding this identity view:

> If Sabellianism is to be avoided, consubstantiality must be something less than identity. If the persons are incomposite, however, it is very hard to see how their consubstantiality could be at once something more than their being like, and something less than their being the same.
>
> (2019, p. 205)

Sabellianism is a version of the modalist heresy which affirms that, though the divine persons are apprehended by us as distinct, they are actually identical. As we see here, Hughes, like Dolezal, assumes that proponents of the DDS must affirm an identity thesis account of the Person-essence relations. As a result, Hughes abandons the DDS and proposes a hylomorphic account of the person-essence relations according to which the Divine persons are compounds of essence and form (2019, p. 205). I will argue that

(Tl) Each Person of the Trinity is distinct from each of the others.

(T2) Each Person of the Trinity is God.

(T3) There is exactly one God.

(T4) God has no parts.

Now, to maintain the proposition that God has no parts (T4), Dolezal has posited that each Person is identical to their distinct relation, whilst he has also affirmed that the personal relations themselves are identical to the Divine essence. It follows that the 'is' in proposition (T2) stating that each Person 'is God' must be read as the 'is' of identity, which entails that each of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are identical to the same divinity. What my argument above showed, however, it that, once it is affirmed that the Divine persons are identical to their divinity, it must be affirmed that the Persons are identical to each other. Thus, Dolezal's account eventually collapses proposition (T1) which affirms the distinctness of each Person. This reveals that we cannot maintain (T1 – T4) when holding the *identity thesis* construal of the thesis that God has no parts (T4).

Now, I will consider a view which is widely held to demonstrate the consistency of (T1 – T3): this is Brower and Rea's account of numerical sameness without identity in the Godhead, which appeals to their model of hylomorphic composition to explain how a single object can contain numerous distinct identities within itself. I will argue that this model faces challenges when we wed divine simplicity (T4) to our account of the Trinity.

(2.b) The hylomorphic model of the Person-essence relations in the Godhead

Brower and Rea (2005) and Hughes (2019) offer hylomorphic accounts of the person-essence relations posited by the doctrine of the Trinity. Reviewing the former account is more important here, given that Brower is one of the key modern proponents of the DDS. Brower and Rea use the

hylomorphic accounts of the person-essence relations do indeed violate the DDS, but the Cappadocians offer us an alternative construal of the person-essence relations which preserves divine simplicity.

concept of ‘numerical sameness without identity’ and the hylomorphic analogy of material constitution to explain how the distinctions between the Divine persons are compatible with the monotheistic principle that ‘there is exactly one God’ (2005, p. 58). The authors characterise their view as offering a solution to the ‘problem of the Trinity’, which concerns the familiar set of propositions (T1 – T3) which affirm that the Divine persons are each distinct (T1), each God (T2), and yet there is only one God (T3) (Brower and Rea, 2005, p. 58). In what follows, I will argue that Brower and Rea’s use of hylomorphic mereology to model the consistency of (T1 – T3) only shows that the Trinitarian distinctions could exist in one God if God was a composite being.

Following Aristotle, Brower and Rea affirm that two things X and Y can be *numerically the same* (or ‘one thing’) without being *identical* (2005, p. 58). The paradigmatic example used to explain this is the case of a bronze statue and the lump of bronze that composes it. The authors capture the crucial features of this case thus:

> (MC) In the region occupied by a bronze statue, there is a statue and there is a lump of bronze; the lump is not identical with the statue (the statue but not the lump would be destroyed if the lump were melted down and recast in the shape of a disc); but only one material object fills that region.
>
> (2005, p. 270)

According to this account, it is the case that, numerically speaking, there is only one object here: the bronze statue. Despite this, we can recognise that two identities are to be distinguished in the one statue: *the bronze lump* and *the statue* are distinct. To appreciate this distinction, we can note that we could destroy the statue without destroying the bronze lump – for example, if the statue were to melt, the bronze lump would continue to exist – and so the distinctness of the identities of the statue and the bronze lump is shown in the fact that they have different persistence conditions. Thus, whilst there is numerically one concrete object – the bronze statue – we can distinguish between two non-identical existences in it. Brower and Rea use Aristotelian hylomorphism to explain the metaphysics of this situation:

> According to Aristotle, familiar particulars (trees, cats, human beings, etc.) are hylomorphic compounds—things that exist because and just so long as some matter instantiates a certain kind of form. Forms, for Aristotle, are complex organizational properties, and properties are immanent universals (or, as some have it, tropes). The matter of a thing is not itself an individual thing; rather, it is that which combines with a form to make an individual thing.
>
> (Brower and Rea, 2005, p. 276)

On Brower and Rea's use of this Aristotelian metaphysics, 'a statue and its constitutive lump are two distinct hylomorphic compounds; yet they are numerically one material object' (2005, p. 277). The first hylomorphic compound is the bronze (i.e matter) arranged 'statuewise' (i.e the form), whilst the second hylomorphic compound is the bronze (matter) arranged 'lumpwise' (the form) (2005, p. 273). Whilst there are two hylomorphic compounds here, there is only *one* object because of the following principle: 'x is (numerically) the same material object as y iff x and y are hylomorphic compounds sharing the same matter in common' (2005, p. 272). Since, in the location of the bronze statue, the 'statue-arranged bronze' and the 'lump-arranged bronze' both exist but share the same matter, they are to be counted, so Brower and Rea's account goes, as a single material object. Thus, according to Brower and Rea, it is possible for there to be two distinct identities which are to be counted as a single object in the special case where one and the same matter constitutes both entities.

Now, applying this hylomorphic account of numerical sameness without identity to the Trinity, Brower and Rea offer the following understanding of the Person-essence relations in the Godhead:

> [T]he Persons of the Trinity can also be conceived of in terms of hylomorphic compounds. Thus, we can think of the divine essence as playing the role of matter; and we can regard the properties *being a Father*, *being a Son*, and *being a Spirit* as distinct forms instantiated by the divine essence, each giving rise to a distinct Person. […] we can regard the divine essence not as an individual thing in its own right but rather as that which, together with the requisite "form", constitutes a Person. Each Person will then be a compound structure whose matter is the divine essence and whose form is one of the three distinctive Trinitarian properties. On this way of thinking, the Persons of the Trinity are directly analogous to particulars that stand in the familiar relation of material constitution.
>
> (2005, p. 276)

At a first glance, this model makes sense of the following truths about the Person-essence relations in the Trinity. Firstly, since there is only one Divine essence (loosely called 'matter' above) which constitutes all three of the trinitarian Persons, the Divine essence is, numerically, the same one existent as all three Divine persons, which means that there is one God (thus, proposition T3 is satisfied). In the Person of the Father, for instance, there are not two existents 'the Divine essence' and 'the Father' to be counted. Rather, there is one reality to be counted because the Divine essence by itself does not count as a complete existent, but rather it only is such when it is united to a form, in this case the form of the Father. Within this framework, we can still distinguish between the Divine essence and each Person. For example, the Divine essence has the role of constituting the Son and the Spirit, whereas the Father does not constitute them. Thus, whilst the Divine essence and the Father are *numerically the same*, it is also the case that the Divine essence and the Father are *not identical*. In sum, Brower and Rea's account offers us a theory which allows us to affirm that:

> (1) In virtue of having different forms, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are distinct from one another.
>
> (2) In virtue of being constituted by the Divine essence, each of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are God.
>
> (3) In virtue of being constituted by the Divine essence, each of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are numerically the same existent as one other.

Here (1) uses the hylomorphic posit of forms to gloss (T1), which affirms that each Divine person is distinct, whilst (2) uses a parallel with the hylomorphic metaphysics of material composition to ground (T2), which affirms that each Divine person is God. Finally, (3) uses the account of numerical sameness based on hylomorphic mereology to ground proposition (T3) that there is exactly one God. Thus, the model represents the distinctness between the Persons posited by (T1), alongside the commitments that each Person is God (T2) and numerically one with the Divine

essence (T3), as being modelled on the thought that each Person is constituted by a different 'hylomorphic compound': a different 'form' – or property of personhood – structures the Divine essence in each case. Now, whilst this model successfully accounts for the joint consistency of (T1 – T3), I will argue that the problem with the 'hylomorphic' approach to modelling the Person-essence relations in the Godhead is that it neglects, and is incompatible with, the further commitment (T4) that God has no parts.

To appreciate that Brower and Rea's account does not model (T4), we can note that they use explicitly *compositional* language to model the Person-essence relations in the Godhead:

> [I]n contrast to ordinary material objects, the role of matter in the case of the Trinity is played by immaterial stuff, and so the structures or compounds constituted from the divine essence (namely, the divine persons) will be "hylomorphic" only in an extended sense.
>
> (2005, p. 276)

Again, the authors say that 'inasmuch as the Persons of the Trinity are distinct hylomorphic compounds, they are distinct from one another' (2005, p. 278). As a caveat, we should note that the authors use the tentative language that the person-essence 'compounds' are '"hylomorphic" only in an extended sense', to factor in for the inherent dissimilarities between material objects and the Divine essence. Thus, whilst the authors avoid proposing that the Godhead literally contains cases of hylomorphic composition, their model for the Trinity, which is supposed to explain the consistency of (T1 – T3), is based on *conceiving* of the Divine persons as hylomorphic composites. To avoid misconstruing Brower and Rea's intentions here, we can follow Wood in noting that their account is a form of *modelling*: given that the authors proposed that the question of numerical sameness without identity in the Trinity is analogous to numerical sameness without identity in cases of material constitution, whilst they openly admit the *disanalogies* between the Godhead and hylomorphic material compounds, it would be a mistake to suppose that they actually believe that the Godhead is a hylomorphic compound comparable to a statue and its constituent lump of bronze (Wood, 2016, p. 51 – 52). Thus, my argument will be that, granted

that Brower and Rea are using numerical sameness without identity in hylomorphic compounds as a *model* for the Trinity, it is hard to see how this analytic model is a success, once it is factored in that God has no parts. If Brower and Rea's model only demonstrates that a composite substance can contain three distinct identities, they have not shown us that the Divine nature, understood in accordance with the DDS, could contain three distinct identities.

Consider, for example, the difference between the Father and the Son on the hylomorphic model. Whilst the Father and the Son have the same essence, the 'form' of the Father is different to the 'form' of the Son. This move preserves the numerical oneness of the Divine essence with each Person, and it facilitates a distinction between each Person, but we can see a clear challenge emerging. The Divine essence is having a form *added to it* in the existence of each person, and the form allows the Divine essence to form a different compound in each of the persons. On this model of the Person-essence relation, each person is being distinguished by a compositional alteration to the Divine essence, which makes each person a composite of essence and form. This directly contradicts the commitment that the Divine persons are *simple*, and so the hylomorphic model fails to account for the further thesis that God has no parts (proposition T4).

Now, to what extent is this a problem with the model? In Wood's engagement with Weisberg's account of models, he notes that models will be successful if they represent features which are 'highly-valued and significant' in their targets, whilst the notion of significance is relative to the priorities of the community engaged in the modelling exercise (2016, p. 46 - 7). Given that Brower and Rea's priority is to model the consistency of (T1 – T3), it might be suggested that their account of numerical sameness without identity need not represent God as partless (T4). Now, if a model ought to represent features of the target which are theoretically 'significant' to those engaged in the modelling exercise, Brower's own extensive defense of God's partlessness – as seen in his truthmaker theory of the DDS – indicates that, for Brower himself, the omission of divine simplicity from the hylomorphic model could present a challenge. Indeed, the pressing issue here is that Brower and Rea's model for explaining how the one God can be three Persons requires us

to imagine an entity that is composed of hylomorphic parts, whilst it directly *grounds* the distinct identities of the Trinitarian individuals in such parts. Given this, the model does not suffice to show a proponent of the DDS – who affirms that God essentially has no parts whatsoever – that the one God can exist as three persons. If you take away the parts from the model, you take away the Divine persons.

There are two independent reasons why a successful model of the consistency of (T1 – T3) should be compatible with divine simplicity (T4). Firstly, as already discussed, the original founders of the doctrine of the Trinity held that God's simplicity (T4) is a commitment of Trinitarian orthodoxy, and so, if a modelling exercise is supposed to demonstrate the consistency of actual Trinitarian doctrine, the historical case can be made that doctrinal orthodoxy is actually committed to (T1 – T4). Furthermore, we saw in the Thesis Introduction that the commitment that God has no parts is essential to maintaining divine aseity, and so if we failed to demonstrate that (T1 – T3) is compatible with (T4), we would be lacking a solution to the logical problem of the Trinity which is compatible with divine aseity. The pressing demand, then, is for us to show that Brower and Rea's account of numerical sameness without identity can be reformulated to uphold the logical consistency of the *four* propositions: T1 – T4. To meet this demand, I will draw upon Cappadocian thought to provide an alternative metaphysics of the relationship between the Divine persons and the Divine essence, before arguing that the notion of numerical sameness without identity can be re-construed within this theory in a way that upholds (T4).

(§3) The Cappadocian account of a simple Trinity: the relational distinguishing marks (ἰδιώματα) of the Divine Persons

In this exegetical section, I study how the Cappadocians understood the distinctions between the three Divine persons in accordance with God's simplicity. I will begin with an analysis of the account of the distinctions between the Divine persons that is offered in *Letter* 38: a text which, though contained in Basil's canon, may have been written by Gregory of Nyssa. I will then proceed to explain Basil's explicit defence of the compatibility of the Trinitarian distinguishing

marks with divine simplicity in *Against Eunomius*, before supplementing this with a study of Gregory of Nyssa's elaboration upon key tenets of Basil's view in *On not three Gods*. Once I have arrived at an exegetically accurate interpretation of the Cappadocians' proposals for the union of the DDS with the Trinity, I will turn in (§4) to the analytic task of demonstrating that this account does indeed offer the resources for showing the compatibility of the conjunction of the DDS with Trinitarian monotheism, as expressed in propositions T1 – T4.

