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Modality, Logical Probability, and the Trinity: A Defence of Weak Skepticism

MODALITA, LOGICKÁ PRAVDĚPODOBNOST A TROJICE: OBHAJOBA UMÍRNĚNÉHO SKEPTICISMU

Dissertation thesis

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Statement

I declare that I wrote this dissertation on my own and that I cited all used sources.

Olomouc, ... Vlastimil Vohánka

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Abstract (EN)
The author defends the thesis that, apart from religious experience, it cannot be evident – in a defined sense of psychological impossibility – that the Trinity doctrine is logically possible. The Trinity doctrine is understood broadly, as the proposition that there is just one God but three persons each of which is God. It is concluded that, apart from religious experience, none of the following claims can be evident: the Trinity doctrine is true; Christianity is true; the Trinity doctrine is logically possible; Christianity is logically possible; the Trinity doctrine has some but not minimal (zero) logical probability with respect to all that is evident; Christianity has some but not minimal logical probability with respect to all that is evident. Christianity is understood as a particular compound proposition including the Trinity doctrine. Replies are provided to objections against the employed principles of logical probability. The author leaves as undecided whether the Trinity doctrine, Christianity, or their logical possibility are: epistemically justified; well-argued; plausibly logically probable with respect to all that is evident (though not evidently logically probable on such information apart from religious experience); or probable in other than the logical sense.

Keywords Evident truth · Logical probability · Logical possibility · Analycity · Trinity · Christianity · Apologetics · Psychological possibility · Religious experience · Non-deductive methods in mathematics · Epistemic justification · Good argument · Interpretations of probability · Richard Swinburne · Timothy J. McGrew · Peter van Inwagen · John Maynard Keynes · James Franklin · Scholasticism · Baroque scholasticism.

Abstrakt (CZ)
Autor hájí tezi, že, dáme-li stranou náboženskou zkušenost, je vyloučeno (ve specifickém smyslu tzv. psychologické nemožnosti), aby bylo evidentní, že učení o Trojici je logicky možné. Učení o Trojici se tu chápe široce; jako propozice, že existuje právě jeden Bůh, ale přitom tři osoby, z nichž je každá Bohem. Je učiněn závěr, že, dáme-li stranou náboženskou zkušenost, je vyloučeno, aby bylo evidentní, že: učení o Trojici je pravdivé; křesťanství je pravdivé; učení o Trojici je logicky možné; křesťanství je logicky možné; učení o Trojici má neminimální (nenulovou) logickou pravděpodobnost vzhledem ke všemu, co je evidentní; křesťanství má neminimální (nenulovou) logickou pravděpodobnost vzhledem k všemu, co je evidentní. Křesťanství se zde chápe jako určitá složená propozice zahrnující učení o Trojici. Jsou poskytnuty odpovědi na námitky proti užitým principům logické pravděpodobnosti. Autor neřeší otázku, zda jsou učení o Trojici, křesťanství či jejich logická možnost: epistemicky justifikované; dobře zdůvodněné; plausibilně logicky pravděpodobné vzhledem ke všemu, co je evidentní (byť nikoli evidentně logicky pravděpodobné vzhledem k takovým informacím, dáme-li stranou náboženskou zkušenost); nebo pravděpodobné v jiném než logickém smyslu.

Klíčová slova Evidentní pravdivost · Logická pravděpodobnost · Logická možnost · Analytičnost · Trojice · Křesťanství · Apologetika · Psychologická možnost · Náboženská zkušenost · Nededuktivní metody v matematice · Epistemická justifikace · Dobrý argument · Interpretace pravděpodobnosti · Richard Swinburne · Timothy J. McGrew · Peter van Inwagen · John Maynard Keynes · James Franklin · Scholastika · Barokní scholastika.

Reproduction of the engraving on the title page: Albrecht Dürer (1471 – 1528), *Melencolia I* (1514). Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Melencolia_I_(Durero).jpg (accessed December 6, 2011).

To Pavla, Kilián, Klára, and Benedikt.

"All things are wearisome; man is not able to tell it. The eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor is the ear filled with hearing." Ecclesiastes 1: 8.

Contents

I. Introduction

This dissertation is an enquiry whether we, humans, can know evidently, but apart from religious experience, that there is just one God who exists in three persons. It is also an inquiry whether we, humans, can know evidently, but apart from religious experience, at least that the latter claim – i.e., that there is just one God who exists in three persons – is logically possible or has some but not minimal (zero) logical probability (with respect to all which is evident to us, at the given time).

The dissertation is detailed and (so) more than long enough to let me lay my cards on the table already now, without spoiling its story for the reader. We can't, given the so far available epistemic resources, know evidently and apart from religious experience any of those three things: i.e., the truth, logical possibility or non-minimal logical probability of the existence of triune God. Or so I will argue. Not surprisingly, it will also be argued that, therefore, we can't, given the available resources, know evidently and apart from religious experience the truth, logical non-minimal logical probability of Christianity. Christianity shall be understood as a compound claim including, among others, the claim that there is just one God in three persons. (For my construal of Christianity, see section II.7.) This latter, Trinitarian claim shall be referred to as the Trinity doctrine.

At the same time, no attempt is made in this text to assess whether belief in Christianity or the triune God can be evidently known as true or from religious experience. (But I will seriously doubt helpfulness of ordinary religious experience as a means to evident knowledge of the truth, logical possibility or non-minimal logical probability of Christianity or the Trinity doctrine.) Similarly, no attempt is made here to decide whether belief in Christianity or the triune God can be epistemically justified, rational, or well-argued.

The next section (I.1) explicates why the stated theme is of consequence. The subsequent section (I.2) outlines the structure of the dissertation and situates the dissertation and its sources in the context of systematic philosophy and the history of philosophy.

I.1. Worth inquiring

In an influential paper in Bayesian confirmation theory (on the problem of confirming a scientific hypothesis by its already known consequences), the American philosopher and historian of science Daniel Garber remarked:

> "… the most difficult kind of criticism to answer is the one that says that a certain project is just not very interesting or important. I shall not attempt to defend the interest of my investigations …"[1]

[1] D. Garber, "Old Evidence and Logical Omniscience in Bayesian Confirmation Theory," in *Testing Scientific Theories*, John Earman (ed.), Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press 1983, p. 124.

Though I am not sure assaults on the importance of my dissertation's subject matter will be those most fatal, I confess, like Garber, that it is somewhat uneasy for me to explain why my project should be deemed as interesting, or in fact very interesting. Not that I'd be disposed to admit my project isn't such. I'm rather displaying a general symptom. Conduct of long-term projects frequently drives out clear awareness why one bothered to take part in them in the first place. Extended enquiries are no exception here, including those in philosophy. Indeed, a significant portion of the history of philosophy could be regarded, by a critical observer, as a story of such forgetfulness. Even if philosophy had begun in wonder – or despair – about the world, and had tried to figure out reasoned answers to ultimate questions, no later than the 20th century it became increasingly indifferent to these questions. Certainly, things are seldom either black or white. Even the writings of early analytic philosophy – logical positivism and early ordinary language philosophy – devoted some space to raising and addressing the problems of God's existence, the meaning of life, and ethics.[2] Still, it is hard to dispute the overall trend of philosophical writings of the first half of the 20th century to speak more and more – even if more and more precisely – about matters less and less helpful to reasoned treatment of these problems (i.e., of God's existence, the meaning of life, and ethics). This, in turn, has been a cause of wonder – or despair – of many philosophers dissatisfied with such a state of the art, and eventually lead to the revival of metaphysics (since 1950's) and philosophy of religion (since 1960's) among analytic philosophers in English speaking countries.[3] Thus, a full circle of the (hi)story of philosophy was completed.

But I digress. Unlike Garber, I want to defend, or at least intimate, the importance of my subject. So, why should a philosopher inquire whether the Trinity or Christianity can be known evidently, but not from religious experience, as true, logically possible, or non-minimally logically probable? I will provide a short and a long reply to this provocation. The short reply is: why shouldn't he? Perhaps such a retort is not an explanation. Yet it is a reply, and one bringing to light the fact that answering the question in the negative – i.e., it is not the philosopher's business – is no less problematic than the answering it in the affirmative. Detailed philosophical research has been carried out on such subjects as psychokinesis and clairvoyance, the ethics of e-mail, the philosophy of computer games, Facebook, pornography, and (even) particular movies. Within the philosophy of religion, multiple nitty-gritty studies were written on mysticism, heaven and hell, Tibetan epistemology, Neo-Taoism, near-death experiences, reincarnation, and

[2] See Quentin Smith (*1952), *Ethical and Religious Thought in Analytic Philosophy of Language*, New Haven and London, Yale University Press 1997. Interestingly, Smith is not only a fertile author in the philosophy of time, language and religion, and since some recent time a theoretical physicist, but originally also a phenomenologist. No surprise he has a good eye for exaggerated intellectual stereotypes. (Note: when they are accessible to me, I adduce nativity and/or death dates of the cited authors.)

[3] Cf. Robert C. Koons, "Who's Afraid of Metaphysics?," *Public Discourse* (June 10, 2011), http://www.thepublicdiscourse.com/2011/06/3356 (accessed December 7, 2011); Jorge J. E. Gracia (*1942), *Metaphysic and Its Task: The Search for the Categorical Foundation of Knowledge*, Albany, State University of New York Press 1999; Douglas McDermid, "Metaphysics," in *The Edinburgh Companion to Twentieth-Century Philosophies*, Constantin V. Boundas (ed.), Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press 2007, pp. 156-171; Charles Taliaferro (*1952) and Erik S. Christopherson, "Philosophy of Religion," ibid., pp. 309-323; Eugene Thomas Long, *Twentieth Century Western Philosophy of Religion 1900-2000*, Dordrecht, Kluwer Academic Publishers 2000.

Zoroastrianism.[4] Given these issues are worth inquiring, then, the issue of this dissertation is worth inquiring, too. To assert otherwise would be ill-grounded, an instance of employing double standard.

Here comes my long reply to the question whether my issue is worth inquiring. First we should pause to ponder what it means to say that a particular issue is worth inquiring. I distinguish four senses, and remark that my issue is non-controversially worth inquiring in the first two of them, and perhaps worth inquiring in the remaining ones.

In the first sense, to say that a given issue (or question) is worth inquiring simply means that one cares about the given issue (say, whether a certain thesis is true, or whether the negation of this thesis is true). Such caring about may even take the form of striving to decide the issue (to decide whether the given thesis is true or false). Even if one does not strive for a solution (an answer), it may still be that he would be bothered if he found out that a particular solution is correct, for he had an initial opinion or predilection concerning the matter. And even if one had no such initial opinion or predilection, he could still want to decide the issue (to find the right answer) in a reasoned way. In any case, if one proclaims that a particular issue or question is worth inquiring in this first sense, there is no space to dispute such a claim. It simply reports that he cares about the issue or question, and on this point he is the highest authority. Of course, the subject matter of this dissertation is worth inquiring in this trivial sense to its author.

In the second, and less trivial sense, to say that a particular issue is worth inquiring means that many people care (or cared) about it. As my subsequent discussion (especially section IV.1) will exhibit in ample detail, the issue of this dissertation is also worth inquiring in this second sense.

In the third sense, to say that a particular issue is worth inquiring could mean that it is worth inquiring independently upon whether anybody cares about it. That is, an issue (or, a question expressing the issue) is worth inquiring in the third sense just when it would be worth inquiring even if nobody cared about it (or, about a correct answer to the given question expressing the issue). Some people will wonder at this moment: what does it mean to say that an issue is worth inquiring in this objective sense?, Does it make sense at all to say such a thing? These qualms, in my opinion, boil down to those pertaining to metaethics. So they are beyond my scope. But I'll reply briefly. *If* there are moral values or norms independent on anybody's belief (embodied, e.g., in the claim, everybody should *not* torture children just for fun), then I see no principled reason against objectively worth pursuing inquiries either. And, indeed, many able thinkers not only defend, but also *have* defended objective moral values or norms.[5] One could

[4] I am not fabricating any of these. Philosophical books, papers or encyclopedia entries were published on all of them. For a sample, cf. the contents of *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. by Edward N. Zalta (*1952), http://plato.stanford.edu (accessed December 7, 2011), an exemplary fruit of the collective effort of contemporary philosophers (mostly analytic), both in its quality and scope.

[5] From recent authors, I name, e.g., Panayot Butchvarov, Thomas Hurka, David Brink, Robert Merrihew Adams, Q. Smith, John F. Post, Derek Parfit, Jonathan Dancy, Robert Audi, Graham Oddie, David McNaughton, Ralph Wedgwood, Paul Bloomfield, John Broome, Richard Swinburne, and William Lane Craig. Aristotelian metaethicists and some virtue ethicists are to be counted for moral objectivists in metaethics, too. For recent analytic book-length defences of moral objectivism, see especially David Enoch, *Taking Morality Seriously: A Defense of Robust Realism*, New York, Oxford University Press 2011; Michael Huemer, *Ethical Intuitionism*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan 2005; Terence Cuneo, *The Normative Web: An Argument for Moral Realism*, New York, Oxford University Press 2007; Matthew H. Kramer, *Moral Realism as a Moral Doctrine*, Oxford, Wiley-Blackwell 2009.

also suggest that without objective moral norms or values, the moral discourse hardly makes sense, and its specific motivational power remains an incomprehensible brute mystery. But mysteries should not be multiplied beyond necessity. Moreover, by the lights of many thinkers, the appearance of objectiveness of moral order swamps any (if any) appearances to the contrary, such as vague and question-begging hints at the alleged "queerness" of objective moral norms and values.[6] To paraphrase David Kellogg Lewis's (1941 – 2001) classical point on behalf of the law of non-contradiction, the objectivity of certain moral values or norms is so much more plausible than the philosophical premises not in dispute that it matters little whether or not a successful defence of the moral objectivity could be based on these principles.[7] So it seems to many people that there is an intuitive sense in which some objects or deeds are worthy independently of human opinions. In like manner, it could seem to many people that there is an intuitive, general sense in which an issue is said to be worth inquiring independently of whether anybody takes it as such. But is *my* issue objectively worth inquiring, even if *some* issue is? I think it plausibly is *if* certain others are *eminently* so. This will be explicated in a while. For now, let's merely say that an issue is objectively worth inquiring just when it is worth inquiring in the third sense. And I note I won't try to argue that some issue *is* objectively worth inquiring.

Finally, in the fourth sense of the word, to say that a particular issue is worth inquiring could mean that the enquiry has for the inquirer *positive* expected value. Here, expected value means the weighted sum of values of possible outcomes of the enquiry, whereas each value is weighted by the probability of the outcome (with respect to the inquirer's total evidence). (Cf. section VI.1 below, for a related notion of a belief based on rational investigation.) Alternatively, to say that a particular issue is worth inquiring could mean that the enquiry has for the inquirer *greater* expected value than not pursuing the enquiry. On both construals, there's an ambiguity for the involved values may be understood either as, on the one hand, objective, or, on the other, as subjective preferences. Yet another ambiguity lurks in the probability talk, which has several interpretations (cf. section VI.3.) More importantly, however, I am not willing to disambiguate,, as I'd be at my wit's end if ordered to compute the expected value of my enquiry. I am not sure what all the main possible outcomes that I should consider are. Objective probabilities and values appear here rather inscrutable. And I am similarly unsure about my own subjective probabilities and preferences. Much less am I ready to advise others about their expected value of the investigation. But *if* somebody views certain issues as worth inquiring in the fourth sense, perhaps he will view this way the issue of this dissertation, too.

Now, what are these certain issues I have on my mind? They are the chief existentially pressing ultimate issues of philosophy. More specifically, they are the chief existentially pressing issue of philosophy of religion. Even more specifically, they are the issues of God's existence, the after-life, and salvation. These three problems are, by the way, among those ultimate ones

[6] Cf. William F. Vallicella, "Moral Objectivism, Mackie's Argument from Queerness, and Alternational Change," June 15, 2011, http://maverickphilosopher.typepad.com/maverick_philosopher/2011/06/the-objective-reality-of-evil.html (accessed December 7, 2011); Trent Dougherty (*1971), " "Spookines": Get Over It," June 19, 2011, http://prosblogion.ektopos.com/archives/2011/06/spookiness-get-.html (accessed December 7, 2011).

[7] Cf. a letter by D. Lewis quoted in the preface of *The Law of Non-Contradiction: New Philosophical Essays*, Graham Priest, J. C. Beall and Bradley Armour-Garb (eds.), New York, Oxford University Press 2005, p. 1. I thank Sean Choi for bringing Lewis's remark to my attention in this context.

that 20th century philosophers were increasingly ignoring, until 1960's. The three problems may be expressed by the three following pairs of questions.

> (i) Is there a God or a God-like reality? (By "God," I mean an omnipotent being. More details in section II.6.)
> (ii) If there is, what is it like?
> (iii) Is there an after-life? (That is, do human persons exist after their own death?)
> (iv) If there is, what is it like?
> (v) Is there salvation? (That is, can humans attain an enormous everlasting well-being or happiness?)
> (vi) If there is, what is it like and how can it be attained?

Naturally, these six questions are interrelated. The affirmative answer to (i) supports the affirmative answer to (iii). The affirmative answer to (iii) is necessary for the affirmative answer to (v). Furthermore, the answer to (ii) will typically shape the answer to (iv), which, in turn, will typically shape the answer to (vi).

Furthermore, all the six listed issues, expressed in the six questions, have appeared to many scholars as *eminently* objectively worth inquiring. Indeed, it is hard to figure out an issue which would be more important than those six listed. At least, *if* some issues are objectively worth inquiring, then those six listed should be among them. Or, put in another way, it plausibly holds that *if* to look for a reasoned answer to some question is objectively worth pursuing, then for any of those six questions, to look for a reasoned answer to it is *eminently* objectively worth pursuing.

Even assuming some issues are objectively worth inquiring, however, perhaps it holds for any of the conditioned questions (ii), (iv), and (vi) that it may be regarded as objectively worth pursuing *only* by those agents who haven't *definitively settled* on the *negative* of the corresponding conditioned upon question. (But, the existence of cocksure atheistic philosophers of religion who have been exploring such conditioned questions testifies to the contrary.) Still, *at least* anybody who *hasn't* settled some of the more fundamental questions of exploration should, plausibly, regard the corresponding conditioned question eminently objectively worth exploring – given there are, in the first place, some issues which are objectively worth inquiring for somebody. Therefore, assuming the existence of objectively worth exploring questions, *all* the six questions should seem as objectively worth exploring *at least* to those who *haven't* settled *any* of the questions (i), (iii), and (v).[8]

[8] I don't have enough patience to answer in detail objections like this: none of the six questions is meaningful because a question is meaningful only if any answer to it can be ascertained by scientific methods alone or by checking meaning postulates (of the given language) alone. I see no reason to accept this draconian rule. So much the less in face of the apparent meaningfulness of those questions, and the fact that they have been deemed as meaningful by the majority of known mankind. Moreover, the rule I reject is correct only if it can be ascertained by scientific methods alone or by checking meaning postulates alone. But the rule itself seems to violate the clause it states. Hence it seems incorrect. These are not epochal but rather well-known hints, of course. For further details, cf. A. Plantinga (*1932), *God and Other Minds: A Study of the Rational Justification of Belief in God*, Ithaca and London, Cornell University Press 1967, ch. 7; R. Swinburne (*1934), *The Coherence of Theism*, Oxford, Clarendon Press 1993, ch. 2; Q. Smith, *Ethical and Religious Thought in Analytic Philosophy of Language*, op. cit., ch. 2.9; C.

Let's recall how Christian religion fits the picture. This religion has today more followers than any other world religion. It also has had a greater influence on the culture and society of Europe, America, Russia, and Australia than any other such religion. Globally, it has been growing in the number of its adherents. Measured by the amount, scope, and detail of philosophical, historically apologetic, and theological writings on its behalf, the Christian religion is arguably the most developed one.[9] This is reflected also in the fact that most contemporary analytic philosophers of religions are Christians and most contemporary analytic philosophy of religion is a reflection upon the meaning, coherence or justification of the central claims of Christian religion.[10]

Now, Christian religion provides an answer to all of the six all-important questions about God, the after-life, and salvation. If the propositional content of the Christian religion is true, then: (i*) there is just one God, (ii*) who is, besides being omnipotent, also omniscient, morally perfect, existing in three persons (the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit), the creator *ex nihilo* of all other beings, etc.; (iii*) there is an after-life, (iv*) the blissfulness of which depends on the moral qualities of one's life (specified in further Christian theological and moral doctrines); (v*) there is salvation, (vi*) which can be attained in the after-life by means of these moral qualities, consisting (among other things) in an intimate union with and knowledge of God, and will (if attained) eventually take on a bodily form. (For further details of the propositional content of the Christian religion, cf. section II.7.)

Given the considerable credentials of the Christian religion (mentioned in the penult par), and given the objective worthiness of exploring questions (i)–(vi), the claims (i*)–(vi*) are plausibly eminently objectively worth examining. Or, *all* the claims (i*)–(vi*) stand as objectively worth examining *at least* in relation to those who *haven't* settled definitively that (i*), (iii*), and (v*) are false. But, *if* the claims (i*)–(vi*) are objectively worth examining, then the Trinity doctrine and Christianity are objectively worth examining, too. For the Trinity doctrine is embedded in the claim (ii*), and Christianity embeds all the claims (i*)–(vi*).

Let me summarize my hitherto thoughts concerning the objective worthiness of enquiry. *If* some issues are objectively worth inquiring, then the issues of God's existence, the after-life, and salvation are *eminently* objectively worth inquiring (at least if we haven't settled definitively that there is no God, no after-life, and no salvation). But if these three issues are eminently objectively worth inquiring, then the issues whether the Trinity doctrine and Christianity are true are eminently objectively worth inquiring, too. Still, even assuming these two latter issues are such, is the issue of the dissertation objectively worth inquiring, if, perhaps, not so gravely?

It seems so to me. Let me explain. *If* the truth of the Trinity doctrine and Christianity is eminently objectively worth inquiring, and having evident knowledge of this truth, independent of religious experience, it would be objectively worth having. At least, people often value intrinsically having true beliefs and not having false beliefs, and having *justified* beliefs, above

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Taliaferro, "Philosophy of Religion," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Spring 2011 Edition)*, E. N. Zalta (ed.), http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2011/entries/philosophy-religion (accessed December 8, 2011), # 2.

[9] Cf. Avery Dulles (1918 – 2008), *A History of Apologetics*, San Francisco, Ignatius Press 2005.

[10] Cf. Daniel J. Hill, "What's New in Philosophy of Religion," in *Philosophy Now*, Issue 21 (Summer/Autumn 1998), http://www.philosophynow.org/issue21/Whats_New_in_Philosophy_of_Religion (accessed November 5, 2011); D. J. Hill and Randal D. Rauser, *Christian Philosophy A–Z*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press 2006.

all on religious matters. Moreover, many philosophers (but not only philosophers) have valued intrinsically *evidently* true beliefs (cf. section II.1), above all on religious matters, including the truth-value of the Trinity doctrine and Christianity. Furthermore, *religious experiences* which would make religious matters, like the Trinity doctrine or Christianity, evident are rare (if any). Further yet, we know most things *only probably*. Still, people also often value intrinsically merely probable beliefs, which respond consciously to all the evidence they have. Many philosophers have valued intrinsically *evidently* correct evaluations of *probabilities*, especially of those pertaining to religious matters. This is reflected in their pursuit of rigorous probabilistic arguments, including those in the philosophy of the Christian religion. And many were trying to evaluate rigorously the *logical* probability of Christianity and of the Trinity doctrine (cf. sections II.2 and IV.1). Logical probability seems to be a fundamental interpretation of probability (cf. sections II.2 and VI.3). It is a degree of support that one proposition (compound or not) lends to another solely in virtue of their conceptual content (cf. section II.2). Of course, no sane man is interested in the logical probability a given proposition has with respect to somebody's fancies or prejudices. One is typically interested in probability with respect to all the evidence he has. (Probability with respect to a proper part of our evidence typically has no bite, for probability is not generally monotonous. What is probable with respect to one piece of evidence may become improbable when another piece is added.) Many philosophers, of course, have been trying to evaluate rigorously or evidently the logical probability of a given proposition with respect to all the *basic* or *evidently* true evidence they have. Accordingly, many philosophers have been trying to evaluate rigorously or evidently the logical probability of Christianity and the Trinity doctrine with respect to all the basic or evidently true evidence they have. But logical probability is intimately connected with *logical possibility* (cf. section II.4). For nothing logically impossible has non-minimal logical probability (cf. part III). So, if one values an evidently correct assessment of the logical probability of Christianity or of the Trinity doctrine intrinsically, their logical possibility becomes relevant.

All this suggests, it seems to me, that *if* the truth of the Trinity doctrine and Christianity is eminently objectively worth inquiring, then it is objectively worth inquiring – although not so eminently – whether humans can know evidently, but apart from religious experience, that: the Trinity doctrine is true; Christianity is true; the Trinity doctrine is logically possible; Christianity is logically possible; the Trinity doctrine has some but not minimal (zero) logical probability (with respect to all which is evident to us, at the given time); Christianity has some but not minimal (zero) logical probability. But it's hard for me to make this intuition of mine more precise. I only add that *if* knowing evidently and independently of religious experience some of these claims would be objectively worth having, it would be also objectively worthy to be provided with plausible reasons that such evident knowledge cannot be acquired. Our time and energy are limited, and there are better things to do than to pursue plausibly unattainable goals.

Let me summarize the whole of my thoughts concerning the objective worthiness of my enquiry. *If* some issues are objectively worth inquiring, then the issues of God's existence, the after-life, and salvation are *eminently* objectively worth inquiring (at least if we haven't settled definitively that there is no God, no after-life, and no salvation). But if these three issues are eminently objectively worth inquiring, then the issues of whether the Trinity doctrine and Christianity are true are eminently objectively worth inquiring, too. But if these two latter issues are eminently objectively worth inquiring, then, plausibly, it is objectively worth inquiring –

though, perhaps, not to such an eminent extent – whether it can be known evidently, and apart from religious experience, that: the Trinity doctrine is true; Christianity is true; the Trinity doctrine is logically possible; Christianity is logically possible; the Trinity doctrine has some but not minimal (zero) logical probability (with respect to all which is evident to us, at the given time); Christianity has some but not minimal (zero) logical probability. So, I contend, the issue of this dissertation should be regarded as worth inquiring at least by those who think some issues are objectively worth inquiring and who, at the same time, haven't settled definitively that there is no God, no after-life, and no salvation. This completes my long reply to the question whether the enquiry of this dissertation is worthy or worthy of a philosopher.

On top of that, meta-inquiries about the limits of human reasoning about religious matters (such as the existence of God, the after-life or salvation) typically and significantly involve inquiries about religious matters themselves. And these first-order inquiries typically embed issues of general importance, like those of epistemology, logic, philosophy of science, metaphysics, and history. Perhaps for similar reasons Immanuel Kant (1724 – 1804) remarked:

> "… it is one of the worthiest of inquiries to see how far our reason can go in the knowledge of God."[11]

Though this dissertation definitely does not aspire to be one of the worthiest ones, its content illustrates that its theme affords a surprisingly ample opportunity for consideration of various philosophical problems from a seldom adopted vantage point. Hopefully, this fact contributes to its being worth existing and worth reading.

I.2. Outline

This dissertation is not one in the history of philosophy, but rather one in systematic philosophy. It is focused on the issue stated in the preceding section (I.1). And this issue is systematic, not historical. Put otherwise, the problem dominant is not an exposition of a particular philosophical text, or a particular collection of philosophical texts, whether by the same or several authors. The problem dominant is to explore reasons for and implications of the claim that it can't be evident, apart from religious experience, that the Trinity doctrine is logically possible. As such, the dissertation is a contribution belonging to (analytic) epistemology of religion and (analytic) metaphilosophy. The employed methodology is purely philosophical: conceptual analysis, deductive logic, and inductive logic.

Likewise I should stress this dissertation is not a piece of (Christian revealed) theology. Thus I asseverate so: it truly and definitely isn't. For on none of its pages is it *asserted by plain assumption* that God exists, that he is triune, that Christianity is true, or that some specifically Christian doctrine is true. As already said (in section I.1), I don't even *argue* that theism, Trinity theism, Christianity, or some specifically Christian claim is true, logically possible, decently or non-minimally probable, or epistemically justified. The dissertation is not a piece of atheology

[11] I. Kant, *Lectures on Philosophical Theology*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press 1978, p. 23; cf. pp. 25-26.

either. On no page it is asserted or argued that God does not exist, is not triune, that Christianity is false, or that some specifically Christian doctrine is false.

In the overwhelming majority, the used literature is purely philosophical. If theological writings are referred to, commented on, or quoted, it is because they simply make points pertaining to my theme. Used sources are mainly of the three following brands: (i) contemporary analytic philosophy of religion; (ii) Christian historical apologetics written in English; and (iii) medieval and Baroque scholasticism. (For certain, I cite or refer also to authors not falling within any of these three categories.) Such a choice of partners for discussion is well-founded. The most reasoned philosophical reflections on the truth, logical possibility, and probability of the Trinity doctrine and Christianity are to be found in the works of the said three sorts. Authors belonging to (i) and (ii) typically try to give arguments which wear their logic on their sleeves, can be instructively formalized (at least partially), or even already are so formalized. Authors in (i) and (ii) also attempt to formulate necessary and sufficient conditions for their concepts, principles, premises, or hypotheses. Finally, such authors are sensitive to modal distinctions.[12] But, obviously, this is just the sort of philosophy and theology one should check and address when exploring the theme of this dissertation. The attention devoted to influential authors belonging to (ii) is motivated by the arguable fact that the most creative and advanced Christian historical apologetics have been written in English.[13]

However, my distribution of space and attention dedicated to the traditions (i), (ii), and (iii) is not even-handed. Quotations from and comments on writings by authors belonging to (i) are most plentiful. It is because authors in (i) display in the highest degree the theoretical virtues of giving logically transparent reasons, and carefully explicated concepts, including modal and probability concepts. Of course, writings in (i) and (ii) do not constitute two disjoint sets. This is also reflected in the fact that the two most often cited and addressed authors of my dissertation belong both to (i) and (ii). The two authors are the British giant of contemporary philosophy of religion Richard Granville Swinburne (*1934),[14] and a top contemporary American probabilistic epistemologist and the chief expert on Christian apologetics and its critique in English language over the period 1697 – 1900 Timothy Joel McGrew (*1965).[15] As partners in the discussion,

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[12] Cf. the comment of the American analytic philosopher Alexander R. Pruss (*1973) to Michael Pakaluk, "We're All Analytic Philosophers Now," April 17, 2008, http://dissoiblogoi.blogspot.com/2008/04/were-all-analytical-philosophers-now.html (accessed December 8, 2011).

[13] Cf. A. Dulles, *A History of Apologetics*, op. cit., pp. 176 and 190.

[14] For summarizing accounts of Swinburne works and his importance and influence, cf. Alan G. Padgett's "Preface," in *Reason and the Christian Religion: Essays in Honour of Richard Swinburne*, A. G. Padgett (ed.), Oxford, Clarendon Press 2002, pp. v-vii; Kelly James Clark, "Introduction: The Literature of Confession," in *Philosophers Who Believe: The Spiritual Journeys of 11 Leading Thinkers*, K. J. Clark (ed.), Downers Grove, InterVarsity Press 1993, pp. 12-13; Bruce Langtry , "Richard Swinburne," in *The History of Western Philosophy of Religion,* Vol. V, Graham Oppy and Nick Trakakis (eds.), Durham, Acumen Publishing 2009, ch. 22; A. Plantinga, "Religion and Science," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Spring 2007 Edition)*, E. N. Zalta (ed.), http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2007/entries/religion-science, # 2 (accessed April 28, 2011).

[15] For McGrew's work in the probabilistic philosophy of Christianity and Christian apologetics, see T. McGrew, "Has Plantinga Refuted the Historical Argument?," *Philosophia Christi* 6, No. 1 (2004), pp. 7-26; "On the Historical Argument: A Rejoinder to Plantinga" (co-authored with his wife Lydia McGrew), *Philosophia Christi* 8, No. 1 (2006), pp. 23-38; "The Argument from Miracles: A Cumulative Case for the Resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth," (with Lydia McGrew), in *The Blackwell Companion to Natural Theology*, William Lane Craig and James Porter Moreland (eds.), Oxford, Wiley-Blackwell 2009, ch. 11; "Miracles," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*

Swinburne and McGrew dominate this dissertation for several reasons. They are the most sophisticated and competent probabilistic philosophers of Christianity and historical apologists to date. They propose the most satisfactory account of analyticity (i.e., analytic truths and falsehoods) that I am aware of and the idea of analycity is salient in my considerations. Moreover, Swinburne also offers the most satisfactory account of logical possibility, and the most promising (though, in my opinion, far from satisfactory) deductive argument from theism to Trinitarian theism.

Allusions to medieval and Baroque scholastics are mostly restricted to footnotes. Moreover, limited space and time did not permit frequent explicit quotes, much less meticulous exposition. Most of the time the reader is only referred to a particular scholastic passage; not provided with its wording. (This holds also for most non-scholastic referred-to authors.) This is, however, of minor importance, as the omitted quotes and expositions are never essential to the case I am making. The reader will always find enough quotes and exposition to understand my point.

The outline of the dissertation follows this structure: explication of the salient concepts employed in the subsequent two arguments (part I); two arguments for several consequences of the premise that the Trinity doctrine can't be evidently logically possible independently of religious experience (part III); a defence of this premise (part IV); replies to the main remaining objections against the two arguments (part V); distinguishing related, but different points not explored in this text (part VI); conclusion (part VII).

More specifically, part I delimitates the notions of evident truth (section II.1), logical probability (II.2), proposition (II.3), logical possibility (II.4), analytic truth and falsehood (II.5), Trinitarian theism (II.6), Christianity (II.7), evident knowledge independent of religious experience (II.8), and psychological impossibility (II.9).

Part III first offers general observations on the place of technical philosophical arguments within the whole of philosophical effort (III.1). The next two sections (III.2 and III.3) present two arguments starting from the position I call Weak Modal Skepticism about the Trinity Doctrine (WMST, for short). It says that it is psychologically impossible (in the sense specified in section II.9) to see evidently and independently of religious experience, that the Trinity doctrine is logically possible. The two arguments derive from WMST the following consequences. It is psychologically impossible to see evidently and independently of religious experience that the Trinity doctrine is not analytically false (abbreviated as WMST*). It is psychologically impossible to see evidently and independently of religious experience that Christianity is not analytically false. It is psychologically impossible to see evidently and independently of religious experience that the Trinity doctrine is true. It is psychologically impossible to see evidently and independently of religious experience that Christianity is true. It is psychologically impossible to see evidently and independently of religious experience that the Trinity doctrine has some but not minimal (zero) logical probability with respect to all that is evident. It is psychologically impossible to see evidently and independently of religious experience that Christianity has some but not minimal (zero) logical probability with respect to

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(Fall 2011 Edition), E. N. Zalta (ed.), http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2011/entries/miracles (accessed November 10, 2011).

all that is evident. Both arguments from WMST to these consequences are presented also in a symbolic notation (in section III.4).

Part IV is an attempt to make a plausible, though not evidently sound, argument for WMST (and, analogically, for WMST*) by means of a critical review of the main philosophical or theological proposal which one could use in his attempt to see evidently and independently of religious experience the truth of the Trinity doctrine (section IV.1A) or at least its logical possibility (section IV.1B). Because all the main attempts fail, it is plausible all such attempts have failed so far (section IV.2), and so it is plausible that all such attempts are psychologically impossible (section IV.3).

Part V addresses (in section V.1) a historical objection from J. M. Keynes's authority against the principle (employed in the arguments of part III) that every analytic falsehood has with respect to any proposition minimal (if any) logical probability. It also replies (in section V.2) an objection against the same principle from induction for analytically true mathematical propositions. I also consider standing of the principle (employed in the first argument of part III) that entailed propositions have at least the logical probability of the entailing propositions (section V.3).

Part VI highlights that even in the face of the preceding results the Trinity doctrine, Christianity, and their logical possibility may well be epistemically justified (VI.1), well-argued (VI.2), plausibly logically probable with respect to all that is evident (though not evidently logically probable on such information apart from religious experience), and also probable in other than the logical sense. Such caveats explain why the dissertation is titled as a defence of *weak* skepticism about the modal status of the Trinity doctrine and its (non-minimal) logical probability.

Part VII affords (in section VII.1) a summary presents a summary of the main results (more detailed than this outline), and ponders (in section VII.2) once more on their importance.

That's all for the outline.

The final introductory note: this dissertation is not supposed to be an exercise in excruciation of the reader by means of meagre vocabulary and bad grammar. In this case, as elsewhere, the point of writing in English, rather than in another language, has been to make available what was written to a broader audience. I am grateful to Alexander Kinsey for his linguistic competence with which he reviewed the final draft of this dissertation.

II. Concepts

Carefully crafted notions are the philosopher's pets. So much the more if they figure in his pet arguments. I have but to submit myself to this law. Whether or not I end up with notions crafted carefully or botchily, I am obligated to fiddle with those figuring in my two arguments (in part III) before booting them from their first premise (defended in part IV). Otherwise I would suffer from an illusion that my reader knows what I mean. Actually, there's hardly a graver obstacle to philosophical communication than terminological confusion. Though no communication in language is absolutely waterproof against all ambiguities, and one may fail even in his best efforts to convey what's on his mind, much misunderstanding can still be eliminated. With this aim, the following notions shall be delimitated. First I explicate what I mean by saying that a particular proposition is evidently true. I also point out that the ideal of evident conclusion has been classical in philosophy, and consider several epistemological objections against its employment (section II.1). Next I characterize generally the concept of logical probability, and point out its importance in contemporary analytic philosophy of Christian religion. (II.2). Subsequently I try to clear up what it takes to be a proposition (II.3), a logically possible proposition (II.4), an analytically true proposition, and an analytically false proposition (II.5). To make my further exploration straightforwardly relevant for as many philosophers interested in specifically Christian religious claims as I can, I propose a broad yet historically standard construal of the Trinity doctrine (II.6) and of Christianity (II.7). To put aside the epistemic value of (rather rare) religious experiences, I restrict my considerations to evident knowledge independent of such experiences (II.8). Finally, I try to clarify the intuitive sense in which humans can't perform – or, are incapable of – certain cognitive feats. This task shows itself as far from trivial, but at the same time rarely reflected upon in the philosophical literature. So sketching an account of the said modality is a considerable achievement even outside the relatively narrow context of this dissertation (II.9).

II.1. Evident truth

In this section, I will try to convey to my reader both the concept of something's being evident, the philosophical importance of this concept and its decent epistemic standing. I illustrate that evident solutions of philosophical problems have been desired in philosophy. Then I address the issue of explication of the concept and the objection that it captures something merely subjective and epistemologically irrelevant. Notably, the name of John Maynard Keynes enters our discussion at this stage, and it will recur even later.

It's common to believe that some propositions are, at least sometimes, *evident*, and also that some others are not. Now and again we encounter concepts of it being evident (or obvious, or clear) that something is the case: for instance, that $1 + 1 = 2$, that one appears thus and so, that a particular argument is sound (i.e., deductively valid and including only true premises), or that a particular solution to a particular mathematical exercise is correct. Alternatively, the same things can be said to be perceived clearly (and distinctly), with (ultimate) clarity, and the like.

Phenomenologists, notably, expanding on the pertinent hints of Aristotle of Strageira (384 – 322 BCE) and René Descartes (1596 – 1650), have treated such concepts of obviousness, clarity or evident truth thoroughly.[16] And their efforts are understandable, in my opinion, in the context of the perennial research project called "philosophy." Attempts at attaining *evidently* true answers, especially those relating to perennial, ultimate questions, have been central to many inquirers. The goal of evidently, clearly, obviously, manifestly, etc. correct results (here, we may treat the terms synonymously), also explains all the technical and formal machinery that has occurred in philosophers' writing during the ages. Given that evident conclusions are the goal, disambiguation and logical reconstruction are the means, to name just two tools mostly reached for by the careful thinker.

To illustrate the role of evident insight in the metaphilosophy of the suggested kind – which runs after evident truths – consider two notes on the nature of philosophy. The first comes from a 20th century classic in the field of philosophy of philosophy (i.e., metaphilosophy). The second emerges from the unquiet deep of the current philosophical bloggosphere. Incidentally, both bear the same title: What is philosophy?

The German phenomenologist Dietrich von Hildebrand (1889 –1977), in his book *What is Philosophy?*, lamented as follows:

> "… certain self-styled philosophers … are very poorly gifted as philosophers. … they are wanting completely in specifically philosophical powers. As Maritain once very rightly said, the main difference between one philosophy and another seems to hinge on this, namely, whether the particular thinker sees certain things or does not see them."[17]

In a few moments, we will find a variation on this view in a writing of another prominent 20th century philosophical thinker who was Hildebrand's contemporary, though one of a markedly different character: I mean the father of analytic philosophy Bertrand Russell (1872 – 1970). But for now let's turn our attention to the promised blogging muse, authored by William F. Vallicella, a contemporary, American, institutionally non-affiliated metaphysician who heeds his own work

[16] See especially Dallas Willard (*1935), *Logic and the Objectivity of Knowledge: A Study in Husserl's Early Philosophy*, Athens (Ohio), Ohio University Press 1984.

[17] D. von Hildebrand, *What is Philosophy?*, New York, Routledge 1990, p. 6. Hildebrand does not provide for the reference, but the following passage from the essay "The Frontiers of Poetry" by Jacques Maritain (1882 – 1973) encapsulating, once more, yet another quotation from another philosophical giant (Plotinus, 204/205 – 270), may well be the one on Hildebrand's mind: "What is most real in the world escapes the notice of a darkened soul. "Just as one can say nothing about the beauties of sense if one has no eyes to perceive them, so it is with the things of the spirit, if one cannot see how beautiful is the face of justice or temperance, and that neither the morning star nor the evening star is so beautiful. One sees them when one has a soul capable of contemplating them; and in seeing them one experiences a greater delight, surprise and consternation than in the preceding case, because now one is very close to genuine realities." " J. Maritain, "The Frontiers of Poetry," http://maritain.nd.edu/jmc/etext/frontier.htm (accessed November 11, 2011). In the notes, Maritain adduces as his source Plotinus, *Enneads*, I.4. He makes the same point, and a shorter quote of this passage, in "Poetry and Perfection of Human Life," http://maritain.nd.edu/jmc/etext/resart4.htm (accessed November 11, 2011). Remarkably, also the American analytic philosopher Peter van Inwagen (*1942) writes in his book *The Possibility of Resurrection and Other Essays in Christian Apologetics* (Boulder, Westview Press 1998, pp. 11-12, 23-25, 30, 34, 40-43) of insights some philosophers simply have and others don't.

by the insights of all philosophical traditions (including those of Hildebrand and Russell), thus following his motto: Study everything, join nothing.

> "To understand philosophy one must genuinely ask or raise or enact one or more philosophical questions. To do that however, one must feel perplexed and feel a strong desire to achieve understanding, and a strong aversion to the pseudo-understanding of 'quick solutions.' … most people do not understand philosophy … They do not *experience* philosophical problems. They perhaps understand them in some vague and abstract way, but they neither feel them nor feel any need to solve them. They never become 'existential,' a matter of one's own most *Existenz*. They have no burning desire for fundamental clarity. They are content to operate with unclarified concepts that work more or less well."[18]

Summing up and daring to merge these two views of Hildebrand and Vallicella into a single one, the true philosopher displays a burning desire for fundamental clarity of his questions and answers, both with respect to their meaning and their truth. That's the more optimistic part of what Hildebrand and Vallicella jointly convey to us. The less optimistic part of that appears to say that there is no guarantee that once we have succeeded in attaining the elevated epistemic grasp our epistemic peers will rejoice and participate in it accordingly. In fact, even this caveat is still too optimistic: an underestimation, to put it plainly. The enlightened, elevated contemplator of his supposed evidently true philosophical accomplishment is rather guaranteed to find a peer who rejects the grasp as an instance of irrationality and who will label the contemplator, even if only privately, as a hallucinator instead. Yet over the millennia, the true philosopher has learnt to live with his defiant colleague in truly admirable peace.

It is also worthy of notice that the goal of evidently correct philosophical results did not pass unnoticed in religious metaphilosophy either. Alfred J. Freddoso, an eminent American analytic philosopher of religion, in his lecture "Two Roles for Catholic Philosophers" approves one of Aristotle's main regulative principles of philosophical effort and research:

> "… a central goal of the philosophical inquirer is to make every conclusion as evident as possible or, in Aristotle's words, to "seek exactness in each area to the extent that the nature of the subject allows." [Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, bk. I, ch. 3, 1094b24]"[19]

Aristotle seems to be suggesting here, besides the goal of pursuing evidently true or correct results, that evidentness may be graded (or, degreed). That is, two claims may be evident, yet one may be more evident than the other. I think we may concede this, although then we must also concede that we can't generally state a criterion delimitating the border between evidentness and non-evidentness. But this does not appear to create any problems for evidentness as such. In like manner, though some surfaces are (or at least appear) bluer than other blue surfaces, and

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[18] W. F. Vallicella, "What is Philosophy?," October 11, 2007, http://lists.powerblogs.com/pipermail/maverickphilosopher/2007-October/002510.html (accessed August 3, 2011).

[19] Freddoso also notes: "This passage is cited by St. Thomas in *Summa contra gentiles* I, chap. 3, just before he introduces the distinction between the preambles of the faith and the mysteries of the faith." A. J. Freddoso, "Two Roles for Catholic Philosophers," in *Recovering Nature: Essays in Natural Philosophy, Ethics, and Metaphysics in Honor of Ralph McInerny*, John P. O'Callaghan and Thomas S. Hibbs (eds.), Notre Dame, University of Notre Dame Press 1999, p. 237 and nt. 13.

although we can't say where exactly on the color spectrum lies the line separating the green part from the blue part, some surfaces are clearly blue, while some others clearly aren't.

But, more importantly, the above quotes should illustrate the fact that the desire for evident truths has been wanted in philosophy, even if it has often been wanting there. Evident truth is a considerably well-entrenched desideratum among philosophers, including philosophers of religion. Still, naturally, reflecting explicitly on our concept of *evident* proposition is a somewhat unnatural activity. What do we mean, specifically, in saying that something is "evident"? This demand for an explication or a definition of the term needs to be addressed.

First, we must beware of too much distrust to the concept of something being evident. For one thing, we use the concept quite commonly; for instance when we assess arguments or inferences. And, indeed, it's hard to find a philosophical text not containing such words as "clear," "obvious," "evident," or its cognates.

Moreover, parlances like "it is easy to see that …" are ever-recurring even in the finest works contributing to that field which have been viewed by many as the gold standard of knowledge: that is, mathematics.[20] Notwithstanding the willful nature of some of these remarks made by advanced mathematicians, the intellectual despair of mathematical laymen upon hearing them, and the toils of graduate students in mathematics who have spent months or years in an effort to fill the deliberate gaps in published mathematical arguments. Notwithstanding all this, frank and serious usage of the concept of evident proposition in passim is palpable in mathematics. And the same holds for philosophy to no lesser degree. Or that's what my own experience with philosophers and their writings has constantly been.

Bertrand Russell would agree, in his early philosophical years at least. As we have seen, he suggested that evident starting points and evident inferences are ubiquitous both in philosophy and mathematics. I think it is worth our time and space to ponder on some of his words from that period of thought, during which, incidentally, he also interacted intensively with the British economist and philosopher John Maynard Keynes (1883 – 1946), a chief founder of modern philosophy of probability, especially of its logical interpretation with which this dissertation is concerned.[21] In *The Principles of Mathematics* (1st ed. 1903), Russell writes:

> "[In mathematics] the principles of deduction, the recognition of indefinable entities, and the distinguishing between such entities, are the business of philosophy. Philosophy is, in fact, mainly a question of insight and perception. … A certain body of indefinable entities and indemonstrable propositions must form the starting-point for any mathematical reasoning; and it is this starting-point that concerns the philosopher. When the philosopher's work has been perfectly accomplished, its results can be wholly embodied in premisses from which deduction may proceed. … The disproof will consist in pointing out contradictions and inconsistencies; but the absence of these can never amount to proof. All depends, in the end, upon immediate perception; and philosophical argument, strictly speaking, consists mainly of an endeavour to

[20] See Don Fallis, "Intentional Gaps in Mathematical Proofs," *Synthese* 134, No. 1-2 (2003), p. 54.

[21] Cf. Rod O'Donnell, "The Epistemology of J. M. Keynes," *The British Journal for the Philosophy of Science* 41, No. 3 (1990), pp. 333-350; and John Bryan Davis, *Keynes's Philosophical Development*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 1995.

> cause the reader to perceive what has been perceived by the author. The argument, in short, is not of the nature of proof, but of exhortation."[22]

Secondly, the pervasiveness of the concept of the evident does not change matters in the following respect. The concept does not yield to definition by means of other known concepts (different from it at least in their explicit content, so to speak). The concept looks indefinable. And even if it is definable, the definition is very hard to attain. Either way, it is then hardly surprising that upon meeting someone (or upon meeting just our inner philosophical interlocutor) who demands an explanation, definition or expression by means of different concepts that are at his disposal we are embarrassed.

Fortunately, we can label such pedantry on the side of the suspicious interlocutor as a Socratic fallacy, to his own embarrassment: that a concept cannot be defined (explicated, expressed) by means of other (known) concepts does not entail that it cannot be used and entertained (apprehended).[23] To wit, recall the concepts of the color green (or its particular hue), of a number, of a man, of a horse, of a chair, of a car, of an item, of a set, etc. Even if all these concepts were expressible by means of other concepts (which is highly doubtful), the lack of their perfect definitions did not prevent many thinkers from substantive, interesting, plausible and even rigorous discoveries by means of considerations in which such undefined concepts were involved. There appears to be no reason why the concept of evident truth should be any different in this respect; or so I contend. To put my point otherwise, I have a liking for the nub of F. P. Ramsey's comment remark, that:

> "The chief danger to our philosophy, apart from laziness and woolliness, is *scholasticism*, the essence of which is treating what is vague as if it were precise and trying to fit it into an exact logical category."[24]

One should not give up the search for precision prematurely. But, at the same time, one should not forget that there may be limits for the exactness the subject matter allows. Both of these ideas were remarked by Aristotle, as Freddoso notes in the quote I provided above. Moreover, the idea of precision itself is vague. That is, it's hard to specify the notion by means of other notions, which may make the accusation of imprecision arbitrary.[25] Furthermore, *not perfect* does not need to be *not good enough*. That is, even if the explication of a given concept does not satisfy the highest standard of in principle available exactness for the treated subject matter, the

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[22] B. Russell, *The Principles of Mathematics*, New York, W. W. Norton & Company 1996, § 125. Cf. also J. M. Keynes, *A Treatise on Probability*, London, Macmillan and Co. 1921, ch. II, § 8; R. I. Aaron, "Intuitive Knowledge," *Mind* 51, No. 204 (1942), pp. 297-318; and Joseph Gredt (1863 – 1940), *Die aristotelisch-thomistische Philosophie*, Vol. II, Freiburg im Briesgau, Herder u. Co. G.m.b.H. 1935, ## 612-618.

[23] I owe the term "Socratic fallacy" to Sandra Lee Menssen and Thomas D. Sullivan, *The Agnostic Inquirer: Revelation from a Philosophical Standpoint*, Grand Rapids and Cambridge, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company 2007, p. 184.

[24] Frank Plumpton Ramsey (1903 – 1930), *The Foundations of Mathematics and Other Logical Essays*, Vol. 5, London, Routledge 2001, p. 269. I have no liking, though, for Ramsey's pejorative use of the word "scholasticism."

[25] Consider the disapproving observation of Saul Kripke (*1940), in his classic *Naming and Necessity*, Cambridge (Massachusetts), Harvard University Press 2001, p. 39: "… it's a common attitude in philosophy to think that one shouldn't introduce a notion until it's been rigorously defined (according to some popular notion of rigor)."

explication may still allow for a plausible argument operating with the concept. I do not want to deny the notion that precision or exactness makes sense, that I have such a notion, that some conceptual explications are more precise than others, or that some conceptual explications could and should have been more precise than they are. What I deny is that my conceptual explications are not sufficient to convey the explained concepts and to the employment of these concepts in my reasoning.[26] Last but not least, attempts at increased exactness often raise more dust than bring more light, especially when undertaken by those who are not well-versed. As Keynes warns us:

> "There are occasions for very exact methods of statement, such as are employed by Mr. Russell's *Principia Mathematica*. But there are advantages also in writing the English of Hume. Mr. Moore has developed in *Principia Ethica* an intermediate style which is hands has force and beauty. But those writers, who strain after exaggerated precision without going the whole hog with Mr. Russell, are sometimes merely pedantic. They lose the reader's attention, and the repetitious complication of their phrases eludes his comprehension, without really attaining, to a complete precision."[27]

Without any dream on my side of achieving the style of David Hume or G. E. Moore, but aware that I am a tyro in formalisms, I will content myself with the precision which may well fall short to that accessible to somebody else.

In case the considered interlocutor, suspicious with respect to the talk of evident truths, still cannot, or pretends that he cannot, entertain the concept of evident truth, let's help (or press) him by a variety of esteemed examples. From such examples he is allowed to choose some clues suitable to his specific epistemic needs. Let the interlocutor ponder on propositions like:

> I think; $2 + 3 = 5$; for any proposition p, $\sim(p \,\&\, \sim p)$; I am appeared to redly; I am appeared to thus and so; if something thinks, then it exists; for any proposition p, q, $((p \rightarrow q) \,\&\, p) \rightarrow q$; if $2 + 2 = 4$ and $3 + 1 = 4$, then $2 + 2 = 3 + 1$; the sum of inner angles in a plane triangle equals the sum of two right angles; etc.

These propositions are evident; or, again, so I contend, together with many others who did so.[28]

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[26] Actually, Ramsey (*The Foundations of Mathematics and Other Logical Essays*, op. cit., p. 264) appears to take success of a definition as consisting in the fact that the definition enables to pursue the chosen inquiry.

[27] J. M. Keynes, *A Treatise on Probability*, op. cit., ch II, § 11, nt. 1.

[28] Cf. R. Descartes, *Oeuvres de Descartes*, Charles Adam and Paul Tannery (eds.), Paris, Vrin 1997; Vol. I, p. 476; Vol. V, p. 146; Vol. VII, pp. 29, 33, 36, 162-169. Also see Aristotle, *Metaphysics* (http://www.classicallibrary.org/aristotle/metaphysics/index.htm, accessed November 27, 2011), bk. IV, chs. 4-8, and *Posterior Analytics* (http://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/a/aristotle/a8poa; accessed November 27, 2011), bk. I, pt. 3, 72b; John Locke (1632 – 1704), *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (http://oregonstate.edu/instruct/phl302/texts/locke/locke1/Essay_contents.html; accessed October 5, 2011), bk. IV, ch. XVII, # 4; J. M. Keynes, *A Treatise on Probability*, op. cit., ch. II, §§ 6-10; Timothy J. McGrew, *The Foundations of Knowledge*, Lanham, Littlefield Adams Books 1995, pp. 50-51, 83, 128. Cf. Earl Conee, "Seeing the Truth," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 58, No. 4 (1998), pp. 847-857, and "Self–Support," forthcoming in *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 77, No. 1 (2011).

Giving a mere list of examples, for sure, does not automatically instruct us perfectly about what the examples have in common. If we search what the relevant common denominator is, a common non-trivial property, condition or relation that makes such propositions evident, we may be baffled and even rest with Keynes in the following modest proclamation:

> "About what kind of things we are capable of knowing propositions directly, it is not easy to say."[29]

Here, Keynes has in mind propositions which are epistemically basic and evident independently upon knowledge of other propositions. My concept of an evident proposition is meant to be (extensionally) broader than Keynes's concept of a directly known proposition; as is attested by the example that the sum of inner angles in a plane triangle equals the sum of two right angles. But it seems he would not object to the statement resulting from putting "evidently" in place of directly.

At any rate, my present point is that whether or not we know the kind of matters yielding to evident insight, we can proceed in a *particularist* way: we hold unto our own favorite evident examples (whatever they are and however they differ across various thinkers), and explain the concept of the evident by an appeal to them. The interlocutor, suspicious to the concept, should abstract from the examples the concept of something being evident. If he isn't able to do it, it doesn't follow that we aren't either.

My third point is similar to the first one above in this section. As I have already said, the concept of the evident is commonly used. Now I want to highlight that its commonality even among its detractors. It is a dialectically delightful and useful observation that those who balk at the concept of the evident should turn their incredulous stare upon themselves, or at least upon their less bright selves at their less bright times. For in their more inattentive and less reflective moments they use the same concept without a scruple. And this is only to be expected, given the ubiquitarian nature of the concept, underscored in my first point. To take an instructive and historically eminent example, in his *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, Ludwig Wittgenstein (1881 – 1959) instructively wonders why:

> "… a thinker as rigorous as Frege appealed to the degree of self-evidence as the criterion of logical proposition."[30]

It did not, however, pass unnoticed that Wittgenstein himself preaches throughout the same book in which he slates Gottlob Frege (1848 – 1925) the self-evidence, obviousness, and clear truth of several of his own statements,[31] some of them not less bold than the most unhappy one of Frege's (i.e., the set-theoretical axiom of comprehension, about which I have some words to say

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[29] J. M. Keynes, *A Treatise on Probability*, op. cit., ch. II, § 8.
[30] L. Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, London and New York, Routledge Classics 2001, # 6.127.
[31] Cf. ibid., ## 2.022, 3.1431, 3.333, 4.012, 4.221, 4.441, 4.5, 5.1311, 5.1363, 5.42, 5.47, 5.476, 5.4731, 5.503, 5.5301, 5.542, 5.555, 5.557, 5.5571, 6.111, 6.1202, 6.1221, 6.1223, 6.1224, 6.123, 6.1233, 6.124, 6.1263, 6.1271, 6.31, 6.35, 6.3631, 6.3751, 6.421, 6.422, 6.51; and Anthony Kenny (*1931), "The Ghost of the *Tractatus*," in *Ludwig Wittgenstein: Critical Assessment*, Vol. I, Stuart Shanker (ed.), New York, Routledge 1986, pp. 67-68.

below). It is truly most ironic that there is actually a par in the *Tractatus* (precisely, the one numbered 5.42) which includes both a proclamation of self-evidence and a critique of Frege. The irony would be increased if the critique concerned Frege's appeals to self-evidence. Fortunately for Wittgenstein the critic, his target is different: Frege's claim that the connectives of propositional logic are primitive concepts. But the moral remains that any future curser of the concept of an evident proposition should be decent enough to reach at least this kind of coherence, and not to drop below its rank by saying that the concept is bogus for there are no evident (clear, transparent, obvious, plain, manifest, or whatever) reasons for its use! A few explicatory notes need to be added, to prevent certain misunderstandings the concept of the evident that I have tried to specify and convey to my reader.

My fourth point is that it appears to be compatible with the modest concession inspired by Keynes – to the effect that it is hard or impossible for us to say what is *the* kind of evident propositions – to say that we *can* say which are some of those *kinds* of propositions which are evident. To name some of these kinds, such are propositions about what one's own beliefs are; about what one himself is trying or intending to do; about one's own idiolect; Cartesian propositions like *I exist now*; propositions about one's own immediate sensation; propositions regarding the content (though not regarding the accuracy) of one's own memories; or certain mathematical, logical and analytic truths and principles. This list of kinds of propositions which are evident (at least sometimes to some people) is not meant to be exhaustive. Still, such propositions which fall in kinds in the list I've just presented differ palpably from other propositions which do not happen to be evident. The mentioned kinds of propositions are strikingly and obviously epistemically different from many others. But is there an answer beyond this answer? One could ask anew: what is the common feature which unites all the mentioned kinds into *the* kind of evident propositions? Fortunately, we need not pursue the answer (if there is any). The explication of the concept of evident(ly true) proposition via the examples and/or the adduced kinds is sufficient to let us go on.[32]

Fifth, as I have noted, Keynes's concept of propositions known by direct knowledge (inspired by Russell's concept of knowledge by acquaintance) is narrower than the concept which I have tried to convey. Keynes has on his mind propositions which are evident in such a way that do not require argument from other propositions to be evident.[33] In Keynes, these appear to constitute a proper subset of evident propositions. To relate directly known propositions to the concepts of

[32] Again, I do not feel obliged to provide my reader with a general definition of the evidently true, as I would not feel either, for instance, in case of the concept of entailment. Indeed, as the American philosopher and historian of deductive logic John Corcoran (*1937) alerts – when speaking of entailment under the name of "logical consequence" – the general strategy need not be the most instructive and adequate one: "It would be an illusion to think that any one of the … [common attempts at its definition] by itself or even in combination with the others is sufficient to uniquely identify "logical consequence" for every reader. Those who have grasped the concept do not need any characterization. … Those who have not yet grasped the concept will need to experience examples of instances and examples of non-instances and they will need hints as well. The problem of characterizing "logical consequence", despite insightful attempts by Carnap, Tarski, and Quine, is still open." John Corcoran, "Argumentations and Logic," *Argumentation* 3, No. 1 (1989), p. 31. Cf. also Timothy and Lydia McGrew, *Internalism and Epistemology: The Architecture of Reason*, London and New York, Routledge 2007, pp. 97-98.

[33] J. M. Keynes, *A Treatise on Probability*, op. cit., ch. II, § 6.

rationality and epistemic justification, we could say *directly* known propositions are intrinsically reasonable, rational to hold without inferring them from anything else, and immediately justified.[34] A belief in a directly known proposition is foundational in the sense that to be justified the belief need not be *based* on belief in any other proposition. That a proposition is directly known by somebody does not, in itself, make the insight easy to or possessed by that somebody, and so much the more it does not make the insight easy to or possessed by everybody. Moreover, a proposition may be evident only *as* a conclusion of an argument, sometimes even of one of considerable, though limited, length and complexity. And as both the above mentioned examples of and kinds of evident propositions suggest, an evident proposition need not be *self-evident*, either in the sense: *assented by everybody to as soon as understood* or in the sense: evidently *analytically* true (i.e., evident *as* true solely in virtue of the contents of the concepts explicitly included in the proposition). In fact, Keynes himself conceded this.[35]

Sixth, having delimitated the concept of an evident proposition to some extent, I should add several epistemological caveats in order to obviate some common objections.

It should be conceded that the phenomenological imagery, whether sensory or emotional, which consists in what is described by the metaphors of natural light or luminousness[36] and by reports of feelings of certainty or irresistibility of assent, is neither the essence of a proposition's being evident, nor that which justifies belief in evident proposition.[37] Ruling out these candidates of phenomenological imagery as pumps of justification or that in which seeing a proposition's truth consists in, does not make the concept of an evident proposition epistemologically empty. Remember, if the concept of something's being evident is basic (as it seems to be), all substitutes for it are destined to be precisely that: wrong substitutes and red herrings.

Furthermore, is it supposed by the defenders of the concept in epistemology that all evident propositions are true? Well, the adduced examples and kinds of evident propositions do suggest so. Maybe even then and after one has already gathered from the examples or from the kinds of concept of evident proposition somebody will wonder whether there is a false one under its scope. In other words, is there a false yet evident proposition? Indeed, we sometimes err when we *take* a proposition to be evidently true. Similarly, one can infer that he failed in a matter in which he previously *took* himself to be an infallible authority. Still, I think, it does not follow that he is not sometimes infallible. Neither does it follow that we can never have a grasp that a proposition is evident that leaves no room either for doubt or falsity (in any sense relevant here). In fact, the concept of an evident proposition positively seem to me by its very nature a concept of a type of access to (or maybe more tellingly: epistemic grasp of, perception of) *truth*.[38] In other words, any evident proposition, if it *is* evident, is *ipso facto* true.

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[34] Cf. Lydia McGrew, "Foundationalism," http://www.iscid.org/encyclopedia/Foundationalism (accessed April 26, 2011).
[35] For further details, see R. O'Donnell, "The Epistemology of J. M. Keynes", op. cit.
[36] Given there is sometimes such accompanying phenomenology or at least one aptly described by these metaphors.
[37] Cf. E. Conee, "Seeing the Truth," op. cit., pp. 849-851 and nt. 17. Compare Conee with Alvin Plantinga (*1932), *Warrant and Proper Function*, New York, Oxford University Press 1993, pp. 105-106 and 191; and with Susan Haack (*1945), *Deviant Logic: Some Philosophical Issues*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 1974, p. 29.
[38] Cf. T. and L. McGrew, *Internalism and Epistemology*, op. cit., pp. 5, 97-98, 104.

Another worry, however, and a notorious one, presents itself immediately. How are we supposed to distinguish our genuine grasps from those that are faked? In other words, how are we to distinguish propositions that are genuinely evident to us (and so true) from those which we are (maybe irrationally) urged to view as such? If we can't do this, clear grasp is useless as a sign of truth of the grasped proposition. Indeed, as we have admitted above, philosophers and people generally actually disagree, at times downright doggedly, among themselves about what is evidently true or false.[39] I think the most pertinent reply goes along the following lines: We just need no *general method* for distinguishing the sheep from the wolves. Or, at least, there is no clear (in other words, evident) reason for a need for such a method. Let me expand on this point of mine.

In the plainest terms, some propositions *are* genuinely evident, and hence true; some other propositions we *take* to be evident, and hence true, but they are false. So we are sometimes mistaken in on a point we proclaim as evident. *Sometimes* we *think* something (some proposition) is evidently true, yet later it turns out false. And when people disagree about what is evidently true about a particular matter, one side taking a particular proposition *p* as evidently true and the other as evidently false, at least one side is wrong. But these facts, which should be conceded, do not rule out that there are *specific* (core) cases when we are undoubtedly, clearly, and evidently right.

Moreover, shifting to a metalevel, there may well be some cases when we are undoubtedly and clearly in possession of some genuine grasp of truth. On this metalevel, one could even defend a peculiar – but, upon reflection, quite natural – asymmetry between situations of such a possession and its mere appearance. Even if we concede that it must be evident to us whenever something (say, *p*) is evident to us, that it (i.e., *p*) is evident to us, it does not follow that whenever something (*p*) is *not* evident to us (even if when we are urged to take it as such), it is evident to us that it (i.e., *p*) is not evident to us. This metalevel asymmetry is (i) neither gratuitous, (ii) nor does it necessarily constitute naive ignorance yielding us to epistemic imprudence; (iii) nor do we need a definition of the concept of the evident (see above), (iv) nor do we need a general method for determining when something is evident to us, either on the first order level or on a higher level. Timothy J. McGrew (already mentioned in section I.2) and wife Lydia McGrew (*1965) explain the points (i), (ii), and (iv) as follows:

> "If one *could* (also clearly and distinctly) "compare" the experience of a genuine grasping of some truth – truly seeing it clearly and distinctly – with an only partially successful attempt to think about it as clearly as one can, one would indeed be able to see the difference between these two epistemic situations. But the person in the second situation is, *ipso facto*, *not* seeing the proposition clearly and distinctly, and so of course he is not in a position to make such a comparison. It does not follow that he will always be over-confident, will always think himself to be having a genuine ... grasp when he does not. He *may* be able to recognize the strain or fuzziness, the lack of clarity and distinctness … But it is not a necessary truth that he will be able to do so in all cases. …. Only a perverse sort of verificationism could require that A cannot have intuitive knowledge in situation S_1 unless he has a method for determining, in all situations S_n where he does *not* have intuitive knowledge, that he does not. One may sometimes mistake the

[39] Cf. S. Haack, *Deviant Logic*, op. cit., p. 29, where this objection is raised.

> call of the jackal for the roar of the lion; but it does not follow that one can mistake the roar of the lion for the call of the jackal."[40]

Finally, to calm down at least some frequent epistemological qualms arising from the intellectual history of the most cocksure howlers displayed by the most bright thinkers ever, and to connect again the preceding discussion to Keynes, it is worth mentioning that probably the most favorite candidate for such a mistake of improper certainty does not fit the role that has been designed for it by the historians of epistemology. I mean Frege's axiom of comprehension (also called naïve axiom of comprehension, axiom of abstraction, Basic Law V, or Rule V), to the effect that for any property, there is a set of just those items which have the property. It has been claimed that this axiom was self-evident, and hence evident, in Frege's own eyes, yet at the same time false because entailing, together with other but apparently true starting points of his original set theory, and without any previous guess on Frege's part, the famous contradiction known as Russell's paradox (the set of all sets that are not members of themselves is a member of itself just when it is not a member of itself). Interestingly for the focus of this dissertation, the British philosopher and historian of science and mathematics Donald A. Gillies, for instance, reports approvingly about Frank Plumpton Ramsey (1903 – 1930), another genius from Russell's and Keynes's circle, who criticized Keynes's position that we have direct knowledge of logical relations between propositions stated in second-order propositions, as follows:

> "Ramsey's doubts about basing probability theory on logical intuition are reinforced by considering how logical intuition fared in the case of deductive inference, which is surely less problematic than inductive. Frege, one of the greatest logicians of all time, was led by his logical intuition to support the so-called axiom of comprehension, from which Russell's paradox follows in a few lines. Moreover, he had companions in this error as distinguished ad Dedekind and Peano … this indicates that logical intuition is not to be greatly trusted in the deductive case, and so hardly at all as regards inductive inferences."[41]

Again, I could point out that even if we, together with Frege, erroneously viewed the axiom of comprehension as self-evidently (hence evidently) true, it would not change matters a bit when it comes to paradigmatically evident propositions. And it would not necessarily shake our belief that these propositions are evidently evident either. But, in fact, there is in addition to this line of reply a positive historical reason, which Gillies fails to mention, that Frege himself did *not* view the axiom as self-evident. In his reaction to Russell's unwelcome discovery, which reaction was attached as an appendix to the second volume of Frege's book *The Basic Laws of Arithmetic*, Frege confessed:

> "I have never concealed from myself its lack of the self-evidence which the others possess, and which must properly be demanded of a law of logic, and I in fact pointed out this weakness in the Introduction to the first volume."[42]

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[40] T. and L. McGrew, *Internalism and Epistemology*, op. cit., p. 106.

[41] D. A. Gillies, *Philosophical Theories of Probability*, London and New York, Routledge 2003, p. 53. See also A. Plantinga, *Warrant and Proper Function*, op. cit., p. 109.

[42] G. Frege, *The Basic Laws of Arithmetic: Exposition of the System*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press 1982, Appendix II, p. 127. The last sentence in this quote also wards off the danger of "reading our

Many will suspect Frege attempted here at a reduction of his own cognitive dissonance.[43] He wanted all self-evident propositions to be true, so he told himself that the uneasy axiom has never been self-evident to him. Maybe. And maybe not. Maybe he *was* frank and honest, both to himself and to the world. It should be at least worthy of a serious consideration to interpret Frege charitably. Another objection, however, could be that even if Frege did not deem the axiom self-evident, he did deem it evident. Indeed, "Frege does not suggest that he had any doubt about Basic Law V's *evidence*."[44] But he does not suggest that he did *not* have any doubt about it either. And to propose he really did not is speculative to no lesser degree than the insinuations of insincerity and self-deceit. Anyway, I repeat that this historical contingency is not essential for a promising reply to the objection against the truth of all evident propositions from misguided, though strong, intuitions.

Having backed up both the historical and the systematical significance of the concept of something's being evident, we are ready to enquire how it relates to the doctrine of the Trinity with respect to its logical probability. The reader, however, is still likely in need to hear more on what I mean by logical probability before we approach that issue.

II.2. Logical probability

Probability is hydra-headed. In other words, the word "probability" itself is multiply ambiguous. There are many interpretations, nominal definitions, and attempts at a real definition of probability. And each has its own specific problems. For any single account, the difficulties that plague it seem to arise mostly because of the demand on being *the* right one, the only one,

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post-Russellian doubts about Basic Law V back into Frege" (of which is Richard Heck is afraid in his "Frege and Semantics," in *The Cambridge Companion to Frege*, Michael Potter and Tom Ricketts /eds./, New York, Cambridge University Press 2010, p. 350). Frege alludes in the same quote to the following note from the Introduction to *The Basic Laws of Arithmetic*: "A dispute can arise, so far as I can see, only with regard to my Basic Law concerning courses-of-values [in other words, value-ranges] (V), which logicians perhaps have not yet expressly enunciated, and yet is what people have in mind, for example, when they speak of the extensions of concepts. I hold that it is a law of pure logic." (pp. 3-4) Another of Frege's epistemological reaction to Russell's paradox concerning Basic Law V reads as follows: "An actual proof can scarcely be furnished. We will have to assume an unprovable law here. Of course it isn't as self-evident as one would wish for a law of logic. And if it was possible for there to be doubts previously, these doubts have been reinforced by the shock the law has sustained from Russell's paradox." G. Frege, "On Schoenfliess: *Die Logische Paradoxien der Mengenlehre*," in G. Frege, *Posthumous Writings*, Hans Hermes, Friedrich Kambartel and Friedrich Kaulbach (eds.), Oxford, Basil Blackwell 1979, p. 182.

[43] As S. Haack does in her *Deviant Logic*, op. cit. p. 29. Similarly Claire Ortiz Hill and Guillermo E. Rosado Haddock, *Husserl or Frege?: Meaning, Objectivity, and Mathematics*, Chicago and La Salle, Open Court Publishing 2003, pp. 100-101; and Philip Kitcher (*1947), "Frege's Epistemology," *The Philosophical Review* 88, No. 2 (1979), pp. 235-262. Cf. T. and L. McGrew, *Internalism and Epistemology*, op. cit., pp. 109-10, for a critique of Haack's assessment; and Robin Jeshion, "Frege's Notions of Self-Evidence," *Mind* 110, No. 440 (2001), pp. 938 and 970-71, for a critique of Kitcher's.

[44] R. Heck, "Frege and Semantics," op. cit., nt. 22 on p. 349.

account of all probability talk. Once this pretension is given up, the furious emulation between different expounders begins to thin out.

But in the upshot, I put no stakes on the pluralistic perspective *tout court* either. I only need the concept of logical probability. I will also assume the corresponding position that this kind of probability exists, at least because of the manner in which I will delineate the concept of logical probability. By saying that logical probability exists, I mean that there are true propositions which say that a probability has a certain value (measured by the standard 0–1 scale or not, precise or imprecise) where the concept of probability is the logical one.[45] This assumption of mine, that logical probability exists, is apparently compatible with a monistic endeavor to reduce all true statements about probabilities to one kind – the logical one. But even if monism is mistaken, and there are true propositions which assert that a probability has a certain value the involved concept of probability is *other* than the logical sense[46], there surely may still be other proposition which truly assert a certain probability value in precisely *that* (i.e., logical) sense. The concept of *logical probability* I have in mind and want to convey is the following.

> The concept of logical probability, employed in this dissertation, is the ordinary language concept of support that one proposition (simple or complex) lends to another, where its values are determined solely in virtue of the contents of the concepts constituting the propositions.

As the just given explication suggests, logical probability is conditional: its probability of a proposition (simple or compound) given some proposition (simple or compound). The interesting logical probability values are, naturally, those which arise from all the evidence we have or from all the evidence that is available to us. Once the conditioned upon proposition (let's call it information) and the conditioned proposition have been fixed, the value of support – if there is any logical probabilistic support at all – has been fixed, too; even if merely objectively, by the content of the involved propositions, and unbeknowst to anybody or denied by everybody. So, degrees of support do not depend on any further unknown contingent facts about the world. It is a debated question whether there is some degree of logical probability between all pairs of propositions. Some require the information to be logically possible. Some require the information and the conditioned proposition to be mutually relevant in the sense of relevant logic. Either way, for any proposition p, q, *if* there *is* some logical probability of q given p, then its value is determined solely by the contents of p and q.

The concept of logical probability is employed by at least some ordinary language speakers when they say, e.g., that on their present evidence, al-Qaida almost certainly is neither conspired, nor directed by the U.S. government; that the Big Bang theory is more probable than the steady-state theory; that the Young Earth creationistic theory is less probable than the

[45] For a similar explication of the existence of logical probability, see Patrick Maher, "The Concept of Inductive Probability," *Erkenntnis* 65, No. 2 (2006), p. 195.

[46] For instance, according to Rudolf Carnap (1891 – 1970), there are two senses of probability, logical and stochastic, neither reducible to another – cf. his *Logical Foundations of Probability*, Chicago, Chicago University Press 1967, e.g. page v; cf. also his "The Two Concepts of Probability," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 5, No. 4 (1945), pp. 513-532.

evolution theory; that with 90% probability Spike the Texan is a swimmer for 90 % of Texans are; or that the probability that a ball is white given it is either white or black is 1/2.[47]

The concept of support between propositions has been commonly taken as a generalization of the concept of entailment. Hence the talk about the propositional support also under the name of "partial entailment," entailment in the strict sense being a limit case of the broadly construed one.[48]

Now, to beat on the same drum once more, if accused that the preceding explication of the concept of propositional support does not amount to a proper definition, the expounder (including myself) need not be ashamed to concede this point so long as he remembers (as I and my reader do) the Socratic fallacy. In fact, I sympathize with Keynes in treatment of the concept of logical probability as primitive (at least for my own purposes), and rather conveyed by and gathered from examples than by means of a general definition. Again, it's highly doubtful that any such definition is available at all.[49] On the standard view, advocated by Keynes, partial entailment resembles entailment not only in being objectively determined by meanings alone, but also in being conceptually primitive (or, at least, hardly definable).

Like everything else in philosophy, logical interpretation of probability has been criticized from many camps, and most influentially by Frank Ramsey who was already mentioned in the previous section II.1. Indeed, logical interpretation of probability was not just criticized. It was truly suppressed and reduced to a minority position even among the philosophers of probability. Today, most of the philosophers of probability are Bayesian subjectivists, interested in actual degrees of beliefs and their probabilistic coherence. Statisticians and scientists have been since long ago mostly non-Bayesians and frequentists both in their interpretation and assessment of probability values. Historical disputes occurred to whether, and to what extent, Keynes was hard pressed by Ramsey. More interestingly, there were debates about the quality of Ramsey's critique in particular, and about the pros and cons of logical and non-logical probability in general.[50]

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[47] Cf. J. M. Keynes, *A Treatise on Probability*, op. cit., ch. I, §§ 2 and 7; R. Carnap, "The Two Concepts of Probability," op. cit., p. 522; P. Maher, "The Concept of Inductive Probability," op. cit., pp. 185, 193-195; James Franklin (*1953), "Resurrecting Logical Probability," *Erkenntnis* 55, No. 2 (2001), pp. 277-278, 281; J. Franklin, *What Science Knows: And How It Knows It*, New York, Encounter Books 2009, pp. 7, 16, 164; James Hawthorne, "*Degree-of-Belief* and *Degree-of-Support*: Why Bayesians Need Both Notions," *Mind* 114, No. 454 (2005), pp. 285-289, 298-299; R. Swinburne, *Epistemic Justification*, Oxford, Clarendon Press 2001, pp. 64-65.

[48] Cf. J. M. Keynes, *A Treatise on Probability*, op. cit., ch. II, § 9; Maria Carla Galavotti, *Philosophical Introduction to Probability*, Stanford, CSLI Publications 2005, pp. 146 and 162; D. A. Gillies, *Philosophical Theories of Probability*, op. cit., pp. 30 and 32; R. Swinburne, *Epistemic Justification*, op. cit., pp. 65-66, 243-44; R. Swinburne, *An Introduction to Confirmation Theory*, London, Methuen 1973, p. 36.

[49] See J. M. Keynes, *A Treatise on Probability*, op. cit., ch. I, § 8, and ch. II, § 11. Cf. also P. Maher, "The Concept of Inductive Probability," op. cit., pp. 185, 194, 199, and 203. Similarly T. McGrew in correspondence (with me) and R. Swinburne in his correspondence with Trent Dougherty (reported by Dougherty in "Juhl: Fine-tuning is not surprising," September 15, 2006, http://prosblogion.ektopos.com/archives/2006/09/juhl-finetuning.html, accessed November 27, 2011).

[50] See Jochen Runde, "Keynes after Ramsey," *Studies In History and Philosophy of Science* 25, No. 1 (1994), pp. 97-121; P. Maher, "The Concept of Inductive Probability," op. cit., pp. 185-206; J. Franklin, "Resurrecting Logical Probability," op. cit., 277-305; J. Hawthorne, "*Degree-of-Belief* and *Degree-of-Support*: Why Bayesians Need Both Notions," op. cit., pp. 277-320; Darrell P. Rowbottom, "On the Proximity of the Logical and 'Objective Bayesian' Interpretations of Probability," *Erkenntnis* 69, No. 3 (2008), pp. 335-349. A notable, generally esteemed, and

To keep the extent of my exposition within a decent range, I must refer my reader to make up his own mind by assessing these battles about the viability of logical probability for himself. Henceforth, I will just assume logical probability makes sense and that it exists between some propositions.

I also have an *ad hominem* reason to deem it unnecessary to go into any greater detail in defending here logical probability as a non-vacuous notion which deserves our attention. The two most sophisticated probabilistic philosophers of Christianity – Richard Swinburne and Timothy J. McGrew – both view logical probability as interesting, real, and determining (wholly or together with other factors) value of rational degree of belief.[51] In this, they follow Keynes's *Treatise on Probability*:

> "In its most fundamental sense, I think, … [probability] refers to the logical relation between two sets of propositions, which … I have termed the probability-relation. It is with this that I shall be mainly concerned … Derivative from this sense, we have the sense in which … the term *probable* is applied to the degrees of rational belief …"[52]

Whether or not logical probabilities exist, Keynes and his advanced followers in analytic Christian philosophy of religion and apologetics believe they do and so bother about such probabilities. Anybody who shares their attitude to the interpretation of probability and their interests in that field of religious inquiry should be bothered about *logical* probability of the Trinity doctrine. Or that is what I expect. And all those who, in addition to that, share the classic philosophical ideal of *evident* conclusions should be bothered whether the same kind of probability, and in what values, pertaining to the said doctrine can be made evident. Maybe there are only a few of those who are interested in all these ways. If it is the case, let it be so. My arguments are not necessarily debased by the possible unpopularity of their premises. And whoever detests these is free to approach and make use of our meditation as a conditional argument; or, even as a *reductio* of whatever premise he doesn't like. I, for myself, do not assume them to be a tentative, merely academic, entirely logical perspective. I see myself as not merely exploring the unfolded consequences of the premises only *as* consequences. All the premises I am going to state in my arguments seem to me true. All the inferences I will unreel

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technically advanced antidote to subjectivistic trends, as well to the common disfavor of the logical view, is the work of the American philosopher and logician Henry Ely Kyburg, Jr. (1928 – 2007), who was inspired by Keynes's and Rudolf Carnap's accounts of logical probability. Cf. Radu Bogdan (ed.), *Henry E. Kyburg, Jr. & Isaac Levi*, Dordrecht, Kluwer 1982. For another technically advanced defence of logical probability, see Peter Roeper and Hugues Leblanc (1924 – 1999), *Probability Theory and Probability Logic*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press 1999, Pt. Two.

[51] Cf. R. Swinburne, *Epistemic Justification*, op. cit., pp. 62-71, esp. 64-65 and 70-71; see also his: *An Introduction to Confirmation Theory*, op. cit., pp. 24-28, 200; *The Existence of God*, Oxford, Clarendon Press 2004, pp. 15-16; *The Resurrection of God Incarnate*, Oxford, Clarendon Press 2003, p. 205; *Revelation: From Metaphor to Analogy*, Oxford, Clarendon Press 2007, pp. 345-346. On McGrew's part, he acknowledged in correspondence with me his embracement of logical probability (in the sense expounded in this section). Cf. also T. and L. McGrew, *Internalism and Epistemology*, op. cit., pp. 43-44; T. McGrew, "Review of Richard Swinburne, *Epistemic Justification*," *Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews* 9 (2002), http://ndpr.nd.edu/review.cfm?id=1094 (accessed April 28, 2011); and T. McGrew, "Evidence," in *The Routledge Companion to Epistemology*, Sven Bernecker and Duncan Pritchard (eds.), New York, Routledge 2011, pp. 61-63.

[52] J. M. Keynes, *A Treatise on Probability*, op. cit., ch. II, § 5.

strike me as correct. But we are still not in a position to present them unless some other notions, besides those of evidentness and logical probability, are explicated. I've talked much of propositions. But how do I understand their nature?

II.3. Propositions

Propositions are the primary bearers of truth and falsity and sharable objects of belief.[53] Belief is the attitude consisting in regarding something as true.[54] Propositions are to the effect (or of the form) that something (or something particular) is (or isn't) so; or, in other words, that something (or something particular) is (or isn't) the case.

I note here that I do not think a systematic theory of or a clear criterion for individuation of propositions is needed; at least for my purposes. I add that even if I believed I need to tackle the issue of individuation of propositions, other common candidates for primary bearers of truth-values, like type sentences and token sentences, would not fare any better. As the American philosopher Alvin Carl Plantinga (*1932) observed, generally, when propositions are numerically different is tolerably clear. And, anyway, the lack of a clear general criterion of individuation of propositions is one that propositions share also "with electrons, mountains, wars – and sentences."[55] Let me leave this problem of individuation aside and continue in my remarks on propositions.

Propositions are structured: that is, they are composite wholes having parts or constituents bound together or related in a certain way.[56] These constituents of propositions, I suggest, are *contents of concepts*. Propositions may constitute other (compound) propositions. I have nothing illuminating to say about what the bound or relation consists in generally. As for the nature of constituents of propositions, I have something more to propose.

There are several opposed theories of conceptual content. The account that seems to me promising is Aristotelian. To communicate my view of conceptual content of an Aristotelian sort, I shall for now draw heavily on Lukáš Novák's explication in a unique recent Czech monograph, which he co-authored, on the logic of the Aristotelian tradition.[57] Any pertinent slips resulting

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[53] Similarly Matthew McGrath, "Propositions," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall 2011 Edition)*, E. N. Zalta (ed.), http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2011/entries/propositions (accessed August 4, 2011).
(accessed August 4, 2011); A. Plantinga, *The Nature of Necessity*, Oxford, Clarendon Press 1974, p. 1; John Leslie Mackie (1917 – 1981), *Truth, Probability and Paradox: Studies in Philosophical Logic*, Oxford, Clarendon Press 1973, pp. 18-22; T. McGrew, *The Foundations of Knowledge*, op. cit., p. 46; Jan Štěpán, *Logika možných světů I* (in Czech), Olomouc, Vydavatelství Univerzity Palackého v Olomouci 1995, pp. 23-28.

[54] For a survey of detailed theories of belief, expanding on this rough characterization, cf. Eric Schwitzgebel, "Belief," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Winter 2010 Edition)*, E. N. Zalta (ed.), http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2010/entries/belief (accessed August 4, 2011).

[55] A. Plantinga, *The Nature of Necessity*, op. cit., p. 1.

[56] Similarly Jeffrey C. King, "Structured Propositions," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall 2008 Edition)*, E. N. Zalta (ed.), http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2008/entries/propositions-structured (accessed August 4, 2011).

[57] Cf. Lukáš Novák (*1978) and Petr Dvořák (*1970), *Úvod do logiky aristotelské tradice* (in Czech), České Budějovice, Jihočeská univerzita v Českých Budějovicích 2007, pp. 38-58.

from my own modification which is to follow are to be ascribed to me. Following Novák, I will try to convey the concept of the content of a concept recursively. First, lets begin with the idea of concept (in other words, with the concept of a concept). *Concept* is a basic element of human reason (as opposed to human senses) which (i.e., the element) represents some aspect of reality (whatever reality is). *Concept's object* is that which is represented by its concept. Now I insert some distinctions. *Concept's material object* is its concept's object with all that in reality (as opposed to cognition which may not cover the reality fully) belongs to this concept's object. *Concept's formal object* is an aspect of its concept's object with all that in reality belongs to this aspect. *Formal concept* (sometimes also called by Aristotelians "subjective concept") is a mental, psychical act by which a concept takes place. *Objective concept* is a formal concept's formal object itself as (intentionally, not really) existing in reason. Finally, *content of a concept* is that which its concept's formal object has in common with the corresponding objective concept (or that which the concept's formal object would have in common with the objective concept if there was the objective concept). Objective concept may differ from its formal object because the former may have marks or features which the latter lacks: e.g., being non-particular (i.e., non-individualized) or abstracting from some features of the formal object. So much is my position concerning conceptual content. The reader is free to bear with me throughout our considerations with a different notion of conceptual content on his mind. For even if he does so, I predict, the proposed premises and inferences will remain substantially the same. I'll now go forward to other notions I will be operating with.

II.4. Logical possibility

On my understanding, a proposition is *logically possible* just when (i.e., if and only if) it does not entail a self-contradictory proposition.[58] A proposition is *logically necessary* just in the case that its negation entails a self-contradictory proposition. A proposition is *logically impossible* just when it is not logically possible; i.e., just when it entails a self-contradictory proposition. A proposition is *logically contingent* if and only if both the proposition and its negation are logically possible. A proposition is *self-contradictory* just when it is to the effect (or, of the form): (p&~p), where p is a proposition; or (there is an x such that: x is F & ~ x is F), where x is some item and F is a feature, property or relation.[59] Proposition p *entails* proposition q just in the case that solely in virtue of the nature of p and q it is true that ~(p&~q).[60] Now, naturally, this characterization of entailment is not meant as its perfectly satisfactory and proper definition. It's

[58] Similarly R. Swinburne, *The Coherence of Theism*, op. cit., pp. 12-14, 19-22, 38-39; *The Christian God*, Oxford, Clarendon Press 1994, p. 111; "In Defence of Logical Nominalism: Reply to Leftow," *Religious Studies* 46, No. 3 (2010), pp. 311, 326; "From Mental/Physical Identity to Substance Dualism," in *Persons: Human and Divine*, Peter van Inwagen and Dean Zimmerman (eds.), Oxford, Clarendon Press 2007, p. 145; cf. also Stephen Edelston Toulmin (1922 – 2009), *The Uses of Argument*, New York, Cambridge University Press 2003, p. 230.

[59] Similarly R. Swinburne, "Analytic/Synthetic," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 21, No. 1 (1984), p. 31; "Analycity, Necessity and Apriority," *Mind* 84, No. 334 (1975), pp. 228-230; *The Coherence of Theism*, op. cit., pp. 13-14, 19; *The Christian God*, op. cit., pp. 100, 107; "In Defence of Logical Nominalism," op. cit., p. 316.

[60] This characterization of entailment is in agreement with the views of R. Swinburne. Cf. nt. 205 below.

rather an attempt to merely suggest, indicate or recall what the notion which is the subject of this section is. We may also convey the same idea, however loosely or roughly, by saying that proposition *p* entails proposition *q* when by asserting *p* everybody is committed to asserting *q*; or, to put it other way, by saying that *q* is involved, albeit covertly, in *p*.[61] I suspect, however, that the concept of entailment is indefinable (i.e., primitive) or nearly-indefinable in the sense of being expressible by means of other concepts accessible to us.[62] In any case, a proper definition of entailment is hard to come by. Fortunately, I am aware of no reason to object that I need to have a perfect definition of entailment in order to operate with the concept of entailment in my arguments.

I guess it shall be prudent and praiseworthy to insert several terminological caveats. I do not intend to define logically necessary propositions as *logical truths*. Even if all logical truths are logically necessary, it need not be (epistemically speaking) that all logically necessary propositions are logical truths. Accordingly, I do not intend to define logically possible propositions as those which are not *logical falsehoods*. Even if no logically possible proposition is a logical falsehood, it need not be that any proposition which is not a logical falsehood is logically possible. Finally, I do not want to define entailment as formal or syntactic entailment. Even if all formal entailment is entailment, the converse need not hold. What do I mean by "logical truth," "logical falsehood," and "formal entailment," as opposed to logically necessary proposition, logically impossible proposition, and entailment, respectively? A proposition is a logical truth, I take it, just in the case that its negation entails a self-contradictory proposition solely in virtue of the meaning of the so-called formal or logical words in the sentence expressing the former proposition (and of the fact that there are some other non-logical words in this sentence which are all meaningful). Accordingly, a proposition is a logical falsehood, I take it, just in case it entails a self-contradictory proposition solely in virtue of the so-called formal or logical words in the sentence expressing the former proposition (and of the fact that there are some other non-logical words in this sentence which are all meaningful). Finally, proposition *p* formally entails proposition *q* just in the case that $\sim(p\&\sim q)$ is a logical truth. Now, why do I not wish to grant collapsing the logically necessary into the logically true (whether extensionally or intensionally), the logically possible into that which is not logically false, and entailment into formal entailment?

First, there is no agreed exhaustive list of logical words. There are many different sets of logical words to be drawn from the collection of terms such as "if," "only if," "and," "or," "not," "some," "all," (predicative) "is," (existential) "exists," "same," "different," "possible," "necessary," (temporal) "before," "after," (spatial) "within," "behind," etc. And different, stipulative, enumerative sets of logical words correspond to different sets of logical truths expressed in sentences, where "logical truth" is relative to the chosen set of logical words.[63] This

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[61] Cf. R. Swinburne, "Analytic/Synthetic," op. cit., pp. 33-34; "Analycity, Necessity and Apriority," op. cit., pp. 230-231, 242; *The Coherence of Theism*, op. cit., pp. 12-14, 273, 275; "In Defence of Logical Nominalism," op. cit., pp. 313-314; *The Christian God*, op. cit., pp. 99-100, 105, 107, 109-110, 246-247; *Revelation*, op. cit., p. 24. See also Norman Malcolm (1911 – 1990), "The Nature of Entailment," *Mind* 49, No. 195 (1940), pp. 333-347.

[62] Cf. the quote on entailment from J. Corcoran's paper in nt. 32 above.

[63] Cf. Benson Mates (1919 – 2009), *Elementary Logic*, New York, Oxford University Press 1972, p. 16; L. T. F. Gamut, *Introduction to Logic*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press 1991, pp. 7-9; and Petr Kolář (*1961), *Argumenty filosofické logiky* (in Czech), Prague, Filosofia 1999, pp. 229-237. See also R. Swinburne,

is apparent, e.g., from the generally recognized limited expressivity of sentential logic. The proposition that ~(something is such that: it is red & it is not red) is not a logical truth in propositional logic. But it is in predicate logic. Logic of relations may be similarly sensitive to logical truths to which subjective-predicate logic is insensitive.[64]

Secondly, would the compounding of all the extant formal logics do? I think it is doubtful that it would. Swinburne, notably, asserts a mismatch, both extensional and intensional, holds even between logical necessity and entailment on the one side and all the apparatus of formal logics so far actually proposed, taken *jointly*, on the other side. Because I esteem his observations to be instructive, I will cite them at length. Swinburne opposes the view:

> "… that all valid proofs must accord with the rule of some recognized system of deductive logic, or consist of a demonstration that there is no model of the proof in which the premises are true and the conclusion is false. But it is an absurd requirement to require a proof to accord with some recognized system of logic. It follows from no logical system that '*x* is red' entails '*x* is coloured'; and that is a lot more obvious than most entailments. Anyway, such a requirement gets things the wrong way around. Our grounds for believing that some system of logic yields only valid inferences is that it captures as entailments many entailments which we already recognize as such, and none (or almost none) which are clearly not entailments. (Since 'almost none' is vague, it requires a decision to determine that there are so few exceptions that we are justified in calling a system of logic a valid system. Apparent exceptions can then be dealt with by holding that the grammatical form of the sentences involved is misleading as a guide to their 'logical form'.) Our recognition of so many entailments is prior to our recognition of some system of logic as capturing them.
>
> It is equally absurd to require a demonstration of entailment by means of models. For a model is an interpretation of each of the 'non-logical' terms of premises and conclusion; and a demonstration of the validity of the argument consists in showing that there is no model in which the premises are true and the conclusion false. But the validity of a proof so often depends on the 'nonlogical' terms involved – no model will show that '*x* is red' entails '*x* is coloured'. (And anyway there is no clear understanding of what counts as a 'non-logical' term.)"[65]

Swinburne contends virtually the same, yet more concisely, elsewhere, as follows:

> "… there are innumerable entailments which we can recognize without the entailment being captured by any system of logic so far devised. "This is red" obviously entails "This is coloured", but no system of logic so far invented will show that it does. Our very understanding of a proposition involves some ability to recognize what it entails (quite apart from any system of logic), what one who asserts it is committed to. The notion of entailment is more basic than the notion of a "logic"."[66]

"Analytic/Synthetic," op. cit., 31-32, 39-40; "Analycity, Necessity and Apriority," op. cit., pp. 226-227, 230; *The Coherence of Theism*, op. cit., p. 16.

[64] Cf. P. Dvořák in L. Novák and P. Dvořák, *Úvod do logiky aristotelské tradice*, op. cit., ch. 6.6. See also Peter Thomas Geach (*1916), "Review of *The Five Ways: St. Thomas Aquinas's Proofs of God's Existence*. By Anthony Kenny," *The Philosophical Quarterly* 20, No. 80 (1970), p. 312; and C. F. J. Martin, *Thomas Aquinas: God and Explanations*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press 1997, pp. 161-162.

[65] R. Swinburne, "In Defence of Logical Nominalism," op. cit., pp. 319-320.

[66] R. Swinburne, "From Mental/Physical Identity to Substance Dualism," op. cit., p. 145.

Thus, for the reasons of Swinburne's sort, there at least may well be: propositions which are logically necessary but not logical truths in the sense of all the apparatus of so far existing formal logics (taken jointly); propositions which are not logical falsehoods in the same sense, but which are not logically possible; and entailments which are not, in this sense once more, formal (syntactic).[67]

Thirdly, for similar reasons, even if there was an agreed exhaustive list of logical words, and even if there was, objectively, some non-arbitrary and exhaustive list of logical words unknown to anybody, it could still be (epistemically speaking) that the set of logically necessary propositions would be broader than the set of all logical truths in the sense of such comprehensive, ideal logic. For there appears to be no rationale to suppose that in all cases when a negation of a proposition entails a self-contradiction, the former entails the latter on the basis of merely formal, logical form (given that *logical form* is a general and principled notion). To adapt Swinburne's favorite example, supposing a brand new formal logic deriving "This is coloured" from "This is red" was finally worked up to Swinburne's satisfaction, it still could be that *some* entailment would remain invisible not only to all the formal logics so far existing taken individually and all of them taken jointly, but also to the ideal logic the apparatus of which would include all and only those words that are truly and objectively logical. So, again, there, at least, may well be: propositions which are logically necessary, but which are not logical truths absolutely speaking; propositions which are not absolute logical falsehoods, but which are not logically possible; entailments which are not formal (syntactic) absolutely. Now I will advance to the notion of analytically false and analytically true propositions.

II.5. Analycity

On my construal, a proposition is *analytically false* just in the case that it is false solely in virtue of the contents of concepts in it (and the relations between them). Naturally enough, a proposition is *analytically true* just in the case that it is true solely in virtue of the contents of concepts in it (and the relations between them). A proposition is *analytically possible* just in the case that it is not analytically false. A proposition is *analytically contingent* when it is neither analytically true nor analytically false. (Some philosophers would rather call analytically true propositions just "analytic," analytically false propositions "incoherent," analytically possible propositions "coherent" and analytically contingent propositions "synthetic."[68])

Again, to keep my exposition of the dominant terms I will be using in this dissertation bearable both to its author and its reader, and because thorough defences of this idea of analycity are relatively well-known and widely used (in contemporary analytic philosophy, at least), I will suppose I do not need to show any further that my characterization of analycity is meaningful

[67] Cf. David Peroutka in Petr Dvořák, David Peroutka and Ondřej Tomala, *Modality v analytické metafyzice* (in Czech), Prague, Filosofia 2010, pp. 144-145, 156-157, 205; P. Kolář, *Argumenty filosofické logiky*, op. cit., p. 53.
[68] Cf. R. Swinburne, "Analytic/Synthetic," op. cit., p. 32; "Analycity, Necessity, Apriority,", op. cit., p. 229.

and that some propositions are analytically true or analytically false (in my sense).[69] Interestingly again, my characterization of analycity is equivalent with some of those made by Richard Swinburne and Timothy McGrew.[70]

I will not, however, spare the reader of several admonitions about philosophical terminology which it is easy to make on a relatively short space (in comparison with a sustained defence of analycity) and which could prevent a host of annoying misunderstandings. My notes will explicitly concern several common ways of usage of the term "analytic truth" (and its cognates) which are different from my usage. The following terminological remarks, however, are also supposed by me to delimit my use of "analytic falsehood." This should be apparent from the fact that a proposition is analytically false (in my sense) just in case it is analytically true that the proposition is false. (That is, a proposition p is analytically false just when $\sim p$ is an analytic truth.) Now to other uses of the term "analytic truth" which are *not* adopted by me.

First, in contrast to the tradition of analycity represented by Immanuel Kant, I do not want to insinuate that all analytically true propositions have subject-predicate form.[71] Further, in contrast to the tradition of Kant, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646 – 1716), Gottlob Frege and Willard Van Orman Quine (1908 – 2000), my explication is not designed by me to imply that any analytically false proposition is: a logical truth; or such that for the sentence expressing it there is some (discoverable) synonymous sentence expressing a logical truth; or such that for the sentence expressing it there is some its (discoverable) definitional version, unpacking the explicitly included concepts by conceptual analysis, which expresses a logical truth.[72] Finally, in contrast to the tradition of Rudolf Carnap (1891 – 1970), I do not want to claim that any analytically true proposition is expressed by a sentence the conjunction of which with all the explicitly stated meaning postulates of the language to which the sentence belongs is a logical falsehood.[73]

The reasons for all these differences are akin to, or virtually the same as, those for not supposing the logically necessary is just the logically true, that the logically possible is just the

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[69] For a convincing defence of analyticity against W. V. O. Quine, see especially B. Mates, "Analytic Sentences," *The Philosophical Review* 60, No. 4 (1951), pp. 525-534. For a careful defence of analycity, characterized by virtually the same words as those I have employed here, see T. and L. McGrew, *Internalism and Epistemology*, op. cit., pp. 94-137. Cf. also R. Swinburne, "Analycity, Necessity, Apriority," op. cit., pp. 225-243; "Analytic/Synthetic," op. cit., pp. 31-42; and a recent book by Gillian Russell, *Truth in Virtue of Meaning: A Defence of the Analytic/Synthetic Distinction*, Oxford, Oxford University Press 2008. An overview of other discussions of the issue is Georges Rey's entry "The Analytic/Synthetic Distinction," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Winter 2010 Edition)*, E. N. Zalta (ed.), http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2010/entries/analytic-synthetic (accessed September 1, 2011). Interestingly, most contemporary analytic philosopher accept the analytic/synthetic distinction. Cf. *The PhilPapers Surveys*, November 2009, http://philpapers.org/surveys (accessed November 28, 2011), sect. Results.