(3.a) The distinguishing marks (ἰδιώματα) of the Divine Persons in *Letter* 38: distinguishing essence (οὐσία) and hypostasis (ὑπόστασις) in the Trinity

Whilst *Letter* 38 is contained in the canon of Basil's writing, it cannot straightforwardly be attributed to him. As Zachhuber notes, some scholars still believe that the letter is Basil's work, but a strong case can also be made that it was written by Gregory of Nyssa to expand upon his elder brother's trinitarian thought (2020, p. 46-48). Thus, in what follows, I will refer to the writer of *Letter* 38 as 'the author', intending this term to refer to the candidate writers of Basil or Gregory of Nyssa. I will discuss the unity of Basil and Gregory's understandings of the Trinity in (3.b-c), when I show that Gregory elaborates upon the epistemological dimension of Basil's theory of the properties of the Divine persons in his own thought.

The author of *Letter* 38 explains the significance of the distinguishing marks (ἰδιώματα) of the Divine persons for our understanding of the relationship between essence and hypostasis in the Godhead. We can read this letter in light of the observation from Radde-Gallwitz that ἰδιώματα are 'peculiar features that distinguish individual members of a common species from one another' (2009, p. 133). The Cappadocian author introduces his distinction between a 'common essence' and the 'distinguishing marks of individuals' through the example of the way that human nature is common to all people, and yet individual humans are distinguished from one another by certain properties. We see this in the following passage about the predicate *man*:

> The predicate therefore being common, and extending to all the individuals ranked under the same name, requires some note of distinction whereby we may understand not man in general, but Peter or John in particular

(*Letter* 38.2)[51]

Once we have noted the common essence between two members of the same kind, we look at 'the distinguishing properties (τὰ ἰδιάζοντα) whereby one is distinguished from another' (*Letter* 38.2). Once these distinguishing properties have been noted, 'the definition' of each individual 'will no longer tally in all particulars with the definition of another' (*Letter* 38.2). The author then introduces the concept of a hypostasis: '[t]hat which is spoken of in a special and peculiar manner is indicated by the name of the hypostasis (τῆς ὑποστάσεως)' (*Letter* 38.3). The suggestion here is that, with regards to beings who share a common nature, their distinguishing marks are – in some sense – what *individuate* that nature into a subsisting individual or 'hypostasis'. The author illustrates our need for the concept of a hypostasis as follows:

> Suppose we say "a man" [...] The nature (φύσιν) is indicated, but what subsists and is specially and peculiarly indicated by the name is not made plain. Suppose we say "Paul." We set forth, by what is indicated by the name, the nature subsisting.
>
> This then is the hypostasis (ὑπόστασις)
>
> (*Letter* 38.3)

The Cappadocian author is observing a distinction between common terms that refer to a nature shared by many individuals, such as 'man', and particular terms that pick out a single being which possesses that nature, such as 'Paul'. And, it is the distinguishing characteristics of Paul (his ἰδιώματα) which allow us to identify his unique existence compared to that of all other individuals sharing the common predicate 'man'.

Now, the author applies the 'difference … both of essence (οὐσίας) and hypostasis (ὑποστάσεως) in human affairs' to the case of 'the divine dogmas' (*Letter* 38.3). First, the author introduces the principle that: since the Divine essence is common to all three Divine persons, the characteristics

[51]All references to the Greek text of *Letter* 38 are to the text as contained in Deferrari and McGuire (1926). The English translation used is that of Jackson (1895).

of the Divine essence are common to each of them. For example, '[t]he account (λόγος) of the uncreate and of the incomprehensible is one and the same in the case of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. For one is not more incomprehensible and uncreate than another' (*Letter* 38.3). Recalling our discussion of the Cappadocian account of the shared 'formula of being' (λόγος τοῦ εἶναι) of the persons of the Trinity in Chapter 3, it is apparent here that the author of *Letter* 38 is affirming that the same formula (λόγος) of predicates ascribing the characteristics of being uncreate and incomprehensible applies to each of the Divine persons. Thus, when we are looking to identify what distinguishes the persons of the Trinity, we cannot turn our attention to anything which is part of their common formula of being.

Now, to recognise the distinction of each hypostasis, the author gives this direction: 'we shall only direct our attention to the enquiry by what means each conception (ἔννοια) will be lucidly and distinctly separated from that which is conceived in common' (*Letter* 38.3). The author then proceeds to describe the distinguishing marks of each Divine person in order to identify their unique hypostasis. Given that the author is seeking to show that, whilst the Divine persons have the same Divine essence, they can nonetheless be apprehended as distinct individuals, it is apparent that *Letter* 38 is concerned with the consistency of the following two propositions of Trinitarian orthodoxy:

(Tl) Each Person of the Trinity is distinct from each of the others.

(T2) Each Person of the Trinity is God.

As we will see, the author of *Letter* 38 does not appear to conceive of the hypostasis of each Person as a *composite* of the Divine essence and a particular distinguishing property. Rather, they propose that the hypostasis of each Person is distinguished by certain unique relational properties (and, in the case of the Father, a *negative* property). Now, to appreciate that the Cappadocian author of *Letter* 38 conceives of the distinguishing mark of each Person as involving a *relation*

that they bear to at least one other Person, let us start where the letter begins, with the distinguishing mark of the Holy Spirit:

> Since, then, the Holy Ghost [...] is attached to the Son, and with Him is inseparably apprehended, and has Its being attached to the Father, as cause, from Whom also It proceeds; It has this note (ἰδιότητος) of Its peculiar hypostatic nature, that It is known (γνωρίζεσθαι) after the Son and together with the Son, and that It has Its subsistence of the Father.
>
> (*Letter* 38.4)

The distinguishing mark of the Holy Spirit is that He is encountered in posteriority to the Son, that He coexists with the Son, and that He receives His 'subsistence' from the Father. Thus, the distinguishing mark of the Spirit is in the category of relation: the hypostasis of the Spirit is the Divine essence particularised by certain relational properties. We should also note that the *order of knowing* is fundamental here. The Spirit is not merely identified on the basis of having certain relations in the Trinity; rather, the Spirit is identified through His being 'known after the Son and together with the Son'. In the present section, I will be uncovering the ontological dimension of the account of the Trinitarian distinctions in this letter, whilst I will return to the epistemological dimension when I place the letter in dialogue with Basil's claims about divine simplicity and the Trinitarian distinguishing marks in *Against Eunomius* in (3b).

For now, let us consider how the author proceeds to describe the distinguishing mark of the hypostasis of the Son:

> The Son, Who declares the Spirit proceeding from the Father through Himself and with Himself, shining forth alone and by only-begetting from the unbegotten light, so far as the peculiar notes are concerned, has nothing in common either with the Father or with the Holy Ghost. He alone is known by the stated signs.
>
> (*Letter* 38. 4)

The distinguishing mark of the Son is that (1) the Holy Spirit proceeds 'from the Father through Himself and with Himself' and (2) the Son has the property of 'only-begetting from the unbegotten light', which is the Father. Thus, the Son's distinctive relation with the Spirit, and His

distinctive relation with the Father, constitute His distinguishing mark. With regards to the commitment of Trinitarian orthodoxy that the Divine persons are distinct (T1), we can note the particular boldness of the author's phrase about the Son: 'so far as the peculiar notes are concerned, [He] has nothing in common either with the Father or with the Holy Ghost. He alone is known by the stated signs' (*Letter* 38.4). Since the Son's distinguishing mark consists in His relational properties in the Trinity, and these relational properties are unique to Himself, the Son's 'peculiar notes' are entirely unshared with the Father and the Spirit. Now, finally, the author gives the distinguishing marks of the Father:

> But God, Who is over all, alone has, as one special mark of His own hypostasis, His being Father, and His deriving His hypostasis from no cause; and through this mark He is peculiarly known.
>
> (*Letter* 38.4)

Again, the Father's hypostasis involves a relational distinguishing feature: the Father has the property of 'being Father' because He begets the Son. The second aspect of the Father's distinguishing mark is a *negative* attribute: 'His deriving His hypostasis from no cause'. In the familiar Cappadocian language, this is the attribute of unbegottenness, which is privative: it is the Father's *non-possession* of the property of being from a cause. If unbegottenness is the absence of a property, it is reasonable to hold that it will not introduce composition into the hypostasis of the Father; we will see Basil make this explicit in our analysis of *Against Eunomius*. In sum, the Father has two aspects to His distinguishing mark: the relational property of Fatherhood, and the lack of the property of being caused.

We have seen that, in the descriptions of the distinguishing marks of the Divine persons in *Letter* 38, all we have encountered are a series of relational properties and one negative property. Now, the author affirms that the Divine essence remains unaltered in each hypostasis when they remark upon the extraordinary relationship between the Divine essence and each hypostasis in the Trinity:

> But the communion and the distinction apprehended in Them are, in a certain sense, ineffable and inconceivable, the continuity of nature (τῆς φύσεως συνεχὲς)

> never being rent asunder by the distinction of the hypostases, nor the notes of proper distinction confounded in the community of essence (τὴν οὐσίαν κοινότητος).
>
> (*Letter* 38.4)

The claim here appears to be that 'the continuity of nature' is not 'rent asunder by the distinction of the hypostases' because the relational properties of the hypostases do not involve any alteration of the Divine essence. Now, why does the author affirm that 'the notes of proper distinction' are not 'confounded in the community of essence'? In other words, how is it the case that the Persons sharing a single essence (which upholds T2 that each person is God) is compatible with the distinction between their unique distinguishing properties (which upholds T1 that the persons are distinct)? The answer appears to lie in the conception of the distinguishing properties of the Persons as being in the category of *relation*: the author of *Letter* 38 seems to think that sharing a single substance does not preclude having different relations, and therefore the presence of the same unaltered substance in each of the Persons does not remove their distinguishing marks.

The following analogy represents how the Cappadocian author seems to be thinking of matters: suppose that we cloned a person 'A' twice so that there were two duplicates of them 'B' and 'C', and then we stood these three people together. In such a scenario, the same nature is common to A, B, and C, whilst each person has unique relational properties in the group: A stands to the left of B, B stands to the right of A, C stands in front of A and B, and so on[52]. It is apparent here that each individual can have a host of unique relational properties, without this requiring an alteration to their nature itself. Likewise, in *Letter* 38, the author is affirming that the Divine persons are

[52] This example has echoes of Leftow's (2004) thought experiment of time-travelling Jane. Leftow proposes that: if it is coherent to posit that a single human, Jane, could travel back to a former time, and re-enter a room that her past self is already in, thereby co-existing with her former self, it is coherent to suppose that a single being can exist in multiple distinct life-streams (2004, p. 308). He uses this thought to propose that the one God can exist in three life-streams that are the Trinitarian persons (2004, p. 326). Whilst my example of cloning above has surface-level parallels to Leftow's thought experiment, my purposes are different to his. Leftow uses his thought experiment to justify the claim that one God can exist as three persons, whereas my thought experiment is offered above to support the far more minimal goal of trying to make sense of what the Cappadocian author *means* with their thesis that a single nature – of any sort – can bear a plurality of distinct relational properties.

distinguished by their relational properties, whilst the intrinsic nature of each Person just *is* the same Divine nature: 'the continuity of nature' between the Divine persons is 'never … rent asunder by the distinction of the hypostases' (*Letter* 38.4). Thus, we can note that the Cappadocian author holds that (T1) that the Persons are distinct is entirely compatible with the position that there is a single unchanging divine nature that exists in all three of them. If there is a single divine nature common to all three Persons, this upholds (T2) that each Person is God, whilst, as we will see in subsequent sections, the existence of *the same* nature in each Person upholds (T3) that there is one God. At present, I am concerned with the descriptive and exegetical exercise of unpacking the Cappadocian account; in (§4), I will turn to the analytical exercise of asking whether the Cappadocian author is right that the one Divine essence can exist unchanging in three Divine individuals.

At the close of our analysis of *Letter* 38, let us recall the author's opening remark about the distinctions between each hypostasis: 'we shall only direct our attention to the enquiry by what means each conception will be lucidly and distinctly separated from that which is conceived in common' (*Letter* 38.3). As Behr has argued, the emphasis here that the term 'hypostasis' refers to that which is distinct in a Trinitarian Person entails that the term 'hypostasis' is *only* a particular term:

> whatever is common to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit belongs to their common essence, while whatever is specific to each denotes their *hypostasis*. As such, it is not possible to single out anything that is common to each *hypostasis*, as *hypostasis*, to facilitate counting "three", for, being common to the "three", it would have to be classified as belonging to their common essence.
>
> (2004, p. 308)

Thus, because the distinctive properties of each Divine person are entirely different to those of the other two persons, whilst it is these properties which particularise the Divine essence into each hypostasis, it follows that, technically, there is not a general kind 'hypostasis' in the Trinity which is instantiated three times (Behr, 2004, p. 308). Now, the question that this account raises is that of how such a strong emphasis on the distinction between the three hypostases is compatible with

the ‘continuity of nature’ between them that is required to maintain monotheism and, indeed, the doctrine of divine simplicity itself.

To transition to a study of Basil’s explicit account in *Against Eunomius* of how the Trinitarian distinguishing marks (ἰδιώματα) are compatible with *divine simplicity* (T4), we can note at the outset that the ‘continuity of nature’ of the Divine essence in each hypostasis cannot be characterised as involving an *identity* relation between the Divine essence and each Person. We have already seen in our analysis of Dolezal in (2.a) that the identity of the Divine essence with more than one Person would collapse the distinctions between the Persons. In the context of *Letter* 38, we can note that the posit of person-essence identity would also lead to the reverse problem that the Divine essence is not identical to itself. Suppose that the author intends for the continuity of the Divine essence in each hypostasis to involve the Divine essence being *identical* to each hypostasis. It would then follow that, for example, the Divine essence directly bears the property of being unbegotten (an aspect of the Father’s mark) and the property of being begotten (an aspect of the Son’s mark). Clearly, though, a single existent cannot be both unbegotten and begotten: for a being to have the property of ‘unbegottenness’ just *is* for it to *not* have the property of begottenness. Since the properties of begottenness and unbegottenness are related as ‘F’ to ‘¬F’, it follows that: if the Divine essence is identical to more than one Divine hypostasis, this would have the absurd consequence that the Divine essence is not identical to itself, for it would possess mutually inconsistent properties. Now, we will see Basil wrestle with the question of how to *avoid* positing that incompatible Trinitarian properties directly inhere in the Divine essence in *Against Eunomius*, when he puts his commitment to the existence of the Trinitarian distinguishing marks (ἰδιώματα) in dialogue with his commitment to divine simplicity. Basil’s discussion of this issue will also allow him to elucidate the *epistemic* dimension of the Trinitarian ἰδιώματα that we have encountered in *Letter* 38.