[70] Cf. R. Swinburne, *The Coherence of Theism*, op. cit., pp. 12-15, 30; *The Evolution of the Soul*, Oxford, Clarendon Press 1986, p. 209; T. and L. McGrew, *Internalism and Epistemology*, op. cit., pp. 47, 115-118.

[71] Cf. I. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* (New York, Cambridge University Press 2000), A 6-7.

[72] See. ibid.; and also G. W. Leibniz, *Monadology*, §§ 33 and 35 (in G. W. Leibniz, *Die Philosophischen Schriften*, Vol. VI, Carl Immanuel Gerhardt /ed./, Hildesheim, Olms 1961); G. Frege, *The Foundations of Arithmetic: A Logico-Mathematical Enquiry into the Concept of Number*, New York, Harper & Brothers 1960, §§ 3 and 88; and W. V. O. Quine, "Two Dogmas of Empiricism," *The Philosophical Review* 60, No. 1 (1951), pp. 23-24.

[73] Cf. R. Carnap, *Meaning and Necessity*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press 1956, pp. 222-232; T. McGrew, *The Foundations of Knowledge*, op. cit., pp. 42-43.

not logically false, and that entailment is just formal entailment. Plainly enough, all analytically true propositions need not be of the subject-predicate form.[74] Further, it need not be that analytically true propositions (i.e., propositions true solely in virtue of their contents) be logical truths either. This is acceptable whether we view logical truth as grounded in a particular collection of logical words, or, in the all-inclusive collection of logical words so far proposed, or in the right, exhaustive, comprehensive set of all logical words – if there is any such set. It is also doubtful that all analytic truth is reducible to logical truth by sheer definitional analysis of the involved concepts or by tampering with synonymy pertaining to the involved words. Finally, there may well be an analytically true proposition expressed by a sentence the conjunction of which with all the explicitly stated meaning postulates of the corresponding language is *not* a logical falsehood (relatively or absolutely speaking). For it may be that formal logic (whether ideal or a formulated one) does not automatically capture all that is relevant to analycity, even given that all the meaning postulates (on which the logic operates) of the given language are stated; or that not all of the meaning postulates are recognized.

As for the definition of analytic truth along the lines of Kant, Leibniz, Frege, and Quine, Swinburne's remarks once more turn up quotable and again utilizing his favorite color counterexamples. More specifically, these remarks critically address the suggestion that all analytic truth is reducible to logical truth (relative to an extant logic) by means of synonymy.

> "… there is the difficulty that on a normal fairly restricted understanding of truths of logic there are sentences which look to be true for the same kinds of reason as analytic truths and yet do not seem to be reducible to truths of logic by substitution of expressions which are plausibly synonymous – e.g., "nothing can be red and green all over." There are no remotely plausible synonyms for "red" and "green" which will reduce this to any sentence which is a remotely plausible candidate for being a truth of logic. … There is no way in which "if it is red, it is coloured" reduces to a truth of logic by substitution of synonymous expressions. "Red" is not definable; and "coloured" does not mean "either red or blue or …" because of the logical possibility of a new colour. (Our eyes might learn to recognize ultra-violet in the same way as we recognize violet.)"[75]

Propositions about colors are employed also in T. McGrew's discussion of analycity. He proposes as clear instances of analytic truths those such as these: black is not white, green is a color, red is a color, the color red is not a musical note, nothing can be simultaneously red and green all over.[76] And he opposes the view that all analytic truths are reducible to logical truths (relative to an extant logic) by definitional analysis. Consider the last color example of an analytic truth.

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[74] W. V. O. Quine notes the limitation in Kant to subject-predicate statements in "Two Dogmas of Empiricism," op. cit., pp. 20-21. See also R. Swinburne, "Analycity, Necessity, Apriority," op. cit., pp. 225, 241; *The Coherence of Theism*, op. cit., pp. 15-16.

[75] R. Swinburne, "Analytic/Synthetic," op. cit., pp. 32, 40. Similarly R. Swinburne, "Analycity, Necessity, Apriority," op. cit., pp. 227-228, 241. See also R. Swinburne, *The Coherence of Theism*, op. cit., pp. 16, 156, 273; *The Christian God*, op. cit., p. 110.

[76] See T. and L. McGrew, *Internalism and Epistemology*, op. cit., pp. 97, 113-118.

> In a sense, "… the concept of not being green all over does not seem to be in any obvious sense ''contained in'' the concept of being red all over. This is clearly true if one means by 'contained in' that the idea of not being green all over springs to mind whenever one thinks of being red all over. A similar, and even more obvious, example concerns numbers. ''Exactly five'' conceptually excludes … an infinity of other numbers both below and above five on the number line, yet we fairly obviously do not have an infinite number of thoughts – ''Not six, not seven, not eight,'' etc. – in our minds whenever we think of exactly five."[77]

But there is yet another sense of conceptual containment, which is embraced by T. McGrew under the name of "conceptual inclusion." This sense he explicates, together with the notion of conceptual exclusion, in the following way:

> "… the concept of A *conceptually includes* the concept of B just in case, in virtue solely of the nature of the concepts themselves, it is a necessary truth that (x) (Ax→Bx). The concept of A *conceptually excludes* (or *analytically excludes*) the concept of B just in case, in virtue solely of the nature of the concepts themselves, it is a necessary truth that (x) (Ax→−Bx)."[78]

Apart from conceptual containment (of the first kind) and conceptual inclusion, there may yet be another sort of grounds of analytic truth:

> "There is … no reason to restrict our notion of analytic truths to those involving containment; as we noted earlier, other relations [such as conceptual inclusion] can be intuitable as well. Borrowing some helpful terminology from John Pollock, we can say that there are *intuitions of implication* of which conceptual containment, exclusion, and so forth are special cases."[79]

Taken together, these three passages from T. McGrew suggest that not all analytic truth is reducible to logical truth (relative to an extant logic) by means of definitional analysis.

Secondly, let me add yet another caveat in order to communicate to you my idea of analycity securely. De novo, my principal aim in this explicatory section is primarily negative: to discriminate the idea from other philosophically frequent notions which could obstruct the understanding between you and me. In the section explicating logical probability (II.2), there wasn't such a need to distinguish it from other notions with which it could be (quite likely) confused because "logical probability" isn't such a philosophically circulated term, heavy-laden with multiple meanings. (For sure, "probability" has been associated with many different, though related, concepts. But that's another issue. Incidentally, I shall differentiate several interpretations of probability later.) To save space and time, I have not provided a robust case, whether defensive or offensive, that logical probability makes sense and exists. I have rather assumed both. Likewise, this section on analycity is not meant to include a robust case on its behalf. I will proceed on the presumption that analycity makes sense; that is, I will assume the reader understands the concept. Notably, because I did not explicate the concept of analycity by

[77] Ibid., p. 117.
[78] Ibid., p. 116.
[79] Ibid., p. 117. The reference is to John L. Pollock (1940 – 2009), *Knowledge and Justification*, Princeton, Princeton University Press 1974, p. 322.

examples (in contrast to my delineation of the concepts of evidentness and of logical probability), it is not clear whether the assumption that analycity exists is needed. I.e., it is not clear that it need be assumed or implied here that the concept of analycity has a non-empty extension; or, in other words, that some propositions are analytic. But if it turns out that the existence of analytic propositions is essential, as long as well-thought defences, both positive and negative, were available, as they really are, the disclosure may leave us indolent. Now back to the negative demarcation of analytic truth.

I do not propose that all analytic truths are trivial in the sense of their truth being apparent to everybody as soon as they are understood by him or as soon as the meaning of the words expressing them is explained to him. Neither do again T. McGrew and R. Swinburne. Although paradigmatic examples of analytic truths, like those above concerning colors, are often trivial, it does not follow that all analytic truths are trivial. McGrew acknowledges the existence of "non-trivial" and "interesting and difficult analytic truths."[80] Swinburne indicates likewise that analycity is often implicit, and its finding out very difficult.[81]

Thirdly, our estimates of the analyticity status of propositions (i.e., whether they are analytically true, analytically false, analytically possible or analytically contingent) are not always correct. To this, several disagreements about the analyticity status of certain propositions bear their witness. And at least in some cases, one may safely admit that he just does not know what to say about the analyticity status of the given proposition. Swinburne offers a couple of examples of propositions (expressed by particular sentences) whose analyticity status is, or was, rather hidden:

> "… there are many sentences whose status "analytic," "incoherent," or "synthetic" is unclear either because all speakers are uncertain about their status, or because different groups of speakers make different judgments … about their status. One example is "all men who see see with their eyes" … It is not clear whether this sentence would be shown false if it were shown that a man had via some other part of the body (e.g. the skin) a means of detecting the presence and properties of objects in the same way (i.e., via qualitatively similar sensations) as we detect them by the eyes; or whether the non-use of the eyes would be sufficient by itself to rule out a claim to see. If the latter, then "all men who see see with their eyes" comes out as analytic …; otherwise it is synthetic. … philosophers of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, equipped with the concepts of analytic and synthetic … could have seen "space is infinite" as a clear case of an analytic sentence. … with the development of non-euclidean geometry men would have become aware of the conceptual possibility of a spatial (i.e., three dimensional) region being finite and yet having no boundary (in the way that the two-dimensional surface of a sphere is finite, yet has no boundary). … The apparent coherence of some description of a finite space would then lead them to see "space is infinite" as a synthetic sentence. So indeed an apparently clear case of an analytic sentence could turn out to be synthetic. … Whether a sentence is analytic depends on whether it satisfies the definition … It might seem that some sentence satisfies that definition but later prove that it does not … [Similarly:] Apparently clear

[80] Ibid., pp. 99, 113, 116, 121.
[81] Cf. R. Swinburne, "In Defence of Logical Nominalism," op. cit., p. 320; *The Christian God*, op. cit., pp. 99-100, 107-110, 246-247.

> cases of things "longer than" other things may turn out to be shorter than them; apparently clear cases of "woman sawn in half" may turn out not to be."[82]

Other examples of propositions with analyticity status which could be a matter of disputes come from the set theory. Frege, before he received the revelatory letter from Russell (discussed in section II.1), could have surmised that the axiom of comprehension – for any property there is a set of just those items that have it – is analytically true (in our sense, though not in his sense of "analytically true"). Russell would, of course, mean otherwise. Even today, the axiom of choice – which says that for any collection of non-empty sets there is a collection of exactly one object from each of the sets – could be debated as a candidate for being analytically true. Similarly for the axiom of infinity: there is a set with infinitely many elements, and for the axiom of an empty set: there is a set with no elements. As for the number theory, the proposition that for every even number $\neq 2$ there is a sum of two primes which equals the even number, called Goldbach's conjecture, hasn't been proven deductively. But it has no known exception and is deemed analytically true or analytically false by many; whereas the former option is preferred, of course. The same holds for Fermat's last theorem which states that there are no integers x, y, z and n such that: $n > 2$, and $x, y, z \neq 0$, and $x^n + y^n = z^n$. Goldbach's conjecture, by the way, shall serve us later as a model case of a proposition which raises some deep issue about probabilistic reasoning applied to analytically true or false propositions. Finally, debates are only to be expected whether geometrical propositions about straight lines being the shortest lines joining their end point, every straight line having just one parallel straight line drawn through any point not lying on the former, every plane triangle having inner angles equal to two right angles, every plane equilateral triangle being equiangular, etc.[83] Again, many viewed at least some bits from geometry as analytical, including those just mentioned, the last of which (about equilateral triangles) we will be tackling later in our discussion of logical probability of analytical truths and falsehoods.

I'll just note at this place that both R. Swinburne and T. McGrew presume that Goldbach's conjecture is analytically true or analytically false.[84] More generally, Swinburne has expressed his belief in analytic mathematical truths several times.[85] He accepts some geometrical claims as analytic, too.[86] This also is all consonant with T. McGrew's talk (quoted above) of the concept of 5 conceptually excluding concepts of other numbers, implying that true propositions about equalities and inequalities between numbers are true analytically and false propositions about such relations are false analytically. Of course, on Kant's usage, we feel no urge to classify propositions like *5 + 7 = 12* as "analytically true"; quite to the contrary. But remember that my characterization of this term is different from that which requires for all analytic truth a

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[82] R. Swinburne, "Analytic/Synthetic," op. cit., pp. 36-37.

[83] For a suggestion, drawing on G. Frege, that non-Euclidean geometries do not, in fact, treat the geometric concepts (such as *point*, *straight line*, etc.) but rather redefine the words (e.g., "straight line" as "path of a light ray"), see Pavel Tichý (1936 – 1994), *The Foundations of Frege's Logic*, Berlin and New York, De Gruyter 1988, pp. 270-281.

[84] Cf. R. Swinburne, "Analycity, Necessity, Apriority," op. cit., p. 242; T. and L. McGrew, *Internalism and Epistemology*, op. cit., pp. 114-115.

[85] Cf. R. Swinburne, "Analycity, Necessity, Apriority," op. cit., pp. 229, 234, 241-242; *The Evolution of the Soul*, op. cit., p. 314; *The Coherence of Theism*, op. cit., pp. 130, 249, 273; "In Defence of Logical Nominalism," op. cit., nt. 3; *Epistemic Justification*, op. cit., p. 10.

[86] Cf. R. Swinburne, "Analycity, Necessity, Apriority," op. cit., p. 241; "Analytic/Synthetic," op. cit., p. 37.

corresponding definitional reduction to exist. It is no surprise that also R. Swinburne's and T. McGrew's usage is broader than Kant's.[87]

Quotably, T. McGrew offers a general three-fold explanation of the hiddenness of the real analyticity status of many analytically true propositions:

> "… it is generally the case that, the more interesting a necessary truth is, the less obvious it is, at least for those of us mortals who do not have all our concepts perfectly regimented and clearly and distinctly before our minds at all times. Will we then be forced to concede that non-trivial necessary truths are synthetic after all? To answer this family of questions, we must distinguish among three different possible sources of initial uncertainty about the truth-value of a putatively analytic necessary proposition. First, we might be initially uncertain about a claim because it involves concepts that are intrinsically fuzzy and because the claim concerns a relation of concepts at their ''fuzzy edges,'' so to speak. Second, we might be unsure about how one concept relates to another because the concepts involved, though not intrinsically fuzzy, have been only partially analyzed. Third, and relatedly, we might be initially unsure about, and hence able to learn, an analytic necessary truth by way of coming to see a relation of conceptual entailment."[88]

That is, the cause of unclear analyticity status of a particular proposition may be vagueness, and hence undetermination, of the involved concepts with respect to what the proposition asserts. Another common reason of our doubts about the status is that we haven't analyzed the involved concepts enough (to see a relevant conceptual containment). Or maybe we are missing a relevant conceptual relation of another type (e.g., a relevant conceptual inclusion).

Finally, and truly shortly, it is not my intention to hold that analytically true propositions are rather about our conceptual schemes or our language than about reality.[89] We will see that analytically true propositions are not "about the world" in the sense that they cannot fail to be true. And the reason is that they are logically necessary. But it is beyond my ken why it should follow from this that analytically true (or logically necessary) propositions are not related to or not true in virtue of reality. Relatedly, I am aware of no good reason why concepts involved in analytically true propositions, however abstract such concepts are, should not capture reality, however abstractedly.[90] In the hope of having clarified my idea of analycity tolerably, I shift to the sense in which I shall be using the term "the Trinity doctrine."

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[87] Cf. R. Swinburne, "Analycity, Necessity, Apriority," op. cit., p. 241.
[88] T. and L. McGrew, *Internalism and Epistemology*, op. cit., pp. 113-114.
[89] As was declared, e.g., by the British logical positivist Alfred Jules Ayer (1910 – 1989). See his *Language, Truth and Logic*, London, Penguin Books 1990, ch. 4. Cf. Oswald Hanfling, *Ayer*, London, Phoenix 1997, pp. 38-43.
[90] On related issues, cf. T. and L. McGrew, *Internalism and Epistemology*, op. cit., p. 113; and R. Swinburne, *The Coherence of Theism*, op. cit., pp. 17, 21-22, 130, 314; *The Christian God*, op. cit., pp. 96-114, 245-247; "In Defence of Logical Nominalism," op. cit., pp. 311, 314-316, 323, 326, 328.

II.6. The Trinity doctrine

For my purposes, I choose to envisage *the Trinity doctrine* as the proposition that: there are (really) three persons each of which is God, yet there is (really) just one God. A person which is God may be deemed to be "divine person." In a rough approximation, altogether sufficient for my further explorations, I think of a person as an item capable (in an ordinary sense of the word "capable") of thought and volition. In order not to beg the question against several extant metaphysical and theological views, I restrain from providing any other – even if compatible or more accurate – demarcation of personhood.[91] It is doubtful that doing otherwise in this matter would advance our discussion. For similar reasons, the following concepts may be approached with the same ease. On my construal, "God" is conceived as an omnipotent being. In order not to raise the dust of controversy about the nature of omnipotence, any attempt at a definition is happily left out.[92] I could expand the explicit content of "God" by adding other features, like

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[91] Swinburne's explications of what it takes to be a person may be read from *The Christian God*, op. cit., pp. 31-32; *The Coherence of Theism*, op. cit., pp. 101-104; and *The Evolution of the Soul*, op. cit., pp. 4-5; *Was Jesus God?*, Oxford, Clarendon Press 2008, pp. 6, 41, 48-49. Cf. also his paper "In Defence of Logical Nominalism," op. cit., pp. 321-323. A survey of contemporary modern debates about personhood is Eric T. Olson's entry "Personal Identity," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Winter 2010 Edition)*, E. N. Zalta (ed.), http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2010/entries/identity-personal (accessed October 5, 2011). Classical and careful discussions of personhood (in the Trinitarian context) are found, for instance, in: Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* (http://newadvent.org/summa; accessed October 5, 2011), I, q. 29, and *Quaestiones disputatae de potentia Dei* (http://dhspriory.org/thomas/QDdePotentia.htm; accessed October 5, 2011), q. 9, a. 1-4; Vojtěch Šanda (1889 – 1970), *Synopsis theologiae dogmaticae specialis*, Vol. I, Freiburg im Briesgau, B. Herder 1916, § 43; and Matthias Joseph Scheeben (1835 – 1888), *The Mysteries of Christianity*, St. Louis and London, B. Herder Book Co. 1951, pp. 69-73.

[92] For Swinburne's definitions of omnipotence, see his books *The Coherence of Theism*, op. cit., ch. 9; *The Christian God*, op. cit., pp. 125, 129-130; and *The Existence of God*, op. cit., pp. 7, 94-99, 334; *Is There a God?*, Oxford, Clarendon Press 1996, pp. 6-7, 43-45; *Was Jesus God?*, op. cit., p. 6; and the paper "How the Divine Properties Fit Together: Reply to Gwiazda, " *Religious Studies* 45, No. 4 (2009), pp. 495-496 and nt. 4. Diverse accounts of omnipotence were recently surveyed and discussed especially by: Joshua Hoffman and Gary Rosenkrantz, "Omnipotence," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall 2009 Edition)*, E. N. Zalta (ed.), http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2009/entries/omnipotence (accessed September 1, 2011); Brian Leftow, "Omnipotence," in *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophical Theology*, Thomas P. Flint and Michael C. Rea (eds.), Oxford, Oxford University Press 2009, pp. 167-198; and D. J. Hill, *Divinity and Maximal Greatness*, London and New York, Routledge 2005, ch. 5.

If pressed, I would prefer a definition along the lines suggested by T. P. Flint and A. J. Freddoso in their seminal paper "Maximal Power," in *The Existence & Nature of God*, A. J. Freddoso (ed.), Notre Dame and London, University of Notre Dame Press 1983, pp. 81-113. Unfortunately, their definition of omnipotence is too complicated to be reproduced here fully and at the same time intelligibly. Moreover, the definition employs the concept of a possible world that I try to sidetrack whenever I may (because it brings in definitional problems of its own). Can one paraphrase the thrust of Flint's and Freddoso's account more briefly and concisely than they did? For a first approximation, J. Hoffman and G. Rosenkrantz, in their "Omnipotence," op. cit., # 4, sum it up roughly as follows: "The basic idea of this account of omnipotence is that an agent is omnipotent just when he can actualize [directly or by bringing about the antecedent of a true counterfactual of freedom] any state of affairs that it is possible for someone to actualize, except for certain "counterfactuals of freedom", their consequents, and certain states of affairs that are "accidentally impossible" because of the past." Here, "counterfactual of freedom" means: subjunctive conditional about how agent(s) would freely act in certain circumstances or negation of such a conditional. The counterfactuals of freedom which are exempted from the omnipotent power are those about free action agents other

omniscience and perfect moral goodness. But, again, there is no need for us to do this. On top of that, omnipotence is the sole divine attribute (from all those standard in natural theology) mentioned in such chief and wide-spread Christian creeds as are the so called Apostles' Creed (its Latin text reported c. 390) and the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed (380/381).[93] This confirms that it is not idiosyncratic, at our time and in our area, to link being God with being omnipotent, at least if "God" is understood as in historically standard Christianity.[94] It also

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than the omnipotent one. But even with this clarification we are still left in the relative dark. For one thing, we do not know which kind of events are said to be "accidentally impossible" because of the past. Let's have another try.

American analytic philosophers James Porter Moreland (*1948) and William Lane Craig (*1949), in their book *Philosophical Foundations for a Christian Worldview* (Downers Grove, InterVarsity Press 2003, pp. 528-529), try to express Flint's and Freddoso's concept of omnipotence compactly, in the following way. Agent *S* is omnipotent at *t* if and only if *S* can at *t* actualize any state of affairs that is not described by counterfactuals about the free acts of others and that is broadly logically possible for someone to actualize, given the same hard past at *t* and the same true counterfactuals about free acts of others. Hard past is understood as constituted by past states which are *not* indirectly actualizable by someone. The (hypothetical) example, provided by Moreland and Craig, of a past state that could have been actualized indirectly is described by the proposition: in 1968, the baseball team Chicago Cubs won the World Series. This example presupposes that if *S* took action *A*, the Cubs would win the 1968 World Series. So it appears that according to Moreland and Craig, hard past embraces all past states that no action of *S* would prevent (from obtaining) by means of bringing about the antecedent of a true subjunctive conditional. We still do not know, however, which modalities are hiding behind the talk of "broadly logical" possibilities and the talk that somebody "can" do so and so. Moreland and Craig provide no explication. See pp. 50 and 503 of their book for their rather lax comments on several modal notions. See also W. L. Craig, "Graham Oppy on the Kalām Cosmological Argument," *Sophia* 32, No. 1 (1993), p. 2.

Now I am going to hazard my own account of omnipotence, which is, in fact, merely a modification of Moreland's and Craig's modification of Flint's and Freddoso's definition. Let's say that a proposition is *fit for x's power* just when: (a) it is metaphysically possible that some item(s) bring(s) about that the proposition is true, and (b) the proposition is not a subjunctive conditional about free act(s) of item(s) other than *x*, and (c) it is metaphysically possible that some item(s) bring(s) about that the proposition is true, given all true subjunctive conditionals about free act(s) of item(s) other than *x* and given all true propositions about the past of *t* each of which is such that no action of *x* would bring its negation about by means of bringing about the antecedent of a true subjunctive conditional. Here, a proposition is meant to be *metaphysically possible* just in case it is not false solely in virtue of the nature(s) (essence(s)) of the item(s) the concepts in the proposition are about. I leave it as an open question whether metaphysical possibility and logical possibility are coextensive. But it seems anything metaphysically possible is logically possible, and that anything logically impossible is metaphysically impossible. Now, I suggest that item *x* is *omnipotent* at time *t* if and only if (i) *x* is an agent (capable of volition) and (ii) for any proposition fit for *x*'s power, if *x* wanted at *t* that the proposition is true (in virtue of its truthmaker obtaining) at *t'* (whether identical to *t* or not), *x* would succeed in bringing it about (by his own direct free volition or by means of bringing about the antecedent of a true subjunctive conditional) that the proposition is true (in virtue of its truthmaker obtaining) at *t'*. The clause (i) is inserted in order to alleviate objections from items incapable of volition (e.g. stones). Otherwise such items would, on some theories of subjunctive conditionals, end up being omnipotent trivially, given the assumption of these theories that any subjunctive conditional with an impossible antecedent is true. In connection with the issue of subjunctive conditionals with impossible antecedents, cf. D. Peroutka, *Aristotelská nauka o potencích* (in Czech), Prague, Filosofia 2010, pp. 139-141; and J. P. Moreland and W. L. Craig, *Philosophical Foundations for a Christian Worldview*, op. cit., pp. 52-54.

[93] This credal elevation of omnipotence is observed in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc/index.htm; accessed November 27, 2011), # 268. D. J. Hill, in turn, reports this observation of the *Catechism* in his book *Divinity and Maximal Greatness*, op. cit., p. 126.

[94] Biblical motivation for the ascription of omnipotence to God is briefly listed by Brian Leftow in his "Omnipotence," op. cit., p. 167; V. Šanda, *Synopsis theologiae dogmaticae specialis*, Vol. I, op. cit., § 29, # 3b; and Ludwig Ott (1906 – 1985), *Grundriß der Dogmatik*, Freiburg im Briesgau, Herder KG 1981, p. 55. The popularity

explains the precedence – even if only slight – that is given here to *omnipotent being* as the intuitive explication of "God," as standardly used in Christian religion, and not to the other non-controversial explication: *the (sole) personal (efficient) cause (active or permissive) of the whole universe*.[95] Indeed, it is hard to find a less controversial and more intuitive characterization of the sense joined by those who have professed to be Christians to the word "God" than the one given by means of omnipotence and the one given by means of the attribute of being the Creator. The former is preferred here because it's explicitly present in both forenamed creeds, while the latter only in the newer of these two formulas. Nothing hinges, though, on this preference, whether regarding the plausibility of the arguments below or their relevance for that aspect of the epistemic standing of standard Christianity (i.e., its non-evident logical possibility, apart from religious experience) which will be in our focus.

Several remarks on some ontological concepts that were used in the above explanation of the sense in which the term "the Trinity doctrine" will be employed are in order. *Being* is supposed, in the context of saying that God is an omnipotent being, to enjoy a peculiar ontological unity, not enjoyed by everything. What has such a unity under consideration? People and animals, for instance; but not, in contrast, aggregates of people or animals. It is not supposed, of course, that any being is a man or some other animal. These examples are chosen merely to convey the general idea of the kind of ontological unity (or non-compositeness) any being, as opposed to some other ontological items, has. As for the other concepts involved in the preceding explications – those of *capable*, of *thought*, of *volition*, of *action*, and of numbers *one*

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of the notion of omnipotence in the talk about "God" across various philosophical and religious traditions is witnessed by William J. Wainwright's entry on "Concepts of God," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Winter 2010 Edition)*, E. N. Zalta (ed.), http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2010/entries/concepts-god (accessed September 1, 2011).

[95] According to the interpretation of C. F. J. Martin, *Thomas Aquinas*, op. cit., p. 85, Aquinas thought that it is obvious to everyone that "God" signifies the cause of the universe (in nt. 85 on p. 94, Martin alludes to Aquinas's *Summa Theologica*, I, q. 2, a. 2, ad 2). Because it is seriously doubtful whether also the impersonal cause of the universe would be generally recognized as God, I added the condition of personality into the explication of "God" as the Creator. By "the universe", I mean the aggregate composed of whatever items spatiotemporally related to the Earth there are. This definition is similar to R. Swinburne's in *The Existence of God*, op. cit., pp. 133-134, and in *Revelation*, op. cit., p. 221. Q. Smith – in "Internal and External Causal Explanations of the Universe," *Philosophical Studies* 79, No. 3 (1995), pp. 297-298, and in *Felt Meanings of the World*, West Lafayette, Purdue University Press 1986, pp. 200-210 and 296-301 – discusses his proposal to delimit the universe as the aggregate composed of whatever causally connected physical states there are. This latter definition of the universe seems acceptable, too. The question whether there is a universe which is not spatiotemporally related to *the* universe (i.e., to our universe) need not be addressed here. As for the concept of (efficient) causality, *x* causes *y*, I take it, just when *x* produces the existence of *y*. Accordingly, *x* causes that *p* (is true), just when *x* produces the existence of the states of affairs reported (represented, described) by *p* – or *x* produces the existence of a truthmaker of *p*. Rather than being illuminating conceptual analyses, these equivalences are mere verbal restatements of the (apparently primitive) concept of causality. I do not believe, however, any philosopher has done much better in his or her delineation of the idea of causality. Similarly on the concept of causation: R. Swinburne, "The Irreducibility of Causation," *Dialectica* 51, No. 1 (1997), pp. 79-92, and *The Evolution of the Soul*, op. cit., pp. 89-90; Gertrude Elizabeth Margaret Anscombe (1919 – 2001), "Causality and Determinism," in *Causation*, Ernest Sosa and Michael Tooley (eds.), Oxford, Oxford University Press 1993, pp. 88-104; A. J. Freddoso, "The Necessity of Nature," *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* 11, No. 1 (1986), nt. 9; and Bruce Reichenbach, "Cosmological Argument," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Winter 2010 Edition)*, E. N. Zalta (ed.), http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2010/entries/cosmological argument, # 4.4 (accessed October 5, 2011).

and *three* – I will presume to be apprehended by the reader, even if left undefined by me in this dissertation, the subject of which would not be advanced if we introduced yet further levels of definition. Again, there appears to be no need, given our subject matter, to go more systematic and torture ourselves about these, trying to search through the depths of the ontological basics.

By my usage of the words "the Trinity doctrine," I do not wish to imply that any different usage is idiosyncratic, incorrect or unsuitable for promoting communication about theological matters. But I do intend my usage *not* to be idiosyncratic, infelicitous or incorrect in respect of its communicative facility. There's hardly anything confusing about the choice to name the proposition *there are three persons such that each of them is God, and there is just one God* by the term "the Trinity doctrine" – as the reader himself shall find out by mere consideration of the proposition itself and of the etymology of the said term. Further claims might surely be attached to the above minimalist construal of the Trinity doctrine in order to yield a more comprehensive theological account of the nature of God which would be properly called "the Trinity doctrine," even if it would be logically stronger than the proposition for which I reserved the term in this dissertation. The following propositions would qualify, before many others, as claims additional to the minimalist Trinity doctrine (explicated in the last paragraph), altering it to somewhat more informative.

Just one divine person is such that it does not proceed from a divine person and some divine person proceeds from it. Just one divine person is such that it proceeds from a divine person and from it (though not from it alone), or through it, proceeds a divine person.[96] And just one divine person is such that it proceeds from a divine person (or persons) and no divine person proceeds from it. The first divine person is most commonly named the Father, the second the Son, and the third the Holy Spirit (or the Holy Ghost).[97] The Son is said to be begotten or generated by the Father. The Holy Spirit is said to be spirated by the Father (and the Son – or through the Son).[98]

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[96] For a brief survey of the (so called "Filioque") question whether from the second person proceeds another divine person, though this latter proceeds from the not proceeding person, too – or whether the second person is instrumental to this procession of the third, see *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, op. cit., ## 245-248 and 264. According to the *Catechism*, both views are true. Similarly: Bertrand de Margerie (1923 – 2003), *The Christian Trinity in History*, Petersham, St. Bede's Publications 1982, pp. 160-178. Cf. also Philip Schaff (1819 – 1893), *The Creeds of Christendom, With a History and Critical Notes*, Vol. I, New York, Harper & Brothers 1919, §§ 8, 12, 16, 20, 21, 40 and 41.

[97] Surveys of biblical passages supporting monotheism and personality, divinity, and mutual non-identity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are: J. P. Moreland and W. L. Craig, *Philosophical Foundations for a Christian Worldview*, op. cit., pp. 575-578 and 597; Jean-Hervé Nicolas (1910 – 2001), *Synthèse dogmatique: De la Trinité à la Trinité*, Fribourg and Paris, Éditions Universitaires Fribourg Beauchesne 1985, pp. 50-73; Norman L. Geisler, *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*, Grand Rapids, Baker Books 1999, "Trinity"; Dave Armstrong, *Mere Christian Apologetics* (e-book), Dave Armstrong 2002, ch. 7; James Anderson, "In Defence of Mystery: A Reply to Dale Tuggy," *Religious Studies* 41, No. 2 (2005), pp. 146-147.

[98] For some credal formulations of some of the indicated mutual relations of procession within the Trinity, see especially the so called Athanasian Creed (from c. 500; Athanasius of Alexandria himself lived in the period c. 297 – 373), the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed (380/381; expands the Creed of Nicaea from the year 325), and the comments on it made by the Council of Toledo (589). All these pronouncements are available for inspection, together with historical remarks, e.g. in P. Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom, With a History and Critical Notes*, Vol. I, op. cit., §§ 8 and 10; § 7 ibid. treats the Apostles' Creed, which was mentioned above. On the main Trinitarian creeds of Christianity, cf. also M. C. Rea, "The Trinity," in *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophical*

Once more, other specifying claims might be added to yield an even more comprehensive doctrine that I'd be safe to call "the Trinity doctrine." But for our goals, we shall not do this. Indeed, by the term we shall subsume the preceding claims about the inner Trinitarian processions and about the names of divine persons either. We shall stick to the minimalist sense of term "the Trinity doctrine" – which is: the proposition that:

> there are (really) three persons such that each of them is God, and there is (really) just one God.

We move now to the question how the word "Christianity" shall be understood in this dissertation.

II.7. Christianity

In this dissertation, *Christianity* shall be understood as the following, compound, and complex indeed, proposition, constituted by a number of diverse, though not unrelated, doctrines:

> There is just one God. God exists in precisely three persons – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit – each of which is God. God is omnipotent (and omniscient and perfectly morally good) and the creator *ex nihilo* of all other beings. Jesus of Nazareth (who lived within a subinterval of 8 BCE – 33 CE in what is now Israel and its surrounding territories) is the Son. Jesus (therefore) is both a human and God. Jesus is the Messiah – the ruler, deliverer and bestower of deep well-being who was promised by God to the Jewish nation. Jesus's mother Mary was caused by the Holy Spirit to conceive Jesus without his having a biological father. Jesus lived and died – by crucifixion – to atone for human morally bad actions; this atonement removed such a grave obstacle that so long as the obstacle wasn't removed, all other humans would be prevented from eternal salvation – an enormous everlasting well-being. After his death and burial (and the expiry of more than a day), Jesus was bodily resurrected. Later, Jesus stopped his living as a human on earth, abandoned a certain lower status which he assumed at his conception, and assumed a certain higher status instead in such a way that it is apt to say that he ascended to the

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Theology, T. P. Flint and M. C. Rea (eds.), op. cit., pp. 404-405. Concerning some biblical passages motivating codifications of the mutual relations of procession in the Trinity, cf. again *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, op. cit., ## 243-248. The two processions within the Trinity – of the Son's generation by the Father, and of the Holy Spirit's procession from the Father (and the Son or through the Son) – and also their biblical support were doubted by some Christian scholars. Examples of such animadversions are: John S. Feinberg, *No One Like Him: The Doctrine of God*, Wheaton, Crossway Books 2001, pp. 488-492; J. P. Moreland and W. L. Craig, *Philosophical Foundations for a Christian Worldview*, op. cit., pp. 577-578 and 594; W. L. Craig, "A Formulation and Defense of the Doctrine of the Trinity" (unabridged version of ch. 29 in the previous book), http://www.reasonablefaith.org/site/News2?page=NewsArticle&id=5909 (accessed October 31, 2011); W. L. Craig, "Is God the Father Causally Prior to the Son?," http://www.reasonablefaith.org/site/News2?page=NewsArticle&id=5867 (accessed October 31, 2011).

> Father; Jesus also became as fully united to the Father as he could be, so that it may be aptly said that Jesus is seated at the right hand of the Father. (By none of these last claims is it intended that Jesus ceased to be a human.) The non-repeatable ceremony of baptism by water in the name of the Trinity appropriates for the baptized human the eternal benefit of the atonement made by Jesus. (It is not intended in this that once gained by the baptized, the benefit can never be lost by him.) God provided the Church – an enduring society to teach about God – in line with the teaching of Jesus and his disciples called Apostles – and about God's works and to make the benefits of God's salvific works available. By any form of good life, members of the Church help each other to attain eternal salvation or to attain it more fully. Sooner or later, God will bring about the bodily resurrection of all deceased humans, Jesus will reappear sensibly to all humans (who ever existed), God will allot morally fitting rewards or punishments to all humans and bodily eternal salvation to some of them, and shall also bring the present order of nature forever to an end in transforming the universe radically.[99]

As when explicating my usage of "the Trinity doctrine" above, the just proposed usage of the term "Christianity" is not meant to insinuate that it is the only correct one. But it is meant to be a correct, non-idiosyncratic and suitable for promoting communication about theological matters.

Further claims might be added to the given construal of Christianity to yield a more comprehensive doctrine properly called "Christianity." In line with Swinburne, we could call the already adduced doctrines, constituting the content of Christianity (in my sense), and add certain moral doctrines.[100] Firstly, the following modified Ten Commandments of the Old Testament are

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[99] A full-range assembly of textual evidence for the listed theological doctrines which comes from the Christian Bible is presented in *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, op. cit., Pt. One, Section Two. Paradigmatic credal proclamations of the same theological doctrines are to be found in the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed. The section referred to from the *Catechism* tracks the structure of these two creeds. It's quite amusing to compare what I define as Christianity with what the American analytic philosopher P. van Inwagen, who's himself a Christian, views as the highest common factor of the various schools of irreligion, and what he, somewhat ironically, expresses as follows: "There is no God. There is, in fact, nothing besides the physical cosmos that science investigates. Human beings, since they are a part of this cosmos, are physical things and therefore do not survive death. Human beings are, in fact, animals among other animals, and differ from other animals only in being more complex. Like other animals, they are a product of uncaring and unconscious physical processes that did not have them, or anything else, in mind. There is, therefore, nothing external to humanity that is capable of conferring meaning or purpose on human existence. In the end, the only evil is pain and the only good is pleasure. The only purpose of morality and politics is the minimization of pain and the maximization of pleasure. Human beings, however, have an unfortunate tendency to wish to deny these facts and to believe comforting myths according to which they have an eternal purpose. This irrational component in the psyches of most human beings – it is the great good fortune of the species that there are a few strong-minded progressives who can see through the comforting myths – encourages the confidence-game called religion. Religions invent complicated and arbitrary moral codes and fantastic future rewards and punishments in order to consolidate their own power. Fortunately, they are gradually but steadily being exposed as frauds by the progress of science (which was invented by strong-minded progressives), and they will gradually disappear through the agency of scientific education and enlightened journalism." P. van Inwagen, *The Possibility of Resurrection and Other Essays in Christian Apologetics*, op. cit., p. 15. Cf. *Humanist Manifestos I and II*, Paul Kurtz (ed.), Amherst, Prometheus Books 1973.

[100] See R. Swinburne, *Was Jesus God?*, op. cit., p. 26; cf. also pp. 22-23, 47-52, 58-60 and 67-83 ibid. for Swinburne's description of the main theological and moral teachings of historically standard Christianity. A more detailed account of the same matter was given by R. Swinburne in his book *Revelation*, op. cit., chs. 7 and 11.

included among Christian moral teachings. It is morally obligatory for humans: to believe in God and to worship (as God) God and only God; not to worship (as God) any idol; not to make irreverent use of words about God; to worship God and not to work unnecessarily on Sundays; to honour one's father and mother; not to murder; not to engage in sex outside monogamous heterosexual marriage; not to steal; not to make a false accusation in a court of law; not to covet or try to get any of someone else's possessions. Secondly, there are some further specific additions to the Ten Commandments: It is morally obligatory for humans: to set Jesus as a model for one's life; to worship God much and to pray much; to feed the hungry humans, care for the sick humans, visit the imprisoned humans, and show hospitality to the lonely humans – or to give money in order to enable other humans to do this; to teach other humans about God; to help other humans to eternal salvation; to forgive those who seek one's forgiveness; not to divorce (at least apart from the reason of adultery); and not to abort a human fetus intentionally. (Some would also deem it apposite to include, as a marked Christian moral teaching, the maxim: not to contracept human sex intentionally.)[101]

But for our goals, we need not construe "Christianity" as involving the listed moral teachings, or, for that matter, any expressly moral teaching at all. It would even be sufficient to construe Christianity quite broadly and vaguely, in the following way: Christianity is just the historically standard Christian creed. If this strategy was embraced, then it might be said, plausibly enough, that on such a construal, Christianity entails the Trinity doctrine. At this place, any doubter of this entailment could be invited to consider any "Christian" creed he can think of. Upon doing so, he would only be expected to attest to the relation of entailment between any – or almost any – creed (under his consideration) aptly classified as "Christian" on the one hand and the Trinity doctrine on the other. An even more laborious inquirer might even inspect such an authoritative historical classic as is the trilogy *The Creeds of Christendom* by the historian Philip Schaff (1819 – 1893).[102] The inquirer would find that the overwhelming majority of the creeds treated on the many pages of this work are Trinitarian.[103] Moreover, even if somebody settled on a construal of Christianity according to which the Trinity doctrine would end up not to be entailed by it – as when John Locke (1632 – 1704), maybe mainly for political or ecumenical reasons, preferred to write of the Christian belief as consisting just in the confession that Jesus is the Messiah[104] –, still, even so, nothing would change the fact that philosophers of the Christian religion, whether themselves Christians or not, mostly *have* been inspecting Christianity construed as entailing the doctrine of the Trinity.[105] And to such philosophers these explorations of mine are addressed in the first place.

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[101] For biblical grounding of these moral doctrines, cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, op. cit., Pt. Three, Sect. Two. See also R. Swinburne, *Revelation*, op. cit., ch. 11.

[102] P. Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom, With a History and Critical Notes*, op. cit., 3 vols.

[103] The only exceptions are Unitarian (also called Socinian) and Swedenborgian creeds. See ibid., Vol. I, §§ 115 and 118. Schaff states the pervasiveness of the Trinity doctrine in the *bona fide* Christian creeds in §§ 6, 9-10, 13 and 44.

[104] See J. Locke, *The Reasonableness of Christianity, as Delivered in the Scriptures*, London, C. Baldwin 1824, pp. 20-21, 157-158, 172-178, 243-245. A considered opposition to the strategy assumed by Locke was proposed by his opponent Robert Jenkin (1656 – 1727), *The Reasonableness and Certainty of the Christian Religion*, Vol. II, London, T. W. 1734, ch. XXVI, pp. 429 and 437-441.

[105] On the Christian side, cf., e.g., Clive Staples Lewis (1898 – 1963), *Mere Christianity*, New York, HarperCollins e-books 2001, Preface (pp. x-xiii) and Bk. Four, ch. 2; R. Swinburne, *Was Jesus God?*, op. cit., pp. 26-38, 48, 70; Caroline Franks Davis, *The Evidential Force of Religious Experience*, Oxford, Clarendon Press 1989, p. 249; A.

Yet, to make matters more clear, a more direct or descriptive account, even if still philosophically or theologically rough and sketchy, was given above of the sense chosen in this text to be attached to the word "Christianity." Thus, rather than being content with the mere proposal that the word shall refer to the content of the historically standard Christian creed, I decree that the word shall, for us, in this dissertation, cover the compound conjunction of the theological, as opposed to moral, doctrines that I have enumerated. No attempt was or will be made, of course, to define the concepts in conjunction throughout, to the satisfaction of any minute philosopher or theologian. It is enough for us to understand it at least generally to appreciate that this conjunction is entailed by what may be aptly called "Christianity" (or "the content of Christianity"), and to grasp that the conjunction entails the Trinity doctrine (in the minimalist sense). By the first token, we will see the relevance of my arguments for Christian apologetics and its critique and for the philosophy of Christian religion. By the second token, we will see the truth of one of its premises (i.e., premise (9); see below, section III.2).

II.8. "Public" evidentness

In this dissertation, we shall be exploring some consequences of and some reasons for and against the claim that: it cannot be publicly evident that the Trinity doctrine is logically possible. In this section, the focus is the term "publicly evident." What do I mean by this? A philosopher's argument often comes up first as a bunch of rough and relatively vague intuitions, with concepts only confusedly apprehended and inferences outlined hastily, with many logical gaps. Rarely, the idea later becomes polished to a perfection of utterly clear and plain definitions, impeccable and evidently correct logical steps, and altogether and evidently true premises. But some progress may be made, for the sake of the philosopher himself or of his (puzzled) interlocutors. The process of clarifying may be at times puzzling for the originator of the argument himself, yielding to him blind alleys he did not expect to face. Choices about the explication of notions he has been employing up to a certain time with ease need not be trivial. Quite to the contrary: Doubts spanning long periods of inquiry sometimes persist whether there is an adequate candidate available in the related literature for a decent definition or explication of a concept

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Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief*, New York, Oxford University Press 2000, pp. vii-ix, 80, 117, 241, 243, 272, 277, 285-288, 304, 319-321, 357, 499; and William J. Abraham, "The Epistemological Significance of the Inner Witness of the Holy Spirit," *Faith and Philosophy* 7, No. 4 (1990), p. 435; W. J. Abraham, *Crossing the Threshold of Divine Revelation*, Grand Rapids and Cambridge, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company 2006, pp. 95-97, 113; Michael J. Murray and M. C. Rea, "Philosophy and Christian Theology," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Summer 2011 Edition)*, E. N. Zalta (ed.), http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2011/entries/christiantheology-philosophy (accessed September 1, 2011); Ronald J. Feenstra, "Incarnation," in *A Companion to Philosophy of Religion*, Philip L. Quinn and Charles Taliaferro (eds.), Oxford, Blackwell 1999, p. 532. On the non-Christian side, see, e.g., Graham Oppy (*1960), "Über die Aussichten erfolgreicher Beweise für Theismus oder Atheismus," in *Gottesbeweise von Anselm bis Gödel*, Joachim Bromand and Guido Kreis (eds.), Berlin, Suhrkamp Verlag 2011, pp. 599-601; and Charlie Dunbar Broad (1887 – 1971), "The Present Relations of Science and Religion," *Philosophy* 14, No. 54 (1939), pp. 131-133. Michael Martin (*1932), in his book *The Case Against Christianity* (Philadelphia, Temple University Press 1991, pp. 5-13), views the Trinity doctrine as a component of "Orthodox Christianity."

crucial to the argument, and if so, which one it is. Now, my subsequent discussions operate with a concept of publicly evident proposition. Basically and in the first approximation, my arguments are interested in and focused on something (more accurately, the logical possibility of the Trinity doctrine) being evident without reliance on religious experience (especially from, by studying of, or on the basis of reasons of Christian natural theology or Christian apologetics). So my usage of the term "publicly evident" is rather technical and specific. Let's survey now two poor candidates for the content of the term "publicly evident" which occur in the epistemological literature. They will end up unfit for the idea of the "publicly evident" that I want to pass on. But because they are out there, tempting, and seemingly fit, I want to address them in order to delimit my own concept against them, and also in order to make some helpful notes (concerning the general notion of evidence, as opposed to the notion of the evident) on the way.

Somebody might immediately suspect, after hearing the words "publicly evident", that what I mean by them is that:

> a proposition is publicly evident just when it is evident from, or by means of exploring or considering, public evidence.

It is worthwhile to think through this suggestion, though the suggestion itself is less valuable. We are lead by it to the question of how we are to think of *evidence* in general. Because the notion of evidence is a notion which would be unwise to confuse with the notion of evident proposition (explained above), and also a notion which will appear in our subsequent discussion, an answer to the question after the nature of evidence is useful. Generally, evidence for something is that which contributes to it some kind of epistemic support, in relation to all that is (occurrently or readily) evident. Evidence may be embodied or displayed, e.g., by fingerprints, bloodstains, knife, plastic bag, spoken testimony, written documents, experimental and observational data, coins, fragments of furniture or pottery or papyrus, test results, X-ray results, subjective experiences, sense data, protocol sentences, observation statements or just propositions one knows. Evidence is evidence for or against something. It is of graded (or, degreed) strength. Some evidence-relations are comparable in their strength.[106] On an account attractive to some probabilists, evidence is evidence for or against a proposition, and evidence itself is a proposition, too.[107] What kind of proposition? In other words, assuming both the evidencing and the evidenced items are, or at least could be, propositions, what makes, or could make, a proposition evidence for another proposition? A tricky question, hardly answerable generally.[108] Although I am not aware of any treatise fleshing out the sketchy proposal I am about to make, I suspect

[106] Cf. especially T. McGrew, "Evidence," op. cit., p. 58-59; see also R. Swinburne, *Epistemic Justification*, op. cit., pp. 135-139; R. Swinburne, "Evidentialism," in *A Companion to Philosophy of Religion*, Charles Taliaferro, Paul Draper and Philip L. Quinn (eds.), Oxford, Wiley-Blackwell 2010, pp. 681-682; Thomas Kelly, "Evidence," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall 2008 Edition)*, E. N. Zalta (ed.), http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2008/entries/evidence (accessed September 2, 2011), introductory section; Richard Feldman, "Evidence," in *A Companion to Epistemology*, Jonathan Dancy, Ernest Sosa and Matthias Steup (eds.), Oxford, Wiley-Blackwell 2010, pp. 349-350.
[107] Cf. T. McGrew, "Evidence," op. cit., pp. 58-60.
[108] Cf. R. Feldman, "Evidence," op. cit., pp. 350-351.

something similar to it is the right answer. Now, as the proposal has it, proposition *q* is evidence for proposition *p* (for agent *S* at time *t*) just when it is the case that (i) both *p* and *q* have some logical probability on the conjunction of all propositions which are evident (to *S* at *t*), and (ii) if the logical probability of *q* (whatever value it then had) on the conjunction of all propositions that are evident (whatever they then were) was lower than it is, then the logical probability of *p* (whatever value it then had) would be lower than it is or not at all. Conversely, proposition *q* is evidence against proposition *p* (for agent *S* at time *t*) just when it is the case that (i) both *p* and *q* have some logical probability on the conjunction of all propositions which are evident (to *S* at *t*), and (ii) if the logical probability of *q* (whatever value it then had) on the conjunction of all propositions that are evident (whatever they then were) was higher than it is, then the logical probability of *p* (whatever value it then had) would be lower than it is or not at all. This attempt at a general definition of the concept of evidence, however neatly it relates to the concepts of evident proposition and of logical probability, is for us a relatively minor issue, offered mainly to those who would like to have some such an attempt or conceptual regimentation presented. If the definition is defective, we may just stick to the notion of evidence as epistemic support, displayed by the provided examples.

Still, assuming we have some notion of evidence, how should we, in general, usefully think of evidence being *public*? Maybe we should say evidence is public just when it is in principle possible to grasp, or consider, or explore, or assess epistemically by multiple humans, at least when they are endowed with certain cognitive organs, or certain observation tools, or conceptual tools.[109] Or just when it is, in principle, possible to share the evidence among humans.[110] Or that it is simply the sort of evidence in books or articles, or observed by senses, or by means of certain observation tools, or coming from human testimony.[111] Or evidence that it would be appropriate to use in the epistemic justification of claims proposed as a part of science, logic or mathematics.[112] Perhaps all these explications are intolerably vague, because of the components that are such right on their sleeve (watch the repeated and cautiously foggy usage of the words "in principle", "certain" and "appropriate") or those that are vague more covertly ("epistemic assessment," "cognitive organs," "science," logic," "mathematics"). Moreover, the second account of the publicity of evidence stands against the objection that not all evidence which appears, in an important sense, public is literally sharable. Sense data, e.g., coming from events intuitively deemed public, cannot be shared.[113] Further, and concerning the last account, as we shall see (in section V.2 on induction to analytically true propositions and against analytically false propositions) it is highly doubtful whether logical and mathematical considerations are correctly classified as "evidence," at least when the notion of evidence is shaped as I have suggested: as a proposition that contributes to logical probability. Related

[109] Likewise, T. Kelly, "Evidence," op. cit., #4.
[110] Cf. ibid.
[111] Cf. the following definition of "epistemic resources" in Quentin Smith, "The Metaphilosophy of Naturalism," *Philo* 4, No. 2 (2001), http://www.philoonline.org/library/smith_4_2.htm (accessed September 2, 2011): "Epistemic resources include information in books and articles, information from experts available to the person, information from what the person could come to know through empirical investigation (given the relevant tools, e.g., telescopes) or reasoning (given the relevant tools, e.g., systems of logic, mathematics, set theory)."
[112] Cf. T. Kelly, "Evidence," op. cit., nt. 38.
[113] Cf. A. J. Ayer, *Logical Positivism*, New York, MacMillan 1959, pp. 17-20; and T. Kelly, "Evidence," op. cit., #4.

worries lead some authors to divide reasons one may have for (or against) a given proposition into evidence for it on the one side and arguments assessing or regimenting the evidence on the other side.[114] At least for all these obstacles, I do not wish to demarcate the notion of something being publicly evident – a notion I need for my purposes – as being evident from, or by means of exploring or considering, public evidence. A general demarcation of *public* evidence is a tall order which I do not wish to make unless I have to. Moreover, it simply does not seem to me that we have a sufficiently firm and familiar grasp of the notion of public evidence to leave it unexplained, or explained by mere examples, and still hinge on it our ponderings. But our last discussion leastways earned a better understanding of the concept of evidence that we shall encounter later; so it was a worthy undertaking. Let's consider now the second unfit candidate for an explication of the desired concept of something being evident publicly.

> A proposition is publicly evident just when it is evident by means of following a method which is certain, or almost certain, to earn to any, or virtually any, human with suitable training and development such an insight.[115]

What shall I say to this suggestion? Setting aside the – perhaps intolerable – vagueness of the term "suitable", this definition is unsuitable for my purposes. I set to explore some consequences of and reasons for and against the premise that it cannot be publicly evident that the Trinity doctrine is logically possible, but not in a sense implying that there cannot be a method which is certain, or almost certain, to earn to any, or virtually any, human with suitable training and development an insight that the Trinity doctrine is logically possible. By the given claim, I do not wish to rule out that there is such a method. (But I do not wish to claim here that there is such a method either.) I rather wish to design the premise as opposing the view that there is such a method which is epistemically independent on religious experience (especially mere study of the reasons of natural theology or apologetics). Interestingly, according to some of his interpreters, Blaise Pascal (1623 – 1662) surmised there is a method which instills in humans a religious experience of the truth of Christianity as palpable and self-certifying as is the basic knowledge of the reality of space, time, movement, sensory experience, and (epistemically) first principles.[116] What is the method? Christian religious life is the response to all. Leading it as if one already believed Christianity to be true, is the response to those who do not. More specifically, performing the rituals, like crossing oneself with holy water and attending mass, following the morals of Christianity, making commitments to do so, prayer or at least attempts at it, reading the

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[114] Cf. G. Oppy's paper "Über die Aussichten erfolgreicher Beweise für Theismus oder Atheismus," op. cit.

[115] Inspired by and modified from Michael V. Antony, "Can We Acquire Knowledge of Ultimate Reality?," section 2, forthcoming in *Models of God and Other Ultimate Realities*, J. Diller and A. Kasher (eds.), Springer 2011, available at http://research.haifa.ac.il/~antony/papers/ultreal.pdf (accessed November 29, 2011); and by M. V. Antony, "Public Knowledge About God," talk given at the conference *Philosophy of Religion in the 21st Century*, Cracow, June 28, 2011. I note that Antony's proposal has the concept of knowledge in the place of the concept of something being evident.

[116] See Douglas Groothuis, *On Pascal*, Belmont, Wadsworth 2003, pp. 94-95; Michael Moriarty, "Grace and Religious Belief in Pascal," in *The Cambridge Companion to Pascal*, Nicholas Hammond (ed.), New York, Cambridge University Press 2003, pp. 156-157; Charles M. Natoli, *Fire in the Dark: Essays on Pascal's Pensées and Provinciales*, Rochester, The University of Rochester Press 2005, ch. 5. Cf. B. Pascal, *Thoughts*, New York, Cosimo, Inc. 2007, ## 185, 233, 242, 252, 277, 282, 287.

Bible, fostering the desire to enter into a loving relationship with Christian God (if he exists).[117] Now we may ask: does, according to Pascal, leading Christian religious life gain for (almost) *any* human readily capable of understanding the devotional moves he's going through an insight that Christianity is true, and so that the Trinity doctrine is logically possible? On this Pascal and his commentators are, to my knowledge, silent. But even assuming that Pascal thought so, my premise – that it cannot be in a certain way evident that the Trinity doctrine is logically possible – is not meant to cover what can or cannot be evident concerning the logical possibility of the Trinity doctrine by way of a certain life style, as opposed to mere explorations independent on religious experience. By my own design and intent, the premise just isn't meant to deny, explicitly or implicitly, that there is a religious practice guaranteeing to (almost) everybody (who performs it with certain understanding) an insight into the truth or possibility of Christianity. Actually, some additional considerations (in the section IV.2 below) will highlight the illusoriness of religious practice as a *generally guaranteed* generator of Trinitarian modal insights. They will also not highlight religious experience functions *this* way either. But these considerations shall be just that: additional, minor. No big stakes shall be put on decisions concerning the issue whether religious practice or religious experience are such generators. The real question of this dissertation is what follows from the view that it cannot be evident independently of religious experience (from apologetic reasons) that the Trinity doctrine is logically possible, and what is the merit of reasons for and against this view. A structured case will be made that: it follows from the view modally skeptical view that, apart from religious experience, it cannot be evident that the logical probability of Christianity is non-minimal; there are no good reasons against this modally skeptical view; and there are some good reasons for it. But if it turned out that it can be evident, even always or ordinarily, from religious experience that the Trinity doctrine is logically possible, no harm would seem to ensue to the case as such, so long as it would be true that it cannot be evident *independently of religious experience* that the Trinity doctrine is logically possible. Similarly, the case also seems compatible with it being evident, even always or ordinarily, by means of going through some religious practice, that the Trinity doctrine is logically possible, so long as it cannot be evident independently upon religious experience (say, if the practice is a source of the insight by way of certain religious experience). In fact, I do not believe some ordinary religious practice or ordinary religious experience always or commonly leads to it being evident that Christianity, or the Trinity doctrine, is true or logically possible. Still, more importantly, am I able to say something more informative or accurate about the desired concept of publicly evident proposition? A high time has come to express the technical notion, which has been on my mind, more positively. I think the following characterization, which has been intimated already, hits the notion nicely.

> A proposition is *publicly evident* just in case the proposition is evident independently upon (or, without epistemic reliance on) religious experience.

I will make several comments on the embedded notions of religious experience and epistemic independence. Firstly a few words on the clause concerning religious experience. The clause is

[117] Cf. B. Pascal, *Thoughts*, op. cit., ## 233, 242, 252; and M. Moriarty, "Grace and Religious Belief in Pascal," op. cit., pp. 144, 155-156.

inserted in order to make my arguments somewhat stronger, by making them more acceptable even to those who believe that humans can see evidently the truth or logical possibility of the Trinity doctrine in religious experience. For my purposes, *religious experience* shall be understood as:

> experience, or a feeling, or an insight, which seems to the human who has it, or is taken by the human, to be: of God, or of a supernatural item, or a result of a cognitive help (inspiration) from God, or from a supernatural item, rather than a mere result of the agent's own cognitive capacities.[118]

Some observations on the notions of experience, insight, feeling, and, especially, of the supernatural follow. It is an open question whether somebody has formulated a precise and informative general definition of *experience*. But our grasp of the notion is firm enough to leave it unexplained. If pressed to make a choice between several explications, I would pick this one as promising: experience (taking place in the realm of the five senses or not) of an item is cognition of it in its individuality (particularity) and as really present.[119] Apart from examples, it is unfeasible to explicate the explication just given at a further and more profound level. But there appears no need to do so in the first place. As for the concept of *insight*, it is the one that has been conveyed already: somebody has an insight of something when this something is evident to him. What was said about the notion of experience we may say about the notion of a *feeling*. If asked for a characterization apart from examples, we could delimit feeling as an experience phenomenologically not taking place in the realm of the five senses but including a bodily content. How should we think of the property of being *supernatural*? Paradigmatic supernatural objects are disembodied persons; such as God, disembodied souls, and angels, manifesting themselves in our world, whether the manifestation is observable by everybody with certain cognitive organs who is at a certain place at a certain time, or detectable only by somebody. Still, putative apparitions and other proclaimed supernatural phenomena need not be personal and disembodied; it is enough that the way they manifest themselves is supernatural. They may take on the form of impersonal processes and events, or be produced by material objects (personal or not). Further, not every supernatural item needs to manifest itself in our world to be supernatural. Finally, it is doubtful that all items outside our, spatiotemporal world (if there are such items), are supernatural. Even if abstract objects, propositions e.g., are non-spatiotemporal, it does not make them supernatural. So, how should we synthetize our intuitions concerning the question what it means to be supernatural and give a positive explication of the notion? I suggest the

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[118] This account of religious experience emerged by merging the definitions of religious experience in the following sources: R. Swinburne, *The Existence of God*, op. cit., pp. 295-296; Kai-man Kwan, "The Argument from Religious Experience," in *The Blackwell Companion to Natural Theology*, W. L. Craig and J. P. Moreland (eds.), Oxford, Wiley-Blackwell 2009, p. 498; and C. F. Davis, *The Evidential Force of Religious Experience*, op. cit., pp. 29-33. I note that when I speak of experience of *x*, I mean experience of *x as x*; and when I speak of taking an experience as an experience of *x*, I mean taking the experience as one which is of *x as x*. Thus, when I say somebody has a religious experience of God or of a supernatural item, I mean that the subject takes it, or that it seems to him, to be one of God *as* God, or of a supernatural item *as* a supernatural item.

[119] Cf. D. von Hildebrand, *What is Philosophy?*, op. cit., pp. 86-92. See also Alvin Plantinga's teacher William P. Alston (1921 – 2009), in the paper "The Perception of God," *Philosophical Studies* 16, No. 1 (1988), pp. 23-52.

following disjunctive definition, which appears to give us all we want. An item (person, being, force, event, process, or whatever) is supernatural just when (i) it is not spatiotemporally located and has causal effects on spatiotemporally located items; or (ii) it is spatiotemporally located and has causal effects on spatiotemporally located items in the absence of spatiotemporally continuous causal processes (or, more generally and if spatiotemporally discontinuous quantum leaps are admitted, has miraculous causal effects on spatiotemporally located items[120]); or (iii) it is not spatiotemporally located and is a person.[121]

Secondly, in which sense is a proposition meant to be evident *independently* upon (or, without reliance on) religious experience? According to my straightforward proposal, in the disjunctive sense that the human agent, to which the proposition is evident, either (i) so far hasn't had a religious experience, or (ii) has had a religious experience, but the proposition would be evident to him even if he so far hadn't had a religious experience.

Having clarified the sense of the subsequent talk of something being "publicly evident", I acknowledge the need to clarify the sense of the subsequent talk of something being unfeasibly publicly evident, too. That is, to clarify the sense in which I will be saying that something "cannot" be publicly evident.

II.9. Psychological impossibility

A peculiar notion of incapability shall be prominent in my arguments. Yet reflections on this notion are far from notorious. So it is only natural to say here more than a few words in an attempt at a delineation of the given notion.

Firstly, by saying a particular proposition *cannot* be (publicly) evident, I mean something quite close, in respect modality, to what I mean, e.g., by saying that a five (or more) yards high jump *cannot*, in an intuitive sense, be performed (on Earth and without a mechanic aid). This sort of modality does not seem to have any agreed upon name in the philosophical literature. For a start, let's call it the modality of "human inability" and its contradictory opposite as the modality of "human ability." I will say now what is *not* meant by the modality of human inability as such in general, and by the modality of human cognitive inability as such in particular. Then an attempt will be made at a positive explication.

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[120] Here, a causal effect is understood to be miraculous just in case it would not have occurred if only physical entities (particles, fields, strings), animals, plants, or spatiotemporally located humans or beings with powers much like ours (and items entailed by them and their causal operations) were causally operating. This general definition of miracle – modifying the one preferred in T. and L. McGrew, "The Argument from Miracles," op. cit., p. 596 – is vague due to the term "much like ours." But I am aware of no way around this if we want to tackle generally the difficulty coming from spatiotemporally discontinuous (quantum) causal processes. For various concepts of miracle, cf. T. McGrew, "Miracles," op. cit., # 1.

[121] The clauses (i) and (ii) are clearly mutually logically incompatible; (ii) and (iii), too; not so (i) and (iii). Propositions are said to be logically incompatible when their conjunction is logically impossible. Clauses (i) and (ii) are were adapted from G. Oppy's characterization of supernatural beings and forces in his "Über die Aussichten erfolgreicher Beweise für Theismus oder Atheismus," op. cit., p. 599. In place of my parenthesis, Oppy has another one, which reads: "(unless somehow making use of quantum entanglement or the like)." The one referring to miraculous effects is to be preferred for its broader scope.

Secondly, the three yard jump example of human inability suggests to the reader, among other things, this: when saying of a particular proposition that it cannot be (publicly) evident, I do *not* mean that it is logically impossible or analytically false, that the proposition is (publicly) evident. In like manner, it may not be logically impossible, or analytically false, that somebody jumps three yards high, although nobody can do so, in the relevant sense.

An illuminating comment was made Alvin Plantinga (already mentioned in section II.3) – according to some the leading contemporary *Protestant* philosopher of religion,[122] for some the most influential *analytic* philosopher of religion,[123] and for some even the greatest Christian philosopher of the 20th century, indeed the greatest philosopher of any stripe within that period.[124] Looking at the comment of Plantinga, it seems that he would take the modality under consideration (human inability) as a kind of "natural" impossibility, and also that he would not deem it to fall in the extent of his notion of broadly logical impossibility, and maybe not even in the extent of my notion of logical impossibility. Let me explain. Plantinga delineates the notion of broadly logical necessity, correlative to that of logical impossibility, by the following examples:

> "Truths of set theory, arithmetic and mathematics generally are necessary in this sense [of broadly logical necessity], as are a host of homelier items such as
>
> No one is taller than himself
> Red is a colour
> If a thing is red, then it is coloured
> No numbers are human beings
>
> and
>
> No prime minister is a prime number."[125]

With these examples in hand, it seems that everything logically impossible (in my sense) is broadly logically impossible (in Plantinga's sense). For, it seems, nothing is logically necessary and at the same time not broadly logically necessary; and nothing is logically impossible and at the same time broadly logically possible. I add that I do not claim here the converse holds too: i.e., that everything broadly logically impossible is logically impossible; or, equivalently, that everything broadly logically necessary is logically necessary; the verbal overlap notwithstanding.[126] Now, on the same page Plantinga writes that broadly logical necessity is extensionally

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[122] Cf. "Modernizing the Case for God" in *Time* 115, No. 14 (April 7, 1980), http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,921990,00.html (accessed November 5, 2011); author unknown.

[123] Cf. D. J. Hill, "What's New in Philosophy of Religion," op. cit.

[124] See John Gordon Stackhouse, Jr., "Mind Over Skepticism. Alvin Plantinga: The 20th Century Greatest Philosopher?," in *Christianity Today*, Issue June 11 (2001), http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2001/june11/19.74.html (accessed November 5, 2011). In comparison, B. Langtry, in the introduction of his entry "Richard Swinburne," op. cit., views Swinburne to be perhaps the foremost 20th century philosopher of religion.

[125] A. Plantinga, *The Nature of Necessity*, op. cit., p. 2. Broadly logical possibility also figures in J. P. Moreland's and W. L. Craig's definition of omnipotence, discussed in this dissertation above, in nt. 92 above).

[126] It seems to me Plantinga's notion of broadly logical possibility is identical to my notion of metaphysical possibility (employed in my account of omnipotence; see above, nt. 92). The term "broadly logical possibility" has been used by many as synonymous with the term "metaphysical possibility." Cf. W. F. Vallicella: "Conceivability,

> "… narrower than … *natural* necessity.
>
> Voltaire once swam the Atlantic
>
> for example, is surely implausible. Indeed, there is a clear sense in which it is impossible. Eighteenth-century intellectuals (as distinguished from dolphins) simply lacked the physical equipment for this kind of feat. Unlike Superman, furthermore, the rest of us are incapable of leaping tall buildings at a single bound, or (without auxiliary power of some kind) travelling faster than a speeding bullet. These things are impossible for us; but not in the broadly logical sense."[127]

In other words, feats like jumping (without a mechanic aid) three yards high or over a tall building (at a single bound), swimming the Atlantic (at a single draught), and moving (without assistance) faster than a shot projectile are naturally impossible for humans, but not broadly logically impossible, not even logically impossible for humans. So, given that logical impossibility implies broadly logical impossibility, such feats are naturally impossible, but not logically impossible, not even logically impossible for humans. Whether or not Plantinga himself would agree with the general link going from logical impossibility to broadly logical impossibility, there is as much reason for doubting that the logical impossibility of human three yard jumps, although they are naturally impossible and outside the scope of human abilities, as there is for doubting their broadly logical impossibility. Thus, because I have likened the modality of human inability to see (publicly) evidently that a particular proposition is true to the modality of human inability to carry out three yard jumps and similar feats, I am not designing that cognitive inability as generally involving the respective logical impossibility (in my sense) or broadly logical impossibility (in Plantinga's sense).

Note also in the quote from Plantinga that it is one matter to claim that natural necessity (and, correlatively, natural impossibility) has a clear sense (maybe acquired from examples in various contexts), another to provide its rough definition by means of other concepts, and yet another to give its precise definition. Plantinga makes that claim and provides three examples, but no definition. The claim, made unqualified, will sound incorrect to some ears. But I would still side with it in so far as it states that the notion of natural necessity is clear enough to be employed in particular distinctions and arguments. Similarly for the modality of human cognitive inability.

Thirdly, as the above examples make clear, when saying that a particular proposition cannot be (publicly) evident, I do not wish to imply generally that the proposition cannot be

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Possibility, Self, and Body," January 18, 2010, http://maverickphilosopher.typepad.com/maverick_philosopher/2010/01/conceivability-possibility-self-and-body.html (accessed October 10, 2011); "Broadly Logical Modality," May 13, 2010, http://maverickphilosopher.typepad.com/maverick_philosopher/2010/05/broadly-logical-possibility.html (accessed October 10, 2011); "Could There Have Been Just Nothing At All?," July 8, 2010, http://maverickphilosopher.typepad.com/maverick_philosopher/2010/07/might-there-have-been-just-nothing-at-all.html (accessed October 10, 2011); "How Does One Knows That There Are Contingent Beings?," June 29, 2011, http://maverickphilosopher.typepad.com/maverick_philosopher/2011/06/contingency-and-presumption-how-do-i-know-that-there-are-any-contingent-beings.html (accessed October 10, 2011). Cf. also J. P. Moreland and W. L. Craig, *Philosophical Foundations for a Christian Worldview*, op. cit., pp. 50, 503; and W. L. Craig, "Graham Oppy on the Kalām Cosmological Argument," op. cit., p. 2.

[127] Ibid.; italics original.

evident to any cognitive agent (of any sort). Analogically, for instance, the claim that *we* – humans – cannot jump three yards high (or over a tall house, or swim a sea, or travel very fast) does not commit one to the claim that no one whatsoever can. So, also our discourse of agents unable to see (publicly) evidently that a particular proposition is logically possible will be limited to humans – *human* is conceived, for my purposes, as a rational animal living on earth.

To take a classic example, Thomas Aquinas (1225 – 1274), when treating the question whether God is omnipotent, distinguished "possible" in the sense of: (i) being within human powers, (ii) being within the powers of the reality created by God, and (iii) not involving a contradiction in terms (= logically possible).[128] Clearly, the notion (i) concerns what humans can and cannot do and reminds of the modality of human inability this section is focused on.

Let's take a look at a handful of examples of human *cognitive* inabilities that we find in the literature produced by the theorists of knowledge. There are distinct concepts of cognitive order in use. A proposition is said to be prior in cognitive order to another proposition when the former can be known (by humans) without latter, but not *vice versa*;[129] or when the latter can be known only by inference from the former.[130] Sometimes the concepts of knowability and unknowability of certain propositions *a priori* – i.e., independently of experience of their truth – are disseminated.[131] Further, humans are naturally viewed as subjected to non-accidental cognitive limitations, at least those of finite memory and of finite processing speeds, and they display definite and not particularly large upper bounds in these capacities.[132] These limitations constrain, in many ways, what humans can perform, cognitively speaking. A particular theory of the so called bounded rationality has been proposed by the American social scientist Herbert Alexander Simon (1916 – 2001) and used in economics, political science, sociology, and psychology for mathematical modeling of human decision making. According to the theory of bounded rationality, many human decision strategies search for a merely satisfying, and not for an optimal, solution. Reasons for such proceedings include: limited information, limited cognitive capacities of the human mind (involving many cognitive inabilities), and limited time. That humans have cognitive limits and "cannot conform to the ideal of full rationality" is deemed by some theorists of bounded rationality as "obvious" – even if the concept of bounded

[128] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, op. cit., I, q. 25, a. 3, co.; see ibid., a. 4, co. Cf. D. Peroutka, "Aristotelské pojetí možného" (in Czech), *Studia Neoaristotelica* 6, No. 2 (2009), pp. 278-279; and C. F. J. Martin, *Thomas Aquinas*, op. cit., p. 157.

[129] Cf. George Frederick Stout (1860 – 1944), "Immediacy, Mediacy and Coherence," *Mind* 17, No. 1 (1908), pp. 25 and 29.

[130] Cf. George I. Mavrodes, *Belief in God: A Study in the Epistemology of Religion*, New York, Random House 1970, pp. 43-45, for a critical discussion of the question whether some pair of propositions is ever cognitively ordered in the second sense. Of course, the absence of any such a pair would not be sufficient as a demonstration of the concept's meaninglessness.

[131] See R. Swinburne, "Analycity, Necessity and Apriority," op. cit., pp. 238-243; J. Štěpán, *Logika možných světů I*, op. cit., pp. 49-59. Swinburne ("Analycity, Necessity and Apriority," op. cit., p. 243) distinguishes human knowability *a priori* and knowability *a priori* by a rational being; similarly S. Kripke, *Naming and Necessity*, op. cit., pp. 34-38. Notably, the concept of *can know a priori* is crucial even to Christopher Arthur Bruce Peacocke's (*1950) paper on the question "What is a Logical Constant?" in *Journal of Philosophy* 73, No. 9 (1976), pp. 221-240; see especially pp. 223, 230 and 236. Cf. also Swinburne's comments (on Peacocke) in "Analytic/Synthetic," op. cit., p. 32 and nt. 9.

[132] G. Oppy, "Über die Aussichten erfolgreicher Beweise für Theismus oder Atheismus," op. cit., pp. 616-617.

rationality itself "cannot be precisely defined."[133] But these two examples of human cognitive inabilities are clear at least: humans cannot compute as fast as (digital) computers, and they cannot remember verbatim all texts on the Internet.

Further, many have doubted that humans can acquire much – or, comprehensive – knowledge which is not merely probable.[134] Others think humans are unable to be altogether logically consistent in their beliefs.[135] Further yet, some epistemologists, including Richard Swinburne and Timothy McGrew, operate with a notion of epistemically privileged access.

McGrew explains his notion as follows:

> "Most people share an intuition that they are related to their own experiences and mental states in a way that others are not. … The fact (if it is a fact) that I have privileged access to (certain of) my mental states should at least mean that I stand in some special relation to them which other human beings do not. … An individual *S* has privileged access to his current mental states just in the sense that he can refer to them demonstratively, and *no one else can do so*."[136]

A similar concept figures in Swinburne's definition of mental properties as those "to which one subject has privileged access", which means that the subject is "necessarily in a better position to know about [them] than anyone else",[137] which means, in turn, "whatever ways others have of finding … out [whether the property is instantiated in the subject] … it is logically possible that he can use, but he has a further way (of experiencing it) which it is not logically possible that others can use."[138] Here, again, we observe a modality of human cognitive inability in use. One thing is worth noting. While Swinburne construes his modality very strongly, i.e., as logical impossibility, it is far from clear whether T. McGrew does so, too. For one thing, the McGrews,

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[133] Reinhard Selten, "What Is Bounded Rationality?," in *Bounded Rationality: The Adaptive Toolbox*, Gerd Gigerenzer and Reinhard Selten (eds.), Cambridge (Massachusetts), MIT Press 2002, pp. 14-15. The idea of bounded rationality was drawn to my attention thanks to a correspondence with James Franklin.

[134] Cf., for example, J. Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, op. cit., bk. I, ch. I, # 5; in bk. IV: the whole chs. III and XI, # 10, ch. XV, #2, and ch. XVII, # 16. On Locke on this issue, see Henry G. Van Leeuwen, *The Problem of Certainty in English Thought 1630-1690*, The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff 1963, ch. V. See also B. Pascal, *Thoughts*, op. cit., # 252; Ch. M. Natoli, *Fire in the Dark*, op. cit., ch. 5.

[135] See Roy Sorensen, "Précis of "Vagueness and Contradiction" ", *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 71, No. 3 (2005), pp. 684-685; and Haim Gaifman, "Reasoning with Limited Resources and Assigning Probabilities to Arithmetical Statements," *Synthese* 140, No. 1-2 (2004), pp. 97-102. On the importunity of probabilistic incoherence in humans, cf. William Talbott, "Bayesian Epistemology," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Summer 2011 Edition)*, E. N. Zalta (ed.), http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2011/entries/epistemology-bayesian, # 6.1 (accessed May 2, 2011); André Kukla, "Evolving Probability," *Philosophical Studies* 59, No. 2 (1990), pp. 213-224; D. Garber, "Old Evidence and Logical Omniscience in Bayesian Confirmation Theory," op. cit., pp. 105-107; Rohit Parikh, "Sentences, Belief and Logical Omniscience, Or What Does Deduction Tell Us?," *The Review of Symbolic Logic* 1, No. 4 (2008), pp. 4-5; L. McGrew, "Pure Philosophy of Religion--Miracles and Natural Theology," April 24, 2010, http://lydiaswebpage.blogspot.com/2010/04/pure-philosophy-of-religion-miracles.html (accessed October 11, 2011).

[136] T. McGrew, *The Foundations of Knowledge*, op. cit., pp. 86 and 88. My italics. Cf. the whole ch. 5 ibid.

[137] R. Swinburne, *The Evolution of The Soul*, op. cit., p. 6. See also ibid., pp. xi-xii, 7-8, 17, 21, 43, 65, 78, 85, 96, 109, 117-118, 133, 321; *Epistemic Justification*, op. cit., pp. 9-11, 23, 26, 34-39, 43, 52, 55, 71, 95, 103, 132-137, 152, 222; *The Existence of God*, op. cit., pp. 44, 193-196; "From Mental/Physical Identity to Substance Dualism," op. cit., pp. 143-144, 151, 163.

[138] R. Swinburne, "From Mental/Physical Identity to Substance Dualism," op. cit., p. 143.

as revealed to me by L. McGrew, do not want to rule out logical possibility of mind-reading in the case of which somebody would be sharing somebody other's mental experiences, at least in the sense of having the shared experiences type-identical (as opposed to token-identical).[139] Thus, due to the apparently logically weaker modal status, T. McGrew's notion of privileged access may well resemble the desired modality of human cognitive inability, hunted in this section, more than Swinburne's notion of privileged access. In any case, the McGrews acknowledge that humans cannot mind-read, though it is logically possible that they – or aliens – mind-read.

In like manner, T. McGrew acknowledged, in a correspondence about Goodman's famous grue paradox for enumerative induction, that, say, aliens might tell any grue thing from any non-grue thing just by observing it (apart from relying on clocks or testimony), though *humans can't* do this. Thus, for this reason at least, T. McGrew does have a concept of an action which is logically possible, yet such that humans can't perform it. So does the British epistemologist and metaethicist Simon Blackburn (*1944) – whose treatment of the grue paradox T. McGrew approves and recommends, by the way.[140] In words of the American philosopher Henry Nelson Goodman (1906 – 1998), predicate "grue" applies to "all things examined before t just in case they are green but to other things just in case they are blue."[141] So, we may say, a thing is *grue* if and only if (i) it is green and was examined up to *t* (inclusive), or (ii) it is blue and was not examined up to *t*; where *t* is a future time. For an arbitrary future time *t*, Blackburn tries to solve, and so block, the paradox consisting in the formally proper, yet intuitively mad, inductive inference from (a) all the so far examined things of a certain sort of green things (typically emeralds) being grue (because green and examined up to *t*) to (b) all things of this sort (emeralds) being grue – because, then, all of those things (emeralds) which would not be examined up to *t* would be blue.[142] We are not going to delve into Blackburn's complicated attempts at a solution of this thorny problem of induction. Blackburn's attempt highlights the difference between the actual human phenomenology of color recognition on the one side and of discrimination whether a given object has a property like grue (involving a reference to time) on the other side. The grue paradox has been explicated here just to set the stage for the following cited statements by Blackburn, which are of a minor importance for his own project, but interesting for us. They display that he understands the idea of a feat which humans can't perform, but which is logically possible for them or some other agents. Blackburn writes:

> "… I am not denying that there could be a *people* who *can* tell immediately, at any time, whether something with which they are presented is grue. *We cannot* do this, but we can *consistently* imagine someone, perhaps with some extraordinary sensory *faculty*, who would at any time state correctly whether a thing is grue or not, and apparently just by looking at it. … We can, for example, imagine somebody who appears to use the word "grue" … and who is mining emeralds throughout New Year's Eve [of the chosen year *t*] … He correctly says, as he turns up green ones

[139] As was written to me by L. McGrew in correspondence.
[140] In correspondence and in T. and L. McGrew, *Internalism and Epistemology*, op. cit., nt. 7 on p. 173.
[141] N. Goodman, *Fact, Fiction, and Forecast*, Cambridge (Massachusetts), Harvard University Press 1955, ch. III, § 4.
[142] See S. Blackburn, *Reason and Prediction*, London, Cambridge University Press 1973, ch. 4. Cf. Swinburne's comments on the grue paradox: R. Swinburne, "Introduction," in *Justification of Induction*, R. Swinburne (ed.), Oxford, Oxford University Press 1974, pp. 7-9.

> and examines them, "Ah, these are grue", until at midnight he turns up a green one and says, "Funny, here is one which is not grue." "[143]
>
> "Of course *someone might have abilities which we have not*: he may have better eyesight, hearing, detect rumblings and smells which we cannot, even tell time using sensations which don't help us …"[144]

In Blackburn's opinion, it is logically possible that somebody, even a human, could tell any grue object from any other object by observing it, while not relying on clocks or testimony or any external sign. But we, humans, in fact *can't* do this. Unfortunately, neither Blackburn nor the other theorists of knowledge so far mentioned, except Swinburne, outline their cognitive modalities. And Swinburne's logical impossibility I am not willing to adopt in this context, for the reason I have explained.

In the philosophy of religion, the talk of human cognitive abilities and inabilities is common, too. A host of questions was raised traditionally: whether (for humans) the existence of God *can* be self-evident;[145] whether it *can* be deductively demonstrated evidently and, at the same time, *a priori*;[146] whether it *can* be demonstrated with certainty (and independently on all testimony and any revelation from God);[147] or whether God's attributes, as opposed to his existence, *can* be known (again, independently on testimony and divine revelation).[148]

Modal notions of human abilities and inabilities occur in the epistemology of Trinitarian belief, too. For Leibniz, e.g., the Trinity doctrine *cannot* be known by humans as true by an evidently sound *a priori* demonstration only because of the limits of their minds.[149] Further, Aquinas denied that the Trinity doctrine *can* be deductively demonstrated by humans (in this life) by their sheer natural reason (i.e., not in reliance on testimony or divine revelation).[150] In this, he

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[143] S. Blackburn, *Reason and Prediction*, op. cit., pp. 69-70.
[144] Ibid., p. 77.
[145] See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, op. cit., I, q. 2, a. 1, and *Quaestiones disputatae de veritate* (http://dhspriory.org/thomas/QDdeVer.htm; accessed October 7, 2011), q. 10, a. 12; J. Gredt, *Die aristotelisch-thomistische Philosophie*, Vol. II, op. cit., ## 701 and 702; V. Šanda, *Synopsis theologiae dogmaticae specialis*, Vol. I, op. cit., §§ 8, 9, and 123.C.1; Pavel Floss, *Úvod do dějin středověkého myšlení* (in Czech), Olomouc, Vydavatelství Univerzity Palackého v Olomouci 1994, pp. 44-46.
[146] See J. Gredt, *Die aristotelisch-thomistische Philosophie*, Vol. II, op. cit., ## 701 and 703.
[147] See, e.g., Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, op. cit., I, q. 2, a. 2; J. Gredt, *Die aristotelisch-thomistische Philosophie*, Vol. II, op. cit., ## 701, 704, 705; V. Šanda, *Synopsis theologiae dogmaticae specialis*, Vol. I, op. cit., §§ 1 and 6; Denys Turner (*1942), *Faith, Reason and the Existence of God*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 2004, pp. 3-6.
[148] See, e.g., Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, op. cit., I, q. 12, a. 12; and Bonaventure of Bagnoregio (c. 1217 – 1274), *Commentaria In librum primum sententiarum* (http://www.franciscan-archive.org/bonaventura/I-Sent.html; accessed October 8, 2011), dist. 3, a. 1, q. 2. By revelation from God (or, divine revelation) we may understand the communication of some truth by God through some supernatural mean.
[149] Cf. G. W. Leibniz, *Die Philosophischen Schriften*, Vol. VI, op. cit., p. 67; G. W. Leibniz, *Opera omnia*, Vol. V, Louis Dutens (ed.), Geneva, De Tournes 1768, p. 147; and Maria Rosa Antognazza, *Leibniz on the Trinity and the Incarnation: Reason and Revelation in the Seventeenth Century*, New Haven and London, Yale University Press 2007, pp. 61 and 128. I noticed the work of Leibniz on the Trinity and on the epistemology of the Trinity doctrine due to L. Novák and D. D. Novotný.
[150] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, op. cit., I, q. 32, a. 1; *Quaestiones disputatae de veritate*, op. cit., q. 10, a. 13; *Quaestiones disputatae de potentia Dei*, op. cit., q. 9, a. 5, co.

is in agreement with such accomplished scholastic philosophers as are John Duns Scotus (1265/1266 – 1308),[151] the nominalists Durandus of Saint-Pourçain (c. 1275 – 1332/1334)[152] and William of Ockham (c. 1287 – 1347),[153] and also the Spanish Jesuit scholars Luis de Molina (1536 – 1600),[154] Francisco Suárez (1548 – 1617),[155] Gregorio de Valencia (1550 – 1603),[156] Gabriel Vázquez (1549 – 1604),[157] and Gaspar Hurtado (1575 – 1646).[158] Leibniz concurs with Aquinas on the deductive indemonstrability of the Trinity doctrine by natural reason, too.[159] So does the German philosopher, theologian and mathematician Martin Knutzen (1713 – 1751), who was Kant's teacher in philosophy, theology, and Newton's physics.[160] As will be noted in the section dealing with several unsuccessful proposals how to see evidently that the Trinity doctrine is logically possible (IV.1), some of these esteemed philosophers hold expressly even that the human naked natural reason can know neither the logical possibility (Durandus, Molina, Suárez, Valencia, Leibniz) nor probability (Molina, Suárez, Leibniz) of the Trinity doctrine. But, again, I am aware of no detailed exposition of the modalities of human cognitive abilities and inabilities these authors are using.

Fourthly, the so far used examples hint that something stronger is meant by the given modality of "cannot" (jump three yards high, swim the Atlantic, leap a tall building at a single bound, travel faster than a speeding bullet, compute like a digital computer, remember verbatim everything written on the World Wide Web) is stronger than the mere claim that no human has performed the given sort of feat. The meaning is also stronger than the mere claim than no human has learned – or, acquired a learned ability – to perform the given sort of action.

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[151] See John Duns Scotus, *Quaestiones in librum tertium sententiarum*, dist. 23, q. 1, n. 9, in John Duns Scotus, *Opera omnia*, Vol. XV, Paris, Louis Vivès 1894; and *Quaestiones quodlibetates*, q. 14, n. 3 and 9, in John Duns Scotus, *Opera omnia*, Vol. XXVI, Paris, Louis Vivès 1895. Cf. Richard Alan Cross , *Duns Scotus*, New York, Oxford University Press 1999, p. 7 and nt. 21 on p. 156.

[152] Durandus of Saint-Pourçain, *In Petri Lombardi Sententias Theologicas Commentariorum IIII*, Vol. I, q. 1, prologus, and dist. 2, q. 4, Venice, ex typographia Guerraea 1571.

[153] See William of Ockham, *Scriptum in Librum Primum Sententiarum (Dist. II et III)*, dist. 2, q. 3, St. Bonaventure, N. Y., The Franciscan Institute 1970; and *Scriptum in Librum Primum Sententiarum (Dist. IV-XVIII)*, dist. 5, q. 1, and dist. 7, q. 14, St. Bonaventure, N. Y., The Franciscan Institute 1977. Cf. Marian Hillar, "The First Translation of *De Trinitate*, the First Part of *Christianismi restitutio*. An Evaluation of its Biblical Theology," paper presented at the meeting of *The South-Central Renaissance Conference*, San Antonio, March 21-24, 2007, http://www.socinian.org/files/DeTrinitateSCRC2007.pdf (accessed October 8, 2011), p. 4.

[154] L. de Molina, *Commentaria In primam D. Thomae partem*, Vol. I, q. 32, a. 1, Lyons, sumptibus Ludovici Prost 1622.

[155] See F. Suárez, *De Sanctissimo Trinitatis mysterio*, prooemium; lib. 1, cap. 2, n. 1-3; cap. 11, n. 1-13; cap. 12, n. 8-11; in F. Suárez, *Opera omnia*, Vol. I, Paris, Louis Vivès 1856. Cf. Thomas Marschler (*1969), *Die spekulative Trinitätslehre des Francisco Suárez S.J. in ihrem philosophisch-theologischen Kontext*, Münster, Aschendorff 2007, ch. 2. It was D. D. Novotný who drawn to my attention Marschler's book, and also to several passages from Suárez.

[156] G. de Valencia, *Commentariorum Theologicorum*, Vol. III, disp. 2, q. 6, punct. 1, Lyons, Sumptibus Horatii Cardon 1609.

[157] G. Vázquez, *Commentariorum, ac disputationum In primam partem Sancti Thomae*, Vol. II, disp. 133 and 135, Lyons, Sumptibus Antonii Pillehotte 1620.

[158] G. Hurtado, *Tractatus de fide, spe, et charitate*, disp. 2, difficultas 10, Madrid, apud Franciscum de Ocampo 1632.

[159] See G. W. Leibniz, *Opera omnia*, Vol. V, op. cit., pp. 142-143 and 147, and *Die Philosophischen Schriften*, Vol. VI, op. cit., p. 83; M. R. Antognazza, *Leibniz on the Trinity and the Incarnation*, op. cit., pp. 127-130 and 165.

[160] See M. Knutzen, *Philosophischer Beweis von der Wahrheit der christlichen Religion*, Nordhausen, Verlag Traugott Bautz GmbH 2005, § 40, and p. XXIV in the introduction by Ulrich L. Lehner.

Accordingly, saying that a proposition cannot be (publicly) evident shall be meant in this dissertation as logically stronger than the proposition that the proposition has not been (publicly) evident to any human, and also logically stronger than the proposition that no man has learned to see evidently that the proposition is true.[161] The human cognitive inability under consideration is meant to be rather in-principle than an ability which hasn't been learned.

Still, fifthly, it is not intended by every application of the modal term under consideration – i.e., it "cannot" be publicly evident that so and so – that there is some law of nature or some psychological law which is, *regardless of history* of our world, logically incompatible with the proposition being evident to some human. In like manner, maybe there is no biological law which, as such, precludes humans from jumping three yards high, regardless of human biological history. Further, it is not my wish to imply by the mere application of the term that the reasons for the proposition (to which the term is applied) *will never* be, in the future, sufficient for the proposition being publicly evident to some human. The so far proposed reasons may be insufficient, although there are some sufficient reasons proposed in the future. Similarly, maybe one day genetically altered humanity shall indulge in fabulous hops (and other techno-blessings).

Sixthly, after all the above negative demarcations, which draw from the literature written by philosophers and state what the desired modality of human cognitive inability is *not*, we whether something informative or illuminating was written about what it *is*, apart from giving paradigmatic examples. I am aware of only one suitable case in literature. There has been a debate whether humans can have knowledge of ultimate reality. On one construal, a human has such knowledge just when (i) he or she knows the most general features of some reality which is not a mere appearance to any (ontologically) more basic reality, or (ii) he or she knows that all that exists constitutes a series of mere appearances behind mere appearances *ad infinitum*.[162] Again, which modality is used here by the word "can"? As the contemporary analytic philosopher of religion Michael V. Antony confessed recently, this kind of modality "is in fact very difficult to characterize precisely." But he tries to make his best, and what he arrives at is also the best proposal I've seen, measured in terms of a positive – even if rough and vague – definition of our modality. Because knowledge is, in large part at least, a psychological state, and because of ease of expression, Antony coins the modality of "can" that he employs when asking whether humans can acquire knowledge of ultimate reality as "(human) psychological possibility." Antony gives the following rough and ready definition of human psychological possibility of knowledge. Particular knowledge is psychologically possible for humans if and only if the knowledge is: (i) logically possible to be had by a human; (ii) metaphysically possible to be had by a human (this notion is left unexplained by the author; it seems to mean: *broadly logically possible* or *not ruled out by the nature of what is involved*); (iii) compatible, as had by a human, with the laws of nature; (iv) compatible, as had a human, with the past history of the

[161] John Maier's entry on "Abilities" in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall 2011 Edition)*, E. N. Zalta (ed.), http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2011/entries/abilities (accessed October 7, 2011) explores only the issue of learned (acquired) abilities. This is witnessed by the examples of abilities Maier gives: the ability to walk, to write one's name, to tell a hawk from a handsaw (these are cases of widespread ability), the ability to tell an elm from a beech, to serve a tennis ball, to punt a football forty yards, to hit a Major League fastball, to compose a symphony (these are cases of comparatively rare ability).

[162] See M. V. Antony, "Can We Acquire Knowledge of Ultimate Reality?," op. cit., section 1; and P. van Inwagen, *Metaphysics*, Boulder, Westview Press 2009, ch. 1.

universe; and (v) not so improbable for a human, given the laws of nature, resources available in the past history of the universe, and conditions favorable to human knowledge acquisition, as to not merit serious consideration of those who desire the knowledge ("e.g., maximally intelligent and virtuous humans popping into existence by quantum accident").[163] Accordingly, knowledge not satisfying any of these conditions is psychologically impossible for humans, so, then, they cannot have it, in the sense just specified. In Antony's opinion, human psychological possibility seems to be a kind of what Mark Jensen calls "practical possibility." Jensen asks: in what sense socio-political ideals – i.e., desired pictures of society, like the scenario of signing peace accords between Israel and the Palestinians in the next three years – are said to be possible in politics and social sciences? He names this kind of possibility as "practical" and suggests as his answer that a socio-political ideal is practically possible just in case it satisfies the just aforementioned conditions (i), (iii) and (iv), and also the condition that it (v*) reflects abilities – both learned and in-principle – of human individuals and of human groups.[164] Accordingly, any socio-political ideal not satisfying some of Jensen's condition is practically impossible in Jensen's sense. Because of a conceptual link going to inability to perform a particular action on the one hand from improbability (in the chance/propensity interpretation) of its performance, Antony's clause (v) may be plausibly viewed as a variation on, or an application of, Jensen's clause (v*).[165] Thus, anything psychologically impossible for humans (in Antony's sense) is also practically impossible (in Jensen's sense). Antony does not seem to suggest the converse: i.e., that anything practically impossible is psychologically impossible. Perhaps the reason for this asymmetry is that something may be practically impossible for humans due to their actual lack of some learned ability, but still psychologically possible for them, in principle. Antony presumes conditions conducive to human knowledge. Jensen doesn't. Antony's human psychological possibility is rather in-principle; so anything psychologically impossible for humans is not such due to the mere lack of some learned ability. Jensen's practical possibility, on the other hand, reflects both learned and in-principal human abilities; so something practically impossible may be such due to the mere lack of some learned ability. Antony's modal concept is closer to the one we need than Jensen's, though the former is inspired by the latter.

I propose to adapt Antony's definition of human psychological possibility by virtual identification of the modality of human cognitive inability we're looking for with Antony's modality of human psychological impossibility. So, humans cannot cognize that p – in the desired sense of "cannot" – just when the proposition reporting human cognizance that p is: logically impossible; or metaphysically impossible; or logically incompatible with the laws of nature; or logically incompatible with a proposition truly reporting the past history of the universe; or so improbable – given its logical and metaphysical possibility, compatibility with the laws and the history, and conditions favorable to human knowledge acquisition – as to not merit serious consideration of those who desire the cognition. Metaphysical impossibility of a proposition shall be understood as its falsehood solely in virtue of the nature of the items that the

[163] M. V. Antony, "Can We Acquire Knowledge of Ultimate Reality?," op. cit., section 3. I note that Antony does not explicate in this paper the notion of probability used in it.
[164] See M. Jensen, "The Limits of Practical Possibility," *The Journal of Political Philosophy* 17, No. 2 (2009), pp. 168-184; see especially p. 172.
[165] The concept of propensity will be related to other interpretations of probability in section VI.3A.

concepts in the proposition are about.[166] I also propose to interpret the employed improbability as chance/propensity, and its degree unworthy of serious consideration as one which is minimal (i.e., zero, if measured) or almost minimal (i.e., almost zero, if measured). By "chance" or "propensity" I mean a degree of tendency of an item or a system of (typically physical and at a particular time) under specific conditions to a specific outcome (again, typically physical and at a particular time). The chance/propensity interpretation of probability – sometimes called "physical," "factual," "stochastic," or "aleatory"– fits best, from all the common interpretations, not only the above examples of human inabilities, but also the talk of human inabilities, present in Jensen, as such, and Antony's example of an exceedingly improbable scenario of acquisition of ultimate knowledge by humans by a quantum accident. Generally said, chance is a degreed propensity or tendency of a particular entity or system of entities to a specific outcome.

Accordingly:

> any sentence of the form "it *cannot* be publicly evident that *p*" is to be understood in this dissertation as equivalent with the following disjunction: (i) it is logically impossible that it is publicly evident to a human that *p*; or (ii) it is metaphysically impossible that it is publicly evident to a human that *p*; or (iii) it is logically incompatible with the laws of nature that it is publicly evident to a human that *p*; or (iv) it is logically incompatible with a proposition truly reporting the hitherto history of the universe that it is publicly evident to a human that *p*; or (v) the chance – given the laws of nature, the hitherto history of the universe, and conditions favorable to human knowledge acquisition – that it is publicly evident to a human that *p* is minimal or almost minimal.
>
> Any sentences of the form "it *cannot* be publicly evident that *p*" shall be taken as synonymous with any sentence of the form "it is *psychologically impossible* that it is publicly evident that *p*."

And:

> any sentence of the form "it *can* be publicly evident that *p*" is to be understood in this dissertation as equivalent with the following conjunction: (i*) it is logically possible that it is publicly evident to a human that *p*; and (ii*) it is metaphysically possible that it is publicly evident to a human that *p*; and (iii*) it is logically compatible with the laws of nature that it is publicly evident to a human that *p*; and (iv*) it is logically compatible with any proposition truly reporting the past history of the universe that it is publicly evident to a human that *p*; and (v*) the chance – given the laws of nature, resources of the past history of the universe, and conditions favorable to human knowledge acquisition – that it is publicly evident to a human that *p* is neither minimal nor almost minimal.
>
> Any sentences of the form "it *can* be publicly evident that *p*" shall be taken as synonymous with any sentence of the form "it is *psychologically possible* that it is publicly evident that *p*."

[166] Cf. nt. 92 above.

Seventhly, let's turn our attention to the case when, in the definitions just given, *p* is the proposition that *the Trinity doctrine is logically possible*. Some propositions, of course, cannot be publicly evident in this sense because they are logically impossible *themselves* and evidentness is understood as truth-entailing. But by making the statement that it cannot be publicly evident that *the Trinity doctrine* is logically possible, I do not need to, and do not wish to imply that the Trinity doctrine is logically impossible. Neither do I wish to imply by that statement as such that the Trinity doctrine is analytically false or metaphysically impossible, incompatible with the laws of nature, or incompatible with the past history of the universe. Further, it is not my intention to promulgate that the proposition *logical possibility of the Trinity doctrine is publicly evident to a human* is logically or metaphysically impossible, analytically false, or incompatible with the laws of nature or with the past history of the universe. To see logical possibility of the Trinity doctrine evidently yet independently of religious experience may be psychologically impossible because of any of the five disjuncts listed in my above definition.