(3b) Basil on ἰδιώματα in *Against Eunomius*: why God's simple essence does not have contradictory properties, and the 'epistemic' dimension of the distinguishing properties of the Divine Persons

In the following passage of Book 2 of *Against Eunomius*, Basil focuses on the importance of avoiding the problem of proposing that the Divine nature directly bears the distinguishing properties of the Divine persons. We see this as follows:

> It is the nature of the distinguishing marks (ἰδιωμάτων) to show otherness (ἑτερότητα) in the identity of the substance. And as for the distinguishing marks themselves, while they are often contradistinguished from one another such that they are separated to the point of being contraries, they certainly do not rupture the unity of the substance (ἑνότητα τῆς οὐσίας), as with the winged and the footed, the aquatic and the terrestrial, and the rational and the irrational. Since there is one substance (μιᾶς οὐσίας) that underlies all of them, these distinguishing marks do not make the substance foreign to itself, nor are they persuaded to join each other in a kind of rebellion.
>
> (*CE* 2.28 | 2011, p.175)[53]

In this passage, Basil indicates his commitment to (T3) that there is numerically one God with his claim that 'one substance' is present in all of the Trinitarian persons. Basil makes it clear that he wishes to affirm that one substance is present in the persons whilst avoiding the problems with affirming that a substance possesses mutually incompatible properties, although, *prima facie*, some of the Trinitarian distinguishing marks would appear to be contraries, such as begottenness and unbegottenness. Basil insists that the Trinitarian distinguishing properties 'do not rupture the unity of the substance' which he indicates is the case with incompatible properties such as 'the rational and the irrational'. Basil seems to be trying to make sense of the point that I expressed a moment ago that two contrary properties must belong to distinct entities, and so a single nature could not possess them both. Given that Basil is positing that the ἰδιώματα of the Divine persons are properties that *do not* divide the one Divine substance in this way, it is incumbent upon him to explain the manner in which he thinks these Trinitarian properties belong to the simple Divine nature. When addressing this issue, Basil makes some striking claims about the Trinitarian distinguishing marks:

[53] References to the Greek of *Against Eunomius* are to the text in *Sources Chrétiennes* (2022); the English translation used is that of Radde-Gallwitz and DelCogliano (2011).

> They implant the activity (τὴν ἐνέργειαν) of the things they identify as a kind of light in our soul (φῶς ταῖς ψυχαῖς ἡμῶν), and guide to an understanding attainable by our minds. But Eunomius, having transferred the opposition of the distinguishing marks to the substance, takes from this the starting-point of his impiety, scaring us with sophisms as if we were children: if the light should indeed be something other than unbegottenness, then we will necessarily demonstrate that God is composite (σύνθετος ὁ Θεὸς).
>
> (*CE* 2.28 | 2011, p.175)

Here, Basil makes it clear that he wishes to avoid the position that 'God is composite', and so he is positioning his account as a defense of divine simplicity (T4). Basil contrasts his position with that of Eunomius, who 'transferred the opposition of the distinguishing marks to the substance'; thus, it is manifest that Basil will propose a view according to which the distinguishing properties of each Person (needed to uphold T1) do not directly inhere in the simple Divine essence. When Basil entertains the view he opposes – that of supposing that the distinguishing marks directly inhere in the Divine substance – he says that 'if the light should indeed be something other than unbegottenness, then we will necessarily demonstrate that God is composite'. Here, Basil appears to be using 'the light' as shorthand for the shared Divine essence – since, as we saw in Chapter 3, 'light' is a common feature or 'proprium' shared between all three Divine persons – and he is proposing that the Father's unbegottenness, a distinguishing mark, cannot be thought of as a concrete *addition* to the Divine essence, as this would make God composite. Thus, Basil wants to offer an account of the distinguishing properties which avoids construing them as composite additions to the Divine essence. To uphold his tenet that the Trinitarian distinguishing marks do not rupture the simplicity or unity of the Divine essence, Basil suggests that the distinguishing marks involve *mental* apprehensions of the Divine persons in the human knower. We see Basil affirm this mental aspect of the distinguishing properties in his affirmation that they 'implant the activity of the things they identify as a kind of light in our soul, and guide to an understanding attainable by our minds'. Basil claims here that the distinguishing marks of the Persons somehow involve features of our conscious experience of God, rather than simply being mind-independent properties that distinguish the Persons on an ontological level. The Cappadocian account of God's activities is invoked here: a distinguishing mark implants 'the activity (τὴν ἐνέργειαν)' of a divine

person as 'a light in our soul (φῶς ταῖς ψυχαῖς ἡμῶν)', which allows us to understand their distinct existence. With Basil's invocation of divine agency, He seems to be saying that each Divine person makes known their own distinctive existence to the human knower by directly revealing it to the human mind.

The *epistemological* dimension of Basil's understanding of the Trinitarian distinguishing marks here has parallels in *Letter* 38, in which the Cappadocian author constantly referred to the order of human knowing when articulating the distinctness of each hypostasis in the Trinity. For example, *Letter* 38 explained the Holy Spirit's distinguishing marks by saying that: 'It has this note of Its peculiar hypostatic nature, that It is known after the Son and together with the Son, and that It has Its subsistence of the Father' (*Letter* 38.4). Here, in addition to the ontological dimension of the Holy Spirit's distinguishing mark that it 'has Its subsistence of the Father', the author affirms that the Holy Spirit's distinguishing mark involves the epistemic property that 'It is known after the Son and together with the Son' (*Letter* 38.4). Clearly, the idea that the distinctions between the Trinitarian Persons involve a conceptual or 'epistemic' dimension is a consistent theme across Cappadocian texts. Before proceeding to unpack what Basil means by saying that the Trinitarian distinguishing marks 'implant the activity of the things they identify as a kind of light in our soul, and guide to an understanding attainable by our minds', we should first make it clear that the Cappadocian conception of the Trinitarian distinctions does not entail that the distinctions between the Persons exist *only* in our minds, which would be a form of the modalist heresy. This can be understood through the case of the Spirit's distinguishing mark in *Letter* 38: the author made it clear that the distinguishing mark of the Spirit had, in addition to the epistemic dimension that the Spirit is known after and with the Son, the *ontological* dimension that the Spirit 'has Its subsistence of the Father' (*Letter* 38.4). Thus, whilst I will be analysing the epistemic dimension of Basil's understanding of the Trinitarian distinctions alongside the question of how this helps to uphold the compatibility of these distinctions with divine simplicity (T4), we can be clear from the outset that this epistemic dimension is intended to be

complementary to the ontological facet of the Trinitarian distinctions, rather than something which replaces it.

Basil further explains how he understands the distinguishing marks of the Divine persons later in *CE* 2.29, when he discusses the options for how to understand our usage of the term 'unbegotten' for the distinguishing mark of the Father. Basil reasons about how our application of the name 'unbegotten' to the Godhead is compatible with divine simplicity (T4) as follows:

> if we are going to preserve the notion of simplicity and partlessness (τοῦ ἁπλοῦ καὶ ἀμεροῦς ἔννοιαν διασῴζειν), there are two options. Either we will not claim anything about God except that he is unbegotten (τὸ ἀγέννητον), and we will refuse to name him 'invisible,' 'incorruptible,' 'immutable,' 'creator,' 'judge,' and all the names we now use to glorify (εἰς δοξολογίαν) him. Or, if we do admit these names, what will we make of them? Shall we apply all of them to the substance? If so, we will demonstrate not only that he is composite (σύνθετον), but also that he is compounded from unlike parts, because different things are signified by each of these names. Or shall we take them as external to the substance (ἔξω τῆς οὐσίας ἐκληψόμεθα)? So, whatever account of attribution they dream up for each of these names, they should apply the designation 'unbegotten' in the same way.
>
> (*CE* 2.29 | 2011, p.176)

Basil makes it clear that his focus is explaining how the Father's distinguishing mark 'unbegottenness' will allow us to 'preserve the notion of simplicity and partlessness'. To do this, Basil lists a series of names for God, 'invisible,' 'incorruptible,' 'immutable,' 'creator,' and 'judge', names which are used in the praise (εἰς δοξολογίαν) of God, and he affirms that the term 'unbegotten' will apply to the Father in the same way as them. It is noteworthy that Basil connects the use of language for God's attributes here with the praise of God: clearly, for Basil, the task of understanding how to use names for God appropriately is not only a philosophical exercise, it also fulfils the purpose of properly orientating us towards God in Christian worship practices. Now, let us consider Basil's own pattern for understanding the glorifying divine names that he lists, as this will simultaneously indicate his way of understanding how the term 'unbegotten' applies to the Father in accordance with divine simplicity (T4). Basil's list of attributions contains three privative names 'in-visible', 'in-corruptible, 'im-mutable'. Each of these privative names would have to be 'external to the substance', to use Basil's terminology, since they signify no positive

substantial quality of God; rather, as I explained in Chapter 3, Basil's view in *Against Eunomius* is that each privative name signifies a *conceptualisation* of God's lack of a given property. Next in Basil's list we have the titles 'creator' and 'judge'. Here, we have two names that, in accordance with the Cappadocian account of divine attributes, surely designate activities (ἐνέργειαι) of God: creating and judging. Thus, like the privative names listed by Basil, these two names would have to be 'external to the substance' since they signify no positive substantial quality of God's divinity, but activities that God enacts within Creation. Thus, each of the sample names that Basil lists for God would not characterise the substance of God in his own theological paradigm; this indicates that he will propose that 'unbegotten' will not pick out something inhering in God's substance either. Having noted that these names would be 'external to the substance' on Basil's own view because they are privative names and names of activity, let us consider Basil's meaning when he asks this question in the passage:

> Shall we apply all of them to the substance? If so, we will demonstrate not only that he is composite (σύνθετον), but also that he is compounded from unlike parts, because different things are signified by each of these names
>
> (*CE* 2.29 | 2011, p.175-176)

Given that Basil's own position would avoid conceiving of these names as picking out properties inhering in God's substance, it is manifest that he is actually referring to his rival Eunomius' theological paradigm here: because the names are non-synonymous, it follows on *Eunomius' linguistic theory* that each name has a distinct referent that, given the distinction in these names for God, they would have distinct referents if they were applied to God's substance directly. This, in turn, would violate divine simplicity, as each name would have to pick out a distinct existent in God's essence. This noted, let us consider Basil's connection of his account of the aforementioned terms for God with his proposal for how to understand the term 'unbegottenness', which names the Father's distinguishing mark, in accordance with divine simplicity:

> Or shall we take them as external to the substance? So, whatever account of attribution they dream up for each of these names, they should apply the designation 'unbegotten' in the same way.

(*CE* 2.29 | 2011, p.176)

Now, what Basil is doing with the comparison between 'unbegotten' and designations such as 'invisible' or 'incorruptible' is clear: the term 'unbegotten' is a conceptualisation of what the Father *lacks*, rather being a term that refers to something inhering in the Divine nature. The Father's distinguishing feature of unbegottenness is a *conceptualisation* rather than a concrete property inhering in God's substance. We can appreciate this by recalling that, in Book 1 of *Against Eunomius*, Basil already tackled the term 'unbegotten' by proposing that it is a term which signifies a privative conceptualisation of God. For Basil, the term 'unbegotten' (ἀγέννητος) operates as follows: 'whenever we call him 'unbegotten'', we are affirming '"Do not believe that the being of God depends on any cause or principle"' (*CE 1.10* | 2011, p.105). Thus, for Basil, the term 'ἀγέννητος' is a designation for our conceptualisation that God is without the property of depending upon a prior cause. In his prior discussion, Basil gave an illustration which is particularly helpful in the present Trinitarian context:

> just as being 'from someone' is not the substance when we are talking about human beings, so too when we are talking about the God of the universe it is not possible to say that 'unbegotten' (which is equivalent to saying 'from no one') is the substance.
>
> (*CE* 1.15 | 2011, p. 114)

Basil claims here that, both in the case of human beings and of God, our account of a person's relations of causal origin cannot be the same thing as our account of their substance. So, whilst Basil holds that the relational causal properties of the Divine persons truly distinguish them in the Godhead (thereby upholding T1 concerning the distinctness of each Person), what he is saying in *Against Eunomius* is that: each of the distinguishing marks of the Divine persons also involves a *conceptualisation* which is distinct from those of the other two persons, and is distinct from a conceptualisation of the simple Divine essence itself. Harking back to our analysis of *Letter* 38, the emphasis that the distinguishing marks of the Trinitarian hypostases involve distinct concepts was manifest in the conceptualist framing of the Trinitarian distinctions that the author began

with: ‘we shall only direct our attention to the enquiry by what means each conception (ἔννοια) will be lucidly and distinctly separated from that which is conceived in common’ (*Letter* 38.3). The distinction between the Divine persons was always intended on the Cappadocian account to involve isolating distinct *concepts* for each person, as well as their actual causal distinctions in the Godhead.