Eighthly, the following general objection arises immediately to my below premise that seeing evidently logical possibility of the Trinity doctrine is psychologically impossible, so I will address the objection right now. Among the five listed disjuncts, the only plausible candidate, why it should be psychologically impossible to see evidently yet independently of religious experience that the Trinity doctrine is logically possible, is the last clause (v). But there is no law of nature and no part of the past history of the universe which could figure in the clause (v) and yield this clause plausible. In any case, we cannot know any such law and history. So, the objection concludes, it cannot be known that it is psychologically impossible to see evidently yet independently of religious experience that the Trinity doctrine is logically possible. I reply that even if the last disjunct (v) in my definition of psychologically impossible public insight is the only candidate left, it is debatable in the extreme that no fitting law of nature or part of the past history is available. Let me explain.

Suppose, for example, that it cannot be publicly evident that the Trinity doctrine is logically possible if and only if there is a law of nature (or a combination of laws), which, in conjunction with a proposition (or a combination of propositions) correctly describing the past history, entails that there is (almost) no chance for it being publicly evident that the Trinity doctrine is logically possible to a human to whom only those reasons for Christianity that has been proposed so far are available. Suppose also that we can know that it cannot be publicly evident that the Trinity doctrine is logically possible obtains if and only if we can know that there is such a law and such history. Well, I am simply aware of no good reason why there should be no such a law and no such history or why we should be unable to know them. The law may be of a *ceteris paribus* and at the same time psychological cognitive sort, about what humans can know evidently, given as available to them only the so far proposed reasons for Christianity. The history may concern the fact that the antecedent conditions in the law are satisfied. And, it seems to me that both the law and the history may be accessible to our knowledge. Let me explain this suggestion of mine in some detail.

How are we to think of the concept of a *law of nature*? In line with the common chance/propensity approach, I suggest that a law of nature is a true proposition of the form: if a (collection of) spatiotemporal item(s) at time *t* (instant or period) has feature *F*, and there is no causally relevant intervention, then the (collection of) item(s) always tends with *propensity* of degreed value *v* (maximal or not, high or not, precise or not) to there being a (collection of)

spatiotemporal item(s) (identical to the former or not) at time *t'* (identical to time *t* or not) which has feature *G* (identical to *F* or not).[167] Similarly, we may say that a *psychological law* is a true proposition of the form: if a (collection of) human(s) at *t* is in a psychological state with feature *F*, and condition *C* holds, and there is no causally relevant intervention, then the (collection of) human(s) in that state always tend with propensity of degreed value *v* to there being at *t'* a (collection of) human(s) in a psychological state which has feature *G*.[168] Shortly, a psychological law says that given no causal intervention, all human psychological states of sort *F* at *t* tend with propensity *v* to human psychological states of sort *G* at *t'*. The intuitive concept of a psychological state will be left undefined here. The same will hold here for the notion of causally relevant intervention, which figures in the *ceteris paribus* clause ("there is no causally relevant intervention") and is also quite intuitive.[169] I merely note that psychological states constitute a

[167] Or, equivalently, if a state of the universe at time *t* (instant or period) has feature *F*, and there is no causally relevant intervention, then the state always tends with propensity of degreed value *v* (maximal or not, high or not, precise or not) to state *B* of the universe at time *t'* (identical to time *t* or not) which has feature *G* (identical to *F* or not). Akin propensity (or, tendency) accounts of laws of nature are embraced by T. McGrew, as he wrote in correspondence with me, and also by R. Swinburne in: *Epistemic Justification*, op. cit., pp. 56-57; *The Existence of God*, op. cit., pp. 26-30; *An Introduction to Confirmation Theory*, op. cit., pp. 11-22; "Evidentialism," op. cit., p. 683; *Faith and Reason*, Oxford, Clarendon Press 2005, pp. 243-248; *Revelation*, op. cit., pp. 112-121; "Introduction," in *Miracles*, R. Swinburne (ed.), New York and London, Macmillan 1989, pp. 1-9. For other proponents of propensity accounts of laws of nature are, see e.g.: John Stuart Mill (1806 – 1873), "On the Definition and Method of Political Economy," in *The Philosophy of Economics: An Anthology*, Daniel M. Hausman (ed.), New York, Cambridge University Press 2008, p. 56; J. S. Mill, *System of Logic*, Part III, in *Collected Works of John Stuart Mill*, Vol. VII, John M. Robson (ed.), London, Routledge 1996; Nancy Cartwright (*1944), *Nature's Capacities and their Measurement*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 1989, pp. 190-191; A. J. Freddoso, "The Necessity of Nature," op. cit., section III; J. L. Mackie, *The Miracle of Theism: Arguments for and against the Existence of God*, Oxford, Clarendon Press 1982, pp. 19-21; J. P. Moreland and W. L. Craig, *Philosophical Foundations for a Christian Worldview*, op. cit., pp. 567-568; W. L. Craig, "The Problem of Miracles: A Historical and Philosophical Perspective," in *Gospel Perspectives*, Vol. VI, David Wenham and Craig Blomberg (eds.), Sheffield, JSOT Press 1986, pp. 9-40; Stephen S. Bilynskyj, *God, Nature, and the Concept of Miracle*, Notre Dame, University of Notre Dame Press 1982, pp. 10-42, 46-53, 117, 138; Daniel von Wachter (*1970), "How a Philosophical Theory of Causation May Help Ontological Engineering," *Comparative and Functional Genomics* 4, No. 1 (2003), pp. 111-114; D. von Wachter, *Die kausale Struktur der Welt*, Freiburg, Verlag Karl Alber 2009, ch. 5; Harold Kincaid, "There are Laws in the Social Sciences," in *Contemporary Debates in Philosophy of Science*, Christopher Hitchcock (ed.), Oxford, Blackwell 2004, pp. 170-175.

[168] Or, equivalently, if psychological state *A* of human(s) at *t* has feature *F*, and condition *C* holds, and there is no causally relevant intervention, then the state always tends with causal propensity of degreed value *v* to psychological state *B* of human(s) at *t'* which has feature *G*. I am aware of no philosophical analysis of the concept of a psychological law, though, likely, some exists out there in the literature. My present suggestion just modifies the propensity account of natural laws, with condition *C* inserted in order to expressly make room for other factors, besides psychological states, to be taken into account in psychological laws.

[169] For discussions on the concept of absent causally relevant intervention, cf. Alexander Reutlinger, Gerhard Schurz and Andreas Hüttemann, "*Ceteris Paribus* Laws," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Spring 2011 Edition)*, E. N. Zalta (ed.), http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2011/entries/ceteris-paribus (accessed October 11, 2011); Alexander Robert Pruss (*1973), *The Principle of Sufficient Reason: A Reassessment*, New York, Cambridge University Press 2006, pp. 107-122, 256, 270-277, 320; Peter Lipton (1954 – 2007), "All Else Being Equal," *Philosophy* 74, No. 2 (1999), pp. 155-168; and Michael P. Levine, "Miracles," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall 2010 Edition)*, E. N. Zalta (ed.), http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2010/entries/miracles (accessed October 11, 2011), section "Miracles and Laws of Nature."

subset of psychological states, and psychological laws constitute a subset of laws of nature.[170] To defend these accounts of laws of nature and of psychological laws is beyond the scope of my dissertation. It suffices to say the former is fairly standard, while the latter is its mere application.

Putting aside debates on how to define the concept of natural law and how to use the term optimally, the existence and knowability of natural laws – whatever they are – is a relatively uncontroversial matter. I write "relatively" for it has been contested by some authors, like almost everything in philosophy.[171] The existence and knowability of *psychological laws* (whatever they are) is, however, more suspicious. There are no psychological laws and/or they cannot be known by us, some will proclaim. What should we say to them? The issue is controversial; that much must be admitted. There are several possible positions to adopt in the debate of the existence and knowability of psychological laws. I regiment the positions as follows. Either there is some psychological law, or there is none. If there is some, either we can know that there is, or we can't. If we can, we can know of some proposition that it is a psychological law, or we can't. Now, the most interesting question is whether we have good reasons to deem some propositions as psychological laws. Well, I think that at least some parts of experimental and social psychology, cognitive science, economics, sociology, decision theory, and game theory constitute such reasons.[172] For it appears (to me) as true that at least some of the many results of these disciplines yield to us knowledge, in a relevant sense of the term "knowledge," of a psychological or a cognitive law. (Concepts of knowledge will be surveyed below in section VI.1.) Indeed, there was a time when psychology was classified as a branch of natural science.[173]

It has been objected that the human world is a subject matter much more complex and difficult to explore than is the subject matter of (typical) natural science. But even if knowledge of some psychological laws is more difficult to attain than knowledge of some laws of natural science, the former still may be attainable.[174] Further yet, even if some sorts of complexity rule out very precise or certain knowledge, they may still allow for approximate and quite likely knowledge.[175] Moreover, it is highly dubious that attaining knowledge of a psychological law is always very difficult or more difficult than knowledge of a law of natural science. It may be that

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[170] P. van Inwagen, in *An Essay on Free Will* (Oxford, Oxford University Press 1986, p. 63), prefers to subsume psychological laws under laws of nature. As he writes: "If there are such laws, it is at least arguable that they should be included among the "laws of nature"; rational agents are, after all, in some sense part of "nature"."

[171] Cf. John W. Carroll, "Laws of Nature," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Spring 2011 Edition)*, E. N. Zalta (ed.), http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2011/entries/laws-of-nature (accessed November 7, 2011), especially # 5.

[172] Cf. J. Franklin, *What Science Knows*, op. cit., pp. 97-101, 240-241, 248; and P. van Inwagen, *An Essay on Free Will*, op. cit., pp. 63-64; Christopher Hitchcock, "Introduction: What is the Philosophy of Science?," in *Contemporary Debates in Philosophy of Science*, op. cit., pp. 14-16.

[173] See J. Franklin, *What Science Knows*, op. cit., pp. 145-146.

[174] Recently, Jared Diamond (*1937) has defended the knowability of laws even on the large scale level of history and sociology. See his book *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed*, New York, Viking Penguin 2005. For a less optimistic – and also less convincing, in my opinion – approach, cf. Robert Brown, *Rules and Laws in Sociology*, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul 1973. A discussion interplay between proponents of the two conflicting views on the existence and knowability of laws outside natural science is displayed by John T. Roberts's "There Are No Laws of the Social Sciences" and Harold Kincaid's "There Are Laws in the Social Sciences," in *Contemporary Debates in Philosophy of Science*, op. cit., pp. 149-185.

[175] As for complexity obstacles to human knowledge, cf. J. Franklin, *What Science Knows*, op. cit., pp. 171-192, 215-235.

to attain the accuracy or certainty of natural science is always more difficult, or even outside the scope of human in-principle abilities. But that is a different question. Finally, when it is contended that humans can't know of any proposition that it is a (human) psychological law, little reflection suffices to give this skepticism a pause. For how can we (humans) know that we (humans) can't know of any proposition that it is a (human) psychological law? The position that we (humans) can't know any psychological law is self-undermining. For it implicitly attempts to state a psychological (cognitive) law for humans. Either there are good reasons for this skeptical position or not. If there aren't, the position cuts no ice against the apparent knowability of psychological laws, evidenced by parts of social science and economics. If there are good reasons for the skeptical position, then there are good reasons for a psychological (cognitive) law – the law that humans can't know any psychological law. So, then, there are good reasons that this position is not true, and so, in turn, there are no good reasons for this position.[176] Hence, the complexity of humans is not a good reason – i.e., it does not make it overall plausible or appearing to be true – that humans cannot know of a proposition that it is a psychological law. So it is still open and worthy of serious consideration that: there is a *ceteris paribus* psychological cognitive law about what humans can know evidently, given the so far available reasons for Christianity; the conditions of the law are satisfied; and both the law and the fulfillment of its conditions are accessible to our knowledge. The law could be saying:

> if to a human only the reasons so far proposed for Christianity are available, and there is no causally relevant intervention, then the human always has (almost) no chance to see publicly evidently that the Trinity doctrine is logically possible.

It would follow from the law, in conjunction with the absence of causally relevant interventions, that any human of the given sort has (almost) no chance to see publicly evidently that the Trinity doctrine is logically possible. We may also say this modal insight would be psychologically impossible for such humans. How could one know such a psychological cognitive law? In the same way as other laws: by observing its positive instances; in this case, failures to see evidently logical possibility of the Trinity doctrine from the so far proposed reasons for Christianity. How could one know there are no causally relevant interventions? Inductively, as in other cases: unless one had a reason to the contrary, one could infer from the many human failures to see evidently logical possibility of the Trinity doctrine from the so far proposed reasons for Christianity the corresponding universal human failure, and so also the universal absence of causally relevant interventions. Thus, there does not appear to be any insurmountable threat to the below premise that seeing logical possibility of the Trinity doctrine is psychologically impossible even under the concession that the premise is (plausibly) true only if there is (plausibly) a law of nature, which, in conjunction with a proposition correctly describing the past history, entails that there is (almost) no chance for it being publicly evident that the Trinity doctrine is logically possible to a human.

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[176] Cf. T. McGrew, *The Foundations of Knowledge*, op. cit., p. 142: "… by the logic of good reasons, we would never consider something to be rationally well supported for the denial of which equally good reasons could be … generated." See also pp. 67 and 70 ibid.

This last observation completes the section in which I have tried to explicate the senses in which I shall be saying that the Trinity doctrine "can" or "cannot" be publicly evident. It also closes the whole part devoted to an exposition of the conceptual landscape in which the two arguments of mine for the psychological impossibility of evident non-minimal logical probability of Christianity are located.

III. Two Arguments

This part presents, both in ordinary language and in a symbolic notation, two arguments from the premise that it cannot be evident independently of religious experience that the Trinity doctrine is logically possible to the conclusion that it cannot be evident independently of religious experience that Christianity has non-minimal logical probability. The said premise is only assumed. It is defended in the next part. But we begin with some general observations about positive philosophical arguments in connection with other segments of philosophical work. These observations are of minor importance, but they explain how this part of my dissertation is related and proportioned to its other parts.

III.1. The brevity of philosophical arguments

While the preceding pages, explicating the concepts that will be used in my two arguments, were many in number, the two arguments I am going to present are comparatively brief and simple, at least if expressed in plain English. Why the contrast? I don't have any principled metaphilosophical explanation to offer; i.e., I have no idea, grounded in the nature of philosophy, why philosophical argument is only expected to be short. Neither have I seen such an explanation. Still, it is a fact that philosophical arguments are commonly outstripped in their length by the rest of the philosophical discourse in which they are embedded.

As we saw (in section II.1), in his comment on the nature of philosophy, Bertrand Russell took this discipline, in its greater part, rather as an exhortation than as producing complicated and meticulously regimented inferences. Maybe we remember Russell wrote the following:

> "[In mathematics] the principles of deduction, the recognition of indefinable entities, and the distinguishing between such entities, are the business of philosophy. Philosophy is, in fact, mainly a question of insight and perception. … philosophical argument, strictly speaking, consists mainly of an endeavour to cause the reader to perceive what has been perceived by the author. The argument, in short, is not of the nature of proof, but of exhortation."[177]

Here we may distinguish arguments in the technical sense and arguments in the non-technical sense. Argument in the technical (philosophical) sense is a collection of propositions some of which are distinctly proposed as premises for a conclusion (i.e., as jointly entailing, probabilifying or supporting it) and some of which is distinctly proposed as a conclusion of the premises (i.e., as jointly entailed, probabilified or supported by them taken jointly).[178] Argument in the non-technical sense is a collection of propositions proposed in the course of defending,

[177] B. Russell, *The Principles of Mathematics*, op. cit., § 125.

[178] See J. Corcoran, "Argumentations and Logic," op. cit., p. 29; G. Oppy, "Über die Aussichten erfolgreicher Beweise für Theismus oder Atheismus," op. cit., p. 607; Robert C. Pinto, "Dialectic and the Structure of Argument," *Informal Logic* 6, No. 1 (1984), p. 16; P. Kolář, *Argumenty filosofické logiky*, op. cit., p. 71; and Albert Casullo, "Argument," in *A Companion to Epistemology*, op. cit., p. 235. Cf. A. Plantinga, *Warrant: The Current Debate*, New York, Oxford University Press 1993, pp. 216-217; and J. L. Pollock, *Contemporary Theories of Knowledge*, Totowa, Rowman and Littlefield 1986, p. 187.

positively or negatively, a particular proposition.[179] Positive defence of a proposition may be some technical argument for the proposition or for some of its consequences. Negative defence of a proposition is directed against propositions incompatible with the proposition or some of its consequences. Negative defence may highlight logical fallacies (deductive or non-deductive), or cast doubt on the truth of some premises, in a technical argument for such a conflicting proposition. Thus, some argument for a proposition, in the technical sense of the word "argument," may be just a proper part of an argument for the same proposition, in the non-technical sense of the word "argument." Russell, in the quoted passage, seems to be implying that philosophical arguments, in the non-technical sense, consist mainly of something other than philosophical arguments in the technical sense. They consist mainly of "an endeavour to cause the reader to perceive what has been perceived by the author", but not by means of a technical argument. If not by means of this, then by means of what? Presumably by laying out hopefully clear concepts, vigorous examples, and evident assertions, and by answering objections. In like manner, I've tried to explicate my concepts and lay some examples illustrating them in the preceding part of this dissertation. In this part, I'll try to employ the concepts and include in my two arguments only such assertions which seem true to me. In the next part, I will respond to the main objections against my two arguments.

Not only Russell has observed the contrast between the length and inferential heftiness of arguments – in the technical sense – in philosophy and certain other disciplines, especially mathematics and logic. As Graham Oppy (*1960), the leading contemporary Australian philosopher of religion, remarks:

> "[An] important fact about proofs in mathematics and logic is that many of them are highly non-trivial. That is, it is often highly demanding to discover—and, in many cases, even to understand—the sequence of steps involved in a proof in mathematics or logic. Of course, standards for non-triviality vary from one person to the next: what novices in mathematics and logic find demanding may be entirely trivial for experts. However, even relative novices in mathematics and logic are familiar with the idea that proofs in mathematics and logic can involve long and complicated sequences of steps, and that they can require steps whose initial discovery required the exercise of quite considerable intelligence. … for any given level of mathematical or logical expertise, there is a corresponding classification of degrees of triviality of mathematical and logical proofs: a number of steps that must be distinguished for a proof appropriate for a relative novice might be compressed into a single step in a proof for someone with considerably greater expertise."[180]

In philosophy, the number of steps that must be distinguished for an appropriate (technical) argument for a relative novice is typically lower than in mathematics, logic, and natural science. Similarly, and relatedly, for the required degree of deductive and non-deductive inferential intelligence and the degree of sophistication of the logic (deductive or inductive) employed. In his paper, Oppy draws our attention especially to usual philosophical arguments for and against

[179] Cf. G. Oppy, "Über die Aussichten erfolgreicher Beweise für Theismus oder Atheismus," op. cit., p. 638.
[180] Ibid., pp. 604-605.

the existence of God (viewed as an immaterial, omnipotent, omniscient, wholly good creator *ex nihilo* and sustainer of all things).

> "… when one looks at common standard form of arguments for or against the existence of God—e.g. in textbooks, or companions, or histories, or the like—one immediately sees that the vast majority of these arguments are nothing much like difficult proofs in mathematics and logic. Many of these arguments have associated derivations that involve only a very small number of steps performed on claims with relatively simple logical structure."[181]

But the same could be truly said about common philosophical arguments for any substantive philosophical position, as Oppy himself acknowledges, when he writes, in a manner reminiscent of Russell, that:

> "… most philosophical discussion is far more a matter of assertion, and much less a matter of demonstrating [logical] inconsistency or [probabilistic] incoherence amongst collections of claims."[182]

Rather than spinning deductive or non-deductive inferential sequences on behalf of a thesis and against the anti-thesis, most of the time the philosopher is in the process of announcing his nominal (stipulative) definitions, describing examples for and counterexamples to attempted real definitions, emphasizing notorious facts, and confessing what seems true (or false) to him, or even evidently true (or false) and what does not seem to him true (or false) to him, or at least not evidently so. And when the philosopher spins an inferential sequence, as he is bound to do from time to time, it's typically quite brief, including the main argument in his work.

In the philosophy of religion, arguably the most logically elaborate arguments so far proposed have been some ontological arguments (which are deductive, and proceed from general metaphysical principles to the conclusion of the /real/ existence of the one and only one thing than nothing greater /or, better/ can be conceived). These ontological arguments are also among the most logically elaborate arguments within all the so far proposed philosophical arguments of any stripe. In a recent authoritative treatment of ontological arguments, authored by the American logician and philosopher Robert E. Maydole, the longest one has eighty seven steps, including the premises and the conclusion.[183] What an impressive achievement! (At least when putting the question of the truth of the metaphysical premises aside.) Still, in contemporary mathematics some of the most complicated proofs, produced collectively, occupy several thousands of pages.[184] These are extremes even in the realm of mathematics, for sure. Yet, as there is a contrast between the philosophical extreme of logical sophistication and the mathematical extreme of logical sophistication, this sort of disparity remains on the common level, as was remarked by Russell and Oppy. This same disparity was expressed by Alexander

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[181] Ibid., pp. 612-613. Cf. also G. I. Mavrodes, *Belief in God*, op. cit., p. 73.
[182] G. Oppy, "Über die Aussichten erfolgreicher Beweise für Theismus oder Atheismus," op. cit., p. 638.
[183] See R. E. Maydole, "The Ontological Argument," in *The Blackwell Companion to Natural Theology*, op. cit., pp. 582-586.
[184] As the Czech philosopher, logician and mathematician David Pavel Černý reports in his paper "Tomistické pojetí matematiky a logiky" (in Czech), *Distance* 5, No. 4 (2002), pp. 39-40.

Robert Pruss (*1973), a prominent contemporary American philosopher of religion, metaphysician, and also a creative mathematician and programmer (with a doctorate in mathematics and philosophy and a degree in physics). Pruss's comment also contains other quotable hints.

> "This morning, I had a look at a recent mathematics paper that I am a coauthor of. I was struck by how complex it is. The reasoning in a mathematics paper is extremely elaborate and complex. In philosophy, we tend to think that an argument with, say, twenty steps is very elaborate. But here the proof involves eleven lemmas, each of which has a proof consisting of several, and at times quite a large number of, steps, many of which are quite elaborate. … Anecdotally, writing good mathematics papers is not harder for me than writing good philosophy papers … [though w]riting a mathematics paper takes me significantly longer than writing a philosophy paper. There is a lot more detail. But how long it takes to write a paper is not a good measure of intellectual difficulty or seriousness. … in the one case there is tedium in getting all the details of the proof right, while in the other case there is a tedium in relating one's result to a vast literature … Moreover, even in the mathematics case, the length and complexity of a proof is not the mark of intellectual quality. If one could find an elegant, quick proof—that would be all the more appreciated by the community."[185]

I will sum up and comment on Pruss's points. His mathematical paper to which Pruss refers in this quote has tens of steps.[186] Without a logical reconstruction, it cannot be said how many precisely, but the number is surely higher than the number of steps in Maydole's most complicated ontological argument (i.e., eighty seven). (Moreover, the number of lemmas in the mathematical paper coauthored by Pruss is not eleven, but fourteen, *pace* his own estimate, based on his – presumably passing – look at the paper a year and a half after its publication.) Arguments of this complexity aren't unusual in mathematics. In philosophy, any such argument would stand out as an extravagant enterprise. It does not follow from this difference between mathematical and philosophical practice, however, that writing (good) mathematics is more important or more intellectually difficult than writing (good) philosophy. It does not follow either that writing mathematics takes more time. We may say, again, that philosophical argument, in the technical sense, is typically less complex than mathematical argument; yet constructing a (good) philosophical argument in the non-technical sense may be no less time consuming because it involves not only the technical argument, but also, and in the larger part, relating the technical argument to a "vast literature." Finally, Pruss stresses that simplicity in reasoning is to be preferred, all else being equal, to complexity in reasoning.

This last point of Pruss' is both quite interesting and kindred to the following observation on mathematical practice, made in a recent commentary to René Descartes's *Rules for the Direction of the Mind*:

> "From the perspective of formal logic, the certainty of the conclusion is given merely by the correctness of each step in the proof and by correct concatenating of these steps. However, in

[185] A. R. Pruss, ""Serious" Intellectual Work," December 1, 2009, http://alexanderpruss.blogspot.com/2009/12/intellectual-work.html (accessed October 12, 2011).

[186] Richard C. Bradley and Alexander R. Pruss, "A strictly stationary, *N*-tuplewise independent counterexample to the Central Limit Theorem," *Stochastic Processes and Their Applications* 119, Issue 10 (2009), pp. 3300-3318.

> mathematics this is seldom considered satisfactory. The first published proofs of mathematical theorems use to be very intricate and long. The aim of other mathematicians is to shorten and simplify these proofs (therein lies a considerable part of the mathematical work in general), because we cannot get a long and intricate proof before our eyes all at once, and must rely on memory too much. It is most prestigious, then, to shorten and simplify the proof, until it becomes almost "trivial." Any such simplification increases the certainty about the correctness of the mathematical theorem, and also provides a deeper insight (intuition) into the nature of the theorem itself."[187]

The more complex an argument is, the more difficult it is to grasp it at a time as a whole (i.e., to grasp all at once all of its premises, lemmas, and logical relations, in connection with the conclusion), and not only some of its steps. Thus, brevity of argument, as such, is rather something to be welcomed than something to be despised, as some mathematicians and philosophers know.

As for Pruss's point about the tedium of relating one's philosophical argument (in the technical sense) to the existing literature, this toil arguably takes place especially in terms of demarcating one's own terms and assertions against those with which they might be likely confused due to mere verbal similarities, and in terms of addressing what the author views as the most common, most plausible or most likely objections. Indeed, the terminological task and the task addressing objections are mutually related. The better we convey the sense of our terms and assertions, the less time we subsequently need to waste on those who misunderstood us and who, in committing a straw-man fallacy, attack a superficially similar yet non-equivalent position, instead of the position we actually adopted. Again, many times the attempt to spare oneself of unnecessary animadversions by means of careful preliminary considerations – i.e., preliminary in respect to one's main technical argument – takes more space or time than the technical argument as such. As the contemporary American philosopher of religion and mind Edward C. Feser remarked sullenly:

> "What seems like an obvious objection to an argument can often constitute in reality a failure to see the point of the argument, and in particular a failure to see that what the argument does is

[187] Jiří Fiala (*1939) in his commentary to R. Descartes, *Pravidla pro vedení rozumu* (in Czech), Prague, OIKOYMENH 2000, nt. 2 on p. 242. On epistemological problems related to grasping long arguments, especially as treated in the writings of Descartes: Vlastimil Vohánka, *Descartes a diskursivita* (in Czech), Master Thesis, Palacký University in Olomouc 2004; and V. Vohánka, "Noetický problém diskurzivity" (in Czech), *Distance* 11, No. 4 (2008), pp. 46-56. Cf. Jiří Fuchs (*1947), "Důkaz pravdy a nejistá paměť" (in Czech), *Distance* 12, No. 2 (2009), pp. 43-50. T. and L. McGrew address some of these problems in their *Internalism and Epistemology*, op. cit., pp. 46-47, 50-51, 56, 98, 110, 113, 115, 131, 137. Cf. especially: A. P. Uchenko, "The Spans of Immediacy and Truth," *The Journal of Philosophy* 26, Issue 10 (1929), pp. 253-264; John Turk Saunders, "Skepticism and Memory," *The Philosophical Review* 72, No. 4 (1963), pp. 477-486; D. Willard, *Logic and the Objectivity of Knowledge*, op. cit., p. 12; Barry Smith (*1952), "Logic and Formal Ontology," § 10, in *Husserl's Phenomenology: A Textbook*, Jitendranath Mohanty and William R. McKenna (eds.), Lanham, University Press of America 1989; and Michael Tooley, "Epistemology Notes: Chapter 7: Knowledge of the Past," http://spot.colorado.edu/~tooley/Chapter7.html (accessed October 18, 2011). On epistemological problems of memory generally, see Thomas D. Senor, "Epistemological Problems of Memory," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall 2009 Edition)*, E. N. Zalta (ed.), http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2009/entries/memory-episprob (accessed October 13, 2011). R. Swinburne expresses his epistemology of memory in the book *The Resurrection of God Incarnate*, op. cit., pp. 9-10.

> precisely to call into question the intelligibility or rational justifiability of the objection itself. While the argument in question can in many cases be stated fairly simply and straightforwardly, pages and pages, indeed an entire book, might be required in order to set the stage so that its terms and basic assumptions are properly understood, and that countless point-missing objections might patiently be swept away like so much intellectual rubbish standing in the way of understanding."[188]

Of course, I do not view all the objections and misunderstandings which motivated me to write the first part of this dissertation as intellectual rubbish. Without this part, many of them would be only natural, given the longevity and fluidity of philosophical terminology. The first part also does not constitute an entire book, although it covers tens of pages. And even if preliminary considerations are book-length, some important objections would still remain, thus requiring a part addressing them. This shall be the task of part three.

To sum up, the structure of this dissertation does not depart from the common philosophical rule. Typically, the philosophical toil is largely an explication of concepts, a communication of insights, and addressing objections. This is reflected in how most philosophical texts look. The main philosophical argument, in the technical sense of the word, in a written philosophical work is usually simple, even almost trivial, even if sandwiched between much longer parts which, on the one hand, set the ground in terms of employed concepts or implicit assumptions, and, on the other hand, cleaning up the ground in terms of replying to the main antagonists. This is also the case of the present dissertation. What is, perhaps, peculiar about it is that a great part devoted to replies to opponents will be utilized as a support for two salient claims in my two distinctly laid out arguments. Now let me present these two arguments. Both proceed from the psychological impossibility of publicly evident logical possibility of the Trinity doctrine to the conclusion of the psychological impossibility of publicly evident non-minimal (non-zero) logical probability of Christianity.

III.2. Argument I

The words "publicly evident" and "publicly evidently" shall be abbreviated henceforth as "p-evident" and "p-evidently," respectively. In the first argument, I proceed from the premise that the Trinity doctrine cannot be p-evidently logically possible. I reach the result that the Trinity doctrine cannot be p-evidently not analytically false. I conclude not only that the doctrine cannot be p-evidently true, which is the minor conclusion, but also, and that is the main conclusion of the argument I, that Christianity – construed as including the Trinity doctrine (cf. section II.7) – cannot have non-minimal (non-zero, positive) logical probability p-evidently.

Now I add some further clarifications. A proposition is p-evidently not analytically false just when it is p-evident that the proposition is not analytically false. A proposition is said to have a certain (value of) *logical probability simpliciter* – i.e., without my mentioning the

[188] E. C. Feser, "Some Brief Arguments for Dualism, Part I," September 24, 2008, http://edwardfeser.blogspot.com/2008/09/some-brief-arguments-for-dualism-part-i.html (accessed October 12, 2011).

proposition *on* which the logical probability arises – just when the proposition has that logical probability (value) on the conjunction of all the propositions which are (occurrently or readily) evident to the given agent (at the given time).[189] A proposition has *minimal* logical probability (*simpliciter* or on some given information) just when the logical probability is not lower than an arbitrary (value of) logical probability of a proposition on some information. A proposition has *non-minimal* logical probability (*simpliciter* or on some given information) just when it has some logical probability (*simpliciter* or on the given information), but it does not have minimal logical probability (*simpliciter* or on the given information). A proposition has *zero* logical probability (*simpliciter* or on some given information) just when it has minimal logical probability (*simpliciter* or on the given information) measured on the common scale from 0 to 1. Finally, a proposition has *non-zero* – or, *positive* – logical probability (*simpliciter* or on some given information) just when it has non-minimal logical probability (*simpliciter* or on the given information) measured on the same scale.

I will call the premise that the Trinity doctrine cannot be p-evidently logically possible as *Weak Modal Skepticism about the Trinity Doctrine* (WMST, for short). Because the modality of "cannot" is the one of psychological impossibility, WMST is to the same effect as the proposition that it is psychologically impossible that it is p-evident that the Trinity doctrine is logically possible. This premise is skeptical only weakly for it does not rule out that it can – in the sense of psychological possibility – be evident, although not *p-evident*, that the Trinity doctrine is logically possible. The premise also does not rule out that it can be known, even if not *evidently*, that the Trinity doctrine is logically possible.[190]

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[189] Alternatively, we could say a proposition has a specific (value of) logical probability *simpliciter* just when the proposition has that logical probability value on all the *evident evidence* which the given agent has (at the given time). R. Swinburne construes logical probability *simpliciter* rather as logical probability on all the epistemically (and properly) basic evidence. Cf. section VI.1 below. But I want to leave it open whether logical probability on all the evident evidence is always the same as logical probability on all the epistemically (and properly) basic evidence. Elsewhere, Swinburne takes probability *simpliciter* as probability on one's total relevant knowledge. Cf. R. Swinburne, "Introduction," in *Justification of Induction*, op. cit., p. 7. But "knowledge" is ambiguous, and different definitions may well yield different results. T. McGrew (in correspondence) characterizes probability *simpliciter* as probability on all that is certain to the given agent. But, again, "certainty" is ambiguous. Similar remarks could be made about some other accounts of probability *simpliciter*. Cf. David Alan Johnson (*1952), *Truth without Paradox*, Lanham, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc. 2004, p. 130; and James B. Freeman, *Acceptable Premises: An Epistemic Approach To An Informal Logic Problem*, New York, Cambridge University Press 2005, pp. 16-17. In any case, this dissertation is concerned with evident truth and evident logical probability in general, and with evident logical probability with respect to all that evidently true in particular. So the proposed construal of probability *simpliciter* is just apposite. Finally, note the difference between, on the one hand, probability with respect to – or, rendered by – one's total evidence, and, on the other hand, probability on one's total evidence in the sense of probability conditional on such evidence. E.g., a proposition may lower than 100% probability with respect to one's total evidence, while its conditional probability on some part of the evidence is 100%. Cf. T. an L. McGrew, "The Argument from Miracles," op. cit., pp. 646-647; T. and L. McGrew, "Foundationalism, Probability, and Mutual Support," *Erkenntnis* 68, No. 1 (2008), pp. 55-77. In this dissertation, the talk of probability of a proposition "on" a proposition means conditional probability of the former on – or, given – the latter.

[190] WMST is rather a (part of a) meta-theory of the Trinity than a (part of a) theory of the Trinity. It's a position in the epistemology of the belief in the Trinity. According to WMST, the Trinity doctrine is a mystery, in a sense. In which sense? Dale Tuggy distinguishes the following senses: (i) a proposition not known before divine revelation of it, but which has now been revealed by God and is known to some; (ii) a proposition which cannot be known independently of divine revelation, but which has now been revealed by God and is known to some; (iii) a

1. The Trinity doctrine cannot be p-evidently logically possible. (WMST)
Premise.

In other words, it is psychologically impossible that the Trinity doctrine is logically possible. In this section, which contains the first argument, and also in the next section, which contains the second argument, WMST will be just assumed. I provide a defence for it in part IV below. Frankly, though, I believe there is much to its truth already from the intuitive perspective. Let me explain. As a matter of fact, it happens that it is *not* evident to me – whether p-evidently (i.e., independently of religious experience) or otherwise – that the doctrine of the Trinity is logically possible. More importantly, the same has happened to the very many philosophers pondering the Trinity, as evinced by the vast extent of the still continuing and fierce debate that has taken place during the couple of the last millenia.[191] In my opinion, it is also hard to see how the doctrine could become p-evidently consistent to anybody, short of its becoming p-evidently true. Yet, it seems, this can't happen. So it seems it cannot be p-evident that the Trinity doctrine is logically possible. Having sketched now why I favor WMST not only as intriguing ammo in logical exercise, but also as a true statement, I move further.

2. If some proposition cannot be p-evidently logically possible, then the proposition cannot be p-evidently not analytically false.
Premise.

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proposition we don't completely understand; (iv) a true proposition we can't explain; (v) a true proposition we can't fully or adequately explain; (vi) an unintelligible proposition, the meaning of which can't be grasped; (vii) a true proposition which one should believe even though it seems, even after careful reflection, to be logically and/or otherwise impossible and thus false. See D. Tuggy "The Unfinished Business of Trinitarian Theorizing," *Religious Studies* 39, No. 2 (2003), pp. 175-176; and D. Tuggy, "Trinity," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall 2009 Edition)*, E. N. Zalta (ed.), http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2009/entries/trinity (accessed October 14, 2011), # 4. Tuggy does not specify the modality of his "cannot." Taking it as psychological impossibility, we may plausibly say that *if* the Trinity doctrine is logically possible, WMST implies the doctrine is a mystery in the sense (iii). WMST leaves the issue of other senses of "mystery" open even under the assumption of logical possibility of the doctrine. Under the assumption that the Trinity doctrine is true, WMST implies the doctrine is a mystery in the senses (iii) and (v). Further, WMST implies mysterianism about the Trinity, in Tuggy's sense of the word. Mysterianism about the Trinity says that the true theory of the Trinity must, given our present epistemic limitations, *to some degree lack* meaning which we can understand *or* lack meaning which seems to us logically possible. Cf. D. Tuggy, "Trinity," op. cit., # 4. The implication by WMST of what Tuggy (ibid.) calls as positive mysterianism is much less clear. By this sort of mysterianism, he means the claim that the true theory of the Trinity must seem to us logically impossible. But there's some distance between (psychologically) necessary absence of evident (logical) possibility and (psychologically) necessary appearance of (logical) impossibility. WMST also does not seem to imply the position labeled by Tuggy as negative mysterianism: the claim that the true theory of the Trinity cannot seem logically possible *and* cannot seem logically impossible. (Ibid.) *If* the Trinity doctrine, in my sense, exhausted the true theory of the Trinity, then negative mysterianism would imply WMST. But it still would be contentious to assert that the converse holds, too, because the appearance of logical impossibility might be (psychologically) possible under WMST. Finally, it's worth noting that although positive mysterianism and negative mysterianism are incompatible, there's still a middle ground between them. A mysterian could hold – against both of the two contraries – that the Trinity doctrine need not, but can seem logically impossible; or that the Trinity doctrine need not seem logically impossible, but can seem logically possible.

[191] See D. Tuggy, "Trinity," op. cit.

Briefly, I defend (2) as follows. If some proposition can be p-evidently not analytically false, then the proposition can be p-evidently logically possible. For, my defence goes on, it can be p-evident that every not analytically false proposition is logically possible.

I will support now in some length the claim that *every not analytically false proposition is logically possible*. Then I will argue shortly that this claim can be p-evident.

Maybe the defence of the given claim will appear unnecessary to the reader for the claim seems to him as evidently, or even self-evidently, true. But maybe it won't. So here I go. The claim has been embraced by many modern philosophers.[192] Notably, it has also been accepted by R. Swinburne and T. McGrew. These two prominent contemporary probabilistic philosophers of Christianity have no conceptual room for the collection of logically possible propositions which is not coextensive with the collection of propositions that are not analytically false.[193] This opposition to analytic possibility without logical possibility could be opposed in turn by someone according to whom it is not enough for a proposition not to be analytically false in order to be logically possible. But for many philosophers, this is *not* a way to proceed; including Swinburne and McGrew. Moreover, a clear rationale may be given why the absence of analytic falsehood pertaining to a proposition is always sufficient for its logical possibility.

This rationale may be extracted, once more, from the writings of Swinburne. According to my construals, a proposition is analytically false just in case it is false solely in virtue of the contents of concepts in it (and the relations between them); a proposition is analytically true just in case it is true solely in virtue of the contents of concepts in it; a proposition is logically possible just in case it does not entail a self-contradictory proposition; finally, p entails q just in case that solely in virtue of the nature of p and q it is true that $\sim(p\&\sim q)$. Now, Swinburne argued that a proposition is such that its negation is not logically possible – i.e., the negation is logically impossible, in my sense of entailing a self-contradictory proposition – if and only if the proposition is such that its negation is incoherent – where incoherence is understood in terms of

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[192] Cf. Frank Cameron Jackson (*1943), *From Metaphysics to Ethics: A Defence of Conceptual Analysis*, Oxford, Clarendon Press 1998, pp. 56-86; M. Tooley, "Introduction," in *Necessity and Possibility: The Metaphysics of Modality*, M. Tooley (ed.), New York and London, Garland Publishing, Inc. 1999, p. vii; Ernst Tugendhat (*1930) and Ursula Wolf (*1951), *Logisch-semantische Propädeutik*, Stuttgart, Philipp Reclam jun. GmbH & Co. 1986, chs. 3 and 14.7; Stanislav Sousedík (*1931), "Úvod" (in Czech), in *Co je analytický výrok?*, Jaroslav Peregrin and S. Sousedík (eds.), Prague, OIKOYMENH 1995, pp. 7-8; P. Dvořák, "Ke Gahérově analýze Tomášovy „*druhé cesty*"" (in Czech), *Studia Neoaristotelica* 2, No. 1 (2005), pp. 112-113; L. Novák, *„Scire Deum esse": Scotův důkaz Boží existence jako vrcholný výkon metafyziky jakožto aristotelské vědy* (in Czech), Prague, Kalich 2011, chs. 2.2.2 and 6.3.2; D. Peroutka, *Aristotelská nauka o potencích*, op. cit., pp. 122-123, 140-142; O. Tomala in P. Dvořák, D. Peroutka and O. Tomala, *Modality v analytické metafyzice*, op. cit., pp. 25-27. It would be difficult to find established and straightforward equivalents for the modern notions of analycity in the writings of pre-modern philosophers. For instance, the scholastic idea of a proposition immediately evident merely from the concepts constituting it – said in Latin to be a truth "per se nota" or a truth known "ex terminis" – is different from the idea of an analytically true proposition. While each proposition *per se nota* is analytically true, the converse does not hold. Cf., e.g., S. Sousedík, "Úvod," in *Co je analytický výrok?*, op. cit., p. 9.

[193] Cf. R. Swinburne, *The Evolution of the Soul*, op. cit., pp. 209 and 314; and *The Coherence of Theism*, op. cit., pp. 12-15, 21-22, 30, 243-261, 272-273; *The Christian God*, op. cit., pp. 99-102, 112, 144; *Revelation*, op. cit., p. 24; "In Defence of Logical Nominalism," op. cit., pp. 311, 315-316. See also T. and L. McGrew, "Psychology for Armchair Philosophers," *Idealistic Studies* 28, No. 3 (1998), pp. 147-157; and *Internalism and Epistemology*, op. cit., pp. 99-103.

entailing a proposition which does not make sense. Swinburne also argued that a proposition is such that its negation is incoherent if and only if the proposition is true solely because of the meanings of words (or semantic rules). Thus, transitively, a proposition is such that its negation is not logically possible if and only if the proposition is true solely because of the meanings of words. For all these three concepts – of a proposition with a logically impossible negation, of a proposition with an incoherent negation, and of a proposition deriving its truth solely from the meanings of words – which are coextensive according to Swinburne, he uses the label "analytic."[194] A slight verbal modification of Swinburne's meditations will yield us a reason elucidating that a proposition is analytically true in my sense if and only if its negation is not logically possible in my sense, and that a proposition is not analytically false in my sense if and only if it is logically possible in my sense.

Swinburne lays out his reason for the coextensiveness of *proposition the negation of which is not logically possible* and *proposition the negation of which is incoherent* in these words:

> "Clearly *if a proposition p entails a self-contradictory proposition then p is incoherent* for it has buried in it a claim that something is so and that it is not so – and it is not conceivable [i.e., it makes no sense] that things should be thus. The converse needs a longer proof. … A proposition will state that an object has a certain property or that a certain relation holds between two certain objects, or that there exists an object with such and such properties. Now take a proposition of one of these forms, for example a proposition ascribing a property to an object. Such a proposition will have the form 'φ is ψ'. *If such a proposition is incoherent, then being φ must be being an object of a certain sort being which is incompatible with having the property of being ψ.* For if there were no incompatibility between being the sort of thing which is φ, and the sort of thing which can be ψ, how could there be any incoherence in a thing being both? So there is an incompatibility between being φ and being ψ, and so *there will be buried within 'φ is ψ' a contradiction* which can be brought to surface by deriving from it what is entailed by the proposition. … This type of argument can clearly be generalized for propositions of other forms to show generally that if a proposition is incoherent it entails a self-contradictory proposition. Hence the two definitions [of analytic proposition – a proposition with a logically impossible negation, and a proposition with an incoherent negation] … are equivalent."[195]

In short, if a proposition q is logically impossible, then, by the definition of logical impossibility, q always entails a self-contradiction, and so, by the definition of incoherence, q is always incoherent. Conversely, if a proposition q is incoherent, then, by the definitions of incoherence and logical impossibility, q is always logically impossible. Thus, if a proposition p is such that the negation of p is logically impossible, then the negation of p is always incoherent. And also conversely, if a proposition p is such that the negation of p is incoherent, then the negation of p is always logically impossible.

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[194] See R. Swinburne, "Analycity, Necessity and Apriority," op. cit., 228-231; and *The Coherence of Theism*, op. cit., pp. 12-21.

[195] R. Swinburne, "Analycity, Necessity and Apriority," op. cit., p. 230 (my italics). Repeated almost verbatim in *The Coherence of Theism*, op. cit., pp. 19-20; in the latter place, instead of relational propositions, Swinburne mentions conditional propositions.

Swinburne explains his reason for the coextensiveness of *proposition the negation of which is incoherent* and *proposition true solely because of the meanings of words* as follows:

> "… *whether a proposition is coherent or incoherent is solely a matter of what it says* – the fact that it says what it does, is alone sufficient to make it coherent, or incoherent, as the case may be. *So the fact that negation of an analytic proposition p says what it does, that not-p, is alone sufficient to make it false.* That being so, that fact that p says what it does is alone sufficient to make it true. That a sentence expresses the proposition it does is a consequence solely of what the words in the sentence mean. If p is true just because of what it says, then any sentence which expresses it will express a true proposition solely because the words in the sentence mean what they do. Hence if a proposition is analytic [in the sense of its negation being incoherent] …, it will be analytic [in the sense of being true solely because of the meanings of words] … Conversely, *if a proposition is analytic [in the sense of being true solely because of the meanings of words]* …, any sentence which expresses p will express a true proposition and do so solely because the words in it mean what they do. In that case the fact that p is true is a consequence merely of what it says. Hence that the negation of p, that is not-p, is false, is also a consequence merely of what it says. So the assertion of *the negation will be in words which have such meaning that the falsity of the negation lies buries in them*. Hence the assertion of *the negation contains its own falsity buried within it and so is incoherent*. Hence any proposition analytic [in the sense of being true solely because of the meanings of words] … will be analytic [in the sense of its negation being incoherent] …"[196]

In short, if a proposition *p* is such that the negation of *p* is incoherent, then, by the definition of incoherence and of a proposition being true solely because of the meaning of words, *p* is always true solely because of the meanings of words. Conversely, if a proposition *p* is true solely because of the meanings of words, then, by definition, the negation of *p* always entails a self-contradiction, and so, by the definition of incoherence, the negation of *p* is always incoherent.

Finally, because each proposition with a logically impossible negation is a proposition with an incoherent negation, and *vice versa*; and each proposition with an incoherent negation is a proposition true solely because of the meanings of words, and *vice versa*; it follows that each proposition with a logically impossible negation is a proposition true solely because of the meanings of words, and *vice versa*.

Frankly, the wording in Swinburne's definition of an incoherent proposition as one which entails a proposition which "does not make sense" is unfortunate, at least if we take the definition as an attempt at a correct – i.e., real, as opposed to nominal – definition of incoherence. For it seems to me that we do entertain the particular propositions and do grasp the meaning of the particular sentences which were classified by Swinburne as making no sense: e.g., that $3 + 1 \neq 4$, or that $1 = 3$.[197] It is puzzling to name such propositions as making no sense. For they make sense, in a sense. Indeed, we even see what would be true if they were true.[198] (More precisely,

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[196] R. Swinburne, "Analycity, Necessity and Apriority," op. cit., p. 231 (my italics). Repeated almost verbatim in *The Coherence of Theism*, op. cit., pp. 17-18.

[197] R. Swinburne, "Analycity, Necessity and Apriority," op. cit., p. 229-230; *The Coherence of Theism*, op. cit., pp. 13-14.

[198] As noted by B. Leftow in his paper "Swinburne on Divine Necessity," *Religious Studies* 46, No. 2 (2010), p. 152. See also ibid. p. 155 and nt. 28.

we can see that just any proposition follows from them.) Moreover, some have believed in outright self-contradictions, even upon their sustained reflection.[199] In contrast, however, to those propositions viewed by Swinburne as making no sense, no overall meaning is (normally) attached to strings composed only of parts having no (established) meaning (e.g., "shouki blah kouki"),[200] neither to strings only partially composed of words having meaning (e.g., famously, "all mimsy were the borogoves"),[201] nor to strings composed of words which all have meaning but are ordered in a grammatically incorrect way (e.g., "upon opens nervously Greece stone hope").[202] So, it does not seem to me to be *literally* true that if a proposition entails a self-contradiction, then it is always incoherent in the sense of entailing a proposition which makes no sense. But a conditional of this sort is crucial to Swinburne's argument.

A better attempt at a (real) definition of incoherence, I suggest, should be the following. A proposition is incoherent just in the case that it entails a proposition which cannot be at the same time entertained attentively *and* not known as entailing a self-contradiction.[203] Under this construal, Swinburne's arguments are more plausible, too; including the involved conditional. Then an equally plausible modification of Swinburne's argument may be launched, with "true solely in virtue of the contents of concepts" instead of "true solely because of the meanings of words." A result of this modification shall be: each proposition with a logically impossible negation is an analytically true proposition, and *vice versa*. It follows, by substitution with negation, that each logically impossible proposition is an analytically false proposition, and *vice versa*. It follows in turn, by transposition, that every not analytically false proposition is a logically possible proposition. This is the claim reported above as embraced by many modern philosophers, including R. Swinburne and T. McGrew. This paragraph also sketches the promised modification of Swinburne's meditations. In the following paragraph, I propose a more direct argument, which dispenses with the conceptual bridge of incoherence. It goes as follows.

If a proposition p is true solely in virtue of the contents of concepts in p, then it always holds that solely in virtue of the nature of $\sim p$ and of a self-contradictory proposition q, it is true that $\sim(\sim p \& \sim q)$. This should be clear; if a proposition is analytically true, then its negation is analytically false, and so any conjunction with the negation as a conjunct is analytically false. But – as my general characterizations of analytic truth, entailment, and logical impossibility testify – the first conditional in this paragraph means that if a proposition p is analytically true,

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[199] See Graham Priest and Francesco Berto, "Dialetheism," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Summer 2010 Edition)*, E. N. Zalta (ed.), http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2010/entries/dialetheism (accessed October 19, 2011).

[200] See R. Swinburne, *The Coherence of Theism*, op. cit., pp. 1-2.

[201] For this surreal line from Lewis Carroll's poem "Jabberwocky," cf. L. Carroll (aka Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, 1832 – 1898), *The Complete Works of Lewis Carroll*, New York, Vintage Books 1978, pp. 153-155, 215-217, 754; and A. R. Pruss's blog post "All Mimsy Were the Borogoves," January 3, 2008, http://alexanderpruss.blogspot.com/2008/01/all-mimsy-were-borogoves.html (accessed October 19, 2011).

[202] See R. Swinburne, *The Coherence of Theism*, op. cit., p. 2.