Why does Basil think that the conceptual dimension to the distinguishing mark of each Divine person helps him to defend God’s partlessness (T4)? The answer lies Basil’s need to affirm that the distinguishing marks of the Father and the Son (which uphold T1) do not rupture the unity of the simple Divine essence (T4). Now, according to Basil, the Father’s ‘unbegottenness’ is actually our *conceptualisation* of his lack of the property of being caused, and so it turns out that ‘unbegottenness’ and ‘begottenness’ are not related as two incompatible concrete properties inhering in God’s nature after all, such as being black all over and not black all over. Rather than being a pair of contrary inhering properties related as ‘F’ to ‘¬F’, the relationship between ‘unbegottenness’ and ‘begottenness’ can actually be construed on Basil’s view as a relationship between a *concept* and a *property*. ‘Unbegottenness’ is simply our *conceptualisation* of the Father’s lack of any causal dependency, whereas the Son’s ‘begottenness’ just *is* his causal dependence upon the Father. Thus, unbegottenness is the conceptual aspect of the Father’s distinguishing mark, whereas begottenness is the causal facet of the Son’s distinguishing mark. This is why the attribute of ‘unbegottenness’ is ‘external to the substance’ in Basil’s sense, meaning that Eunomius was wrong to have ‘transferred the opposition of the distinguishing marks to the substance’: the ‘unbegottenness’ of the Father is a ‘light in our soul’, a concept, rather than a component of the Divine essence (*CE* 2.28 | 2011, p.175). At long last, it follows that to posit the existence of the Father and the Son’s distinguishing marks is not to claim that two incompatible concrete properties inhere in the Divine essence. Now that we can avoid claiming that the Divine essence is ‘compounded from unlike parts’ in the Father and the Son’s distinct identities, it appears that Basil’s account of the distinguishing marks is compatible with divine simplicity (T4).

(3c) Gregory of Nyssa's development of Basil's causal and conceptual account of distinguishing marks in *On not three Gods*

Our interpretation of Basil's account of the distinctions between the Divine persons as involving a causal and a conceptual dimension is supported by Gregory of Nyssa's account of the Trinitarian distinctions in *On not Three Gods*. In this letter, Gregory unites a discussion of the causal and conceptual aspects of the distinguishing characteristics of the Trinitarian persons:

> But in speaking of cause (Αἴτιον), and of the cause (ἐξ αἰτίου), we do not by these words denote nature (φύσιν) (for no one would give the same definition (λόγον) of cause and of nature), but we indicate the difference in manner of existence. For when we say that one is caused, and that the other is without cause, we do not divide the nature by the word cause, but only indicate the fact that the Son does not exist without generation, nor the Father by generation […] To say that anything exists without generation sets forth the mode of its existence (πῶς μέν ἐστιν ὑποτίθεται), but what exists (τί δέ ἐστι) is not indicated by this phrase.
>
> (*On Not Three Gods*)[54]

Here, Gregory confronts the causal and the conceptual dimensions of the distinctions between the Divine persons. Firstly, on a conceptual level, Gregory proposes that when we refer to the 'cause' (i.e the Father) and 'of the cause' (i.e the Son), these terms do not 'denote nature' because 'no one would give the same *definition* (λόγον) of cause and of nature' (italics my emphasis). Gregory's point is that the meaning of a term for a distinguishing feature of a Divine person cannot be the same as the meaning of a term for the Divine nature, because our notion of 'cause' and our notion of 'nature' are non-synonymous. Thus, on a conceptual and semantic level, our terms for the Trinitarian distinctions cannot be picking out the Divine nature. Secondly, on an ontological and causal level, Gregory affirms that 'when we say that one is caused, and that the other is without cause, we do not divide the nature'; to support this claim, Gregory affirms that to state the causal origins of a Divine person is to state 'the mode of its existence', but not 'what exists'. Thus, Gregory is proposing that, metaphysically speaking, the relations of causal origin

[54] Greek text is from *Gregorii Nysseni Opera* (GNO.3.1: 56.11-22). Translation is that of Wilson (1893).

between the Divine persons are their 'modes of existence' rather than 'what they are' (that is, their simple nature). Gregory explains this with the following analogy:

> If one were to ask a husbandman about a tree, whether it were planted or had grown of itself, and he were to answer either that the tree had not been planted or that it was the result of planting, would he by that answer declare the nature of the tree? Surely not; but while saying how it exists he would leave the question of its nature obscure and unexplained.
>
> (*On Not Three Gods*)

If we were seeking to know about a particular tree, being informed that the tree was, or was not, planted by a human would tell us nothing about the kind of tree it is. Likewise, so Gregory reasons, when we are informed by the name 'unbegotten' that the Father is from no prior cause, we learn nothing about what the divinity of God is in itself: 'when we learn that He is unbegotten, we are taught in what mode He exists, and how it is fit that we should conceive (νοεῖν) Him as existing, but *what* He is (τι δέ ἐστι) we do not hear in that phrase' (*On Not Three Gods*). According to Gregory, I can form the conceptual understanding that the Father is uncaused, but being able to grasp this truth about the Father does not give me a comprehension of His essence. Perhaps Gregory's argument suggests a further step here: since it is possible to *know* that the Father is uncaused and to know that the Son is caused, whilst *not knowing* their shared transcendent Divine essence, it must be the case that the knowable causal relations in the Trinity are not identical to the Divine essence. The thought that we can know that the Father is unbegotten *without* knowing His essence indicates that the Father's distinguishing characteristic of unbegottenness cannot be the same thing as the Divine substance. Gregory concludes from his discussion that:

> since on the one hand the idea (λόγος) of cause differentiates the Persons of the Holy Trinity, declaring that one exists without a Cause, and another is of the Cause; and since on the one hand the Divine nature is apprehended by every conception (πάσης ἐννοίας) as unchangeable and undivided (ἀπαράλλακτός τε καὶ ἀδιαίρετος), for these reasons we properly declare the Godhead to be one, and God to be one (μία θεότης καὶ εἷς θεὸς), and employ in the singular all other names which express Divine attributes.
>
> (*On Not Three Gods*)[55]

[55] Greek text cited is (GNO.3.1: 57.8-13).

Gregory follows Basil in this letter by maintaining that the Divine persons are differentiated, in accordance with (T1), with regards to their *causal* origins: this is true both on the conceptual level – 'the idea (λόγος) of cause differentiates the Persons' – and on the ontological level, for the Persons truly are distinct in virtue of the fact that the Father is uncaused, whereas the Son and the Spirit are caused in their own unique way. Furthermore, when we think about each Divine person 'the Divine nature is apprehended by every conception (ἐννοίας) as unchangeable and undivided' because what is altered in our contemplation of each person is our concept of their relational-causal distinguishing property, not our account of their divinity itself. Now, returning to our analysis of Brower and Rea's discussion of numerical sameness without identity and the need for proponents of Trinitarian orthodoxy to affirm (T3) that there is one God, we can note that Gregory infers from the 'unchangeable and undivided' account of the Divine nature in each Person that 'we properly declare the Godhead to be one, and God to be one'. Thus, for Gregory, if we can hold that the Divine nature is not altered in each of the persons, we can affirm that it is *numerically one* in the persons, and this entails that there is *one God*. In sum, Gregory is affirming that, if the one Divine nature exists unchanged in each Person, this allows us to uphold (T3) that there is exactly one God. Given Gregory's apparent eagerness to show that the person-essence relations in the Godhead are relations of numerical oneness, I will ask in the following section whether the Cappadocian theory of the distinguishing properties of the Divine persons can be united to the account of numerical sameness without identity offered by Brower and Rea.

(§4) Defending the thesis that God's simple nature can have a plurality of relational properties, and articulating person-essence 'numerical sameness' on the Cappadocian view

As we have seen, the Cappadocian view of the Trinitarian distinctions and their compatibility with divine simplicity relies upon two closely connected theses. Firstly, *conceptually speaking*, we cannot conceive of God's simple substance as being the same as the plurality of distinctive relational properties in the Trinity. Secondly, *ontologically speaking*, properties that are in the category of relation need not introduce composition into a nature, and therefore God's simple substance really can bear a plurality of relational properties that give rise to the Trinitarian

persons. Once I have argued that the Cappadocians are right to affirm both of these theses, I will use the Cappadocian theory of the Trinitarian distinctions to reformulate Brower and Rea's account of 'numerical sameness without identity' in the Trinity. This will ultimately allow me to uphold the consistency of the propositions which compose the union of the DDS with the Trinity (T1 – T4).

(4.a) Why the Cappadocians are right that concepts for God's simple substance and concepts for the relational distinguishing marks in the Trinity are entirely distinct

To evaluate the Cappadocian position that our concepts for properties in the category of relation – including our concepts for the Trinitarian distinguishing properties – must always be distinct from concepts for substances – including an (epistemically unattainable) concept for the Divine substance – let us return to the distinction between substances and relations in the Cappadocian corpus. In *On not three Gods*, Gregory of Nyssa appeared to connect the distinction between the one Divine essence and the plural divine relations with an *epistemic* thesis: the very fact that one can think about the relations of causal origin in the Godhead *without* comprehending the Divine essence shows that there is a strong conceptual difference between the relations that distinguish each Hypostasis and the simple Divine nature. This invokes a conceptual commitment: when we are thinking about the world, it is a rationally intelligible *thought* that a simple nature possesses a plurality of properties in the category of relation. I will now propose that this thesis is eminently plausible.

Imagine that there is a simple physical particle 'ϕ' in the middle of my room; it is apparent that, in this scenario, we conceive of particle ϕ as having a plurality of relational properties such as 'being next to the chest of drawers', 'being beneath the ceiling', and so forth. If we are able to entertain the *thought* that there could be a simple physical particle that has a plurality of spatio-temporal relations, such as 'being next to the chest of drawers' and 'being beneath the ceiling', this shows that, *conceptually*, we are able to entertain propositions which ascribe to a simple substance a plurality of properties in the category of relation. Thus, if an objector rejects the

Cappadocian thesis that it is *conceptually coherent* to ascribe to God's simple nature a plurality of relational properties, they should also hold that the thought that there is a simple physical particle which has a plurality of relational properties actually involves a conceptual incoherence too. If one is willing to entertain the thought experiment that a simple particle exists that has a plurality of relations, it would seem to be *ad hoc* to hold that there is a conceptual incoherence in the thought that the simple Divine nature has a plurality of distinct relations.

Now, Gregory's reasoning in *On not three Gods* seemed to imply that the plausible distinction between thinking about the simple Divine substance and thinking about the divine relations leads to a stronger ontological thesis. If, when I am conceiving of the relations of causal origin in the Trinity, I am thinking about things which are in the category of *relation* rather than substance, it *cannot* be the case that, ontologically speaking, these relational distinguishing properties are identical to the simple Divine substance. I will now argue that Gregory is right that the conceptual distinction between things in the category of substance and properties in the category of relation gives rise to a plausible *ontological* account of the thesis that the simple Divine substance can possess a plurality of distinct relational properties.

(4.b) Why the Cappadocians are right that a simple substance can possess a plurality of properties in the category of relation

To begin to grasp the Cappadocian thesis that a simple substance can possess a plurality of relational properties, let us return to the position of the author of *Letter* 38 that it is possible for one and the same substance to exist in three individuals who have distinct relational properties. The Cappadocian author affirmed that 'the continuity of nature' is not 'rent asunder by the distinction of the hypostases', where the distinctions between the hypostases are grounded in a plurality of unique relational properties that each one possesses (*Letter* 38.4). Recall the analogy of cloning that we considered here: if a person 'A' is cloned to produce 'B' and 'C', the group of people formed by the collection of A, B, and C involves each of them having unique relational properties in the group without an alteration to their cloned human nature itself. Now, the main

dissimilarity between this thought experiment and the Cappadocian conception of the unity of the three Divine hypostases appears to be that, as Gregory of Nyssa made clear in *On not three Gods*, there is only *one* Divine nature: the simple divinity of God is not cloned in the three Divine persons. Rather, there is one common essence which constitutes each Person whilst *not* being identical to their distinct relational properties. Now, this account relies on the thought that it is possible for a simple nature to give rise to, and possess, a plurality of relational properties. Through the use of further thought experiments, I will now argue that this *is* a plausible view.

We have already seen that the posit that a simple particle exists which has a plurality of relational properties is conceptually coherent. Despite this, the Cappadocian account of the relational properties in the Trinity requires that the simple Divine essence not only has a plurality of relations, but has a plurality of relations *with itself,* as that is how the distinct hypostases have their own existences. It seems to be the case, however, that there is no further problem raised when we affirm that a simple nature has a plurality of relations with itself. For example, hypothetical simple particle ϕ has the following relations with itself: 'ϕ exists in the same moment as ϕ', 'ϕ has the same material properties as ϕ'. Thus, we should be comfortable with the thought that a simple entity has a plurality of relations with itself. Now, it can rightly be pointed out that the Cappadocian account needs something further again: we need the posit that a simple nature can have a plurality of intrinsic *causal* relations with itself. For example, in the relation between the Father and the Son, the Divine essence appears – in some sense - to bear a relation of begetting to itself. I will now argue that there is no problem with the notion of a simple nature having a plurality of intrinsic causal relations with itself.

It is apparent that we can conceive of an immaterial mind '$\boldsymbol{\psi}$' where $\boldsymbol{\psi}$ is simple in substance: $\boldsymbol{\psi}$ is not composed of immaterial 'mind-parts'. Now, we can also conceive of it being the case that immaterial mind $\boldsymbol{\psi}$ has the following distinct intrinsic causal relations with itself:

- '$\boldsymbol{\psi}$ thinks about $\boldsymbol{\psi}$'
- '$\boldsymbol{\psi}$ loves $\boldsymbol{\psi}$'

- '$\boldsymbol{\psi}$ causes $\boldsymbol{\psi}$ to think about mathematics'

The last example looks to be the most compelling. The posit that a simple mind could cause itself to think only requires the commitment that simple entities can cause events involving themselves. This is very plausible. Returning to the case of simple particle ϕ, if we entertain the thought that this particle has *any* causal properties, this would seem to entail that it could cause events involving itself. For example, suppose that particle ϕ changes direction if it collides with another particle; it follows that, upon such a collision, particle ϕ will contribute causally to the event of its own change of location. Now, if it is conceivable that a simple entity, such as a simple mind or a simple particle, has causal relations with itself, the posit that the simple Divine essence has a plurality of intrinsic causal relations with itself does not immediately go against our metaphysical intuitions.

At this point, a reader familiar with Aquinas' account of the Trinity (ST I, q.27 - 43) will note that he, following a Trinitarian image originally discussed by Augustine (*De Trinitate* Bk.9), also uses the posit of a mind that knows and loves itself to explain the Trinitarian relations, although the use that Aquinas makes of this thought is quite different to that which I am proposing here. Aquinas holds that the relations in the Trinity really are special cases of self-knowledge (the Father's relation to the Son) and self-love (the Father and the Son's spirating of the Spirit). In contrast, I am only proposing that the possibility of a simple mind that has causal relations with itself supports the general thesis that simple natures can bear causal relationships with themselves, and this entails that the Cappadocian posit that the simple Divine nature has a causal relationship with itself is acceptable. Because of the Cappadocian apophatic thesis that the Godhead is beyond our knowledge, I do not want to follow Aquinas in using the case of a mind which knows and loves itself to attempt to offer a theory of what the Trinitarian relations actually consist in.

If it is plausible that a simple mind could bear causal relations with itself, such as causing itself to think, I take this to show that the idea of a simple substance having causal relations with itself

is not, by itself, problematic. Perhaps the Cappadocian account of the particularisation of the Divine essence into each Person actually relies on the posit of relational properties that are more extravagant than those that I have considered, but I do not think this is plausible. As we saw in *Letter* 38, the Trinitarian relations posited by the Cappadocian author just involve the two commitments that, firstly, 'the continuity of nature' is not 'rent asunder by the distinction of the hypostases' and, secondly, that the relations that this nature bears in each hypostasis are causal in nature (*Letter* 38.4). Thus, given the plausibility of the thesis that a simple nature *can* bear a plurality of causal relations with itself, as the example of the simple mind that thinks of itself, loves itself, and causes itself to think indicates, the burden would clearly be on an objector to show that there is some additional characteristic of the relations which distinguish each hypostasis in the Cappadocian paradigm that I am yet to show is possible in a simple substance. Thus, an objector to the account under discussion would need to, firstly, specify exactly what kind of self-relating property a simple nature cannot have, and, secondly, show that the Cappadocian account of the Trinity posits that God's simple essence has precisely this relation to itself.

At this point, I take myself to have shown that both of the following Cappadocian tenets are rationally defensible:

(1) There is a distinction between thinking about the simple Divine nature (in the category of substance) and thinking about the Trinitarian relational properties (in the category of relation).

(2) It is indeed possible for the simple Divine nature to possess a plurality of relational properties which constitute the distinctions between the Trinitarian individuals.

Now, having defended (1) and (2) above, I will combine the Cappadocian theory of the individuation of each Divine person in the simple Divine nature with Brower and Rea's concept of 'numerical sameness without identity' to offer an account of the unity of the DDS with the doctrine of the Trinity.

(4.c) Upholding Trinitarian Divine simplicity through Cappadocian Simplicity

The Cappadocian theory proposes that the simple Divine nature can be particularised into distinct persons through a plurality of relational properties being present in the Godhead. Let us consider whether this account offers a cogent rendering of the consistency of the propositions that I have proposed as composing the union of the doctrine of the Trinity with the doctrine of Divine simplicity:

(Tl) Each Person of the Trinity is distinct from each of the others.

(T2) Each Person of the Trinity is God.

(T3) There is exactly one God.

(T4) God has no parts.

To address the question of divine aseity, I will also argue that the construal of the divine simplicity thesis (T4) on the Cappadocian account upholds God's ontological independence from all else.

Let us begin by considering the compatibility of (T1) and (T4) on the Cappadocian account. Firstly, whilst maintaining that the Divine nature is non-composite (T4), why think that it could be particularised into three relational divine persons, as expressed in (T1)? We have just seen why it is plausible to maintain that the possession of properties which are in the category of relation does not introduce composition into a simple nature. If one is willing to entertain the posit that a simple physical particle ϕ can have a plurality of relations, or that a simple immaterial mind $\boldsymbol{\psi}$ can have intrinsic causal relations with itself, one should be comfortable with the proposal that a plurality of relations can also obtain between the simple Divine nature and itself. Now, do the distinguishing properties of the Divine persons, such as unbegottenness and begottenness, entail that the simple Divine essence is composed of unlike parts, which would undermine (T4)? Basil has given us a convincing reason to think that the answer is *no*: with regards to the glaring case of contradictory properties in the Godhead, the 'unbegottenness' of the Father and the begottenness of the Son, it is actually the case that *unbegottenness* is our concept for the absence of a causal property in the Father, whereas *begottenness* is the Son's real causal property of

dependence upon the Father. What we have here are not two contrary concrete properties in the simple divinity of God, but rather a concept in the human mind (unbegottenness) and a relation of causal origin in the Trinity (begottenness). Thus, the existence of the Father and the Son in the same simple Divine nature does not rupture the unity of the Divine substance. It follows that one can affirm that the Father and the Son have different distinguishing features (T1) without needing to introduce contradictory parts into the Divine substance, and therefore the simplicity of God (T4) can be affirmed.

Now, does this account of the distinctions between the persons preserve the monotheistic tenet (T3) that there is one God? If we unite the Cappadocian account with Brower and Rea's notion of numerical sameness without identity, I believe that we can uphold (T3) here. According to Brower and Rea's concept of numerical sameness without identity, it is the case that: if the Father, Son and Holy Spirit all share only one nature, it follows that they can be counted as numerically one existent. Thus, to uphold (T3), the proponent of the Cappadocian view must show that only one nature exists in all three Divine persons. To meet this demand, I have followed the Cappadocians in arguing that the simple Divine nature can have a plurality of relations with itself and, once the Divine nature has a plurality of relations with itself, the existence of these relations distinguishes three distinct individuals (hypostases). Suppose we ask: 'what is the substance of each Divine individual?' The answer is that the same simple nature is the substance of each, as there is only one nature in the Godhead giving rise to the diverse relations. Now, if the substance of each Divine individual just *is* the Divine nature, it also clearly follows that all three Persons are 'God' because they each are constituted by the Divine nature; thus, thesis (T2) regarding each Person being God is maintained on this account. Now, if there is only a single nature which underlies the distinct existence of all three Divine individuals, it follows that there is only one nature to count in the Godhead. So, if it is asked 'how many Divine natures are there in the Godhead?' or 'How many Gods are there?', the answer that the Cappadocian view yields is *one*, as there is a single simple nature that underlies all of the relations that individuate the Persons in the Godhead. Thus, the Cappadocian view allows us to maintain the relational distinctions

between the Persons (T1), whilst affirming that the simple Divine nature underlies each of them (thereby upholding T2 and T4), and, given that there is only this one nature to count in the Godhead, it follows that there is only one God, and so (T3) is maintained.

The Cappadocian account that I have offered follows Brower and Rea's posit that the person-essence relations in the Godhead are cases of numerical sameness without identity: each Divine person has the same one Divine nature, but each Person is *distinct* from the other two Persons and from the Divine nature itself as a result of the unique relations that the single nature bears in each Person. Now, why think that this Cappadocian relational account of Person-essence numerical sameness is the better option for proponents of divine simplicity, compared to Brower and Rea's hylomorphic model? I have argued that the Cappadocians are right that relational properties do not introduce composition into a simple nature, and so this relational conception of the Trinitarian distinctions allows us to preserve divine partlessness. In contrast, Brower and Rea modelled the distinctions between the Persons as being grounded in the Persons each being distinct hylomorphic compounds, but this is evidently incompatible with divine simplicity (T4). Thus, conceiving of the personal distinctions as grounded in Cappadocian relational distinctions, rather than modelling them as distinctions of hylomorphic compounds, is the superior theoretical option for proponents of divine simplicity.

Now, Dolezal (2014) also distinguished between the Divine persons on the basis of their unique relations, so why think that the Cappadocian view is preferable to his account? As we saw, Dolezal looked to uphold the DDS by proposing the application of the identity thesis that each Person and their distinctive relation is *identical* to the one Divine nature, and this led to the problem that the Persons must be identical to each other as a result of the transitivity of identity. In contrast, the Cappadocians have offered a convincing account of how a nature can be *simple* and possess a plurality of relations with which it is not identical. As a result, a proponent of the Cappadocian account can agree with Dolezal that the distinct identities of the Trinitarian persons are grounded in their relations, but they can avoid the further claim that the one Divine nature is

identical to the distinct Personal relations; as a result, the Cappadocian theologian can avoid the modalist implications of Dolezal's 'identity thesis' account of the person-essence relations in the Godhead.

Now, we have seen that the Cappadocian view that the simple Divine nature can bear a plurality of relational properties that give rise to three divine individuals offers a plausible account of the consistency of propositions (T1 – T4), but our defense of this account will not be complete until it is demonstrated that God's aseity is maintained on the Cappadocian theory. I will now turn to address this issue in the final section of the chapter.

(§5) Cappadocian Triune Simplicity and Divine aseity

Recall why the DDS is a prerequisite for divine aseity: if God were composed of parts, He would depend upon these parts for His existence, and so God would actually be a dependent being rather than one that exists with ontological independence. In light of this, there is a challenge that could be levelled at the Cappadocian account, which is the following. We have proposed that the Divine persons are distinguished by their relations of causal origin in the Godhead, which involves the thesis that the Son and the Spirit bear relations of dependence upon the Father; but, given the Cappadocian thesis that the one Divine nature exists in the persons of the Son and the Spirit, this surely entails that the Divine nature *itself* bears relations of causal dependence in the relations that cause these two Persons. Thus, so the objection could proceed, the Cappadocian account entails that the Divine nature bears relations of causal dependence, and this just *is* the denial of divine aseity.

My 'aseity worry' about Cappadocian Trinitarianism is a close parallel to an objection to the tenet that the Son and the Spirit are causally dependent upon the Father which is offered by Mullins (2020) and (2023). Mullins proposes that the thesis that the Son and the Spirit are causally derived from the Father is incompatible with the aseity, and therefore true divinity, of the Son and the

Spirit; thus, he proposes that we should abandon belief in the 'divine processions' to preserve the thesis that the Son and Spirit are truly God and homoouisios with the Father (2023, p. 52)[56]. An exploration of Mullins' overarching worry will help me to frame my Cappadocian account of how the *a se* Divine essence *does* exist in the begotten Son and the proceeding Spirit. Let us consider Mullins' statement of the issue using the case of the Son's dependence upon the Father. His argument can be summarised thus:

(1) 'The Father has the property of aseity' alongside all other possible great-making properties (2020, p. 98).

(2) The Son depends upon the Father and 'lacks the property of aseity' (2020, p. 98).

(3) 'Aseity is a great-making property' (2020, p. 99).

(4) 'God has all of the possible great-making properties', and He has them essentially (2020, p. 90).

(5) [From 1, 2, 3, 4] With regards to the properties required for being divine, '[t]he Son lacks an essential great-making property that the Father has' (2020, p. 99).

(6) [From 1, 4, 5] Whilst the Father has the essential great-making properties of divinity, the Son has an essence 'inferior' to that of the Father. In this sense, the Son is 'ontologically subordinate to the Father' (2020, p. 99).

[56] I will omit a discussion of Mullins' use of the concepts of 'extensive' and 'intensive' great-making properties to *interpret* the Nicene claim that the Father and the Son are 'homoousios' (2020, p. 89 – 91) and (2023, p. 35). Given that Mullins cites Nagasawa (2017) as the source of the concepts of extensive and intensive greatness, it is an anachronism to read these concepts from contemporary perfect being theology into the Nicene statement of the homoousion. Sijuwade (2021) and (2026) has defended the compatibility of the pro-Nicene doctrine of divine processions with the aseity of the Son and Spirit against Mullins, although he follows Mullins in using the same 'great-making property' concepts from perfect being theology to unpack the original *content* of Nicene Trinitarianism. Whilst Sijuwade sights the Cappadocian Fathers as the forerunners to his view (2026, p. 18), I have shown in Chapter 3 that their method for articulating the consubstantiality of the Divine persons is through the affirmation that the same set of *predicates* – the same 'formula of being' (λόγος τοῦ εἶναι) – applies to each Person. This approach to articulating the consubstantiality of the Persons was valuable for the Cappadocian account of simplicity precisely because it *avoided* using an ontology of properties to affirm that the Persons have the Divine essence.

Now, Mullins' actual aim is to *avoid* the conclusion (6) that the Son is an ontologically subordinate being who lacks the Divine essence of the Father. To avoid this outcome, Mullins (2023) proposes that we deny (2) by affirming that the Son has aseity; to do this, he proposes that we reject the 'doctrine of divine processions', which affirms that the Son and the Spirit are causally derived from the Father (2023, p. 52). We can understand Mullins' argument and my aseity worry for Cappadocian Trinitarianism as using the same core theses, although our arguments proceed based on opposite assumptions about which premises must be true and false:

My concern about the aseity of the Divine nature on Cappadocian Trinitarianism	*Mullins' argument for the subordinating consequences of the Trinitarian processions*
1) (Divine Processions thesis) The Son and the Spirit are causally dependent upon the Father.	1) (Divine Processions thesis) Suppose that the Son and the Spirit are causally dependent upon the Father.
2) (Essence-Persons thesis) The Son and the Spirit are constituted by the one Divine essence that constitutes the Father.	2) (¬Essence Dependence thesis) It is impossible for the Divine essence to bear relations of causal dependence.
3) [From 1, 2] (Essence Dependence thesis) In the Persons of the Son and the Spirit, the Divine essence bears relations of causal dependence.	3) [From 1, 2] (¬Essence-Persons thesis) It follows from our starting assumption (1) that the Son and the Spirit *do not* have the one Divine essence that the Father has.

Whilst my syllogism raises the question of how the 'Essence Dependence thesis' regarding the presence of the one Divine essence in the Son and the Spirit is *compatible* with the aseity of the Divine essence, Mullins' argument proceeds in the opposite direction of rejecting the 'Essence Dependence thesis' on the basis that it is fundamentally incompatible with divine aseity. As noted, given that Mullins wants to affirm that the Son and Spirit *do* have the same essence as the Father, which is the claim that his argument would force us to reject, he proposes that we have to reject

the Divine processions thesis (1) to avoid the conclusion that the Son and Spirit lack the *a se* Divine essence. Now, however, I will propose that the Cappadocians give us the resources for showing that the thesis that, in the Son and the Spirit, the Divine essence bears relations of causal dependence upon the Father *is* actually compatible with divine aseity. My proposal will be that the 'dependence' relation that the Divine essence bears in the Trinitarian processions is a form of *self-dependence* which is compatible with aseity.