[203] W. F. Vallicella would use here the word "inconceivability" and its cognates, instead of the word "incoherence" and its cognates; cf. his "Conceivability and Epistemic Possibility," op. cit. Swinburne uses "inconceivability" and its cognates, too; cf. his "Analycity, Necessity and A priority," op. cit., pp. 229-230; *The Coherence of Theism*, op. cit., pp. 13-14; and "In Defence of Logical Nominalism," op. cit., pp. 316-317. But while Vallicella would call as inconceivable an incoherent proposition (e.g., $\sqrt{4} \neq 2$, $\sqrt{1} = 3$), Swinburne would call as inconceivable rather a consequence of an incoherent proposition (e.g., $3 + 1 \neq 4$, $1 = 3$).

then the negation of *p* always entails a self-contradiction, and so is always logically impossible. In fact, this arrow of implication is not crucial for my argument. Neither is it for my modification of Swinburne's arguments. It's kept in both of these lines of thought just for the sake of greater completeness and greater analogy with Swinburne's argument. The converse arrow of implication is crucial. I present it as follows. If a proposition *p* is such that solely in virtue of the nature of ~*p* and of a self-contradictory proposition *q* it is true that ~(~*p*&~*q*), then *p* is true solely in virtue of the contents of concepts in *p*. Again, this should be clear; any self-contradiction is analytically false and its negation is analytically true; so, the locus of analytic falsehood in the conjunction having as its conjuncts just the negation of *p* and the negation of the self-contradiction is the first conjunct; hence, *p* is analytically true. But that means that if a proposition *p* is such that the negation of *p* entails a self-contradiction, and so is logically impossible, then *p* is always an analytically true proposition. It follows that: each proposition with a logically impossible negation is an analytically true proposition, and *vice versa*; so, by substitution with negation, each logically impossible proposition is an analytically false proposition, and *vice versa*; and so, by transposition, every not analytically false proposition is a logically possible proposition. Which completes my argument that every not analytically false proposition is logically possible. More generally, such considerations show the coextensiveness of: logical necessity and analytic truth; logical impossibility and analytic falsehood; logical possibility and analytic possibility; logical contingency and analytic contingency.

The two preceding paragraphs present my reasons for the view that every not analytically false proposition is logically possible. In case these arguments failed, there would still remain a way out by means of proclaiming the view as immediately evident, self-evident, or evident in some other way. It's sure, practically speaking, that there are many philosophers who would take such a strategy as proper. But the reasons just given are those most satisfactory, to my knowledge, and as such they are offered by me to the reader. Now I will sketch briefly why it is plausible that it can be p-evident that every not analytically false proposition is logically possible.

In my opinion – and, as we saw, also in the opinion of Swinburne – the reasons just given make it even *evident* that every not analytically false proposition is logically possible. To see this, of course, one must consider the claim and/or the reasons for it carefully. And there does not seem to me any other means left to convince my reader that the claim is evidently true. Further, the claim is plausibly evident – whether immediately or from the arguments for it – independently of religious experience. So it is plausibly *p-evident* that every not analytically false proposition is logically possible. No doubt Swinburne would agree here, too. So would also many other philosophers, including T. McGrew. Thus we have an ample reason for supposing that it *can* (in the sense of psychological possibility) be p-evident that every not analytically false proposition is logically possible. It should be already clear that this supposition yields the desired premise (2). If it isn't, see argument I in symbolic notation (below).

In sum, my case for (2) goes as follows. It can be p-evident that every not analytically false proposition is logically possible. So, if some proposition can be p-evidently not analytically false, then the proposition can be p-evidently logically possible. This, by transposition, entails (2). Let us move further, to the step (3).

3. The Trinity doctrine cannot be p-evidently not analytically false. (WMST*)
From (1) and (2), by substitution and modus ponens.
May be a premise, too.

For obvious reasons, I call (3) WMST*. It is obvious, too, that (3) follows from (1) – aka WMST – in conjunction with (2). What is more, what was said on behalf of (1) could be plausibly said also on behalf of (3). WMST* could be just assumed as a starting point. That is, the arguments I and II pruned of (1) and (2) and starting from (3) right off would still remain promising. The reasons provided in part IV below speak for (1) as well as for (3). And similarly as in the case of (1), there is much to the truth of (3) already from the intuitive perspective. It is not evident to me – whether p-evidently (i.e., independently of religious experience) or otherwise – that the doctrine of the Trinity is not analytically false. The same has happened to many philosophers pondering on the Trinity. It is also hard to see how the doctrine could become p-evidently not analytically false to anybody, short of its becoming p-evidently true. But it seems this can't happen. So it seems it cannot be p-evident that the Trinity doctrine isn't analytically false. In fact, the only work that (1) and (2) do in the arguments I and II is to be a basis from which (3) is derived. So, why are (1) and (2) not dropped? Because they make the arguments I and II explicitly relevant for, or interesting to, those who take seriously (1) but not (3). Further, because in the literature on the Trinity doctrine logical modalities have been more prominent than analytic modalities, (1) gains more direct support from it, and can be more easily related to it, than (3).

Now I add two noteworthy and obvious, but minor steps, which are essential neither to the argument I nor to the argument II.

4. If some proposition can be p-evident, then the proposition can be p-evidently not analytically false.
Premise.

The premise (4) seems quite uncontroversial. If some proposition can be p-evident, then it can be p-evidently not false. And if it can be p-evidently not false, then it can be p-evidently not analytically false. For it can be p-evident that every true proposition is not false, and that every not false proposition is not analytically false. Indeed, both that every true proposition is not false and that every not false proposition is not analytically false are claims embraced by (almost) all philosophers. Or that has been my impression. I also expect almost all philosophers would reckon these two statements as evident, p-evident, and (psychologically) possibly p-evident.

In brief, it is evident that every true proposition is not false and that every not false proposition is not analytically false. Thus, if some proposition can be evident, then it can be evidently not analytically false. Which is what (4) says.

It follows that:

5. The Trinity doctrine cannot be p-evident.
From (3) and (4), by substitution and modus tollens.

(5) is the minor conclusion I highlighted at the beginning of this section, presenting argument I. Now we shift to the probability talk and also to the remaining crucial part of this argument.

> **6.** If some proposition cannot be p-evidently not analytically false, then the proposition cannot have p-evidently non-minimal logical probability.
> *Premise.*

My reason for (6) is the following conditional: if some proposition can p-evidently have non-minimal (positive, non-zero) logical probability (*simpliciter*), then the proposition can be p-evidently not analytically false. For it can be p-evident that every proposition with non-minimal logical probability (*simpliciter*) is not analytically false. Why? Because, in turn, it can be p-evident that every analytically false proposition has minimal logical probability on any given information – if it has any logical (measured) probability on it at all.

The requirement of minimal (zero) logical probability for analytical falsehoods on any given information suits well for cases when we have two (sets of) propositions, one of them is analytically false, and there *is some* (measured) relation of logical probability that the analytically false proposition bears with respect to the latter proposition. If there is no such relation of logical probability (or its degree cannot be measured by numbers, precise, interval, or fuzzy), there is, of course, no *minimal* (zero) degree of it either.[204] But if there is one (trivially or not), then analytical falsehood of the given proposition engenders entailment of its negation by the other, which, in turn, engenders minimal (zero) logical probability of the former on the latter. To make this thought more transparent, I reformulate it as follows:

[204] According to Swinburne, every proposition has some logical probability on every other proposition. See his *Epistemic Justification*, op. cit., p. 62. On the contrary, according to J. Franklin, "Resurrecting Logical Probability," op. cit., p. 281, only propositions mutually relevant in the sense of relevant logic get some logical probability. Presumably, Franklin means here something to the effect that two propositions are mutually relevant in the intended sense just when they have some non-logical concept in common. Cf. Edwin Mares, "Relevance Logic," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Spring 2009 Edition)*, E. N. Zalta (ed.), http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2009/entries/logic-relevance (accessed October 26, 2011). Fortunately, we need not to unravel these controversies. Notably, A. Plantinga, "Epistemic Probability and Evil," in *The Evidential Argument from Evil*, Daniel Howard-Snyder (ed.), Bloomington, Indiana University Press 1996, p. 82, expressed certain doubts about contingent propositions having logical probability on necessary propositions (cf. his *Warrant and Proper Function*, op. cit., pp. 145-149). So did also: L. McGrew, in the interview (moderated by Luke Muehlhauser) on "The Probability of Christianity," http://commonsenseatheism.com/?p=10555 (accessed October 26, 2011); Jordan Howard Sobel (1929 – 2010), "To My Critics with Appreciation: Responses to Taliaferro, Swinburne, and Koons," *Philosophia Christi* 8, No. 2 (2006), nt. 41 on p. 263. It is also far from clear whether some proposition has logical probability on a logically impossible (or analytically false) proposition. It has been proved, however, that the right answer to this question is always "no" if we assume rules of a standard probability calculus (as was highlighted to me by T. McGrew in correspondence). Cf. T. McGrew, "Review of Richard Swinburne, *Epistemic Justification*," op. cit.; Peter Forrest, "Heterodox Probability Theory," in *A Companion to Philosophical Logic*, Dale Jacquette (ed.), Oxford, Blackwell 2006, pp. 585-586.

> For any proposition p, q, if (i) there is some logical probability of p on q (measured by $P(p|q)$) and (ii) analytically, $\sim p$, then (iii) analytically, $q \rightarrow \sim p$; that is, analytically, $\sim(q\&p)$ – by (ii). Hence, (iv) q entails $\sim p$ – by (iii);[205] and (v) the logical probability of p on q is minimal – by (i) and (iv). (Hence $P(p|q) = 0$.)

As for the nexus between (iii) and (v) via (iv), remember that the concept of logical probability is the one of propositional support the degrees (values) of which are determined solely in virtue of the concepts in the involved propositions. If solely in virtue of the concepts in p and q, $q \rightarrow \sim p$, then q entails $\sim p$. So, solely in virtue of the concepts, the truth of q guarantees $\sim p$; or, $\sim p$ is guaranteed on (given) q. So, logical probability, the degrees (values) of which are determined solely in virtue of the concepts in the involved propositions, is in such case minimal (zero). Rendering the same in a slightly different way, the concept of logical probability can be viewed as a generalization of the concept of entailment. This, in fact, gave rise to the talk about propositional support under the name of "partial entailment", entailment in the strict sense being a limit case of the partial one.[206] Entailment, being a limit case on the one side of the spectrum, yields a maximal – and if measured, 100% – logical probability. Entailment of negation, being a limit case on the other side of the scale, *ex hypothesi* yields minimal – if measured, 0% – logical probability on any given information, including the conditioned upon information of logical probability *simpliciter*.

So, by considerations analogical to those adduced in the discussion of (2), it is plausible not only that it is evident, but also that it *can* be *p-evident* – whether immediately or from the explication just given in the preceding paragraph – that every analytically false proposition has minimal logical probability (*simpliciter*), if it has any logical (measured) probability at all. I believe R. Swinburne, T. McGrew and many other philosophers of probability would agree. For one thing, the view that every analytically false proposition has minimal (zero) logical probability on any given information (if it has any /measured/ probability on it at all) has been embraced, and quite naturally, in the philosophy of *logical* of probability.[207] Both R. Swinburne[208] and T. McGrew[209] are no exceptions in this respect.

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[205] Recall that my general characterization of entailment was in terms of analytically true material implication: q entails p just when solely in virtue of . This characterization was approved by R. Swinburne (in personal communication). It is also already implicit in his published alternative definitions of entailment, to the effect that q entails p just when: (i) by asserting q everybody is committed to asserting p; (ii) p is involved, or covertly buried, in q; (iii) $(q\&\sim p)$ is incoherent; (iv) $(q\&\sim p)$ is logically impossible. For (i) and (ii), see nt. 61 above. For (iii) and (iv), see nt. 221 below.

[206] I say *a* limit case, rather than *the* limit case, for it is controversial whether a proposition has minimal logical probability on some information only if its negation is entailed by this information. R. Swinburne, *Epistemic Justification*, op. cit., pp. 62-66, 244, has preferred to think so. On the contrary, the British mathematician, statistician, geophysicist, and astronomer Harold Jeffreys (1891 – 1989), *Theory of Probability*, Oxford, Clarendon Press 1981, p. 21, averred it is a false principle that if a proposition has zero probability on other proposition, then the latter entails the negation of the former. He writes: " 'If P(q | p) = 0, then p entails ~q.' This is false … For instance, a continuous variable may be equally likely to have any value between 0 and 1. Then the probability that it is exactly 1/2 is 0, but 1/2 is not an impossible value." As T. McGrew wrote to me in correspondence, this evaluation is in agreement with measure probability theory. But, again, we need not to decide this dispute.

[207] See R. Swinburne, *An Introduction to Confirmation Theory*, op. cit., pp. 34-36, 40, 59. Cf. J. Franklin, "Non-Deductive Logic in Mathematics," *The British Journal for the Philosophy of Science* 38, No. 1 (1987), p. 14.

[208] R. Swinburne, *Epistemic Justification*, op. cit., pp. 65-67 and 176; *The Existence of God*, op. cit., p. 16.

The requirement of minimal logical probability value for analytic falsehoods is current even in probabilistic treatments of *degrees of belief*.[210] These treatments have been dominantly Bayesian. A pressing reason for this acceptance of the said, or at least very similar, constraint for degrees of belief is reported in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* entry on Bayesian epistemology. Degrees of belief (more precisely, degrees of belief satisfying some probability calculus) require:

> "… that all deductive logical truths have probability one, all deductive inconsistencies have probability zero, and the probability of any conjunction of sentences be no greater than any of its deductive consequences. … Because relaxing that assumption would block the derivation of almost all the important results in Bayesian epistemology, most Bayesians maintain the assumption … and treat it as an ideal to which human beings can only more or less approximate."[211]

Given the coextensiveness of logical and analytic modalities, discussed with the premise (2), the assumption mentioned in the quote – sometimes called the assumption of logical omniscience – yields the constraint of minimal degree of belief for all logically impossible propositions, and thus for all analytically false propositions. Whether or not the absence of the assumption of logical omniscience is necessary for whatever important results in Bayesian epistemology (the entry specifies neither what these results amount to, nor what is here crucial about logical omniscience), it is a vivid empirical fact that probabilists regularly make that supposition their own point of departure. It is less clear that those of them who are interested mainly in coherent and rational degrees of belief are bound to do so. I mean, this is less clear than it would be if they were rather after logical probabilities than degrees of belief. But, as said, probabilists frequently do make that assumption. Furthermore, they do seem to need it, at least if we take the cited passage for what it says. That's why my argument should be of importance not only to those

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[209] In correspondence.

[210] Cf. R. Swinburne, *An Introduction to Confirmation Theory*, op. cit., pp. 34-36, 40, 58-59. If logical modalities correspond to analytic modalities in the way I suggested when discussing the premise (2), we can commit to the constraint of minimal degree of belief for analytic falsehoods also all the following authors, who speak rather of logically impossible propositions than of analytically false propositions: J. Hawthorne, "*Degree-of-Belief* and *Degree-of-Support*: Why Bayesians Need Both Notions," op. cit., p. 289; Paul F. A. Bartha, *By Parallel Reasoning: The Construction and Evaluation of Analogical Arguments*, Oxford, Oxford University Press 2009, pp. 180-181; H. Gaifman, "Reasoning with Limited Resources and Assigning Probabilities to Arithmetical Statements," op. cit., pp. 97, 102-104, 112-114; D. Garber, "Old Evidence and Logical Omniscience in Bayesian Confirmation Theory," op. cit., pp. 104-107, 115; Ian Hacking (*1936), "Slightly More Realistic Personal Probability," *Philosophy of Science* 34, No. 4 (1967), pp. 317, 320-321; Irving John Good (1916 – 2009), *Probability and the Weighing of Evidence*, London, Charles Griffin & Co. Ltd. 1950, p. 49; I. J. Good, "Corroboration, Explanation, Evolving Probability, Simplicity and Sharpened Razor," *The British Journal for the Philosophy of Science* 19, No. 2 (1968), pp. 124-125; Brian Skyrms (*1938), *Choice & Chance: An Introduction to Inductive Logic*, Belmont, Wadsworth 2000, p. 110; Abner Shimony (*1928), "Coherence and the Axioms of Confirmation," *The Journal of Symbolic Logic* 20, No. 1 (1955), p. 3; A. Shimony, *The Search For a Naturalistic Worldview Vol. I: Scientific Method and Epistemology*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 1993, p. 153; J. H. Sobel, *Logic and Theism: Arguments for and against Beliefs in God*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 2004, p. 252; J. H. Sobel, "Self-Doubts and Dutch Strategies," *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 65, No. 1 (1987), p. 68.

[211] W. Talbott, "Bayesian Epistemology," op. cit., # 6.1.

philosophers of Christian religion who ask for evident *logical* probabilities, but also to those who thirst for clear assessments of more subjective probability values.

It should be clear that the supposition that it can be p-evident that every analytically false proposition has minimal logical probability (*simpliciter*) yields the desired premise (2). For details, see the symbolic reconstruction of argument I. In brief, my case for (6) may be summed up in the following way. It can be p-evident that every analytically false proposition has minimal logical probability (*simpliciter*). So, if some proposition can p-evidently have non-minimal logical probability (*simpliciter*), then it can be p-evident that the proposition is not analytically false. Which, by transposition, entails (6).

Now we are in a position to derive that:

> **7.** The Trinity doctrine cannot have p-evidently non-minimal logical probability.
> *From (3) and (6), by substitution and modus tollens.*

In other words, it is psychologically impossible that it is evident independently of religious experience that the Trinity doctrine has non-minimal (non-zero, if measured) logical probability on the conjunction of all the propositions which are (occurrently or readily) evident.

Henceforth, the way I want to draw my moral should be fairly clear; if it hasn't been all along to the point of triviality. Yet, philosophers are a lavish lot, hair-splitting the already obvious to find some more. So I shall push on accordingly.

> **8.** If some proposition cannot have p-evidently non-minimal logical probability, then any proposition p-evidently entailing the former proposition cannot have p-evidently non-minimal logical probability.
> *Premise.*

My reason for (8) is the following conditional: if some proposition p-evidently entailing some other proposition can have p-evidently non-minimal logical probability (*simpliciter*), then the p-evidently entailed proposition can have p-evidently non-minimal logical probability (*simpliciter*), too. Why? Because, it can be p-evident that on any given information, every entailing proposition has logical probability equal to or lower than the logical probability of the entailed proposition. Indeed, how could the logical probability of that which is entailed be lower than the logical probability of that which entails? It couldn't; in all circumstances in which the latter holds, the former holds, too.[212]

To repeat a pattern analogical to that which we went through when discussing the premise (6), we may begin by the observation that the requirement under consideration – of the entailed having at least the logical probability of the entailing – suits well for cases when we have two (sets of) propositions, one of them is so entailed by the other, and there are *some* (measured) relations of logical probability that the analytically implied proposition bears with respect to a third proposition, and that the entailing proposition bears with respect to the same third proposition. If either of these two relations of logical probability (or its measured degree) is missing, there is no issue about some (measured) threshold of the entailing proposition that the

[212] I thank Nat Tabris and Sean Choi for their discussing with me some modifications of (8).

entailed proposition must pass. But if both of these two logical probabilities arising from the fixed information are given (trivially or not), entailment of one proposition by the other engenders entailment of the former by the latter. That, in turn, engenders logical probability for the former on the given information of at least such degree as that of the latter on the same information. In the attempt to make this meditation clearer, I reformulate it as follows:

> For any proposition p, q, r, if (i) there are some logical probabilities of both p on r and of q on r (measured by $P(p|r)$ and $P(q|r)$, respectively) and (ii) q entails p, then (iii) analytically, $\sim(q\&\sim p)$ – by (ii); and (iv) the logical probability of p on r is greater than or equal to the logical probability of q on r – by (i) and (iii). (Hence $P(p|r) \geq P(q|r)$.)

As for the nexus between (ii) and (iv) via (iii), recall again that the concept of logical probability is the one of propositional support the degrees (values) of which are determined solely in virtue of the concepts in the concerned propositions. If q entails p, then solely in virtue of the concepts in p and q, $q \rightarrow p$; i.e., $\sim(q\&\sim p)$. So, solely in virtue of the concepts, q guarantees p; or, p is guaranteed on (given) q. So, logical probability, the degrees (values) of which are determined solely in virtue of the concepts in the involved propositions, is in the case of p given q maximal (one). Thus, to the extent r supports q, r, by the same token, supports p, too. In addition to this support on the side of r, r may support p also by way of $\sim q$. Hence, the logical probability of p on (given) r is greater than or equal to the probability of q on (given) r. Rendering the same thing by an analogy, according to the rule of hypothetical syllogism, for any p, q, r, if r entails q and q entails p, then r entails p. In such a case, the entailment of q by r amounts to the entailment to p by r. Now, in the case when q supports p to the limit of entailment and r supports q to some (measured) degree, this degree of support of q by r is fully transmitted to p.

Again, by considerations analogical to those adduced in the discussion of (2), it is plausible that it *can* be *p-evident* – whether immediately or from the explication just given in the preceding paragraph – that every entailing proposition has logical probability (*simpliciter*) equal to or lower than the logical probability (*simpliciter*) of the entailed proposition. It seems R. Swinburne, T. McGrew and many other philosophers of probability would agree.

The view that on any given information, any entailed proposition has at least the logical probability of the entailing proposition (if these probabilities exist at all), has been embraced in the philosophy of logical probability.[213] The constraint is current in probabilistic treatments of degrees of belief, too. This sort of general acceptance, and a reason for it, has already been stated in the above quote from *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* entry on "Bayesian Epistemology."

Assuming it can be p-evident that on any given information, any proposition entailing other proposition has logical probability equal to or lower than the logical probability of the entailed proposition, the premise (8) follows plausibly. In brief, my case for (8) is encapsulated in the subsequent line of thought. It can be p-evident that on any given information, any

[213] If only because of the standard Theorem of total probability: for any p, q, r, $P(q|r) = P(p|r)\ P(q|r\&p) + P(\sim p|r)\ P(q|r\&\sim p)$; given all the input probabilities are defined (measured). When conjoined with 100% logical probability on the given information for propositions entailed by the information – which is commonly embraced, too – the theorem yields the said requirement. P. Forrest, "Heterodox Probability Theory," op. cit., pp. 583-585, presents the requirement as a usual starting point of probability theories.

proposition entailing another proposition has logical probability equal to or lower than the logical probability of the entailed proposition. Thus, if some proposition can have p-evidently non-minimal logical probability (*simpliciter*), then any proposition p-evidently entailed by it can have p-evidently non-minimal logical probability (*simpliciter*). This entails, by transposition, (8). Once more, more details will be found in the part reconstructing argument I.

I carry on, inserting the premise:

9. Christianity p-evidently entails the Trinity doctrine.
Premise.

On my, arguably historically accurate, representation of the propositional content of historically standard forms of Christian religion, the propositional content, called in this dissertation simply as "Christianity," is a particular compound proposition, characterized above in section II.7. A proper propositional part of Christianity so construed was stated as follows: there is just one God *and* God really exists in precisely three persons – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit – each of which is God. As we recall the Trinity doctrine says: there really are three persons such that each of them is God, and there is just one God. Because it is evident, p-evident, and (psychologically) possibly p-evident that this proper propositional part of Christianity entails the Trinity doctrine, it is also evident and p-evident that Christianity itself entails the Trinity doctrine. This establishes the premise (9).

Finally, it follows that:

10. Christianity cannot have p-evidently non-minimal logical probability.
From (7), (8) and (9), by substitution and modus ponens.

This is my main conclusion. In other words, it is psychologically impossible that it is evident independently of religious experience that Christianity has non-minimal (non-zero, if measured) logical probability on the conjunction of all the propositions which are (occurrently or readily) evident. We might call (10) as Weak Skepticism about Non-Minimal Logical Probability of Christianity. This conclusion is skeptical only weakly for it does not rule out that it can – in the sense of psychological possibility – be evident, although not *p-evident*, that Christianity has non-minimal logical probability (on the conjunction of all the propositions which are evident). The conclusion also does not rule out it can be known, even if not *evidently*, that Christianity has non-minimal logical probability.

The argument (1)–(10), dubbed here as argument I, may be summed up as follows. If Christianity can have p-evidently non-minimal logical probability (*simpliciter*), then the Trinity doctrine can have p-evidently non-minimal logical probability, too. For it can be p-evident that the logical probability of the Trinity doctrine is not lesser than the logical probability of Christianity. If the Trinity doctrine can have p-evidently non-minimal logical probability, then the doctrine can be p-evidently not-analytically-false. For it can be p-evident that: the doctrine has non-minimal logical probability only if the doctrine is not analytically false. If the Trinity doctrine can be p-evidently not analytically false, then the doctrine can be p-evidently logically possible. For it can be p-evident that: the doctrine is not analytically false only if the doctrine is logically possible. But: the Trinity doctrine cannot be p-evidently logically possible and/or it

cannot be p-evidently not analytically false. Hence, by multiple application of modus tollens, Christianity cannot have p-evidently non-minimal logical probability (*simpliciter*).

III.3. Argument II

In the second argument, I proceed from WMST and reach the result that Christianity cannot be p-evidently not analytically false. I conclude that Christianity cannot be p-evidently true, and, again, also that Christianity cannot have non-minimal logical probability (*simpliciter*) p-evidently. The second argument, dubbed as argument II, has, like argument I, ten steps. Argument I even overlaps argument II in these seven points: (1)–(4), (6), (9), and (10). Argument II does not include the points (5), (7), and (8), but includes three new ones: (3*), (4*), and (5*). These latter three are somewhat similar to (3), (4), and (5), respectively. The most important difference between argument I and argument II is the premise (4*) which allows to drop the premise (8) and derive – given (3), (4), (6), and (9) – the rest of the argument II.

As already said, the first three steps in second argument are the same as in the first one. Then argument II continues by the highlighted premise (4*), which states as an epistemic principle that:

> **4*.** If some proposition p-evidently entailed by other proposition cannot be p-evidently not-analytically false, then the latter proposition cannot be p-evidently not-analytically-false.
> *Premise.*

It can be p-evident that every proposition entailed by some not analytically false proposition is not analytically false. For it can be p-evident that every proposition entailed by some logically possible proposition is logically possible, and that every not analytically false proposition is logically possible. (Or, alternatively, for it can be p-evident that every proposition entailing some analytically false proposition is analytically false.) So, if some proposition can be p-evidently not analytically false, then any proposition which is p-evidently entailed by it can be p-evidently not analytically false. This, by transposition, implies (4*).

I will present three arguments for the principle that every proposition entailed by some not analytically false proposition is not analytically false and can be p-evident. By means of (some of) these, the principle can be p-evident. From this psychological possibility I will briefly infer the premise (4*).

It's a commonly held principle that: if some logically possible proposition entails some other proposition, then the entailed proposition is logically possible, too.[214] Put differently, if some proposition does not entail a self-contradiction, but entails some other proposition, then the latter proposition does not entail a self-contradiction either. For if the latter proposition entailed a

[214] The word "other" is not meant to imply as such that the propositions must be non-identical.

self-contradiction, then, by the transitivity of entailment,[215] the first proposition would entail a self-contradiction, too, and so, by the definition of logical possibility, would not be logically possible. So, each proposition entailed by a logically possible proposition is logically possible. From this we deduce that if some not analytically false proposition entails some other proposition, then the entailed proposition is not analytically false either. The reason is the correspondence between logical and analytic modalities, discussed with the premise (2) of argument I. More specifically, the reason is that every not analytically false proposition is logically possible, and *vice versa*, every logically false proposition isn't analytically false. This is my first argument for the principle that if some not analytically false proposition entails some other proposition, then the entailed proposition is not analytically false either.

R. Swinburne states the rule of logical possibility of anything entailed by anything logically possible not in terms of propositions, but in terms of sentences, understood as words strung together in conformity with the rules of grammar.[216] Note in the following passage the talk of logical possibility under the name of "coherence."[217]

> "… we may show [a sentence] *s* to be coherent (i.e., not to entail a self-contradiction, and so to be either analytic, or synthetic) by showing that it is itself entailed by a coherent sentence (or coherent conjunction of sentences) *r*, which we in agreement with others judge straight off so to be."[218]

Elsewhere, Swinburne states the same rule in like manner, except for the label of "coherence," replaced this time by the terminology of "logical possibility."

> "… if *r* does not entail a contradiction, neither does any sentence entailed by it. So if disputants can agree that *r* is a logically possible sentence and that *r* entails *s*, they can agree that *s* is not logically impossible."[219]

Elsewhere yet, Swinburne states a similar rule of coherence of anything entailed by anything coherent, corresponding to the rule of logical possibility of anything entailed by anything logically possible. This time, he does so – instead in terms of sentences – in terms of statements, understood as claims about how things are, expressed by sentences composed only of words with meaning.[220] Coherence of a statement is taken as its not entailing any statement which does not make sense. There's also a light change concerning Swinburne's dummy variables. Instead of (a

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[215] Cf. the rule of hypothetical syllogism and R. Swinburne, "Analytic/Synthetic," op. cit., pp. 34 and 39, and "In Defence of Logical Nominalism," op. cit., p. 320. See also T. Williamson, *The Philosophy of Philosophy*, op. cit., p. 51.

[216] On Swinburne's notion of sentence, cf. *The Coherence of Theism*, op. cit., p. 11; *The Christian God*, op. cit., p. 97; and *Revelation*, op. cit., pp. 7 and 12.

[217] The same terminological license is introduced on p. 24 of Swinburne's *Revelation*, op. cit.

[218] R. Swinburne, "Analytic/Synthetic," op. cit., pp. 38-39. To Swinburne's predicate "analytic" corresponds my predicate "analytically true," and his "synthetic" corresponds to mine "analytically contingent."

[219] R. Swinburne, "In Defence of Logical Nominalism," op. cit., p. 320.

[220] On Swinburne's notion of statement, cf. *The Coherence of Theism*, op. cit., pp. 11-12; *The Christian God*, op. cit., pp. 99 and 107; *Revelation*, op. cit., pp. 7, 10, 24; and "Necessary A Posteriori Truth," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 28, No. 2 (1991), p. 113.

sentence) *s* entailed by (a compound sentence) *r*, Swinburne writes here of (a statement) *p* entailed by (a compound statement) *r*. More importantly, in this passage he explains why the rule of coherence of anything entailed by anything coherent is true. When doing so, he assumes his result, discussed by me above in connection with the premise (2) of my argument II, that every incoherent statement is logically impossible and (thus, by transposition) every logically possible statement is coherent; and that every logically impossible statement is incoherent and (thus, by transposition) every coherent statement is logically possible.

> "We saw… that if a statement expresses an incoherent supposition, it will entail a self-contradictory statement – which henceforward I will often call, simply, a contradiction. The statement expresses an incoherent supposition, for buried in it is a claim that a thing is so and it is not so – and it is not coherent to suppose that that could be. It follows that if a statement does not entail any contradiction, then it expresses a coherent supposition. … Our only hope of proving a statement *p* to be coherent is by showing that it is entailed by some other statement *r*; and that would prove it to be coherent if and only if *r* was coherent. So to prove one statement coherent you need to assume that some other statement (or conjunction of statements) is coherent. You can prove *p* to be coherent if you can show that it follows deductively from another statement *r* which is coherent. For if *r* makes a coherent claim about the world and *p* follows deductively from *r* and so is involved in the claim that *r*, *p* must also be coherent. Put another way, if *r* is coherent, no contradiction follows from *r*, and therefore, since *p* follows from *r*, no contradiction follows from *p*, and so *p* is coherent."[221]

In short, according to Swinburne, if some statement is coherent, then any statement entailed by the former statement is logically possible. For were it not logically possible, the entailing statement, by the definitions of logical possibility and coherence, would not be coherent. But, it has been explicated already (although in terms of propositions) that, if some statement is logically possible, then it is coherent, and *vice versa*. So, if some statement is coherent, then any statement entailed by it is coherent, too.

Interestingly for us, as was argued by Swinburne, if some statement is not analytically false, then it is coherent, and *vice versa*. So, by the preceding rule that any statement entailed by a coherent statement is coherent, it follows that if some statement is not analytically false, then no statement entailed by it is analytically false. This amounts to a second argument for the principle that if some not analytically false proposition entails some other proposition, then the entailed proposition is not analytically false.

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[221] R. Swinburne, *The Coherence of Theism*, op. cit., pp. 38-39. This passage continues: "But proof only gets off the ground if you assume that a certain other statement *r* is coherent. So you have to assume the coherence of one statement in order to prove the coherence of another. Further, proofs of … coherence … depend on assumptions about what entails what, which means in effect assumptions about other statements being incoherent. For a statement *p* entails a statement *q* if and only if *p* and not-*q* are inconsistent, that is, '*p* and not-*q*' is an incoherent statement." As the p. 13 (ibid.) reads: "A statement *p* entails another statement *q* if and only if *p* and the negation of *q* are inconsistent." In R. Swinburne, *Epistemic Justification*, op. cit., p. 65, the world "entails" is "… being used in the sense of 'strictly implies'. *p* strictly implies *q*, if it is not logically possible that (*p* and not-*q*)." According to Swinburne, these two definitions of entailment may be viewed as equivalent for the definitions of incoherence and logical impossibility are equivalent.

At this place, I will make two minor notes. Firstly, the rule of logical possibility (coherence, analytic possibility) of anything entailed by anything logically possible (coherent, not analytically false) has been repeatedly used by Swinburne in his arguments to the effect that the existence of God is not logically necessary (and denials of God's existence are neither incoherent, nor analytically false).[222] Secondly, it is a commonly held principle that: if some proposition is logically necessary, then any proposition entailed by it is logically necessary, too.[223] In other words, for any proposition p, q, if $\sim q$ entails a self-contradiction and q entails p, then $\sim p$ entails a self-contradiction, too. Why? By hypothesis, q entails p. So, by the definition of entailment, it is analytically true that $\sim(q\&\sim p)$. So, by the rule – discussed together with the premise (2) in argument I – that everything analytically true is logically necessary, it is logically necessary that $\sim(q\&\sim p)$. So, by the definition of logical necessity, $(q\&\sim p)$ entails a self-contradiction. Now, by hypothesis, q is logically necessary. So, by the rule that whatever is logically necessary is the case, q is true.[224] So, by the rule that whatever is true is logically possible, q is logically possible.[225] So, by the definition of logical possibility, q does not entail a self-contradiction. Thus, the locus of self-contradiction in $(q\&\sim p)$ is not q, but $\sim p$. So, by the definition of logical possibility, $\sim p$ is not logically possible. So, by the definition of logical necessity, p is logically necessary. Again, assuming with Swinburne that it is always incoherent (i.e., not making ultimate sense) to negate anything logically necessary, and that all incoherent suppositions deny something logically necessary, it is incoherent to deny anything entailed by anything incoherent. Similarly, because everything logically necessary is analytically true, and

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[222] See especially R. Swinburne, *The Coherence of Theism*, op. cit., pp. 272-275; *The Christian God*, op. cit., pp. 144-145; "In Defence of Logical Nominalism," op. cit., pp. 326-328. As a critique of this thesis of Swinburne and of his arguing for it, I recommend L. Novák, "Is God Logically Necessary?" (forthcoming). For other critiques, see B. Leftow, "Swinburne on Divine Necessity," op. cit., pp. 141-162; and D. von Wachter, *Die kausale Struktur der Welt*, op. cit., ch. 13. Novák's philosophy of modalities is closer to mine than Leftow's and Wachter's.

[223] Cf. R. Swinburne, *The Coherence of Theism*, op. cit., pp. 272-275; and "In Defence of Logical Nominalism," op. cit., pp. 316 and 326. See also, e.g., B. Leftow, "Swinburne on Divine Necessity," op. cit., p. 153; L. Novák, *„Scire Deum esse"*, op. cit., ch. 8.2.5; or Q. Smith, *Ethical and Religious Thought in Analytic Philosophy of Language*, op. cit., p. 98.

[224] Cf. James Garson, "Modal Logic," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Winter 2009 Edition)*, E. N. Zalta (ed.), http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2009/entries/logic-modal (accessed October 24, 2011), # 2; S. Kripke, *Naming and Necessity*, op. cit., p. 36; B. Leftow, "Swinburne on Divine Necessity," op. cit., pp. 148 and 155; A. J. Freddoso, "The Necessity of Nature," op. cit., p. 225.

[225] See, e.g., E. Tugendhat and U. Wolf, *Logisch-semantische Propädeutik*, op. cit., ch. 14.2; J. Štěpán, *Logika možných světů II* (in Czech), Olomouc, Vydavatelství Univerzity Palackého v Olomouci 1995, p. 20; P. Dvořák, "The Logic and Semantics of Modal Propositions in Juan Caramuel," *Acta Comeniana* 19 (2005), p. 108; P. T. Geach, *Mental Acts*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul 1957, p. 15; D. J. Hill, *Divinity and Maximal Greatness*, op. cit., p. 128; B. Leftow, "Swinburne on Divine Necessity," op. cit., p. 159; Raymond Geuss (*1946), *Outside Ethics*, Princeton, Princeton University Press 2005, p. 39; John Duns Scotus, *A Treatise on God as First Principle* (http://www.ewtn.com/library/THEOLOGY/GODASFIR.HTM; accessed October 25, 2011), # 3.6 (cf. L. Novák, *„Scire Deum esse"*, op. cit., chs. 8.2.4 and 8.2.5); P. van Inwagen, *God, Knowledge & Mystery: Essays in Philosophical Theology*, Ithaca and London, Cornell University Press 1995, p. 219; P. van Inwagen, *The Possibility of Resurrection and Other Essays in Christian Apologetics*, op. cit., p. 13; W. F. Vallicella, "From Facts to God: An Onto-Cosmological Argument," *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 48, No. 3 (2000), p. 159; G. W. Leibniz, *Die Philosophischen Schriften*, Vol. IV, C. I. Gerhardt (ed.), Hildesheim, Olms 1961, p. 425 (cf. M. R. Antognazza, *Leibniz on the Trinity and the Incarnation*, op. cit., pp. xvi, 8, 154 and nt. 42 on p. 176).

vice versa, it follows that everything entailed by anything analytically true is also analytically true.

But more importantly for us, it's also a commonly held principle that: if some proposition entails some logically impossible proposition, then the entailing proposition is logically impossible, too. Otherwise the entailing proposition would not entail anything impossible. In other words, if some proposition entails some proposition which entails a self-contradiction, then, by the transitivity of entailment, the first proposition entails a self-contradiction. Hence, by the definition of logical impossibility, the first proposition is logically impossible.

Once more, assuming that everything logically impossible is incoherent, and *vice versa*, it follows that anything entailing an incoherent proposition is incoherent. Swinburne notes in this context:

> "It certainly looks as if one could prove a given statement incoherent by proving that it entails a contradiction."[226]

As the American medievalist, metaphysician, and philosopher of religion Brian Leftow (*1956) remarks:

> "Swinburne holds that … [w]hat entails nonsense is nonsense itself." [227]

Because everything logically impossible is analytically false, and *vice versa*, it follows from the principle that any proposition entailing a logically impossible proposition is analytically false that: any proposition entailing an analytically false proposition is analytically false. The same follows also from Swinburne's principle that everything entailing something incoherent is incoherent, in conjunction with his principle that everything incoherent is analytically false, and *vice versa*.

From the principle that any proposition entailing an analytically false proposition is analytically false it follows that: if some not analytically false proposition entails another proposition, then the entailed proposition isn't analytically false either. For if it was, then, by the said principle, the first proposition would be analytically false. This is the third argument for the principle that if some not analytically false proposition entails some other proposition, then the entailed proposition is not analytically false either.

Now, it is plausible not only that it is evident, but also that it *can* be *p-evident* – whether immediately or from some of the three arguments just given above – that every proposition entailed by some not analytically false proposition is not analytically false. I expect R. Swinburne, T. McGrew and many other philosophers would agree. It follows that if a proposition can be p-evidently not analytically false, then any proposition which is p-evidently entailed by it can be p-evidently not analytically false. And this, by transposition, implies the premise (4*). More details on the logic of this line of thought are included in the symbolic reconstruction of argument II.

At this place, I insert the already familiar claim that:

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[226] R. Swinburne, *The Coherence of Theism*, op. cit., p. 38.
[227] B. Leftow, "Swinburne on Divine Necessity," op. cit., p. 155.

9. Christianity p-evidently entails the Trinity doctrine.
Premise.

It follows:

3*. Christianity cannot be p-evidently not analytically false.
From (3), (4*) and (9), by substitution and modus ponens.

Now two obvious, but minor steps. First comes the already known claim that:

4. If some proposition can be p-evident, then the proposition can be p-evidently not analytically false.
Premise.

Here comes a minor result that:

5*. Christianity cannot be p-evident.
From (4) and (3*), by substitution and modus tollens.

We continue with the known principle:

6. If some proposition cannot be p-evidently not analytically false, then the proposition cannot have p-evidently non-minimal logical probability.
Premise.

And we finish argument II by deriving the old news that:

10. Christianity cannot have p-evidently non-minimal logical probability.
From (3) and (6), by substitution and modus ponens.*

Argument II may be summed up concisely, too. If Christianity can have p-evidently non-minimal logical probability (*simpliciter*), then Christianity can be p-evidently not analytically false. For it can be p-evident that Christianity has non-minimal logical probability only if it is not analytically false. If Christianity can be p-evidently not analytically false, then the Trinity doctrine can be p-evidently not analytically false, too. For it can be p-evident that Christianity is not analytically false only if the Trinity doctrine is not analytically false. If the Trinity doctrine can be p-evidently not analytically false, then the doctrine can be p-evidently logically possible. For it can be p-evident that the doctrine is not analytically false only if the doctrine is logically possible. But: the Trinity doctrine cannot be p-evidently logically possible and/or it cannot be p-evidently not analytically false. Hence, by multiple application of modus tollens, Christianity cannot have p-evidently non-minimal logical probability (*simpliciter*).

This completes my presentation of arguments I and II in – more or less plain – English. The next section presents them in a symbolic form. This should facilitate their appreciation, at least for those to whom abbreviated notations have proved useful in assessment of arguments.

Others may skip the symbolization without much loss in understanding and advance directly to part IV, which defends the claims WMST and WMST*, which are salient both in argument I and II.

Finally, if you wonder why neither of arguments I and II interact with the metaphysics of the Trinity doctrine, I reply that it is because they are just applications of what seem to me general epistemic principles. It is common in the philosophy of religion to propose an argument which does not depend upon any substantial features of the discussed worldview but rather on some fairly abstract and detached considerations.[228] Virtually the same arguments as mine might be offered with the Incarnation doctrine (i.e., Jesus of Nazareth was both a human and God) in place of the Trinity doctrine. More generally, a virtually identical argument might be amended for any view which p-evidently entails a proposition which can't be p-evidently logically (or analytically) possible. Some would be willing, e.g., to argue in our manner that no world view including the claim that the universe is, in reality, just one being (substance) can be p-evidently true or have p-evidently non-minimal logical probability. If one thinks that theism is logically necessary (or analytically true), he can similarly point out that no view declaredly denying the existence of God can be evidently true or have evidently non-minimal logical probability. This dissertation is focused on the Trinity doctrine. If somebody wishes to apply my argument to other doctrines, Christian or not, he is free to try. In any case, those who wish to hear something about the specifics of Trinitarian metaphysics and epistemology and about their connection to arguments I and II should be satisfied by the part IV, defending WMST and WMST*.

III.4. Arguments I and II in a symbolic shape

This reconstruction of arguments I and II exploits mainly some basic sentential logic.[229]

Let each of the following nine notions be a proposition forming operator, operating on propositions, and abbreviated as stated on the right.[230]

It is logically possible that …	◊ …
Analytically, …	■ …
It is coherent that …	<> …
It is psychologically possible that …	⟐ …
It is p-evident that …	E(…)

[228] Cf. P. van Inwagen, *The Problem of Evil*, op. cit., pp. 53-55; G. Oppy, "Über die Aussichten erfolgreicher Beweise für Theismus oder Atheismus," op. cit., p. 624.

[229] I owe the idea to symbolize my arguments – and also several specific suggestions on how to symbolize the first one of them – to D. D. Novotný. The first symbolization benefited also from discussions of its versions with Miroslav Hanke, Dan Dolson, and Jan Štěpán. All the prospective slips are my own, of course.

[230] For a kindred use of non-logical operators in epistemology, see J. L. Mackie, "Self-Refutation – A Formal Analysis," *The Philosophical Quarterly* 14, No. 56 (1964), pp. 193-203; and T. McGrew, *The Foundations of Knowledge*, op. cit., Appendix I.

With non-minimal logical probability *simpliciter*, … $P_!(\ldots)>0$
With some logical probability on the given information, … $P(\ldots)=x$
With minimal logical probability on the given information, … $P(\ldots)=0$
That … has logical probability greater than or equal to the logical probability that …, on the given information. $P(\ldots)\geq P(\ldots)$

Let Christianity and the Trinity doctrine be abbreviated as *C* and *T*, respectively. Let *p*, *q* and *r* be schema placeholders[231] or dummy variables[232] for propositions. Finally, let → be the sign for material implication, ↔ for material equivalence, ~ for negation, & for conjunction, ∨ for disjunction, ⇒ for entailment, and ∃ the existential quantifier.

III.4A. Argument I

1. The Trinity doctrine cannot be p-evidently logically possible. (WMST)

$\sim\diamond E(\Diamond T)$ Premise.

2. If some proposition cannot be p-evidently logically possible, then the proposition cannot be p-evidently not analytically false.

$\sim\diamond E(\Diamond p) \rightarrow \sim\diamond E(\sim\blacksquare\sim p)$ Lemma.

Comment on (2). It can be p-evident that every not analytically false proposition is logically possible. So, if some proposition can be p-evidently not analytically false, then the proposition can be p-evidently logically possible. Which entails (2). A reconstruction of this argument follows.

2.1. It can be p-evident that every not analytically false proposition is logically possible.

$\diamond E(\sim\blacksquare\sim p \rightarrow \Diamond p)$ Premise.

Comment on (2.1). By means of the following two arguments, it can be p-evident that:

2.1*. Every not analytically false proposition is logically possible.
$\sim\blacksquare\sim p \rightarrow \Diamond p$

[231] Cf. J. Corcoran, "Schema," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall 2010 Edition)*, E. N. Zalta (ed.), http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2010/entries/schema (accessed October 26, 2011).
[232] Cf. R. Swinburne, *Epistemic Justification*, op. cit., pp. 62-67, 102-107; *An Introduction to Confirmation Theory*, op. cit., chs. I-III .

My argument for (2.1)*

A. $\blacksquare p \leftrightarrow \sim\Diamond\sim p$ Premise.

Comment on (A). If a proposition *p* is true solely in virtue of the contents of concepts in *p*, then it always holds that solely in virtue of the nature of ~*p* and of a self-contradictory proposition *q*, it is true that ~(~*p*&~*q*). If a proposition *p* is such that solely in virtue of the nature of ~*p* and of a self-contradictory proposition *q* it is true that ~(~*p*&~*q*), then *p* is true solely in virtue of the contents of concepts in *p*. This implies (2.1.1).

B. $\blacksquare\sim p \leftrightarrow \sim\Diamond\sim\sim p$	From (A), by substitution of *p* for ~*p*.
C. $\blacksquare\sim p \leftrightarrow \sim\Diamond p$	From (B), by double negation.
D. $\blacksquare\sim p \rightarrow \sim\Diamond p$	From (C), by the definition of material implication.
E. $\sim\Diamond p \rightarrow \blacksquare\sim p$	From (C), by the definition of material implication.
F. $\sim\sim\Diamond p \rightarrow \sim\blacksquare\sim p$	From (D), by transposition.
G. $\Diamond p \rightarrow \sim\blacksquare\sim p$	From (F), by double negation.
H. $\sim\blacksquare\sim p \rightarrow \sim\sim\Diamond p$	From (E), by transposition.

(2.1*) follows from (H), by double negation.

Moreover,

I. $\sim\blacksquare\sim p \leftrightarrow \Diamond p$	From (2.1*) and (G), by the definition of material equivalence.

A modification of Swinburne's argument for (2.1.1) and (2.1*)*

A*. $\sim\Diamond\sim p \leftrightarrow \sim\langle\rangle\sim p$ Premise.

Comment on (A*). As said, according to Swinburne, if a proposition is logically impossible, then, by the definition of logical impossibility, the proposition always entails a self-contradiction, and so, by the definition of incoherence, the proposition is always incoherent. Conversely, if a proposition is incoherent, then, by the definitions of incoherence and logical impossibility, the proposition is always logically impossible. Thus, if a proposition *p* is such that the negation of *p* is logically impossible, then the negation of *p* is always incoherent. And also conversely, if a proposition *p* is such that the negation of *p* is incoherent, then the negation of *p* is always logically impossible. Which implies (A*).

B*. $\sim\langle\rangle\sim p \leftrightarrow \blacksquare p$ Premise.

Comment on (B*). If a proposition *p* is such that the negation of *p* is incoherent, then, by the definition of incoherence and of analytic truth, *p* is always analytically true. Conversely, if a proposition *p* is analytically true, then, by definition, the negation of *p*

always entails a self-contradiction, and so, by the definition of incoherence, the negation of *p* is always incoherent. Which implies (B*).

(A) follows from (A*) and (B*), by extensional transitivity.

Then the modification of Swinburne's argument for (2.1*) continues as shown in the sequence (A)–(I).

2.2. If it can be p-evident that every not analytically false proposition is logically possible, then if some proposition can be p-evidently not analytically false, it can be p-evidently logically possible.

$\diamond E(\sim\blacksquare\sim p \rightarrow \Diamond p) \rightarrow (\diamond E(\sim\blacksquare\sim p) \rightarrow \diamond E(\Diamond p))$ Premise.

Comment on (2.2). This premise is established by the ease of inferring by substitution (or, universal instantiation) and its independence on religious experience.

2.3. If some proposition can be p-evidently not analytically false, then the proposition can be p-evidently logically possible.

$\diamond E(\sim\blacksquare\sim p) \rightarrow \diamond E(\Diamond p)$ From (2.1) and (2.2), by modus ponens.

(2) follows from (2.3), by transposition.

3. The Trinity doctrine cannot be p-evidently not analytically false. (WMST*)

$\sim\diamond E(\sim\blacksquare\sim T)$ From (1) and (2), by substitution and modus ponens. May be a premise, too.

4. If some proposition can be p-evident, then the proposition can be p-evidently not analytically false.

$\diamond E(p) \rightarrow \diamond E(\sim\blacksquare\sim p)$ Premise.

Comment on (4). When a proposition is evident, it is, by the same token, evidently true. Similarly, when a proposition is p-evident, it is, by the same token, p-evidently true. Further, it is an evident, and also p-evident, rule that what is true is not false. So, if some proposition *can* be p-evident, then it also can be p-evidently not false. And if the proposition can be p-evidently not false, then it can also be p-evidently not analytically false. Which implies (4).