To explain my Cappadocian account of how the Son and the Spirit can depend upon the Father and yet still have the *a se* Divine essence, it will be helpful to frame my contribution as an elaboration upon Pawl's (2020) defence of the aseity of the Son and Spirit. Pawl sees the key to defending the aseity of the Son and the Spirit in conjunction with a belief in their dependence upon the Father as lying in a specification of what we mean by the claim that a being exists with aseity:

> Rather than something being *a se* when, as Mullins puts it, "its existence is not dependent upon, nor derived from, anything outside of itself," something is *a se* when it has a nature the existence of which is not dependent upon, nor derived from, anything outside of itself. Then, since each divine person *has a nature* that is not dependent or derived, each divine person is *a se*.
>
> (Pawl 2020, p. 119 – 120)

The thought here is that, if we posit that the Son and Spirit possess the same Divine nature as the Father, whilst the Divine nature has aseity in virtue of not being 'dependent upon […] anything outside of itself', we can affirm that all three Divine persons have aseity on the supposition that a sufficient condition for aseity is just having a *nature* which exists with ontological independence. For Pawl, the Son and the Spirit can be dependent upon the Father in the processions of the Trinity and yet still have aseity, just because the nature they possess is a nature that bears no dependence relations to anything outside of itself, and this is sufficient for aseity. As Pawl puts it, 'each divine person has a nature that fulfills the conditions needful for that person to be properly called "a se"' (2020, p. 120).

Pawl's minimal claim that a nature has aseity just if it does not depend upon something external to itself tracks the intuitions that motivated my argument that the DDS is a prerequisite for divine aseity in the Thesis Introduction. For example, on the thought that God's nature is composed of divine parts, the Divine nature would lack aseity because it would depend upon a reality which is not the Divine nature: a divine part by itself is not the Divine nature, and so the dependence of the Divine nature on such a part would entail that the Divine nature depends upon something other than itself, thereby lacking aseity. Moreover, Pawl's thesis that a *nature* exists *a se* if, and only if, it does not depend upon some external entity is also a thesis which Mullins implicitly assumed with his argument that the Son could not be begotten by the Father *and* exist with the Divine nature. On Mullins' account, the Son could not depend upon the Father *and* possess the Divine nature precisely because a being can only have the *a se* Divine nature if it bears no relations of dependence. Despite both Pawl and Mullins operating with parallel assumptions about what it would take for a *nature* to exist with aseity, Mullins (2023) has challenged Pawl's nature-based solution for affirming the aseity of the Son and the Spirit by claiming that it is question begging: the claim that the Son and Spirit can have their origin in the Father and yet still possess the *a se* Divine nature already presupposes that their dependence upon the Father is compatible with their aseity. Mullins puts the charge thus:

> Aseity is the property of not having a cause for one's existence. No being can be caused to exist in such a way that it does not have a cause for its existence. That is incoherent on its face. Further, it is question begging because it asserts the very thing that has been called into question by the argument, and it does nothing to explain how the Son can be *caused* to have the property of aseity.
>
> (2023, p. 51)

To overcome Mullins' response, a proponent of Pawl's view that the Son and Spirit exist with aseity in virtue of possessing the *a se* Divine nature would have to provide independent justification for the implicit premise Pawl requires that a Person can be dependent in the Trinitarian processions and yet still have the *a se* Divine nature. It is this independent justification that my Cappadocian solution can provide.

Let us consider the implication of the Cappadocian account that, in the persons of the Son and the Spirit, the Divine nature bears relations of causal dependence upon the Father. As we saw, the Cappadocian view also holds that the Divine nature is the nature present in the Father. Thus, on the Cappadocian account, the proposition 'the Son depends upon the Father' actually posits that the Divine nature depends upon the Divine nature itself. In the relations of causal origin posited by the Cappadocian account of the Divine persons, then, it is only claimed that the Divine nature is dependent upon the Divine nature. Putting aside the question of what it would mean for a *person* to exist with aseity, on the minimal claim that a *nature* exists *a se* if it does not depend upon an external entity, the proposition 'the Divine nature depends upon the Divine nature' is not a violation of aseity: if a single nature depends upon itself, it does not follow that the nature depends upon any external entity. But, if the claim that the Son depends upon the Father only rests upon the thesis that the Divine nature depends upon itself, it seems that the doctrine that the Son is begotten from the Father only requires the commitment that the Divine nature can bear relations of *self-dependence* in the generation of the Divine persons. Now, if the claim that the Son and the Spirit depend upon the Father only entails that the Divine nature depends upon the Divine nature, this *is* compatible with the aseity of the *nature* of the Son and the Spirit: the 'dependence' of the Son and Spirit here entirely consists in the one Divine nature depending upon itself, and, given the account of 'nature aseity' outlined above, a nature which is entirely self-dependent has aseity. The nature of the Son or the Spirit would only lack aseity if it depended upon something other than itself. I propose, then, that the Son and the Spirit are dependent persons in the Godhead, but the predicate '*a se*' applies to them because the 'dependence' relations that they bear in the Trinity are relations of *nature self-dependence* whereby the one Divine essence, already present in the Father, depends upon itself to bring forth two persons.

Now, recall that we must maintain that one nature exists in all three Divine persons to uphold the thesis that there is only one Divine nature, and therefore only one God in the Trinity. On the Cappadocian view that this one nature 'already' exists in the Father whilst it is also the very same

nature that is present in the Son and the Spirit, it follows that the generation of the Son and the spiration of the Spirit *do not* involve the generation or spiration of the Divine nature itself. The Divine nature already exists in the Father's person, and it is the very same nature that is present in the Son and the Spirit; thus, when the Father generates the Son, and the Father and Son spirate the Spirit, it is only the *Persons* that are brought to be in the Trinitarian relations, *not* the Divine nature. In the Father's bringing forth of the Son, and their shared bringing forth of the Spirit, a single, always existent, divine nature bears a relation of dependence upon itself to bring forth two persons who also exist with this nature.

Here, we can recognise that Eunomius' argument against the divinity of the Son was based on the opposite supposition that the generation of the Son involved the bringing forth of a second *nature*, and not just a person: using the language of 'nature' (φύσις) and 'essence' (οὐσία) interchangeably, Eunomius reasoned that 'God neither existed before himself nor did anything else exist before him' and therefore 'he is unbegotten essence' (*Apology* 7 in Vaggione, 1987, p. 41 - 42). Here, Eunomius appears to espouse the same intuition as Mullins that a generated essence – or 'nature' – cannot be God, because the essence of God must have always existed *a se* as the first principle in reality. Once we recognise, however, that, in the generation of the Son, one and the same nature which was already present in the Father *depends upon itself* to give rise to the Son, we do *not* have to follow Eunomius in conceiving of the generation of the Son as the bringing forth of a second nature. Eunomius is right that, if a second nature were brought into existence here, it would not be the *a se* Divine nature that exists in the person of the Father. But, if the single *a se* nature present in the Father can bear relations of *self-dependence* to give rise to the Son and Spirit, we should affirm that it is only the *persons* of the Son and Spirit that are generated by the Father, and not their natures. Clearly, Eunomius' difficulty sprang from his idea that the Son is one whose 'essence was begotten' (*Apology* 12 in Vaggione, 1987, p. 49). If Eunomius had understood that the Son is one whose *person* was begotten, whilst His nature was never brought into being, he might have been able to recognise that the Son, in sharing the one *a se* nature of the Father, is God.

I have proposed that the dependence of the Son and the Spirit upon the Father is grounded in relations whereby the one Divine nature depends upon itself. I admit that it is hard to comprehend the full meaning of the term 'depends' here: what could it mean to say that a nature depends upon itself to bring forth persons? Whilst this is beyond comprehension, I want to propose that the notion of a nature depending upon itself is not logically incoherent. As humans, we depend upon ourselves all of the time: I depend upon myself to perform activities such as work, for example. Thus, the notion that a being bears relations of self-dependence is not a contradiction in terms. Though the tenet that a nature could depend upon itself is not inherently contradictory, it is hard to fathom a sense of self-dependence which is so rich that it can give rise to new persons, however. When I depend upon myself to do work, I depend upon myself to reach a particular goal. In contrast, in the bringing forth of the Son from the Father, the Divine nature depends upon itself to give rise to a new unique person. Here, a natural 'Cappadocian' attitude would be that the self-dependence of the Divine nature in the bringing forth of the Son and the Spirit is too profound for us to form a positive conception of it. For example, Gregory Nazianzen discusses the incomprehensibility of the generation of the Son with an imaginary Eunomian interlocutor as follows:

> The Begetting of God must be honoured by silence. It is a great thing for you to learn that He was begotten. But the manner of His generation we will not admit that even Angels can conceive, much less you. Shall I tell you how it was? It was in a manner known to the Father Who begot, and to the Son Who was begotten. Anything more than this is hidden by a cloud, and escapes your dim sight.
>
> (*Or.* 29.8)[57]

Here, Gregory invokes his apophatic theme of the cloud: many realities pertaining to God are too exalted for us finite human beings to comprehend them. Theologians who are open to Gregory's apophatic stance on the Son's generation from the Father should be sympathetic to the account that I have offered. The mystery that our account preserves is the question of how the self-

[57] English translation used is that of Browne and Swallow (1894).

dependence of the *a se* Divine nature is so profound that it gives rise to new persons; this stretches far beyond the modest form of self-dependence that we humans are capable of when acting towards goals. The very fact that we cannot conceive of the manner of the Divine nature's dependence upon itself in the bringing forth of the Son and the Spirit indicates that God is a being who transcends the finite bounds of our epistemic grasp. I take the fact that the notion of such self-dependence is not a contradiction to show that this apophatic reserve in our Cappadocian account is not an appeal to mysterianism to avoid a logical problem, but a candid admission of the limitations of the human mind when it seeks to contemplate God.

Chapter conclusion

In this chapter, I have argued that the 'logical problem of the Trinity' ought to be expanded: given that the DDS was part of the original framework of Trinitarian orthodoxy and it is a pre-requisite for divine aseity, we must show that the existence of three Persons in the Godhead is not only compatible with the monotheistic principle that there is one God, but that it is also compatible with the further claim that God is without parts. In (§2), I demonstrated that neither Dolezal nor Brower and Rea have the resources for showing that the set of propositions that constitute the conjunction of the Trinity and Divine simplicity is a consistent set. Dolezal's identity thesis interpretation of the DDS collapsed the distinctions between the Divine persons and their relations, whilst Brower and Rea's model of hylomorphic composition, which explains how three distinct identities can be counted as one existent, only shows that a composite God could contain the trinitarian distinctions.

In response to this situation, I have unearthed the Cappadocian account of the Trinitarian distinctions and their compatibility with the DDS in (§3) and (§4). The hallmark of the Cappadocian solution is the tenet that a simple nature can bear a plurality of relations, and that these relations constitute the distinct identities of the Divine persons. Thus, there is no need to claim that the Trinitarian relations are identical to the Divine nature to preserve the partlessness of God. Once it was shown that the same simple nature can exist in each Divine person on the

Cappadocian view – since the Trinitarian distinguishing marks do not rupture the unity of the nature, as Basil showed – it follows that the Godhead contains only one divine nature. Thus, the monotheistic tenet that there is only one God can be maintained. In (§5), I then argued that the presence of the same nature in each Person entails that, in the bringing forth of the Son and the Spirit, the one nature which already exists in the Father simply bears relations of dependence to itself. This allowed us to preserve the aseity of the Divine nature, whilst it also brought clarity regarding Eunomius' doctrinal errors, for he conceived of divine generation as the bringing forth of a nature, and not merely a person.

Thesis Conclusion

In this concluding chapter, I will begin by explaining in (§1) how the Cappadocian theory of Divine simplicity that I have developed in the final three Chapters of this thesis has addressed the philosophical issues with the DDS and Thomist Simplicity which were uncovered in Chapters 1 and 2. Then, in (§2), I will explain the wider significance of my fusion of the methodologies of analytic thought and patristics in my account of the Cappadocian doctrine of God for the development of our understanding of analytic theology as an authentic branch of traditional Christian theology.

(§1) Upholding Divine Simplicity through the theory of Cappadocian Simplicity

Before I explain how Cappadocian Simplicity has resolved the objections to the DDS which have arisen in analytic responses to Thomist Simplicity, let us begin by reviewing these two central traditional accounts of the DDS in Christian philosophical theology.

In the Thesis Introduction, I argued that Aquinas was right to hold that the DDS underpins the traditional theistic commitment to divine aseity. In Chapter 1, I proceeded to explain the evolution of the 'identity thesis': the tenet that the DDS entails that God is identical to His attributes. Once I noted the presence of the identity thesis interpretation of divine simplicity in Augustine and Anselm, I explored Aquinas' view that God's perfection is the simple ground of the plural finite perfections of creatures, in which Aquinas affirms that the simple God is identical with His supereminent possession of each perfection. I then explained the claim of Thomist Simplicity that God's existence and essence are identical, showing that Aquinas holds that this allows him to maintain God's partlessness, necessity, aseity, and ontological role as the first being. I also demonstrated that both the contemporary proponents and opponents of the DDS often assume that the tenet that God is simple is just to be interpreted in accordance with Aquinas' theory of the doctrine. Thus, the notion that one could view Thomist Simplicity as false and yet still believe the DDS is a possibility which is rarely acknowledged in the contemporary analytic literature.

Following Radde-Gallwitz's insight that there is another account of divine simplicity at the heart of the Christian tradition which does not share the same assumptions as Thomist Simplicity, I offered an analysis of Cappadocian Simplicity in Chapter 3. Through a study of Basil of Caesarea's *Against Eunomius* and *Letter* 234, I explained the theory of conceptualisation (ἐπίνοια) and Basil's account of our knowledge of God derived from His activities (ἐνέργειαι). I argued that the Cappadocian thesis that whilst God's simple essence is unknowable, our positive knowledge of Him comes from His activities is a consistent thread throughout the writings of all three Cappadocian Fathers, as displayed in Gregory of Nyssa's *On not three Gods* and Gregory Nazianzen's *Second Theological Oration*. I argued that the Cappadocians do not conceive of God's activities as eternal processions from God as Palamite interpreters such as Bradshaw have argued, but rather the Cappadocians portray divine 'activities' as God's contingent causal effects within Creation. I also showed that Gregory Nazianzen's discussion of prayer allows us to maintain that the theologian can have a direct understanding of God's activities, as we can conceptualise 'divine activities' as the effects that God produces in our interior experience in the spiritual life.

Once we saw that neither our concepts derived from divine activity nor our privative concepts such as 'unbegotten' have content which is intended to represent the transcendent divinity of God itself, we saw that, on Cappadocian Simplicity, none of our divine attribute concepts refer to properties or perfections in the simple Divine essence, and therefore the problematic identity thesis can be avoided. When I turned to the Cappadocian conception of 'propria', or the unique traits of God's divinity, I followed the conceptualist reading of the later Radde-Gallwitz and Cross that propria are the unique concepts for God that we possess, rather than actual properties of the Divine nature. This then allowed us to make sense of the Cappadocian thesis that we identify the Divine persons through the unique set of predicates which form the 'formula of substance' (λόγος τῆς οὐσίας) for their common nature.

Now, drawing upon Alston's functionalist account of theological predication, I argued in Chapter 4 that the Cappadocian account of our concepts for God's activities can be received in a modern analytic idiom as a functionalist account of psychological concepts for God: we have epistemic access to God's behaviour, and this is all we need to make meaningful predications about God's 'psychology' – functionally construed – even whilst God's transcendent essence is inaccessible. I argued that our functional psychological concepts for God, which have content entirely derived from His knowable activity within the created order, provide a framework according to which we can make predications about the *causality* of the simple Divine essence. We know the simple God by being acquainted with the pattern of His action, the events that He causes. In the words of Basil: 'we say that from His activities we know our God, but His substance itself we do not profess to approach. For His activities (ἐνέργειαι) descend to us, but His substance (οὐσία) remains inaccessible' (*Letter 234* | 1926, p. 372 – 373).

Now, I will expand upon the model of Cappadocian Simplicity by explaining how it allows us to maintain that the DDS is compatible with the three phenomena that Thomist accounts of the DDS struggle to explain. These phenomena are: (i) the existence of the plural divine attributes; (ii) God's willing and knowing contingent states of affairs; and, (iii) God's existence as a Trinity of persons.

(i) How can the simple God have a plurality of attributes?

In Chapter 2, I began by showing that whether one understands the properties with which God is taken to be identical on the identity thesis as abstract objects or concrete properties (akin to perfections), the identity thesis leads to absurd results. I explained that Plantinga's famous objections to Thomist Simplicity just serve the role of demonstrating that the first option here, the 'abstract object' reading of properties, is untenable for the traditional theist, at least once Morris' further rebuttal of Mann's property-instance view is also taken into account. With regards to the second horn of the dilemma, the 'concrete' reading of properties, I then showed that Mann's attempted redemption of the identity thesis interpretation of the DDS within a framework which

affirms that God's properties are 'causal powers' that are the maximal version of attributes such as knowledge also failed. Here, I showed that Mann's revised thesis leads to the consequence that creatures instantiate *God* as a property – a thesis that Mann himself wished to avoid – and that ordinary language speakers who ascribe properties to creatures do not understand the meaning of the predicates in their language.

Now, I showed in Chapter 4 that a proponent of Cappadocian Simplicity can agree with the likes of Plantinga that there is a real distinction between God and each of His attributes, for divine attributes are actually *names* (ὀνόματα) which conceptually present to us God's action as manifest in His created effects. Thus, the plural 'divine attributes' are not a series of properties held to be identical in the Divine nature as Aquinas maintained, but rather the plurality is a plurality of designations for God's character as manifest in His many created effects. Thus, the Cappadocians can affirm the DDS without having to maintain that God is identical to His attributes.

I turned to a discussion of Brower's truthmaker account of divine simplicity in Chapter 4. There, we saw that Brower replaced the thesis that God's attributes are properties with the proposal that the divine attributes are actually a plurality of descriptions of God which all have a single truthmaker, the simple Divine essence. Once I noted the parallels between Brower's understanding of the divine attributes and the Cappadocian conceptualist view, I argued that Brower's account lacks an explanation of how our propositions formed with the divine attribute concepts can possibly have *content*, given that they have God's unknown divinity as their referent and truthmaker. To explain how the Cappadocian conceptualist view is not subject to the same limitation, I argued that my Cappadocian-functionalist account of psychological concepts for God provides a framework according to which we can make meaningful predications about God's causal dispositions, as they are known to us through His created effects. Thus, Cappadocian Simplicity offers the supplement needed to make Brower's truthmaker theory of the divine attributes work by explaining how our propositions about the divine attributes have God's unknowable essence as their truthmaker, whilst still having content.

(ii) How can the simple God have contingent volitions and contingent knowledge?

In Chapter 2, I argued that Aquinas' conception of God as identical with both His knowledge and His will leads to modal collapse problems for Thomist Simplicity, for, in both cases, the unchanging identity of the simple Divine substance across possible worlds entails that – on the identity conception of God's will and knowledge - God's will and knowledge must be the same in every possible world. This then entails that all contingency in God's volition and knowledge of creatures collapses. We also saw that another modal collapse problem for Thomist Simplicity stems from the thesis that God is pure act. As Mullins showed, Aquinas' pure act thesis seems to make all divine action necessary rather than contingent, which in turn makes it impossible for the simple God who is *actus purus* to cause contingent entities. I will split the Cappadocian solutions available for the proponent of the DDS here into two parts, beginning with the case of contingent divine volition and knowledge, before proceeding to the case of the pure act thesis.

In Chapter 4, I explained that my Cappadocian-functionalist view of our concepts for God's will is that these concepts are really disguised concepts for God's *action*: we speak of God 'willing' just to conceptualise the fact that God causes certain events, rather than to try to refer to any changing 'mental states' in God. We have no grasp of God's divinity, and so it cannot be the case that our concepts have the purpose of trying to map events in the inner divine being in the first place. Here, Brower again proved to be an important conversation partner with his agent-causal model of the simple God's contingent volitions. My Cappadocian account of the concept of God's contingent will was in harmony with Brower's in that both models propose that the concept 'God's will' does not refer to an intrinsic state of God; rather, it refers to a state of affairs extrinsic to the Divine nature in which God causes an event or effect in His creation. I argued, however, that my solution was the better option for the proponent of the DDS, for it avoided Brower's *ontological* thesis that God's volitions are *identical* to God's extrinsic causal relationships with contingent states of affairs. Brower's thesis that a divine volition just *is* the state of affairs [God → causes → Creation] commits Him to the view that God has a complex divine mental state – a

volition – which contains creatures as a component of it. If God has complex mental states which include creatures as components, divine simplicity is compromised, whilst creatures seem to enter into our conception of God's mental states. In contrast to Brower, I articulated my Cappadocian-functionalist view as just involving the conceptual commitment that we *conceptualise* the event of God causing C_1 and the event of God causing C_2 using different functional psychological concepts, and this is because these two causal processes involve God being related to different effects. Thus, we can use concepts for contingent divine willing without actually positing the *existence* of divine volitions, nor do we need to believe in Brower's posited divine volitions that are identical to causal relations between God and the created order. To uphold the DDS, I argued that we need not suppose that an entity must undergo intrinsic changes in order to play different functional roles, and therefore our application of different 'willing' functional psychological concepts to God in different possible worlds does not necessitate the posit that God's intrinsic nature varies across worlds.

Now, turning to contingent divine knowledge, in Chapter 2 I considered Grant's extrinsic model of God's knowledge as a causal relationship with Creatures. I argued that Grant's proposal entailed that a posited divine mental state – God's knowledge – involves creatures as constituents of this mental state. This entails both that God does not have aseity, for one of His mental states supervenes upon the existence of His creatures, *and* that panentheism begins to creep into one's doctrine of God, for the account entails that creatures are *part* of God's mental life. I turned to Wood's discussion of targetless apophatic models for God, and argued that Grant's model is best repositioned as a representation of what God's knowledge 'seems to do' according to our epistemic standpoint. I picked up this theme with my Cappadocian defence of the DDS in Chapter 4, when I argued that our *concept* of God's knowledge was only ever intended to help us to make sense of divine activity: we can interpret the proposition 'God knows that P' as actually offering the conceptualisation that, *in His relationship with us,* God acts like a being who knows that P. Thus, so I propose, concepts devised to pick out the state of affairs of 'God's knowing P' just serve the role of helping us to conceptualise divine behaviour: the notion that such concepts refer

to contingent divine mental states results from a misunderstanding of the epistemic role of our concepts. Like our concepts for divine volitions, our concepts for God's knowledge just track changes in God's causation of events, rather than representing any supposed changes in God Himself. Just as in the case of our functional psychological concepts for God's 'willing', a being does not need to undergo intrinsic changes to play different functional roles, and so we can posit that God plays the different causal roles ascribed to Him by our functional concepts for God's knowledge that P – or, more accurately, 'God's acting as though P is the case' – without disposing of the belief that God is simple.

Now, let us consider the pure act issue derived from Thomist Simplicity. In Chapter 2, I demonstrated that Mullins is correct that Aquinas' thesis that God is pure act leads to a dilemma for the proponent of Thomist Simplicity: either it is affirmed that God has act-potency composition in virtue of it being possible for Him to exist alone with a state of 'potentiality to create', or it is affirmed that God is pure act and the actual world where God creates our Creation is the only possible world. Here, I proposed that the correct response to Mullins' dilemma is not to eschew the DDS or the contingency of God's creative act, but rather to recognise that the first horn of the dilemma regarding God having potency states is entirely premised upon Aquinas' Aristotelian metaphysics of act and potency. In the Cappadocian apophatic view that we have no concepts which represent the transcendent Divine essence, an alternative paradigm to the Thomistic-Aristotelian framework of applying the categories of 'act' and 'potency' to God's essence emerged. I argued that the Cappadocian principle that our concepts cannot represent God's essence entails that we cannot apply concepts for act or potency states to God's essence. This then leads to us eschewing the attempt to apply an ontology of act and potency components to God, which facilitates a removal of the idea that a simple God would have to be *pure act*. This then allowed us to circumvent Mullins' modal collapse objection entirely, by avoiding the Thomistic-Aristotelian starting point that it was based upon.

(iii) How can the simple God be a Trinity of Persons?

In Chapter 5, I identified the desiderata for a reconciliation of the DDS with the doctrine of the Trinity that God is three persons in one nature. Building upon Brower and Rea's introduction of (T1 – T3) as expressing the propositions essential to the doctrine of the Trinity, I argued that our Cappadocian account of the coupling of the DDS with the Trinity must show that the following *four* theses are compatible:

(Tl) Each Person of the Trinity is distinct from each of the others.

(T2) Each Person of the Trinity is God.

(T3) There is exactly one God.

(T4) God has no parts.

With regards to the consistency of (T1) and (T4), I drew upon the Cappadocian *Letter* 38, Basil's *Against Eunomius*, and Gregory of Nyssa's *On not three Gods* to argue that properties which are in the category of relation – which distinguish the Trinitarian individuals – do not introduce composition into a simple nature. I proposed that we treat the matter of whether a simple nature has a plurality of relations and the matter of whether it has composition as separate issues. Once I argued that we admit the conceptual coherence of imagining a simple mind that bears causal relations with itself, I argued that the thought that God's nature is both simple and bears intrinsic causal relations with itself is consistent. Now, once it is understood that the Cappadocians distinguish between the three Divine persons entirely on the basis of their relations of causal origin, it is manifest that the Cappadocian view that God's nature is both simple and consists in three causally related divine persons is philosophically coherent.

The second issue regarding the compatibility of (T1) and (T4) concerned the special case of avoiding claiming that God's nature is constituted by 'unlike parts' in virtue of possessing the seemingly contrary properties of unbegottenness and begottenness. Here, Basil showed us that the Father's 'unbegottenness' is actually our *concept* for the absence of a causal property in the Father, whereas the Son's 'begottenness' is His real relational property of causal dependence upon

the Father. Thus, 'unbegottenness' is a *conceptual* distinguishing feature of the Father, whereas 'begottenness' is a *causal* distinguishing feature of the Son, and therefore the ἰδιώματα of the Father and the Son do not 'rupture the unity of the substance' of the simple Divine nature (*CE 2.28* | 2011, p.175).

Now, let us consider the compatibility between (T1) that the Divine nature gives rise to three distinct persons and (T3) that there is one God. We saw Gregory of Nyssa insist that, because the same nature is unchanging in each of the three Divine persons, it is the case that 'the Divine nature is apprehended by every conception as unchangeable and undivided' in the three Persons and therefore we 'declare the Godhead to be one, and God to be one' (*On Not Three Gods*). Thus, the reason that Gregory counts *one* God is that there is a single nature which does not change in each of the three trinitarian persons; the fact that each Divine person is constituted by the Divine nature also upholds (T2) that each Person is God. I proposed that Brower and Rea's account of numerical sameness without identity offered the tools for affirming the Cappadocian account of the oneness of God: on the hypothesis that x and y can be counted as numerically one existent iff x and y are constituted by the same nature, it follows from the sharing of a single nature in the Divine persons that they are numerically one existent. Thus, the monotheistic doctrine that there is one God can be maintained on the Cappadocian account. I then argued that the Cappadocian account of the relational distinctions between the Persons is the superior choice for upholding the DDS, in contrast to Brower and Rea's model of the Trinity as involving distinct hylomorphic compounds that structure each of the Divine persons. Whilst the Cappadocian account of divine simplicity can preserve (T1 – T4), Brower and Rea's use of hylomorphic mereology inevitably fails to model (T4) that God is simple.