5. The Trinity doctrine cannot be p-evident.

$\sim\diamond E(T)$ From (3) and (4), by substitution and modus tollens.

6. If some proposition cannot be p-evidently not analytically false, then the proposition cannot p-evidently have non-minimal logical probability.

$\sim\diamond E(\sim\blacksquare\sim p) \rightarrow \sim\diamond E(P_!(p)>0)$ Lemma.

Comment on (6). It can be p-evident that every analytically false proposition has minimal logical probability on the given information, whatever this information is – if the proposition has any logical probability on the information at all. So, it can be p-evident that every analytically false proposition has minimal logical probability *simpliciter* – if it has any logical probability *simpliciter* at all. So, if some proposition can have p-evidently non-minimal logical probability, then it can be p-evident that the proposition is not analytically false. Which implies (6). Here's a reconstruction of this argument.

6.1. It can be p-evident that every analytically false proposition has minimal logical probability on any given information – if it has any logical probability on the information at all.

$\diamond E((\blacksquare\sim p \,\&\, P(p)=x) \rightarrow P(p)=0)$ Premise.

Comment on (6.1). The general claim that $(\blacksquare\sim p \,\&\, P(p)=x) \rightarrow P(p)=0$ can be p-evident by the following consideration. For any proposition p, q, if (i) there is some logical probability of p on q and (ii) analytically, $\sim p$, then (iii) analytically, $q \rightarrow \sim p$; that is, analytically, $\sim(q\&p)$ – by (ii). Hence, (iv) q entails $\sim p$ – by (iii); and (v) the logical probability of p on q is minimal – by (i) and (iv). For if solely in virtue of the concepts in p and q, $q \rightarrow \sim p$, then, by the definition of entailment, q entails $\sim p$. So, solely in virtue of the concepts, the truth of q guarantees $\sim p$; or, $\sim p$ is guaranteed on q. Thus, logical probability, the degrees (values) of which are determined solely in virtue of the concepts in the involved propositions, is in such case minimal.

6.2. If: it can be p-evident that every analytically false proposition has minimal logical probability on the given information – if it has any logical probability on the information at all; then: it can be p-evident that every proposition with non-minimal logical probability on the given information is not analytically false.

$(\diamond E((\blacksquare\sim p \,\&\, P(p)=x) \rightarrow P(p)=0)) \rightarrow (\diamond E(P(p)>0 \rightarrow \sim\blacksquare\sim p))$ Premise.

Comment on (6.2). I propose two formally different, but virtually identical ways by means of which it can be p-evident that $P(p)>0 \rightarrow \sim\blacksquare\sim p$. This psychological possibility then establishes the material implication of (6.2). Firstly, assume as p-evident that $(\blacksquare\sim p \,\&\, P(p)=x) \rightarrow P(p)=0$ (see the comment on 6.1). Assume also as p-evident that $P(p)>0 \rightarrow \sim(P(p)=0 \,\&\, P(p)=x)$; which seems p-evident by the involved concepts. So, by conditional proof from the assumption that for an arbitrary proposition P, $P(P)>0$, we may p-evidently derive that $P(p)>0 \rightarrow \sim\blacksquare\sim p$. Or, secondly, we may reason p-evidently by means a *reductio* that for an arbitrary P, $P(p)>0 \,\&\, \blacksquare\sim p$, and derive the same conclusion. Here is the *reductio*.

A. $P(p)>0 \rightarrow \sim P(p)=0 \ \& \ P(p)=x$	Premise; by the involved concepts.
B. $P(p)>0 \rightarrow \sim P(p)=0$	From (A), by simplification of implication.
C. $P(p)>0 \rightarrow P(p)=x$	From (A), by simplification of implication.
D. $(\blacksquare\sim p \ \& \ P(p)=x) \rightarrow P(p)=0$	Premise; by the involved concepts. See (6.1).
E. $\sim P(p)=0 \rightarrow \sim(\blacksquare\sim p \ \& \ P(p)=x)$	From (D), by transposition.
F. $P(p)>0 \rightarrow \sim(\blacksquare\sim p \ \& \ P(p)=x)$	From (B) and (E), by hypothetical syllogism.
G. $\exists p(P(p)>0 \ \& \ \blacksquare\sim p)$	Assumption for conditional proof.
H. $P(P)>0 \ \& \ \blacksquare\sim P$	From (G), by existential instantiation.
I. $P(P)>0$	From (H), by simplification of conjunction.
J. $P(P)>0 \rightarrow \sim(\blacksquare\sim P \ \& \ P(P)=x)$	From (I) and (F), by substitution.
K. $\sim(\blacksquare\sim P \ \& \ P(P)=x)$	From (I) and (J), by modus ponens.
L. $\sim\blacksquare\sim P \vee \sim P(P)=x$	From (K), by equivalence of negated conjunction with disjunction of its negated conjuncts.
M. $P(P)>0 \rightarrow P(P)=x$	From (I) and (C), by substitution.
N. $P(P)=x$	From (I) and (M), by modus ponens.
O. $\sim\sim P(P)=x$	From (N), by double negation.
P. $\sim\blacksquare\sim P$	From (L) and (O), by disjunctive syllogism.
Q. $\blacksquare\sim P$	From (H), by simplification of conjunction.
R. $\exists p(P(p)>0 \ \& \ \blacksquare\sim p) \rightarrow (\sim\blacksquare\sim P \ \& \ \blacksquare\sim P)$	Conditional proof from (G)–(Q).
S. $\sim(\sim\blacksquare\sim P \ \& \ \blacksquare\sim P)$	Premise; by the rule of non-contradiction.
T. $\sim\exists p(P(p)>0 \ \& \ \blacksquare\sim p)$	From (R) and (S), by modus tollens.
U. $P(p)>0 \rightarrow \sim\blacksquare\sim p$	From (T), by the definition of $\exists$.

This shows that $\diamond E(P(p)>0 \rightarrow \sim\blacksquare\sim p)$; which is the consequent of the material implication (6.2). So, by the definition of material implication, this line of thought also establishes (6.2).

Interestingly, it also follows:

V. $((\blacksquare\sim p \ \& \ P(p)=x) \rightarrow P(p)=0) \rightarrow (P(p)>0 \rightarrow \sim\blacksquare\sim p)$	From (D)–(U), by conditional proof.

6.3. It can be p-evident that every proposition with non-minimal logical probability on the given information is not analytically false.

$\diamond E(P(p)>0 \rightarrow \sim\blacksquare\sim p)$	From (6.1) and (6.2), by modus ponens.

6.4. If it can be p-evident that every proposition with non-minimal logical probability on the given information is not analytically false, then if some proposition can have p-evidently non-minimal logical probability on the given information, it can be p-evident that it is not analytically false.

$(\diamond E(P(p)>0 \rightarrow \sim\blacksquare\sim p)) \rightarrow (\diamond E(P(p)>0) \rightarrow \diamond E(\sim\blacksquare\sim p))$	Premise.

Comment on (6.4). As the premise (2.2), the premise (6.4) is established by the ease of inferring by substitution (universal instantiation) and its independence on religious experience.

6.5. If some proposition can have p-evidently non-minimal logical probability on the given information, it can be p-evident that the proposition is not analytically false.

$(\diamond E(P(p)>0) \rightarrow \diamond E(\sim\blacksquare\sim p)$ From (6.3) and (6.4) by modus ponens.

6.6. If some proposition cannot be p-evidently not analytically false, then the proposition cannot have p-evidently non-minimal logical probability on the given information.

$\sim\diamond E(\sim\blacksquare\sim p) \rightarrow \sim\diamond E(P(p)>0)$ From (6.5), by transposition.

(6) follows from (6.6) because logical probability *simpliciter* – abbreviated here as $P_!(\ldots)$ – is just a kind of logical probability on whatever information, abbreviated here as $P(\ldots)$.

7. The Trinity doctrine cannot have p-evidently non-minimal logical probability.

$\sim\diamond E(P_!(T)>0)$ From (3) and (6), by substitution and modus ponens.

8. If some proposition cannot have p-evidently non-minimal logical probability, then any proposition p-evidently entailing the former proposition cannot have p-evidently non-minimal logical probability.

$(\sim\diamond E(P_!(p)>0) \,\&\, E(q\Rightarrow p)) \rightarrow \sim\diamond E(P_!(q)>0))$ Lemma.

Comment on (8). It can be p-evident that on every given information, every proposition entailing some other proposition has logical probability equal to or lower than the logical probability of the entailed proposition – if the latter has any logical probability on the information at all. So, if some proposition can have p-evidently non-minimal logical probability *simpliciter*, then any proposition p-evidently entailed by it can have p-evidently non-minimal logical probability *simpliciter*. Which implies (8). I reconstruct this in the following way.

8.1. It can be p-evident that on any given information, every proposition entailing some other proposition has logical probability equal to or lower than the logical probability of the entailed proposition – if the latter has any logical probability on the information at all.

$\diamond E((P(p)=x \,\&\, q\Rightarrow p) \rightarrow P(p)\geq P(q))$ Premise.

Comment on (8.1). The general claim that $(P(p)=x \,\&\, q\Rightarrow p) \rightarrow P(p)\geq P(q)$ can be p-evident by the following consideration. For any proposition p, q, r, if (i) there are some logical probabilities of both p on r and of q on r, and (ii) q entails p, then (iii) analytically, $\sim(q\&\sim p)$ – by (ii); and (iv) the logical probability of p on r is greater than or equal to the logical probability of q on r – by (i) and (iii). For if q entails p, then, by the definition of entailment, solely in virtue of the concepts in p and q, $\sim(q\&\sim p)$. So, solely in virtue of the concepts, q guarantees p; or, p is guaranteed on q. So, logical probability, the degrees (values) of which are determined solely in virtue of the

concepts in the involved propositions, is in the case of p given q maximal. Hence, to the extent r supports q, r supports p. In addition to this support of p, r may support p by way of $\sim q$. Thus, the logical probability of p on r is greater than or equal to the probability of q on r.

8.2. If: it can be p-evident that on any given information, every proposition entailing some other proposition has logical probability equal to or lower than the logical probability of the entailed proposition – if the latter has any logical probability on the information at all; then: it can be p-evident that on any given information, every proposition entailed by some other proposition with non-minimal logical probability has non minimal logical probability.

$\diamond E((P(p)=x \,\&\, q \Rightarrow p) \rightarrow P(p) \geq P(q)) \rightarrow \diamond E((P(q)>0 \,\&\, q \Rightarrow p) \rightarrow P(p)>0))$

Premise.

Comment on (8.2). Clearly, this conditional premise holds by the involved concepts.

8.3. It can be p-evident that on any given information, every proposition entailed by some other proposition with non-minimal logical probability has non minimal logical probability.

$\diamond E((P(q)>0 \,\&\, q \Rightarrow p) \rightarrow P(p)>0))$ From (8.1) and (8.2), by modus ponens.

8.4. If: it can be p-evident that on any given information, every proposition entailed by some other proposition with non-minimal logical probability has non-minimal logical probability; then: if some proposition can have p-evidently non-minimal logical probability on some information and p-evidently entails some other proposition, then the latter proposition can have p-evidently non-minimal logical probability on that information.

$\diamond E((P(q)>0 \,\&\, q \Rightarrow p) \rightarrow P(p)>0)) \rightarrow ((\diamond E(P(q)>0 \,\&\, E(q \Rightarrow p)) \rightarrow \diamond E(P(p)>0))$

Premise.

Comment on (8.4). This premise holds due to the ease of inferring by substitution (universal instantiation) and its independence on religious experience.

8.5. If some proposition can have p-evidently non-minimal logical probability on some information and p-evidently entails some other proposition, then the latter proposition can have p-evidently non-minimal logical probability on that information.

$(\diamond E(P(q)>0 \,\&\, E(q \Rightarrow p)) \rightarrow \diamond E(P(p)>0)$ From (8.3) and (8.4), by modus ponens.

8.6. If some proposition cannot have p-evidently non-minimal logical probability on some information, then it is not true that: some other proposition p-evidently entails the former proposition and can have p-evidently non-minimal logical probability on that information.

$\sim{\diamond}E(P(p)>0) \rightarrow \sim({\diamond}E(P(q)>0 \,\&\, E(q \Rightarrow p))$

From (8.5), by transposition.

8.7. If some proposition cannot have p-evidently non-minimal logical probability on some information and some other proposition p-evidently entails it, then it is not true that: the latter proposition p-evidently entails the former proposition and can have p-evidently non-minimal logical probability on that information.

$(\sim{\diamond}E(P(p)>0) \,\&\, E(q \Rightarrow p)) \rightarrow \sim({\diamond}E(P(q)>0 \,\&\, E(q \Rightarrow p))$

From (8.6), by the monotony of material implication:
$(p \rightarrow q) \rightarrow ((p \& r) \rightarrow q)$.

8.8. If some proposition cannot have p-evidently non-minimal logical probability on some information, then any proposition p-evidently entailing the former proposition cannot have p-evidently non-minimal logical probability on that information.

$(\sim{\diamond}E(P(p)>0) \,\&\, E(q \Rightarrow p)) \rightarrow \sim{\diamond}E(P(q)>0))$

From (8.7), by the rule:
$((p \& q) \rightarrow \sim(r \& q)) \rightarrow ((p \& q) \rightarrow \sim r)$.

(8) follows from (8.8) because logical probability *simpliciter* – abbreviated here as $P_!(\ldots)$ – is just a kind of logical probability on whatever information, abbreviated here as $P(\ldots)$.

9. Christianity p-evidently entails the Trinity doctrine.

$E(C \Rightarrow T)$ Premise.

Comment on (9). This premise is true due the ease of seeing it, independently on religious experience, as evidently true by the definitions of Christianity and of the Trinity doctrine.

10. Christianity cannot have p-evidently non-minimal logical probability.

$\sim{\diamond}E(P_!(C)>0)$ From (7), (8) and (9), by substitution, conjunction rule and modus ponens.

III.4B. Argument II

This argument shares with argument I the steps (1)–(3). Then it continues in the following manner.

4*. If some proposition p-evidently entailed by another proposition cannot be p-evidently not-analytically false, then the latter proposition cannot be p-evidently not-analytically-false.

$(\sim\diamond E(\sim\blacksquare\sim p)\ \&\ E(q \Rightarrow p)) \rightarrow \sim\diamond E(\sim\blacksquare\sim q)$ Lemma.

Comment on (4*). It can be p-evident that every proposition entailed by some not analytically false proposition is not analytically false. For it can be p-evident that every proposition entailed by some logically possible proposition is logically possible, and that every not analytically false proposition is logically possible. (Or for it can be p-evident that every proposition entailing some analytically false proposition is analytically false.) So, if some proposition can be p-evidently not analytically false, then any proposition which is p-evidently entailed by it can be p-evidently not analytically false. This, by transposition, implies (4*). Here's a reconstruction of this argument.

4*.1. It can be p-evident that every proposition entailed by some not analytically false proposition is not analytically false.

$\diamond E(\sim\blacksquare\sim q\ \&\ (q \Rightarrow p)) \rightarrow \sim\blacksquare\sim p)$ Premise.

Comment on (4*.1). By means of the following three arguments, it can be p-evident that:

4*.1*. Every proposition entailed by some not analytically false proposition is not analytically false.
$(\sim\blacksquare\sim q\ \&\ (q \Rightarrow p)) \rightarrow \sim\blacksquare\sim p$

My first argument for (4.1*)*

A. $(\Diamond q\ \&\ (q \Rightarrow p)) \rightarrow \Diamond p$ Premise.

Comment on (A). If some proposition does not entail a self-contradiction, but entails some other proposition, then the latter proposition does not entail a self-contradiction either. For if the latter proposition entailed a self-contradiction, then, by the transitivity of entailment, the first proposition would entail a self-contradiction, and so, by the definition of logical possibility, would not be logically possible. Thus, each proposition entailed by a logically possible proposition is logically possible.

2.1*.I. $\sim\blacksquare\sim p \leftrightarrow \Diamond p$ Lemma; proved above in argument I.

(4*.1*) follows from (A) and (2.1*.I), by coextensional substitution.

A modification of Swinburne's argument for (4.1*)*

A*. $(\Diamond q \,\&\, (q \Rightarrow p)) \rightarrow \Diamond p$ Premise.

Comment on (A*). If some proposition is coherent, then any proposition entailed by it is logically possible. If the entailed proposition wasn't coherent, then the entailing proposition would be, by the definitions of logical impossibility and coherence, incoherent.

B*. $\sim\Box\sim p \leftrightarrow \Diamond p$ Lemma.

Comment on (B*). This follows from (2.1*.B*), by way of my argument for (2.1*), with "$\Diamond$" instead of "$\Diamond$".

(4*.1*) follows from (A*) and (B*), by coextensional substitution.

My second argument for (4.1*)*

A**. $\exists p \exists q((\sim\Box\sim q \,\&\, (q \Rightarrow p)) \,\&\, \sim\sim\Box\sim p)$ Assumption for conditional proof (*reductio*).

B**. $\sim\Box\sim Q \,\&\, (Q \Rightarrow P) \,\&\, \sim\sim\Box\sim P$ From (A**), by existential instantiation.

C**. $\sim\Box\sim Q \,\&\, (Q \Rightarrow P) \,\&\, \Box\sim P$ From (B**), by double negation.

D**. $(Q \Rightarrow P) \,\&\, \Box\sim P$ From (C**), by simplification of conjunction.

E**. $((q \Rightarrow p) \,\&\, \Box\sim p) \rightarrow \Box\sim q$ Lemma.

F**. $\Box\sim Q$ From (D**) and (E**), by substitution and modus ponens.

G**. $\sim\Box\sim Q$ From (C**), by simplification of conjunction.

H**. $\exists p \exists q(\sim\Box\sim q \,\&\, (q \Rightarrow p)) \,\&\, \sim\sim\Box\sim p) \rightarrow (\Box\sim Q \,\&\, \sim\Box\sim Q)$ From (A**)–(G**), by conditional proof.

I**. $\sim(\Box\sim Q \,\&\, \sim\Box\sim Q)$ Premise; by the rule of non-contradiction.

J**. $\sim(\exists p \exists q((\sim\Box\sim q \,\&\, (q \Rightarrow p)) \,\&\, \sim\sim\Box\sim p))$ From (I**) and (J**), by modus tollens.

(4*.1*) follows from (J**), by the definition of $\exists$.

*An argument for (E**)*

A***. $(q \Rightarrow p) \,\&\, \sim\Diamond p) \rightarrow \sim\Diamond q$ Premise.

Comment on (A***). If some proposition entails some proposition which entails a self-contradiction, then, by the transitivity of entailment, the first proposition entails a self-contradiction. So, by the definition of logical impossibility, the first proposition is logically impossible.

B***. $\sim\Diamond p \leftrightarrow \blacksquare\sim p$ Lemma.

Comment on (B***). This follows from (2.1*.I), by transposition and double negation.

(E**) follows from (A***) and (B***), by coextensional substitution.

4*.2. If: it can be p-evident that every proposition entailed by some not analytically false proposition is not analytically false; then every proposition p-evidently entailed by a proposition which can be p-evidently not analytically false can be p-evidently not analytically false.

$\diamond\!\!\!\diamond E(\sim\blacksquare\sim q \,\&\, (q \Rightarrow p)) \rightarrow \sim\blacksquare\sim p) \rightarrow ((\diamond\!\!\!\diamond E(\sim\blacksquare\sim q) \,\&\, E(q \Rightarrow p)) \rightarrow \diamond\!\!\!\diamond E(\sim\blacksquare\sim p))$

Premise.

Comment on (4*.2). This premise holds due to the ease of inferring by substitution (universal instantiation) and its independence on religious experience.

4*.3. Every proposition p-evidently entailed by a proposition which can be p-evidently not analytically false can be p-evidently not analytically false

$(\diamond\!\!\!\diamond E(\sim\blacksquare\sim q) \,\&\, E(q \Rightarrow p)) \rightarrow \diamond\!\!\!\diamond E(\sim\blacksquare\sim p)$ From (4*.1) and (4*.2), by modus ponens.

4*.4. If some proposition cannot be p-evidently not analytically false, then it is not true that: some other proposition entails it p-evidently and can be p-evidently not analytically false.

$\sim\diamond\!\!\!\diamond E(\sim\blacksquare\sim p) \rightarrow \sim(\diamond\!\!\!\diamond E(\sim\blacksquare\sim q) \,\&\, E(q \Rightarrow p))$ From (4*.3), by transposition.

4*.5. If some proposition p-evidently entailed by other proposition cannot be p-evidently not analytically false, then it is not true that: the other proposition entails it p-evidently and can be p-evidently not analytically false.

$(\sim\diamond\!\!\!\diamond E(\sim\blacksquare\sim p) \,\&\, E(q \Rightarrow p)) \rightarrow \sim(\diamond\!\!\!\diamond E(\sim\blacksquare\sim q) \,\&\, E(q \Rightarrow p))$

From (4*.4), by the monotonousness of material implication:
$(p \rightarrow q) \rightarrow ((p \& r) \rightarrow q)$.

(4*) follows from (4*.5), by the rule: $((p\&q) \rightarrow \sim(r\&q)) \rightarrow ((p\&q) \rightarrow \sim r)$.

9. Christianity p-evidently entails the Trinity doctrine.

$E(C \Rightarrow T)$ — Premise; see above, argument I.

3*. Christianity cannot be p-evidently not analytically false.

$\sim\Diamond E(\sim\blacksquare\sim C)$ — From (3), (4*) and (9), by substitution, conjunction rule and modus ponens.

4. If some proposition can be p-evident, then the proposition can be p-evidently not analytically false.

$\Diamond E(p) \rightarrow \Diamond E(\sim\blacksquare\sim p)$ — Premise; see above, argument I.

5*. Christianity cannot be p-evident.

$\sim\Diamond E(C)$ — From (4) and (3*), by substitution and modus tollens.

6. If some proposition cannot be p-evidently not analytically false, then the proposition cannot p-evidently have non-minimal logical probability.

$\sim\Diamond E(\sim\blacksquare\sim p) \rightarrow \sim\Diamond E(P_!(p)>0)$ — Lemma; proved above in argument I.

10. Christianity cannot have p-evidently non-minimal logical probability.

$\sim\Diamond E(P_!(C)>0)$ — From (3*) and (6), by substitution and modus tollens.

IV. A Defence of WMST and WMST*

This part includes considerations on behalf of WMST, aka the premise (1), and WMST*, aka the step (3). These two claims figured prominently in both argument I and II. Because the defence of WMST applies as well to WMST*, henceforth I will often drop the mention of the latter claim. But my reasons for WMST may be easily amended as reasons for WMST. My defence of WMST and WMST* will be both negative and positive. That is, I will answer the main objections against WMST (and WMST*) and argue that it is true. Somewhat paradoxically, my defence of WMST shall be positive by way of being negative. More specifically, WMST (WMST*) is plausibly true, it will be contended, for all the main attempts to refute it have an undermining defeater which is neither refuted nor undermined. Even more specifically, it's plausible it cannot be evident independently of religious experience that the Trinity doctrine is logically possible (not analytically false) because it's plausible that no human has achieved an evident knowledge, independently of such experience, that the Trinity doctrine is logically possible (not analytically false). I opt for this way of arguing on behalf of WMST (WMST*) because it is more convincing than other strategies that I've encountered. Because of restrictions of space and time, I will not indulge in contrasting the superiority of my own approach with others. It suffices to say I have no transcendental argument which would make WMST (WMST*) apparent in one concise sweep.

Obviously, my defence of WMST (and WMST*) won't rest upon the claim that the Trinity doctrine *is* logically impossible or analytically false.[233] Moreover, as will be made clear at length in part VI, I won't make the claim that it cannot be epistemically justified or fairly well-argued that the Trinity doctrine is logically possible (and not analytically false). Even more, my defence of WMST (and WMST*) actually does not even include the view that the Trinity doctrine seems to me logically impossible (or analytically false).[234] Whether the doctrine seems

[233] As it happens, I am aware of no good argument for either of these two modal claims. A brief survey of critiques of logical possibility of the Trinity doctrine is D. Tuggy, "Trinity," op. cit., ## 2.2 and 4 and the supplements (ibid.) "Judaic and Islamic Objections" and "Unitarianism." For rebuttals of some of such attempts, see David Brown, *The Divine Trinity*, Chicago and La Salle, Open Court Publishing 1985; and N. L. Geisler, *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*, op. cit., "Trinity."

[234] That the Trinity doctrine appears logically impossible even upon metaphysical reflection and explication, but, in fact, isn't, has been argued recently by the contemporary Scottish philosopher, theologian, and mathematician James Anderson. See his book *Paradox in Christian Theology: An Analysis of Its Presence, Character, and Epistemic Status*, Waynesboro, Paternoster Theological Monographs 2007, pp. 11-59 and 200-205; and his paper "In Defence of Mystery," op. cit., p. 153 and nt. 24. According to Anderson, putting aside its revelation, the Trinity doctrine always remains a "MACRUE" – i.e., a merely apparent contradiction resulting from unarticulated equivocations. In contrast, the Catholic philosopher Edward C. Feser avers a correct metaphysical explication eliminates the appearance of logical impossibility. See his "Trinity and Mystery," February 10, 2010, http://edwardfeser.blogspot.com/2010/02/trinity-and-mystery.html (accessed October 26, 2011). This view is present in the official teaching of the Roman Catholic Church, in *The Decrees of the First Vatican Council* (http://www.piar.hu/councils/ecum20.htm, accessed October 26, 2011), "Dogmatic Constitution on the Catholic Faith" (1870), ch. 4, # 6: "God cannot deny himself, nor can truth ever be in opposition to truth. The appearance of this kind of specious contradiction is chiefly due to the fact that either the dogmas of faith are not understood and explained in accordance with the mind of the church, or unsound views are mistaken for the conclusions of reason." With both the two said contrary positions is compatible the view that the Trinity doctrine, apart from its revelation, appears logically impossible (though not necessarily forever). This is the view of the following Christian authors:

to one logically possible, or logically impossible, or neither, one may still advocate not only that the doctrine is not evidently logically possible, and not p-evidently logically possible, but also that it cannot be evidently logically possible, or at least that it cannot be p-evidently logically possible.

A question naturally arises. Why not argue for the following counterpart of WMST (WMST*): it cannot be p-evident that the Trinity doctrine *is* logically impossible (analytically false)? Accordingly, a corresponding argument for this counterpart would state that it's plausible it cannot be evident independently of religious experience that the Trinity doctrine is logically impossible (analytically false) because it's plausible that no human has achieved an evident knowledge, independently of such experience, that the Trinity doctrine is logically impossible (analytically false). Well, I'd say WMST (WMST*) and its counterpart are compatible. Moreover, also this is more controversial, the premise that all attempts at an evident demonstration of the logical impossibility (analytic falsehood) of the Trinity doctrine also seems true. But to pursue this line of argument in detail is beyond the limits of this dissertation, speaking in terms of its extent and the author's competence. Such an argument would have to address not only attempted disproofs of Trinitarian theism which concede that God exists, but also attempted disproofs of bare theism, especially deductive arguments from the alleged incompatibility or impossibility of divine attributes, and deductive arguments from evil.[235] And this cannot be done here with any satisfactory degree of detail. Moreover, although I've read arguments against God's existence and the existence of the Trinity quite much, I am fairly more familiar with the spectrum of reasons that have been proposed for their existence. So I'll try to stay within the relatively safe, although narrow, boundaries of my chief competence. On the top of this, the apparent failure to show compellingly that the Trinity doctrine is logically impossible has been exploited in the literature as a reason – though, in turn, not necessarily a compelling one

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William of Ockham, *Quodlibeta Septem*, quodl. 2, q. 3, ad 3, St. Bonaventure, N. Y., The Franciscan Institute 1980 (cf. R. A. Cross, *Duns Scotus*, op. cit., nt. 43 on p. 159). F. Suárez, *De Sanctissimo Trinitatis mysterio*, op. cit., lib. 1, cap. 11, n. 10-11; *Disputationes Metaphysicae* (http://homepage.ruhr-uni-bochum.de/Michael.Renemann/suarez; accessed October 27, 2011), disp. 30, sect. 17, n. 13 (cf. T. Marschler, *Die spekulative Trinitätslehre des Francisco Suárez S.J. in ihrem philosophisch-theologischen Kontext*, op. cit., p. 86). Diego Ruiz de Montoya (1562 – 1632), *Commentaria, Ac Disputationes in primam partem sancti Thomae De Trinitate*, disp. 41, sect. 4-5, disp. 43, sect. 2, Lyons, Sumptib. Ludovici Prost 1625. G. W. Leibniz, *Sämtliche Schriften und Briefe*, Series VI, Vol. I, Willy Kabitz (ed.), Darmstadt, Akademie der Wissenschaften 1930, p. 515; Series VI, Vol. IV, Heinrich Schepers et al. (eds.), Berlin, Akademie Verlag 1999, p. 552; *Die Philosophischen Schriften*, Vol. VI, op. cit., p. 67; *Opera omnia*, Vol. V, op. cit., pp. 144-145 (cf. M. R. Antognazza, *Leibniz on the Trinity and the Incarnation*, op. cit., pp. 60-61, 70, 131). Moses Stuart (1780 – 1852), *Letters on the Trinity, and on the Divinity of Christ*, Aberdeen, George King 1834, p. 39. M. J. Scheeben, *The Mysteries of Christianity*, op. cit., pp. 47-48. Germain Grisez (*1929), *The Way of the Lord Jesus Vol. I: Christian Moral Principles* (http://www.twotlj.org/G-1-V-1.html; accessed October 29, 2011), ch. 24, Appendix 1. P. van Inwagen, *God, Knowledge & Mystery*, op. cit., p. 219; P. van Inwagen, *The Possibility of Resurrection and Other Essays in Christian Apologetics*, op. cit., p. 13. J. P. Moreland and W. L. Craig, *Philosophical Foundations for a Christian Worldview*, op. cit., p. 597. D. Tuggy, Internet series *Dealing with Apparent Contradictions* (20 parts), http://trinities.org/blog/?s=Dealing+with+Apparent+Contradictions%3A+Part&searchsubmit=Find (accessed October 27, 2011).

[235] Cf. *The Impossibility of God*, Michael Martin and Ricki Monnier (eds.), Amherst, Prometheus Books 2002; and M. Tooley, "The Problem of Evil," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Spring 2010 Edition)*, E. N. Zalta (ed.), http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2010/entries/evil (accessed October 27, 2011).

– that the doctrine is logically possible (cf. section IV.1B, category 2.2). But, to my knowledge, the apparent failure to show compellingly that the Trinity doctrine is logically possible (not analytically false) hasn't been reflected sufficiently. This fact presents itself to me as yet another occasion to stay focused on the implications of the latter failure. Finally, it is noteworthy that even assuming the counterparts of WMST and WMST*, the counterparts of the result (7) and of the conclusion (10) would not follow straightforwardly. (7) and (10) say, respectively, that the Trinity doctrine cannot have p-evidently non-minimal logical probability, and that Christianity cannot have p-evidently non-minimal logical probability. Their counterparts would be, respectively, to the effect that the Trinity doctrine cannot have p-evidently minimal logical probability, and that Christianity cannot have p-evidently minimal logical probability. Now while both WMST and WMST* imply, as shown in arguments I and II, (7) and (10), I am still not prepared to argue that the counterpart of WMST or the counterpart of WMST* implies the counterpart of (7) or the counterpart of (10). For one thing, I have defended the principle (6) that if some proposition cannot be p-evidently not analytically false, then the proposition cannot have p-evidently non-minimal logical probability. I have done so on the grounds of the (generally accepted) principle that every analytically false proposition has minimal logical probability on any given information – if it has any logical probability on the information at all (cf. the premise (6.1) in section III.4A). The principle (6) then enabled to derive the result (7) and the conclusion (10). But I am not in a position to defend the counterpart principle that if some proposition cannot be p-evidently analytically false, then the proposition cannot have p-evidently minimal logical probability. For it is a dubious principle that every proposition with minimal logical probability is analytically false (cf. nt. 206). So the counterpart of (6) is not a safe ground from which to derive the counterpart of (7) and the counterpart of (10). I am not aware of any other way in which to derive any of these two counterparts. So, the counterparts of WMST and WMST* seem to me less interesting in their probabilistic implications than WMST and WMST* themselves. This is the last explanation of the focus on theses two latter claims. Now I proceed to their promised defence. Its first, and very long, segment (i.e., section IV.1) will argue that nobody has succeeded in acquiring p-evident insight that the Trinity doctrine is logically (analytically) possible. Another, and much shorter, segment (section IV.3) will infer plausibly that, therefore, such knowledge can't be acquired. (The segment in between – i.e., IV.2 – contains interlacing notes related largely to the section IV.1.) The first segment is so long that to conclude plausibly that the Trinity doctrine can't be p-evidently logically (analytically) possible, I need to address plausibly a representative sample of failed attempts at such a modal insight. Let's face this task.

IV.1. A partition

Let's think first of the defence in terms of objections to WMST (and WMST*). How could the Trinity doctrine become evidently logically possible, independently of religious experience, to a human? An attempt to outline possible scenarios in an exhaustive manner usually helps. I will attempt now at such a logical map of claims that the Trinity doctrine *is* p-evidently logically possible to a human. If any of these claims were true, it would plausibly follow that the Trinity

doctrine *can* be p-evidently logically possible (to a human). As the reader already knows, I find all such claims to p-evident logical possibility of the Trinity doctrine unpersuasive. How could the logical possibility of (or the absence of analytical falsehood of) the Trinity doctrine be evident to a human independently of religious experience? I propose to consider the following partition of kinds or ways of obviousness, independent of religious experience, of the logical possibility of the doctrine.

1. The *truth* of the doctrine is p-evident – and from its truth its logical possibility is p-evident, too. 2. Logical possibility of the Trinity doctrine is p-evident, but not from its *truth*. Let's turn to the first option. How could it happen? 1.1. *Not* by testimony. This, in turn, could take place in two ways. 1.1.1. *A priori*, i.e., not from experience. Such knowledge, in turn, could be acquired immediately and self-evidently, by mere comprehension of the concepts in the doctrine, or by a deductive and evidently sound argument solely from premises known *a priori*. 1.1.2. *A posteriori*, i.e., not *a priori*, at least partially from experience. This knowledge may be obtained immediately, or by a deductive and evidently sound argument from some premises known *a posteriori*. There remains the other option of how the truth of the doctrine may be supposed to be p-evident: 1.2. From testimony. No other way to know the truth of the Trinity doctrine p-evidently is possible.

Let's turn, however, to the other kind of obviousness, independent of religious experience, of logical possibility of the Trinity doctrine: that is, 2. logical possibility of the Trinity doctrine being p-evident, but not by means of its actual *truth* being evident. How could such obviousness be attained? Again, 2.1. Not from testimony, or 2.2. From testimony. As before, I divide the former category into the two following ones. 2.1.1. *A priori*, i.e., not from experience. This may happen immediately and self-evidently, by mere apprehension of the concepts in the doctrine, or indirectly, by way of an argument. 2.1.2. *A posteriori*. No other way to know the logical (analytic) possibility of the Trinity doctrine p-evidently, but not from its truth, is possible.

Overall, there is no other available way to know the logical (analytic) possibility of the Trinity doctrine evidently and independently of religious experience.

This partition of kinds of p-evident grasps of the logical (analytic) possibility of the Trinity doctrine is expressed in a simple diagram.

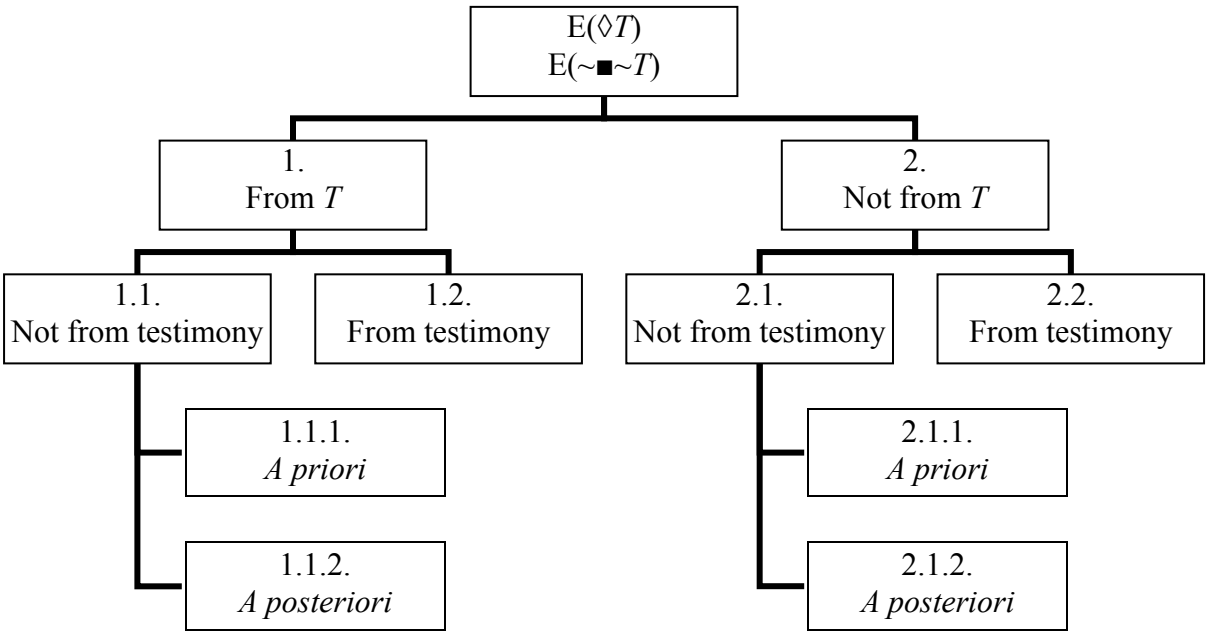

Diagram 1. A partition of the kinds of ways in which it could be p-evident to a human that the Trinity doctrine is logically possible (not analytically false).

No surprise, I will occupy many of the following pages with explaining why I think none of the epistemic scenarios which end the diagram and jointly exhaust it has been accomplished (by a human). These are the epistemic scenarios 1.1.1, 1.1.2, 1.2, 2.1.1, 2.1.2, and 2.2. My plan of elimination shall be carried out by looking over the categories in the partition generally or by looking over the main and so far proposed attempts covered by them. Granted, which argument is the most important one within a single category may be controversial. But under the confines of space and time, both yours and mine, there's no other way than to be selective in our discussion. As I will stress later, addressing only a few candidates, objections or opposing argument which simply seem as those which are the most important is a common procedure. Of course, with a philosophical or theological poll in hand about what appears as the strongest Trinitarian reason of this or that kind, it would be easier to substantiate preferences concerning what to include and what not to include into one's discussion. No such polls are available, though. So, within each category, I will simply choose reasons which appear to me to merit consideration the most. My selection, of course, shall be based on my own reading of the pertinent literature. A detailed justification of this selection would require an extensive treatment of what I read. Which can't be done here. The reader is free to judge for himself whether my selection is a sort of best of. Let's turn to the categories constituting our partition.

IV.1A. Possibility of the doctrine p-evident from its truth?

Consider first the following category.

1.1. Human evident knowledge of the logical (analytic) possibility of the Trinity doctrine, from the truth of the doctrine, not from testimony, and independent of religious experience.

The denial of such evident human knowledge of logical possibility of the Trinity doctrine is fairly classical. This denial is implied in the many writings of esteemed Christian philosophers, apologists, and theologians, by their denial of the knowability of the doctrine by (mere, unaided) human reason (independently of divine revelation and testimony).[236] A more fine-grained look should explain why this attitude is correct.

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[236] See the following works. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, op. cit., I, q. 1, a. 8, co., q. 32, a. 1, II-II, q. 1, a. 5, ad 2; *Quaestiones disputatae de veritate*, op. cit., q. 10, a. 13; *Quaestiones disputatae de potentia Dei*, op. cit., q. 9, a. 5, co; *Summa contra gentiles* (http://dhspriory.org/thomas/ContraGentiles.htm; accessed November 7, 2011), bk. 1, chs. 8-9, bk. 3, ch. 154, n. 8. John Duns Scotus, *Quaestiones in librum tertium sententiarum*, op. cit., dist. 23, q. 1, n. 9, dist. 24, q. 1, n. 20; *Quaestiones quodlibetates*, op. cit., q. 14, n. 3 and 9; see also *Reportata Parisiensia*, d. 1, q. 1, prol., in John Duns Scotus, *Opera omnia*, Vol. XXII, Paris, Louis Vivès 1894. Durandus of Saint-Pourçain, *In Petri Lombardi Sententias Theologicas Commentariorum IIII*, Vol. I, op. cit., q. 1, prologus, and dist. 2, q. 4. William of Ockham, *Scriptum in Librum Primum Sententiarum (Dist. II et III)*, op. cit., dist. 2, q. 3; *Scriptum in Librum Primum Sententiarum (Dist. IV-XVIII)*, op. cit., dist. 5, q. 1, and dist. 7, q. 14. L. de Molina, *Commentaria In primam D. Thomae partem*, Vol. I, op. cit., q. 32, a. 1. F. Suárez, *De Sanctissimo Trinitatis mysterio*, op. cit., prooemium; lib. 1, cap. 2, n. 1-3; lib. 1, cap. 11, n. 1-13; and cap. 12, n. 8-11. G. de Valencia, *Commentariorum Theologicorum*, Vol. III, op. cit.), disp. 2, q. 6, punct. 1. G. Vázquez, *Commentariorum, ac disputationum In primam partem Sancti Thomae*, Vol. II, op. cit., disp. 133 and 135. G. Hurtado, *Tractatus de fide, spe, et charitate*, op. cit., disp. 2, difficultas 10. D. Ruiz de Montoya, *Commentaria, Ac Disputationes in primam partem sancti Thomae De Trinitate*, op. cit., disp. 41-43. Tirso González de Santalla (1624 – 1705), *Manuductio ad conversionem mahumetanorum*, Vol. I, lib. 2, cap. 3, § III, Madrid, sumptibus Salmanticensi Academia Sacrae Theologiae 1687. G. W. Leibniz, *Opera omnia*, Vol. V, op. cit., pp. 142-143 and 147; *Die Philosophischen Schriften*, Vol. VI, op. cit., p. 83. M. Knutzen, *Philosophischer Beweis von der Wahrheit der christlichen Religion*, op. cit., § 40. M. Stuart, *Letters on the Trinity, and on the Divinity of Christ*, op. cit., pp. 39-45. William Poynter (1762 – 1827), *Evidences and Characters of the Christian Religion*, London, Keating and Brown 1827, ch. III. M. J. Scheeben, *The Mysteries of Christianity*, op. cit., ch. II. V. Šanda, *Synopsis theologiae dogmaticae specialis*, Vol. I, op. cit., §§ 62 and 127. J.-H. Nicolas, *Synthèse dogmatique: De la Trinité à la Trinité*, op. cit., Part III, ch. One; N. L. Geisler (*1932), *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*, op. cit., "Trinity"; P. van Inwagen, *God, Knowledge & Mystery*, op. cit., p. 219. Notably, the denial of the accomplishment of the scenario 1.1 is, arguably, also implied by the official doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church. Consider *The Decrees of the First Vatican Council*, op. cit., "Dogmatic Constitution on the Catholic Faith" (ch. 4, ## 3 and 4: "… besides those things to which natural reason can attain, there are proposed for our belief mysteries hidden in God which, unless they are divinely revealed, are incapable of being known. … the divine mysteries, by their very nature, so far surpass the created understanding that, even when a revelation has been given and accepted by faith, they remain covered by the veil of that same faith and wrapped, as it were, in a certain obscurity, as long as in this mortal life we are away from the Lord, for we walk by faith, and not by sight [cf. 2 Corinthians 5: 6-7]." (See also canon 4, # 1, in the same constitution; and M. J. Scheeben, *The Mysteries of Christianity*, op. cit., pp. 26 and 36.) The quoted passage was propounded in opposition both to theological rationalism, according to which humans can know the mysteries without their revelation, and to theological semi-rationalism, according to which humans can know the mysteries without reference to the revelation as such, although only after the revelation provided them with the needed clues. (Cf. Theodoro Granderath /1839 – 1902/, *Constitutiones dogmaticae sacrosancti Oecumenici concilii Vaticani ex ipsis eius actis explicatae atque illustratae*, Freiburg im Briesgau, Herder 1892, pp. 89-91.) Historically, the denial of theological rationalism and semi-

1.1.1. Human evident *a priori* knowledge of the logical (analytic) possibility of the Trinity doctrine, from the truth of the doctrine, not from testimony, independent of religious experience.

I think we may justly put aside any claims to self-evident *a priori* insights into the truth of the Trinity doctrine from mere comprehension of the concepts in the doctrine, and independently of religious experience. In fact, I am not aware of any case when a claim to such an *a priori* immediate insight was made. It seems that p-evident, immediate, and *a priori* insight into the truth of the doctrine has never been seriously announced or defended by anybody. So it hardly merits consideration.[237] It has been commonly assumed, as obvious and without ceremony, that the Trinity doctrine simply isn't evident from its own concepts (i.e., is not *per se nota*, or, in other words, is not evident *ex terminis*).[238] Such is, at least, the consensus of the literature. Indeed, if this consensus was wrong, we would expect that somebody would oppose it in a serious manner. But, apparently, nobody has shown up to do this. I conclude it is exceedingly plausible to maintain that the Trinity doctrine hasn't been *a priori* self-evident to anybody independently of religious experience. What about indirect, yet p-evident knowledge of the truth of the Trinity doctrine, by way of an *a priori* argument?

The most promising effort in this area would seem to attempt at an evident *a priori* deductive demonstration of the existence of just one God, followed by an evident *a priori* demonstration that theism entails the doctrine of the Trinity. To this sort of effort we will confine ourselves. But note first that if the second part of this *a priori* demonstrative Trinitarian project fails, the whole project fails. Because I think the second part does fail, I put aside the first part (comprising especially ontological arguments for theism). As for the second part, for many philosophers and theologians it is no news that it fails, too.[239] As regards deductive *a priori* arguments for the conclusion that if there is God, then he must be triune, one thinks particularly of the work R. Swinburne. It revives the argumentative efforts of three medieval authors: the Scottish (or Irish) theologian and mystic Richard of St. Victor (d. 1173),[240] the English theologian and philosopher Alexander of Hales (c. 1185 – 1245),[241] the Italian theologian,

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rationalism has been an object of an almost unanimous consensus of Catholic theologians. (Cf. L. Ott, *Grundriß der Dogmatik*, op. cit., pp. 11, 91-92; E. C. Feser, "Trinity and Mystery, Part II," February 13, 2010, http://edwardfeser.blogspot.com/2010/02/trinity-and-mystery-part-ii.html; accessed October 28, 2011.) Of course, the Trinity doctrine is the chief one of the mysteries under consideration. (Cf. L. Ott, *Grundriß der Dogmatik*, op. cit., p. 92; V. Šanda, *Synopsis theologiae dogmaticae specialis*, Vol. I, op. cit., § 62, # 3; E. C. Feser, "Trinity and Mystery, Part II," op. cit. I owe most of the references to the First Vatican Council, Ott, and Šanda to L. Novák.)

[237] Similarly wrote about pretensions to view religious beliefs as self-evidently true Józef Maria Bocheński (1902 – 1995), in his book *The Logic of Religion*, New York, New York University Press 1965, p. 128. Cf. Roger Pouivet, "On the Polish Roots of the Analytic Philosophy of Religion," *European Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 3, No. 1 (2011), pp. 16-17.

[238] Cf. John Duns Scotus, *Quaestiones in librum tertium sententiarum*, op. cit., dist. 23, q. 1, n. 7; *Quaestiones quodlibetates*, op. cit., q. 14, n. 3. See also W. J. Abraham, *Crosssing the Threshold of Divine Revelation*, op. cit., p. 48.

[239] Cf. G. W. Leibniz, *Die Philosophischen Schriften*, Vol. VI, op. cit., p. 67; *Opera omnia*, Vol. V, op. cit., p. 147. See also John Duns Scotus, *Lectura* 1, d. 42, n. 19 (http://shell.cas.usf.edu/~thomasw/dunsscotus/Lect1dd42-44.htm; accessed October 28, 2011).

[240] See Richard of St. Victor, *De Trinitate*, lib. 1, cap. 4, and lib. 3, cap. 3-4, 11, 14-15, lib. 5, cap. 16-17, Paris, Vrin 1958.

[241] See Alexander of Hales, *Summa theologica*, Vol. I, n. 304, Rome, ex typographia Collegii s. Bonaventurae 1924.

philosopher and mystic Bonaventure of Bagnoregio (c. 1217 – 1274),[242] who was in Paris a student of Alexander of Hales and a university colleague of Thomas Aquinas. Richard of St. Victor is the seminal author who inspired the other two medieval thinkers. He also had the greatest influence on Swinburne's argument.[243] But, I contend, the Trinitarian project of this tradition has not been wrought into a really compelling shape, including Swinburne's update of the medieval speculation. It is Swinburne's version that we will treat here at some length for it approaches the desideratum of being evident more than other metaphysical arguments for the conclusion that if God exists, then there are three divine persons.

At its start, Swinburne's meditation assumes one person which is God and is perfectly morally good. Let's grant this. This divine person, the argument continues, will certainly do anything for which he has an overriding moral reason. But the divine person has an overriding moral reason to love, the argument goes. For love is a supreme good. Indeed, the divine person has an overriding moral reason to engage in supreme love. Yet, Swinburne adds – following Richard of St. Victor, Alexander of Hales, and Bonaventure – that supreme love involves

> "… giving to another what of one's own is good for him and receiving from the other what of his is good for one; and love involves cooperating with another to benefit third parties."[244]

This means that the first divine person originates another one, in order to *share* his goods fully. And these two divine persons together originate a third one in order to *cooperate in sharing* their goods fully. Swinburne sums up:

> "… the love of a first divine individual G_1 would be manifested first in bringing about another divine individual G_2 with whom to share his life, and the love of G_1 or G_2 would be manifested in bringing about another divine individual G_3 with whom G_1 and G_2 cooperatively could share their lives …"[245]

This is, in a nutshell, Richard of St. Victor et al. on why theism entails that there are three divine persons. But is this what an evidently sound argument looks like? I don't think so. There *is*

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[242] See Bonaventure of Bagnoregio, *The Mind's Road to God* (http://www.ewtn.com/library/SOURCES/ROAD.TXT; accessed November 27, 2011), ch. 6; *Commentaria In librum primum sententiarum*, op. cit., dist. 2, a. 1, q. 4.

[243] For the explicitly acknowledged legacy of the contemporary Richard to the medieval Richard, see R. Swinburne, *The Christian God*, op. cit., pp. 190-191, 250; and *Was Jesus God?*, op. cit., pp. 30-33. On p. 191 of *The Christian God*, Swinburne also mentions Alexander and Bonaventure.

[244] R. Swinburne, *The Christian God*, op. cit., p. 177.