To show that the Cappadocian account of God's triune simplicity is compatible with divine aseity, I argued that the relations of dependence that the Son and the Spirit bear to the Father are to be understood as relations whereby the one Divine nature *depends upon itself*, which is compatible with the account of 'nature aseity' proposed by Pawl (2020) and perhaps implicitly assumed by

Mullins (2020) and (2023). On this proposal, the relations of begetting and spirating in the Godhead only involve the bringing forth of the second and third Divine *persons* and not their nature, for there is only the one, self-depending *a se* nature in the Godhead. To assume otherwise would be to imagine that the generation of the Son and the spiration of the Spirit involve the Father bringing forth two new natures, which appeared to be the idea that Eunomius found unacceptable: surely, he thought, only the first nature, that of the Father, would really be God (*Apology* 7). I showed that the key to avoiding Eunomius' position largely consists in removing his mistake of supposing that the generation of the Son and spiration of the Spirit involve the bringing forth of dependent *natures*; rather, I proposed that, via relations of 'nature self-dependence', the Son and the Spirit possess the same *a se* nature already present in the Father.

Now that I have elucidated the Cappadocian theory of God's simplicity throughout this dissertation, the contemporary acrimony regarding the DDS can be transformed, as this new model of divine simplicity offers an alternative paradigm to the current stalemate between proponents of accounts of the DDS derived from Thomist Simplicity and their opposition. Now that we have a choice between the framework of Cappadocian Simplicity and Thomistic accounts of God's simplicity, we are presented with a space of robust theoretical options regarding which interpretation of the DDS to choose. My proposal is not that we consign Thomist Simplicity to the theoretical scrap heap, but rather that we recognise that it was only ever one model of the DDS amongst a plurality of different options for how to construe the doctrine. As we have seen, there is a completely different – and, in the context of the current objections to the DDS, more fruitful – approach to divine simplicity available in the theological resources of the Cappadocian Fathers, which involves a fundamentally different way of thinking about God's simplicity to that offered by Aquinas. Whilst these two ways of approaching the DDS render radically different accounts of divine simplicity, it is clear from the fruits of my Cappadocian defence of the DDS that philosophical theologians should follow Cappadocian Simplicity if they wish to affirm that the simple God has a plurality of attributes, is free in His relationship with creatures, and is a Trinity of Persons.

(§2) The contribution of my Cappadocian study to the methods of analytic theology: why a 'ressourcement' appreciation of early Church thought was not just for 20th Century theologians

In this closing section, I will consider how my synthesis of the patristic theology of the Cappadocians with the tools of contemporary analytic thought while defending divine simplicity offers a helpful contribution to the methodology of analytic theology today. To get to the heart of this methodological conversation, I will begin by clarifying some overarching matters regarding the evolution of analytic theology as a discipline, before highlighting the contrasting methodological expectations of analytic thinkers with those of the theologians of early Christianity. I will then explain why my analytic turn to Cappadocian thought to resolve contemporary philosophical issues with divine simplicity can place analytic theology in dialogue with the theological movement known as the '*Ressourcement*' in 20th Century Catholic thought.

Analytic theology began to emerge as an enterprise distinct from analytic philosophy of religion towards the end of the first decade of this century (Wood, 2009, p. 943). As Wood notes, the movement from the practice of philosophy of religion to analytic theology has usually involved the same people – originally trained in the analytic philosophical tradition – transitioning to analysing the doctrinal framework of their religious tradition, which has often been Christianity (2009, p. 943-4). Wood notes that a 'defining feature of analytic argument—one that is especially pertinent to the philosophy of religion—is that analytic philosophy proceeds by way of explicit, propositional truth claims' (2009, p. 950). Given this, the analytic philosophical tradition can equip us to be highly effective at analysing the logical entailments of doctrines, as long as those doctrines are stated as propositions in the same way that many substantial metaphysical theses in philosophy – for example, concerning the nature of the mind or of time – are stated as propositions for analysis. Now, whilst it *is* the case that Christian doctrines have historically been stated as propositions – 'there is one God', 'the one God exists as three Persons', and so on – there is strong evidence in the early Church that these propositions were expressed in contexts where a paradigm

was accepted which specifies how to *interpret* these doctrines and *integrate* them within the exegetical and even liturgical practices of the Church, as I will now proceed to explain.

It is clear that the doctrinal debates about the relationship between the Father and the Son which consumed much of fourth century Christian thought gave rise to a shared understanding between theologians about the impact of doctrine upon the reading of Scripture. For example, Basil and Eunomius both agreed that if one is going to affirm that the Father and the Son are consubstantial, one will need to explain how one reads Christ's words 'the Father is greater than I' (Jn 14:28) (*CE* 1.24-25 | 2011, p. 125-127). On the other hand, if a theologian is going to affirm that the Father and the Son are not of the same substance, they will need to explain why the Word is called 'God' in the prologue of the Gospel of John and described as involved in the divine action of making the cosmos. Eunomius takes it upon himself to defend his heterousian doctrine by offering an interpretation of this scriptural language as being entirely compatible with the idea that the Word was 'created' by the Unbegotten God, and so he reasons that the Word is merely called 'God' relative to 'those things which came into existence after him and through him' (*Apology* 15 in Vaggione, 1987, p. 53). Here, Basil and Eunomius, whilst on rival sides of the debate, shared the view that one's doctrine of God was immediately intertwined with an approach to reading Scripture.

Elsewhere, in Basil's work *On the Holy Spirit*, he expresses the conviction that one's account of the Trinity is also an account of how one understands the liturgy. When Basil argues for the understanding that the Holy Spirit is divine, he makes it clear that his dispute is not just with the *doctrine* of those who oppose the divinity of the Spirit, but with the fact that '[t]hey insist we must give glory to God *in* the Holy Spirit, but never *and to* the Holy Spirit', whereas Basil proposes that doxologies which glorify the Spirit with the Father and the Son are common and accepted ecclesial practice (*On the Holy Spirit,* 25 | 1980, p. 90 - 92)[58]. Clearly, Basil and the opponents of

[58] The translation used here is that of Anderson (1980).

the divinity of the Spirit both recognised that one's stance regarding whether the Spirit is divine is intertwined with one's reading of the spiritual praxis of the Church as expressed in the doxologies of the liturgy. A person's acceptance or denial of the proposition 'the Spirit is God' is taken to reveal an underlying stance on the liturgical life of Christian prayer. In a similar manner, we saw in Chapter 5 that Basil regards our terms for divine attributes to be doxological in nature: our divine attribute vocabulary, which provides the concepts used in theological reflection, is the language of *worship*. Thus, the theologian who reflects upon our divine attribute terms is actually contemplating the language of divine praise. This implies that the theological activity of arriving at conceptualisations for God based on this language is an inherently spiritual activity in itself, as it is orientating the theologian towards a true understanding of the worship of God.

Thus, whilst these early figures share with contemporary analytic theologians the practice of articulating Christian orthodoxy by isolating systems of correct propositions, these propositions were wedded to a *tradition of interpretation*, in which it was expected that a doctrine about God should simultaneously offer a paradigm for understanding the scriptures, the liturgy, and the spiritual life.

Now, what is the bearing of this early vision of theology on analytic theology today? I propose that if we are inheritors of the Christian theological tradition, we must carry on the vision which was embraced by the original theologians who formed our conception of doctrinal orthodoxy. The task of demonstrating that a doctrinal proposition is both true and integrated within the wider spiritual practices of Christianity was not only a task for fourth century thinkers. Rather, to be part of the Christian theological tradition, a tradition still wedded to the Creeds of the 4th Century, *is* to integrate the theoretical task of giving elucidations of doctrines with the spiritual praxis of the Christian life. This point about theological methodology can be strengthened by a consideration of Wynn's philosophical stance that, in the religious domain, to show the 'logical adequacy' of an idea does not, by itself, guarantee that the idea has religious 'relevance' in practice:

> Whatever the logical adequacy of a particular system of religious ideas, it will hold no real relevance for religious life if it fails to engage the affective and imaginative dimensions of human understanding. So in determining the overall adequacy of a religious viewpoint, it is not enough to make reference to its logical properties; it is also necessary to consider whether it can be embedded from the point of view of feeling and imagination within a religious practice.
>
> (1999, p. 155)

Wynn is not saying anything here which would question the analytic aspiration of rendering religious beliefs logically precise and internally consistent: the proposal is not that systematic thinking should be relaxed in favour of testing ideas on the basis of 'feeling'. Rather, Wynn's proposal is that, if we saw a religious belief as vindicated once we were assured of its logical coherence, we would not be taking that belief *seriously enough*: whilst demonstrating the 'logical adequacy' of a belief – perhaps by showing how it can be immune to a given set of objections – is crucial, one must also show that one's understanding of that belief coheres with the 'affective and imaginative' practical life of the religion of which the belief is a part.

Wynn explores anthropological studies of religion as a reliable testing ground for discerning the practical significance of systems of religious beliefs (1999, p. 155). This empirical emphasis differs to some extent to the focus upon experience in the Cappadocians' thought: the Cappadocian theological method that I have explored has tended to integrate doctrinal considerations with first-person experiences of prayer, worship and the revelation of Christ in the Gospel, rather than with third-person observations of a religious community. Take, for example, Gregory Nazianzen's discussion of the encounter with God which I analysed in Chapter 3. Here, we saw that the Cappadocian 'theoretical' distinction between God's essence and activities functioned not only as an explanation of how the plurality of divine attributes are compatible with God's simplicity, but also as an account of the phenomenology of spiritual experience. Gregory's understanding of divine simplicity was also an account of how we should understand the encounter with the 'hidden' God who manifests Himself to us in prayer. Thus, the Cappadocian understanding of God's simplicity and activities presented in this thesis was intertwined with a

distinctive approach to prayer and contemplation. For analytic theologians who are sympathetic to Cappadocian Simplicity as an account which can resolve contemporary objections to the DDS, I suggest that the Cappadocian methodology which yielded this account exhorts us to see the lived experiential encounter with God in prayer, liturgy, and scripture as part of the 'practical life' which cannot be neglected in the analysis and interpretation of doctrine.

Analytic thought and the Cappadocian Fathers: lessons from 'ressourcement' theology

To contribute to the union of analytic methodology with the methodologies of other branches of Christian theology, I have engaged with key Cappadocian texts both through the analytic paradigm and through the exegetical techniques of patristic scholarship. This allowed my argument to offer a study of doctrinal orthodoxy which embeds the analytic method with the demands of other areas of theology. Here, my union of analytic methodology with methodologies used in the patristics department can help to present a richer vision of the role of analytic theology in the Christian tradition. By turning to the matter of uniting analytic thought and patristic theology, I should note that I am continuing the work of other scholars engaged with this project. For example, with regards to the DDS, Leftow (2006) has emphasised the value of Augustine's original formulation of divine simplicity when defending the doctrine whilst, in the domain of Christology, Pawl's (2016) *In Defence of Conciliar Christology* contains a study of the claims about Christ made by the first seven Ecumenical Councils in the early Church. Thus, in my research on Cappadocian Simplicity, I am furthering a project of dialogue between the analytic tradition and early Christian thought which has already begun. This noted, I propose that the synthesis of analytic and patristic tools in this dissertation presents potential methodological developments for future enquiry in analytic theology. To explain this, I must briefly discuss the movement in 20th Century French theology known as the *Ressourcement*.

As Flynn explains, the Ressourcement – or 'return to the sources' – movement was multifaceted, involving a 'biblical renewal', a 'liturgical renewal', and a 'patristic rejuvenation', although I will primarily be concerned with the latter third of this triad here (Flynn, 2011, p.3 - 4). Towards the

end of the first half of the twentieth century, *ressourcement* theologians conceived of a return to early Church theology as offering solutions to the theological problems of their day. This is captured in the words of one of the chief theologians of the movement, Henri De Lubac: '[e]ach time, in our West, that Christian renewal has flourished, in the order of thought as in that of life (and the two are always connected), it has flourished under the sign of the Fathers' (quoted in Flynn 2011, p.8). Ressourcement theologians were responding to the state of theology in the Catholic world, in which a manualist tradition had emerged where certain theologians received the tenets of Aquinas and expositors of his thought as dogmatic foundations for all theology. As Flynn explains, '[t]he achievement of the ressourcement theologians lay not so much in their rejection of a long since arid neo-scholasticism as in their dual concern to engage with the contemporary world and to ensure the essential unity of theology' (2011, p.9). The 'essential unity of theology' that Flynn refers to here is the unity of the Christian theological enterprise in the present with the original deposit of theological insight that was expressed in the thought of the Church Fathers. Thus, according to this movement, there is an inherent unity between the task of answering doctrinal questions today with the original beginning of the tradition of articulating the orthodox Christian faith in the early centuries of the development of the Church.

Now, with my proposal that we can find resolutions to the contemporary analytic problems with divine simplicity by returning to the patristic theology of the Cappadocians, my approach is essentially a continuation of the ressourcement vision of theology in an analytic context. I am uniting 21st Century analytic theological questions with the theology of the early centuries of doctrinal development. It is particularly noteworthy that the ressourcement movement was sparked by a desire to move beyond a situation where the thought of Aquinas was seen as the main starting point for theological enquiry. Whilst analytic thinkers are not dogmatically committed to only discussing Aquinas, it is remarkable to note that, as displayed in Chapter 2, in practice many analytic discussions of the DDS proceed as though Thomistic thought sets the terms for the debate of this doctrine. Discussions of the DDS in analytic thought have been in need of a rediscovery of theological tools that precede Aquinas' thought. By shifting the focus away from

Thomist Simplicity and towards Cappadocian Simplicity, I have brought the required ressourcement manouvre to bear on contemporary analytic debates. Further work can be done here, as recent patristic research has brought to light other distinctive approaches to God's simplicity in early Christian thought that could be put in dialogue with the analytic discussion of the DDS, such as Pui Him Ip's recent study of Origen's view of God's simplicity (2022). In this regard, I hope that analytic theologians continue to see a union of the resources of patristic theology with analytic thought as a rich opportunity for future analyses of Christian doctrine.

To the extent that I have succeeded in demonstrating that Cappadocian Simplicity can be expressed in an analytic idiom to resolve the modern objections to the doctrine of divine simplicity, I take myself to have furthered the project of uniting the analytic method with the original patristic foundations of Christian thought, and to have shown that this is a deeply promising development for philosophical theology. In Cappadocian Simplicity, we have discovered both an account of God's simplicity, and an approach to the practice of theology itself, which can illuminate our understanding of Christian truth today.

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