[245] Ibid., p. 178. See also R. Swinburne, "Could There Be More Than One God?," *Faith and Philosophy* 5 (1988), pp. 225-241; and *Was Jesus God?*, op. cit., pp. 26-34. On this whole argument, cf. especially Richard of St. Victor, *De Trinitate*, op. cit., lib. 3, cap. 3-4, 14-15; and Bonaventure of Bagnoregio, *Commentaria In librum primum sententiarum*, op. cit., dist. 2, a. 1, q. 4. The British philosopher and logician Christopher John Fardo Williams (1930 – 1997), in his paper "Neither Counfounding the Persons nor Dividing the Substance" (*Reason and the Christian Religion*, A. G. Padgett /ed./, op. cit., pp. 238-239), employs the first part of this argument – i.e., the part which supports a plurality of divine persons. So do also J. P. Moreland and W. L. Craig, *Philosophical Foundations for a Christian Worldview*, op. cit., pp. 594-595; and W. L. Craig, "Love and Justice in the Trinity," http://www.reasonablefaith.org/site/News2?page=NewsArticle&id=8227 (accessed November 1, 2011).

something fitting to the idea that God's own eternal glory and beatitude isn't solitary.[246] The meditation is not without nobility and even some epistemic appeal. Nevertheless, this far from being evidently true, even assuming God exists, is perfectly morally good, has a morally overriding reason to love supremely, and (so) loves in a supreme way. (It is not *my* business to explicate the notions involved in these concessions. It's granted to my opponent that we have a sufficient understanding of them.) It is *not evidently* absurd that God's love is supreme yet not related to another and equal partner. In other words, it is not evidently false that there is just one person who is God and loves supremely. For this person could love supremely just himself. This could well be an inordinate, and so morally deficient, act *if* the person would not be worthy of supreme love – but *this* is a shaky presumption, given the person is a wholly good God. In other words, supreme yet morally proper self-love does not seem as a self-contradictory notion. For it may well be that supreme self-love is inordinate and improperly egoistic only if one directs it to the self which is not divine.

Let's consider now an analogous issue which concerns the perfection of God. Clearly, God, *sans* incarnation, cannot feel the wind on his face, or the pleasure of sleep after fatigue, or engage in erotic love.[247] But it was routinely presupposed, even by those favoring metaphysical arguments for the existence of three divine persons, that God could be supremely happy and loving even if he did not incarnate. There's a way, it was often added, for God to have all the happiness and perfection of material beings while being in a wholly non-material state, although we may not be able to specify how all this could take place. So, I conclude, to submit as evidently true that a perfectly happy divine person must have another divine person on hand, or that a supremely loving divine person must have another divine person to love, looks like a special plea. In any case, it is an open, and not evidently ruled out, scenario that if a divine, perfectly morally good, and supremely loving person exists, then the supreme love of this person is self-sufficient – i.e., not in need of another divine person.

As the German theologian and mystic Matthias Joseph Scheeben (1835 – 1888) wrote eloquently in this context:

> "Richard of St. Victor is of the opinion that the infinite beatitude of God could not be conceived by us unless God had associates in His happiness; the finest constituent of every joy would be lacking, namely, the consciousness of loving others and of being loved by them, and of being able to share one's joy with them. Therefore he postulates in God a loving person, another who is the worthy object of the love of the first, and a third who is to be the co-loved (*condilectus*) in this union of three.
>
> I do not wish to say this argument proves nothing; it contains a profound truth … But at least from the standpoint of natural reason it proves nothing. … [E]ven though God must be … [as the absolute Being absolutely] happy in the possession and enjoyment of the infinite good which is the divine essence, will reason find it necessary to assign Him associates in this possession? Creatures seek their fellows because they are not self-sufficient but must be supplemented by

[246] R. A. Cross (*Duns Scotus*, op. cit., nt. 21 on p. 156) reports John Duns Scotus (*Lectura* 1, d. 2, q. 2, n. 165) opines that certain considerations in favor of God's triune nature are perhaps more demonstrative than many other arguments posited in metaphysics.

[247] Cf. my discussion with L. McGrew, "God's Limitations," January 12, 2011, http://lydiaswebpage.blogspot.com/2011/01/gods-limitations.html (accessed October 28, 2011).

> others and have a share in the fortunes of others. Hence it is precisely because of the absolute self-sufficiency of God that we must incline to the conclusion that He does not stand in need of any associates. And, in fact, God does not need another person to complement His happiness; each of the divine persons is infinitely happy by reason of the fullness of the divine nature which He possesses and which is equal in all the persons. … It would really, therefore, have to be proved that the wealth of God, in the enjoyment of which He finds His infinite happiness, admits and requires coproprietors … Such a proof would be reducible to the argument that the infinite perfection of God demands plurality of persons …"[248]

With this assessment of the divine perfection argument for the existence of three divine persons, Scheeben follows perhaps another theologian and mystic, indeed perhaps the most influential and famous of the theological mystics. Aquinas noted, having Richard of St. Victor on his mind, that:

> "… some are moved by the consideration that "no good thing can be joyfully possessed without partnership." [But] … when it is said that joyous possession of good requires partnership, this holds in the case of one not having perfect goodness: hence it needs to share some other's good, in order to have the goodness of complete happiness."[249]

This reply from Aquinas can easily be amended as an undermining defeater for Swinburne's argument from supreme divine love. When it is said that supreme love requires partnership, this holds in the case of one not having perfect goodness: hence it needs to love some other, in order to have the goodness of supreme love. But to say that supreme love requires partnership even in the case of one having perfect goodness is another matter. More generally, the idea of unique perfection of God casts doubts on Swinburne's, Richard's, Alexander's, and Bonaventure's premise that supreme divine love (perfection, happiness) demands two – or even three – divine persons. To my knowledge, this undermining defeater of their arguments has remained undefeated. It remains unrefuted by natural reason, proceeding independently of the testimony coming from the (alleged) revelation.[250]

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[248] M. J. Scheeben, *The Mysteries of Christianity*, op. cit., pp. 40-41.

[249] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, op. cit., I, q. 32, a. 1, ob. 2 and ad 2.

[250] I am not aware of any satisfactory answer to Aquinas's objection to the presumption that supreme divine love (perfection, happiness) demands a plurality of divine persons (i.e., more than one person) from proper self-love. For instance, C. J. F. Williams, "Neither Counfounding the Persons nor Dividing the Substance," op. cit., pp. 238-239, is aware of Aquinas's objection from God's self-love (and from proper human self-love); but, in response, he begs the question by flat assertions to the effect that the talk of proper divine (and human) self-love is "analogical, if not metaphorical," and that "real love, love in the literal sense, requires more than one person." For detailed critical discussions of Richard's and Bonaventure's metaphysical reasons for the existence of three divine persons, see M. J. Scheeben, *The Mysteries of Christianity*, op. cit., pp. 36-43; F. Suárez, *De Sanctissimo Trinitatis mysterio*, op. cit., lib. 1, cap. 11-12; L. de Molina, *Commentaria In primam D. Thomae partem*, Vol. I, op. cit., q. 32, a. 1; D. Ruiz de Montoya, *Commentaria, Ac Disputationes in primam partem sancti Thomae De Trinitate*, op. cit., disp. 33, sect. 2, disp. 41, sect. 2, and disp. 42, sect. 4. For an allied treatise on Richard's argument, see Ctirad Václav Pospíšil (*1958), *Jako v nebi, tak i na zemi: Náčrt trinitární teologie* (in Czech), Prague and Kostelní Vydří, Krystal OP and Karmelitánské nakladatelství 2010, pp. 374-386. Remarkably, Scheeben's treatment, though critical, is esteemed by Pospíšil. The latter author even makes the following concession: "It is obvious that without the self-gift of God's revelation, we would, on our own, never arrive at this mystery [i.e., of the Trinity] with certainty." See ibid., pp. 41-42.

Swinburne's argument, as such, therefore does not afford evident *a priori* knowledge, independent of religious experience and testimony, of the truth of the Trinity doctrine. But, arguably, all the other so far proposed candidates for such *a priori* argumentative insight are far from being more probative.[251] Swinburne's attempt is the most rigorous one of its stripe to date. Yet it fails glaringly if measured by the standard of being evidently sound. I conclude nobody has attained p-evident knowledge of the truth of the Trinity doctrine by way of an *a priori* argument not referring to testimony. I've also concluded already that nobody has attained self-p-evident knowledge of the truth of the Trinity doctrine. Hence, human evident *a priori* knowledge of the logical (analytic) possibility of the Trinity doctrine, from the truth of the doctrine, not from testimony, and independent of religious experience hasn't been realized. This leaves the epistemic category 1.1.1 vacuous (at least so far).

Before moving to another category from our partition, I add three further notes related to Swinburne's argument for the claim that if there is a morally perfect divine person, then there are three divine persons.

First, Swinburne himself appears to view his argument as plausibly sound, but not evidently sound. This, as we shall see presently, holds at least for the metaphysical reasons he adduces for the proposition that there are not more then three divine persons.[252] Some interpreters ascribed such humility also to the appraisals that Richard of St. Victor and Bonaventure themselves related to their arguments for the existence of three divine persons.[253]

Secondly, as we remember, the Trinity doctrine is defined as the proposition that: there are three persons such that each of them is God, and there is just one God. Here, God has been meant all along as an omnipotent being, where *a being* has been all along supposed to enjoy a peculiar kind of ontological unity, a kind of unity had, e.g., by people and animals, but not, say,

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[251] For a critical discussion of the Trinitarian arguments by the Spanish philosopher and logician Ramon Llull (1232 – 1316), and of the similar arguments by Bartholomeus Keckermann (1571 – 1609), who was a German astronomer, mathematician and theologian, see G. W. Leibniz, *Sämtliche Schriften und Briefe*, Series VI, Vol. IV, op. cit., p. 589; *Die Philosophischen Schriften*, Vol. VI, op. cit., p. 83 (cf. M. R. Antognazza, *Leibniz on the Trinity and the Incarnation*, op. cit., nt. 29 on p. 281). More detailed critical treatments of Llull's attempts are: F. Suárez, *De Sanctissimo Trinitatis mysterio*, op. cit., lib. 1, cap. 11, n. 3, 7-9, 21, cap. 12, n. 8; G. Vázquez, *Commentariorum, ac disputationum In primam partem Sancti Thomae*, Vol. II, op. cit., disp. 133; D. Ruiz de Montoya, *Commentaria, Ac Disputationes in primam partem sancti Thomae De Trinitate*, op. cit., disp. 3, sect. 3, disp. 41, sect. 1 and 5, disp. 43, sect. 2. On the Trinitarian arguments by Anselm of Canterbury (1033 – 1119), see M. J. Scheeben, *The Mysteries of Christianity*, op. cit., pp. 32-36; and A. Dulles, *A History of Apologetics*, op. cit., pp. 98-104. On the argument for a plurality of divine persons by the French philosopher, theologian and physicist Nicolas Malebranche (1638 – 1715), see G. W. Leibniz, *Sämtliche Schriften und Briefe*, Series II, Vol. I, Paul Ritter, Willy Kabitz and Erich Hochstetter (eds.), Darmstadt, Akademie der Wissenschaften 1923, p. 454. Finally, on the arguments by Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770 – 1831), which are, however, only dubiously on behalf of the existence of three divine *persons*, see D. Brown, "Trinity," in *A Companion to Philosophy of Religion*, P. L. Quinn and C. Taliaferro (eds.), op. cit., p. 527; and C. V. Pospíšil, *Jako v nebi, tak i na zemi*, op. cit., pp. 340-341.

[252] This fact was brought to my attention thanks to E. C. Feser, "Swinburne's Tritheism," *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 42, No. 3 (1997), pp. 178-180.

[253] E.g., M. J. Scheeben, *The Mysteries of Christianity*, op. cit., pp. 39-40, 49-50, 85; A. Dulles, *A History of Apologetics*, op. cit., pp. 103-104, 110, 128; D. Ruiz de Montoya, *Commentaria, Ac Disputationes in primam partem sancti Thomae De Trinitate*, op. cit., disp. 33, sect. 2, disp. 41, sect. 2. Scheeben and Ruiz de Montoya suggest this sort of epistemic modesty about the Trinitarian arguments is rather intermittent or wavering in the writings of Richard. Scheeben suggests the same about Bonaventure.

by aggregates of people or animals. The claim that there is just one God, entailed by the Trinity doctrine, has been designed as excluding the existence of *more beings* which are God (i.e., omnipotent). According to a common philosophical, theological and religious usage, "being," in the intimated sense, means the same as "substance." So, in this usage, to say that there are not more substances of a certain sort, means that there are not more beings of that sort. Such seems to be also the meaning of the Athanasian Creed, a part of which reads:

> "… we worship one God in Trinity, and the Trinity in unity, without either confusing the persons or dividing the substance. For the Father's person is one, the Son's another, the Holy Spirit's another … the Father is God, the Son God, and the Holy Spirit God; and yet there are not three Gods, but there is one God."[254]

This passage was fairly obviously meant to imply that there is one being (substance) which is God, that there are not three beings each of which is God, and that there is not more than one being which is God.[255] Shortly, the passage implies there is just one being – just one substance – which is God. That is, just one divine being; neither more nor less than one divine being; hence not three divine beings. This I take to be a part of the view of the Trinity I will be calling, due to its affinity to the Athanasian Creed, as Athanasian. The said tenet of the Athanasian view – that there is just one divine being was – accepted by Richard of St. Victor, Alexander of Hales, Bonaventure, and many other authors. It also has been commonly viewed as a part of the sense of Trinitarian utterances (whether written in the Bible or authoritative for Christians in some other way).[256] However, this interpretation or understanding is more common in the Latin (or,

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[254] Verses 3-4, 15-16; in *Creeds of the Churches: A Reader in Christian Doctrine, From the Bible to the Present*, John H. Leith (ed.), Louisville, Westminster John Knox Press 1982, p. 705. See also the creed of the (local) Eleventh Council of Toledo (675), available at http://www.ewtn.com/library/COUNCILS/TOLEDO.HTM (accessed November 1, 2011); and the creed of the Seventeenth Council of Florence (1438 – 1445), Session 11 (1442); Session 8 (1439) repeats the Athanasian Creed; both sessions available at http://www.ewtn.com/library/councils/florence.htm (accessed November 18, 2011).

[255] Cf. P. van Inwagen, *God, Knowledge & Mystery*, op. cit., pp. 228-229, 245, 261-263; Jeffrey E. Brower and M. C. Rea, "Understanding the Trinity," *Logos* 8, No. 1 (2004), p. 145; J. E. Brower and M. C. Rea, "Material Constitution and the Trinity," *Faith and Philosophy* 22, No. 1 (2005), section 1; M. C. Rea, "The Trinity," op. cit., 404-406; D. Tuggy, "Trinity," op. cit., supplement "History of Trinitarian Doctrines," # 3.3.3.

[256] Cf., e.g., Tertullian (c. 160 – 230), *Against Praxeas* (http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0317.htm; accessed November 1, 2011), ch. 2 (cf. J. P. Moreland and W. L. Craig, *Philosophical Foundations for a Christian Worldview*, op. cit., pp. 578-579); Augustine of Hippo (354 – 430), *City of God* (http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1201.htm; accessed November 5, 2011), bk. I, ch. 10; Richard of St. Victor, *De Trinitate*, op. cit., lib. 3, cap. 9; G. W. Leibniz, *Sämtliche Schriften und Briefe*, Series I, Vol. XI, Wolfgang Bungies, Albert Heinekamp and Franz Schupp (eds.), Berlin, Akademie Verlag 1982, p. 547; Series VI, Vol. IV, op. cit., pp. 2291-2293, 2364-2365 (cf. M. R. Antognazza, *Leibniz on the Trinity and the Incarnation*, op. cit., pp. 73, 107, 213-216); R. Jenkin, *The Reasonableness and Certainty of the Christian Religion*, Vol. II, op. cit., ch. XXVI, pp. 431-433; M. Stuart, *Letters on the Trinity, and on the Divinity of Christ*, op. cit., pp. 26-27, 29, 39, 44; Thomas Vincent Tymms (1842 – 1921), *The Ancient Faith in Modern Light*, Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark 1897, p. 38; M. J. Scheeben, *The Mysteries of the Christianity*, op. cit., pp. 51-52; G. Grisez, *The Way of the Lord Jesus Vol. I*, op. cit., ch. 24, q. B and Appendix 1; P. T. Geach, *Logic Matters*, Berkeley, University of California Press 1972, pp. 238-247; P. T. Geach, *The Virtues*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 1977, pp. 72-81; P. T. Geach and G. E. M. Anscombe, *Three Philosophers: Aristotle, Aquinas, Frege*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell 1963, pp. 118-120; P. van Inwagen, *God, Knowledge & Mystery*, op. cit., pp. 222-224, 249, 254, 261-263; P. van Inwagen, "Three Persons in One Being: On Attempts to Show That the Doctrine of

Western) Christian religion than in the Eastern Christian religion. Swinburne himself is a convert from Anglicanism to Greek Orthodoxy, and so is naturally closer than many others, including Richard of St. Victor et al., to those parts of the Eastern theological tradition which do not take the Athanasian view for granted. Swinburne's theory of the Trinity belongs to the school named Social Trinitarianism. This school has been commonly connected with the three theologians of the 4th century called Cappadocian Fathers: Basil of Caesarea (329/330 – 379), Gregory of Nazianzen (c. 329 – 389/390), and Gregory of Nyssa (c. 335 – c. 395). The writings of these three authors inspired, justly or not, Social Trinitarianism.[257] There are, expectantly, several ways to be a Social Trinitarian. But, roughly, Social Trinitarianism as such appears to consist in the position that divine persons are proper parts of God, whereas the whole God is taken either as a single (omnipotent or otherwise sufficiently supreme) being, or as an aggregate of (three omnipotent or otherwise sufficiently supreme) beings which are mutually related in a certain special or metaphysically tight manner (and so God aggregated of three beings enjoys a sufficiently strong kind of unity, although not the one of a single being).[258] It seems most Social Trinitarians today prefer the former – i.e., aggregative – view of God.[259] Some Social

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the Trinity is Self-Contradictory," in *The Trinity: East/West Dialogue*, Melville Y. Stewart (ed.), Boston, Kluwer Academic Publishers 2003, pp. 83-97; B. Leftow, "Anti Social Trinitarianism," in *The Trinity: An Interdisciplinary Symposium on the Trinity*, Stephen T. Davis, Daniel Kendall and Gerald O'Collins (eds.), New York, Oxford University Press 1999, pp. 203-204; J. P. Moreland and W. L. Craig, *Philosophical Foundations for a Christian Worldview*, op. cit., pp. 579, 587-588, 593; D. Howard-Snyder, "Trinity Monotheism," *Philosophia Christi* 5, No. 2 (2003), pp. 375-377, 393-396, 401-403; J. E. Brower and M. C. Rea, "Material Constitution and the Trinity," op. cit., section 1 and nt. 7; M. C. Rea, "Polytheism and Christian Belief," *Journal of Theological Studies* 57, Pt. 1 (2006), pp. 133-136, 145-146; M. C. Rea, "The Trinity," op. cit., pp. 404, 416; Christopher Hughes, "Defending the Consistency of the Doctrine of the Trinity," in *Philosophical and Theological Essays on the Trinity*, Thomas McCall and M. C. Rea (eds.), New York, Oxford University Press 2009, ch. 16. For other classic authors and passages than those adduced in this note which accept only one divine being (substance), see B. de Margerie, *The Christian Trinity in History*, op. cit., pp. 122-126, and the supporters of the supposit theory of the Trinity (discussed below).

[257] M. C. Rea ("The Trinity," op. cit., pp. 408, 412-423) doubts these Greek Church Fathers would be happy with Social Trinitarianism.

[258] For similar characterizations of Social Trinitarianism, cf. J. E. Brower and M. C. Rea, "Understanding the Trinity," op. cit., pp. 145-147; J. E. Brower and M. C. Rea, "Material Constitution and the Trinity," op. cit., section 1 and nt. 7; and M. C. Rea, "Polytheism and Christian Belief," op. cit., pp. 133-136, 139-141, 143, 145; M. C. Rea, "The Trinity," op. cit., pp. 412-414.

[259] M. C. Rea even opines that the aggregative view is defining for Social Trinitarianism as such and also is the most popular theory of the Trinity. "Christian philosophers and theologians have long been concerned with the question of how to reconcile their belief in three divine Persons with their commitment to monotheism. One strategy is to insist that, despite being three in some sense, the divine Persons are somehow also the *same* god. … By far the most popular strategy, however, involves *denying* that Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are the same god and then arguing that monotheism is secured by the special relationship that obtains among the divine Persons. Proponents this latter sort of view are typically labeled 'Social Trinitarians' (because they conceive of the divine Trinity on the analogy of a *society* of human persons). … One of the basic ideas that Social Trinitarians share in common, then, is that the Christian commitment to monotheism is *not* a commitment to the claim that there is only one divine being, but rather a commitment to the claim that *all divine beings* – all gods, in the ordinary sense of the term – *stand in a particular relation to one or more members of the holy Trinity*." Ibid., pp. 133-134 (italics original). Although it is doubtful, in my opinion, to state that Social Trinitarianism – aggregative or not – is historically the majority view of Christian philosophers and theologians, Rea's observation supports its dominance among contemporary scholars. Still, it is false that all Social Trinitarians are of the aggregative brand. In his later paper "The Trinity" (op. cit.), Rea explicitly writes of Social Trinitarianism as the most popular *contemporary* view (pp. 408 and 412) and of the its

Trinitarians opt for the latter, though.[260] In this respect, Swinburne belongs to the contemporary majority of Social Trinitarians. For he opines that there are just three omnipotent divine persons – each of which is God in my sense – which are mutually discrete divine beings and which together constitute God in the aggregate sense.[261] Clearly enough, this aggregative view of Swinburne implies that there are three Gods in my sense, and so his view contradicts the Trinity doctrine in my sense. Swinburne implies that it isn't true that there is just one being – just one substance – which is God (that is, just one divine omnipotent being, neither more nor less than one divine being, and so not three divine beings). Swinburne, therefore, denies, together with other aggregative Social Trinitarians, that there is just one divine being (substance), contrary to Richard of St. Victor et al. and a common reading of Trinitarian authoritative pronouncements. The details of Swinburne's theory about how metaphysically tight the relations between divine persons are do nothing about that incompatibility so long as these distinct persons are construed also distinct beings (substances). But for the sake of an illustration how, in general, aggregative Social Trinitarians envisage the unity between divine persons, and, in particular, also for the sake of explicating how Swinburne specifies the sense in which divine persons are related in a metaphysically tight way, I report his view on this matter. I will also compare it with the Athanasian view.

According to Swinburne, the Father exists everlastingly and has no active cause for his existence. The Son and the Holy Spirit both exist everlastingly and due to the Father's active causation which is (logically) inevitable (on the supposition that the Father exists). The Father actively causes the Son, and the Father and the Son jointly and actively cause the Holy Spirit. It is left undecided whether these two active causations of producing the Son and the Holy Spirit take places everlastingly or merely for some finite interval. Each of the three persons is omnipotent, omniscient, perfectly morally good, and a permissive cause of the existence of each of the other two persons. Finally, the Father has, due to his having no active cause of his existence and due to being an active cause of the Son and the Holy Spirit, a right to suggest (logically) contingent rules the agreement on which will prevent the three divine (morally

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non-aggregative brand as the more popular one (p. 415). Cf. also M. J. Murray and M. C. Rea, "Philosophy and Christian Theology," op. cit., # 2.1, where the non-aggregative view is suggested to be embraced by "many Social Trinitarians."

[260] See J. P. Moreland and W. L. Craig, *Philosophical Foundations for a Christian Worldview*, op. cit., pp. 586-595; W. L. Craig, "A Formulation and Defense of the Doctrine of the Trinity," op. cit.; W. L. Craig, "Trinity Monotheism Once More: A Response to Daniel Howard-Snyder," *Philosophia Christi* 8, No. 1 (2006), pp. 101-113; W. L. Craig, "Is Trinity Monotheism Orthodox?," http://www.reasonablefaith.org/site/News2?page=NewsArticle&id=9039 (accessed November 1, 2011). Cf. also C. S. Lewis's famous analogy: God is three persons in a way similar to that in which a cube is composed of six sides (*Mere Christianity*, op. cit., Bk. Four, ch. 2).

[261] Cf. R. Swinburne, *The Christian God*, op. cit., pp. 9-13, 180-181; "Could There be More Than One God?," op. cit.; *Was Jesus God?*, op. cit., p. 34. Similarly Timothy W. Bartel, "Could There Be More Than One Almighty?," *Religious Studies* 29, No. 4 (1993), pp. 465-495. Notably, Swinburne applies the term "substance" (and also the nouns "individual" and "being") to all enduring unified entities, including some aggregates (cf. *The Christian God*, op. cit., pp. 7, 121, 184; *Is There a God?*, op. cit., p. 20; *The Coherence of Theism*, op. cit., p. 101; *Was Jesus God?*, op. cit., pp. 13, 28, 34-35); and to all entities (other than events, i.e., instantiations of monadic or relational universals at times), including, again, some aggregates, which can (logically speaking) exist independently of all other entities of their kind other than their parts (see "From Mental/Physical Identity to Substance Dualism," op. cit., pp. 142-143). Swinburne's usage of the word "substance" (and of the noun "being") is, therefore, different from the more classic one, intimated above.

perfect) persons from any clash in their decisions.[262] The American philosopher Dale Tuggy, who is the author of the entry on the Trinity in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, sums up Swinburne's picture:

> "… the Trinity is a tightly unified complex thing with three divine beings as parts, which necessarily acts much as a single personal being would. It is a whole, which is, in a sense, reducible to the sum of its parts; the entire set of truths about the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit could in principle be stated without mentioning this collective or composite which is the Trinity."[263]

What this all shows is that Swinburne does not try to argue for the Trinity doctrine in my sense: i.e., that there are three persons each of which is God, but there is *just one* being which is God. Swinburne denies the second part of the Trinity doctrine thus construed. For the same reason, he also denies the Trinity doctrine in the sense in which it was accepted and understood by Richard of St. Victor, Alexander of Hales, Bonaventure, and the whole Athanasian tradition of Trinitarian philosophical and theological reflection. On the other hand, the discussed argument for a trinity of divine persons, coming from Richard et al., is just that: an argument for the conclusion that three divine persons exist. The claim that there is just one divine being is external to it. This claim was accepted and conjoined to the preceding conclusion by Richard et al; but it isn't by Swinburne et al. Put another way, although Swinburne follows the pattern of argument, coined by Richard of St. Victor, for and up to the conclusion that three divine persons exist, he thinks he may depart in the issue concerning the number of divine beings. The older Richard et al. say there is just one divine being. The younger Richard et al. say there are three divine beings. Conversely, and more directly to our interests, when I was discussing Swinburne's revival of Richard's argument for a trinity of divine persons as a part of the most promising Trinitarian project how to make the Trinity doctrine, in my sense, p-evident by an *a priori* deductive argument, I was merely discussing it as such: i.e., as an argument that there are three divine persons. If successful and conjoined to an *a priori* p-evidently sound argument for the conclusion that there is just one divine being, Swinburne's version could yield an *a priori*, p-evident, argumentative knowledge of the truth of the Trinity doctrine. As I've tried to show, this *a priori* project fails because Swinburne's argument, understood as an *a priori* enterprise, fails. But I was nowhere assuming that Swinburne's argument is one for the conclusion that just one divine being exists or that it is understood by Swinburne as such.

Of course, as a Greek Orthodox, Swinburne need not feel unorthodox due to his clash with the Athanasian view. Moreover, he takes the plurality of divine beings as compatible with the use of the Greek word *homoousion* in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, which he takes more seriously than the Athanasian Creed. This term is to be translated as "of the same essence" or "of one substance" (or, in a word comprising both preceding translations, as "consubstantial").[264] The Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed says the Son is *homoousios* with the

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[262] See R. Swinburne, *The Christian God*, op. cit., pp. 118-121, 146, 170-180.
[263] D. Tuggy, "Trinity," op. cit., # 3.2.
[264] Cf. M. C. Rea, "The Trinity," op. cit., pp. 404-405, 416; D. Tuggy, "Trinity," op. cit., supplement "History of Trinitarian Doctrines," # 3.2; and P. van Inwagen, *God, Knowledge & Mystery*, op. cit., pp. 261-262. See also Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, op. cit., I, q. 29, a. 2, co.

Father. So, the creed says the Son is of the same essence as the Father or of the same substance as the Father. Swinburne himself prefers the former translation: the Son is of the same essence as the Father.[265] This he interprets as being of the same essential kind; namely: omnipotent, omniscient, wholly morally good, etc.[266] Thus, it seems, according to Swinburne the creed means that the Son and the Father (and the Holy Spirit) share the same specific essence; it does not mean that they share the same individual essence.[267] This way Swinburne manages to answer the objection that the plurality of divine beings is incompatible with the intent of the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed. What of the same creed's statement that the Son is "not made"? (In the Greek, *ou poienthentos*.) Isn't this statement incompatible with Swinburne's claim that the existence of the Son is caused (by the Father)?[268] Swinburne doesn't think so for he reads the "not made" as meaning: not made out of pre-existing matter.[269]

This brings us to another peculiarity of Swinburne's metaphysics of the Trinity. The plurality of divine beings (substances), though related in a special way, is not the only difference of his theory, when compared with the Athanasian view, embraced by Richard of St. Victor and other Swinburne's inspirers. The second difference I want to note here is that while from the Athanasian perspective the two processions within the Trinity are not causal, from the perspective of Swinburne they are. More specifically, on the former view, the Father begets, but does not cause, the Son, and the Father and the Son together spirate, but do not cause, the Holy

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[265] See R. Swinburne, *Revelation*, op. cit., p. 184; *Was Jesus God?*, op. cit., pp. 26 and 34-35.

[266] See R. Swinburne, *The Christian God*, op. cit., pp. 180-181, 184, 189.

[267] This position of Swinburne contradicts at least the supposit theory of the Trinity, explained below together with the involved notions of specific and individual essence. Cf. also B. de Margerie, *The Christian Trinity in History*, op. cit., pp. 122-126 (a section named "Numerical or Specific Unity of the Divine Nature?"); N. L. Geisler, *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*, "Trinity"; B. Leftow, "Anti Social Trinitarianism," op. cit., pp. 203-204; B. Leftow, "Modes without Modalism," in Persons, P. van Inwagen and D. Zimmerman (eds.), p. 358. On the other hand, Swinburne's view resembles the one of the Cambridge Platonist Ralph Cudworth (1617 – 1688), expressed in his work *The True Intellectual System of the Universe*, Vol. I, London, Richard Royston 1678, pp. 598, 616-620. As for this resemblance, cf. W. J. Wainwright, "Monotheism," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Winter 2009 Edition)*, E. N. Zalta (ed.), http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2009/entries/monotheism (accessed November 5, 2011), # 7.2. This latter view – i.e., in Wainwright's own words, that each divine person has "its own individual essence", but "all share a common specific or generic essence (namely, divinity)" – Wainwright ascribes to "many second and third century church fathers, some western Christian Platonists, and the Eastern Orthodox Church as a whole." (Ibid.) As was already noted, however, such reading of the Cappadocian Fathers would be controversial. Another important Christian author close in his view of the Trinity to Swinburne's and Cudworth's is the philosopher, scientist and theologian John Philoponus of Alexandria (c. 490 – c. 570). See Christian Wildberg, "John Philoponus," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall 2008 Edition)*, E. N. Zalta (ed.), http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2008/entries/philoponus (accessed November 17, 2011), # 4.3.

[268] Cf. R. Swinburne, "Could There Be More Than One God?," op. cit., p. 232; *The Christian God*, op. cit., pp. 118-121, 170-180; *Revelation*, op. cit., pp. 235-236; *Was Jesus God?*, op. cit., pp. 29 and 32. Swinburne (*The Christian God*, op. cit., p. 184; *Was Jesus God?*, op. cit., p. 32) cites for his support the letter to Ablabius "On "Not Three Gods" " by Gregory of Nyssa (http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/2905.htm; accessed November 2, 2011), where Gregory writes of divine persons as distinguished by their mutual causal relations. But this wording on the side of Gregory may well be a mere *façon de parler*.

[269] See R. Swinburne, *The Christian God*, op. cit., pp. 183-184; *Revelation*, op. cit., pp. 235-236; *Was Jesus God?*, op. cit., pp. 35-36. Notably, this reading does not seem to be enough according to the Trinitarian creed which originated at the (local) Eleventh Council of Toledo (op. cit.): "We also confess that the Son was born, but not made, from the substance of the Father …"

Spirit.[270] Again, this view concerning causality seems to be a part of the meaning of the Athanasian Creed, the 8th, 22nd, and 23rd verse of which together state that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are uncreated (in Latin, *increatus*), although the Son is begotten, and the Holy Spirit is proceeding.[271] In contrast, according to Swinburne, as we have seen, the Father actively causes the Son, and the Father and the Son together actively co-cause the Holy Spirit; moreover, each divine person is a permissive cause of each other divine person.

I do not suggest the differences concerning the number of divine beings and the non/causal nature of processions are the only ones between the Athanasian view and Swinburne's view of the Trinity. But these two are the ones that should be made clear. I sum them up by the two following diagrams.

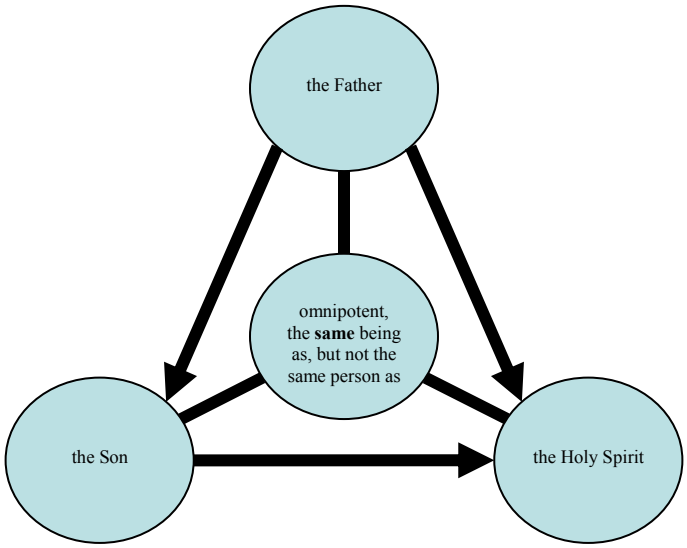

Diagram 2. Athanasian Trinity. → represents non-causal procession.

[270] As was drawn to my attention by Daniel Heider, *Ontologie* (in Czech), manuscript of lectures, ch. 2.
[271] Cf. also the creed of the Eleventh Council of Toledo.

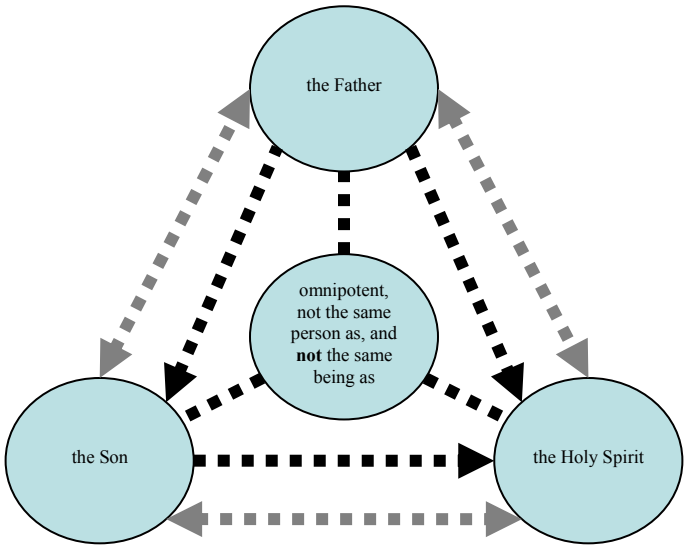

Diagram 3. Swinburnian Trinity. ⇢ represents active causation, ⇠ permissive causation.

It is not hard to see Swinburne's motivation for departing from the Athanasian view of the Trinity with respect to the number of divine beings and the nature of processions. It is only natural to wonder whether it is logically possible that three persons are one being (substance), and also whether it is logically possible for something to proceed, in a relevant sense, from something other and not to be caused by the latter. In correspondence, Swinburne expressed qualms about logical possibility of the Athanasian Creed, in contrast to the question of logical possibility of the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed.[272] On the other side, it is only natural, too, to wonder whether Swinburne's theory of the Trinity is logically compatible with the putative revelation (whether written in the Bible or handed down orally) which he tries to explain and defend.[273] Some, of course, have arrived at the conclusion that it isn't.[274]

Here's the third note I will make before moving to the epistemic category 1.1.2 of our partition. I have addressed above Swinburne's argument for the conclusion that there are three divine persons. But he has adds, too, an argument for the conclusion that there are not *more* than

[272] Cf. R. Swinburne, *The Christian God*, op. cit., pp. 180-181, 186.
[273] See W. P. Alston, "Swinburne and Christian Theology," *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 41, No. 1 (1997), p. 56; P. van Inwagen, "Three Persons in One Being," op. cit., p. 88; C. Hughes, "Defending the Consistency of the Doctrine of the Trinity," op. cit., section II.
[274] K. J. Clark, "Trinity or Tritheism?," *Religious Studies* 32, No. 4 (1996), pp. 463, 471-473; E. C. Feser, "Swinburne's Tritheism," op. cit., pp. 175-184; B. Leftow, "Anti Social Trinitarianism," op. cit., pp. 203-249 (see especially p. 232); J. P. Moreland and W. L. Craig, *Philosophical Foundations for a Christian Worldview*, op. cit., pp. 587-588; D. Howard-Snyder, "Trinity Monotheism," op. cit., p. 396.

three divine persons.[275] (Which, in conjunction with the preceding conclusion, entails that there are just /or, exactly/ three divine persons.) Swinburne argues as follows. It is logically necessary that something is a divine person only if its existence is (logically) inevitable, given that some divine person exists.[276] This necessary condition of divine personhood seems clear to Swinburne. We may also say that for Swinburne, a person is God – i.e., omnipotent, omniscient, etc. – only if his existence is not a matter of a contingent decision of another divine person. Let's grant this. But, Swinburne continues, any divine person beyond the already established trinity of divine persons would *not* exist inevitably. Any such further person would not exist by essence of a divine person (or persons), but by a contingent act of will of a divine person (or persons). This is asserted on the account that there would be no morally overriding reason for the established trinity of divine persons to originate any further divine person. And, we are said in turn, there would be no such morally overriding reason because the origination of any further (i.e., fourth or next) divine person would not constitute a new *kind* of good, although it would yield a new instance of good.[277]

> "My ethical intuitions are inevitably highly fallible here, but it seems to me that cooperating with two others in sharing is not essential to the manifestation of love so long as cooperation with one in sharing is going on. There is a qualitative difference between sharing and cooperating in sharing and hence overriding reason for divine acts of both kinds; but, as it seems to me, no similar qualitative difference between cooperating with one in sharing and cooperating with two."[278]

> "Bringing about cooperating in sharing with a fourth person is not a qualitatively different kind of good action from bringing about cooperating in sharing with a third person. … bringing about the Spirit as well as the Son would provide for each divine person someone other then themselves for every other divine person to love and be loved by; but adding **a fourth would not provide a new kind of good state**."[279]

In other words, while the two preceding kinds of good – i.e., sharing divinity and cooperating in sharing divinity – constitute a morally overriding reason to produce a new divine person, the origination of a new divine person doesn't. Thus, Swinburne concludes, there are not more than three divine persons (and so, given there are three of them, there are exactly three of them).

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[275] On this issue, cf. Bonaventure of Bagnoregio, *Commentaria In librum primum sententiarum*, op. cit., dist. 2, a. 1, q. 3-4; and G. Vázquez, *Commentariorum, ac disputationum In primam partem Sancti Thomae*, Vol. II, op. cit., disp. 133 (a discussion of R. Llull's treatment of the question).

[276] See R. Swinburne, The Christian God, op. cit., pp. 100, 177-179; *Was Jesus God?*, op. cit., pp. 27-29, 31, 33.

[277] Bonaventure says that no further divine person exists for there is no other kind (or, manner – *modus*) of a divine person available, besides (i) the kind of a divine person who is the beginning (*principium*) of a divine person and is not begun (*principatum*), (ii) the kind of a divine who is begun and not a beginning of a divine person, and (iii) the kind of a divine person who is begun and a beginning of a divine person. See his *Commentaria In librum primum sententiarum*, op. cit., dist. 2, a. 1, q. 4, co. Ibid., q. 3, co., Bonaventure rejects the infinite number of divine persons for the reason that such infinity would be repugnant to God's perfection.

[278] R. Swinburne, *The Christian God*, op. cit., p. 179.

[279] R. Swinburne, *Was Jesus God?*, op. cit., p. 33; bold emphasis original.

Nevertheless, I ask, is it evident that the two kinds of good – sharing divinity and cooperating in its sharing – would be a morally overriding reason to produce a new divine person, but the instance of a new divine person itself would *not* be such a reason, just because it would not be a new *kind* of good?[280] I expect Swinburne would appeal at this moment to his principle that a divine person *only* has a morally overriding reason to do some action if the action is of a best *kind* (from all the alternatives).[281] But, I think, this principle will not do to show that there would be no morally overriding reason for a further divine person. It simply begs the question (as a reply to my preceding question) to claim that any origination of a further divine person would not be an action of a *best* kind *because* it would not be an action of a *new* kind. Here, an action is said to be of a best kind just when every action of an incompatible kind is worse. (Similarly, an action may be said to be of an equal best kind only when every action of an incompatible kind is not better.) Let's grant to Swinburne that the origination of a second divine person is of a best kind, and that the origination of a third divine person is of a best kind. Let's grant, too, that the origination of yet a further divine person would not be new in kind (although this brings in the question of how kinds should be individuated in this context, which is neither obvious nor answered by Swinburne). Still, how is it ruled out that some origination of a further divine person is an action of a best kind, although not of a new kind? In other words, it is not clearly false or absurd that the origination of a further – fourth or next – divine person would be better than any alternative, although it would be nothing new qualitatively (in terms of the manner of origination). (Assuming origination of a divine person as such isn't clearly false or absurd.) So, Swinburne's argument for the existence of only three divine persons isn't evidently sound. This is acknowledged by its author himself in his remark – quoted above – about the "highly fallible" nature of his ethical intuitions which lead him to embrace that there would be no morally overriding reason for the already established trinity of divine persons to originate any further divine person.

This completes my three further notes related to Swinburne's argument for the claim that there are three divine persons.

So far I have viewed the argument as *a priori*.[282] But it is, when slightly amended, also the most promising *a posteriori* candidate within our category 1.1.2 to which we will shift right now.

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[280] Cf. B. Leftow, "Anti Social Trinitarianism," op. cit., nt. 101: "Swinburne is right that the qualitative difference between cooperating with one and cooperating with two is not as great as that between sharing and cooperating in sharing. But one cannot help thinking that with the absent pre-given theological conviction that there are in fact just three Persons, the difference to which Swinburne points is not a satisfying answer to 'why just three?' (as vs. 'why at least three?')."

[281] Cf. R. Swinburne, *The Christian God*, op. cit., pp. 171-172, 178; *Was Jesus God?*, op. cit., pp. 7-8, 28-30, 33.

[282] K. J. Clark, "Trinity or Tritheism?," op. cit., pp. 463 and 473-475, takes the argument as an *a priori* proposal. Swinburne himself explicitly presented it that way (see *The Christian God*, op. cit., pp. 170, 190-191). Yet, at one later place (*Was Jesus God?*, op. cit., p. 5), Swinburne writes that by *a priori* reasons for the central theological doctrines of Christian religion he means "… reasons arising from the very nature of God and from the general condition of the human race …" But, presumably, those general conditions are not *a priori* in the sense used by me (i.e., known not from experience). It still may be, however, that Swinburne views (or viewed) his Trinitarian reasons as *a priori* in my sense. In any case, we are free to construe them as the best candidate for 1.1.1. As we shall see, we are also free to construe them as the best candidate for 1.1.2. In like manner, So does E. C. Feser ("Swinburne's Tritheism," op. cit., pp. 175-176, 178-179, 182) at times presents Swinburne's reasoning as *a priori* and at another

1.1.2. Human evident *a posteriori* knowledge of the logical (analytic) possibility of the Trinity doctrine, from the truth of the doctrine, not from testimony, independent of religious experience.

Analogically to our progression in 1.1.1, we can put aside claims to immediate *a posteriori* insights into the truth of the Trinity doctrine, independently of religious experience. Again, these claims would be unprecedented. I am not aware of anybody who has made them. To my knowledge, p-evident, immediate, and *a posteriori* insight into the truth of the doctrine has never seriously been announced or defended by anybody. I conclude it is exceedingly plausible to maintain that the Trinity doctrine hasn't been immediately *a posteriori* evident to anybody independently of religious experience. Mystical visions and putative experiences of a revelation do not count by reason of being sorts of religious experience. What about indirect, yet p-evident knowledge of the truth of the Trinity doctrine, by way of an *a posteriori* argument?

Within this rank, the most promising effort enterprise is to attempt at an evident *a priori* or *a posteriori* deductive demonstration of the existence of just one God, followed by an evident *a posteriori* demonstration that theism entails that there are three persons each of which is God. Again, if the second part of this *a posteriori* project fails, the whole project fails. But the second part does fail. So I put aside the first part (comprising especially ontological arguments for theism and *a posteriori* deductive arguments for theism). As regards deductive *a posteriori* arguments for the conclusion that if there is God, then there must be three divine persons, I've already said that the most fitting candidate is to be extracted from the work of R. Swinburne. What does this *a posteriori* candidate look like? Well, it's almost undistinguishable from the *a priori* one, discussed under 1.1.1. Maybe we recall it assumes the existence of one wholly good (and so supremely loving) divine person and is summed up by Swinburne as follows:

> "… the love of a first divine individual G_1 would be manifested first in bringing about another divine individual G_2 with whom to share his life, and the love of G_1 or G_2 would be manifested in bringing about another divine individual G_3 with whom G_1 and G_2 cooperatively could share their lives …"[283]

We may turn this reasoning into an *a posteriori* one if we view the following remark by Swinburne as its *a posteriori* premise, which is introduced in support of the preceding summary.

> "A loving person needs someone to love; and **perfect love is love of an equal**, totally mutual love, which is what is involved in perfect marriage. While, of course, the love of a parent for a child is of immense value, it is not the love of equals; and what makes it as valuable it is, is that the parent is seeking to make the child (as she grows up) into an equal. … [Still, a] twosome can be selfish. A marriage in which a husband and wife are interested only in each other and do not seek to spread the love they have for each other is a deficient marriage. (And of course the obvious way, but not the only way, in which they can spread their love is by having children.)"[284]

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time (p. 179 ibid.) as *a posteriori*. Relatedly, C. V. Pospíšil (*Jako v nebi, tak i na zemi*, op. cit., pp. 375-377, 381-384) appears to view the Trinitarian reasoning of Richard of St. Victor as an *a posteriori* enterprise, proceeding from the experience of love and the phenomenology of gift.

[283] R. Swinburne, *The Christian God*, op. cit., p. 178.

[284] R. Swinburne, *Was Jesus God?*, op. cit., pp. 28-29; bold emphasis original.

> "There would be something deeply unsatisfactory … about a marriage in which the parties were concerned solely with each other and did not use their mutual love to bring forth good to others, for example by begetting, nourishing, and educating children, but possibly in other ways instead."[285]

At least two claims are made here: Firstly, and roughly, flourishing human love requires another and (relevantly) equal human. Secondly, flourishing marriage tries to procreate. It is not clear whether Swinburne himself views these claims as *a posteriori* premises (known from experience), adduced in support of the claims that supreme divine love requires a plurality of divine persons, and that supreme love of two divine persons requires a third divine person. Maybe he does. Maybe, however, he rather illustrates his point by *a posteriori* examples; or he points to those examples as intuition pumps or cases from which the reader can gather the concepts required for an *a priori* Trinitarian argument. And maybe Swinburne views the matter both ways: one can choose to proceed from the claims about human and marital love *a posteriori* (and take them as premises), or *a priori* (and take them as illustrations), or both ways. We took the first path under 1.1.1, and the second one here, under 1.1.2.

Again, Swinburne's argument for the existence of three divine persons, even when amended by the *a posteriori* premises about human and marital love, does not provide evident *a posteriori* knowledge, independent of religious experience and testimony, of the truth of the Trinity doctrine. The *a posteriori* inputs do not suffice to make it evident that supreme divine love (perfection, happiness) demands two – or even three – divine persons. Even if it was evident that any flourishing human love requires plurality of human persons, and that any conjugally flourishing human pair tries to procreate, it would not, as such, make it evident that supreme divine love requires a plurality of divine persons or that supreme love of two divine persons requires a third divine person. For one thing, it is not evident (independently of religious experience and testimony) that supreme divine love is relevantly similar to prospering human love. Maybe the *a posteriori* inputs make, for some people, the existence of three divine persons plausible, or at least somewhat more plausible. That, however, is a different matter.

Those who think the arithmetic of supreme divine love should track the arithmetic of booming human love should ponder on how this logic leads to *more* than three divine persons. If the employed analogy of human love, concerning sharing, and the employed analogy of marriage, concerning cooperation in sharing, speak evidently for full sharing of divinity by the first divine person and cooperation in sharing of it by the first and the second divine person, another familial analogy, speaks to no lesser degree for further reproduction. And if the latter analogy doesn't, neither do the two former. There is no clear important difference between these analogies, and, hence, no clear base for any double standard. Edward C. Feser (quoted already in section III.1) construed a parallel we are presently thinking of:

> "One could argue as follows: 'We know from human experience that a child who has no siblings often feels that his family life is less fulfilling than that of children who do have siblings; so a state of affairs in which love is shared between four individuals is better than that in which it is shared between three. So a perfectly good divine individual, since he is obligated to bring about

[285] R. Swinburne, *The Christian God*, op. cit., pp. 177-178. Cf. Richard of St. Victor, *De Trinitate*, op. cit., lib. 3, cap. 4.

> the best state of affairs possible, must bring about three other divine individuals. In fact, since very large families (including as many as ten children) are often the happiest, perhaps we should conclude that there must be, after all, eleven or twelve divine beings'. I do not claim that such an argument would be very convincing. But it is not obvious that it would be any weaker than Swinburne's argument …"[286]

A couple of years after Feser, Brian Leftow (since Swinburne's retirement in 2002 the Nolloth Professor of the Philosophy of the Christian Religion at Oriel College at the University of Oxford) published a very similar critique, addressed to Swinburne:

> "… many parents expand their families beyond a single child because forms of love become possible with greater complexity which are not possible given only one child, or because there is something very good about a child having a sibling, and about together teaching that child to share in love for that sibling, or because there are peculiar joys to (say) taking a large brood rather than an only child on a family vacation or involving a bigger band in family chores. If marital and familial analogies have a place in thinking about the inner life of God, why shouldn't this one? Cooperating with two to involve yet another is a greater 'balancing act' than cooperating with one to love yet another. It requires kinds of diplomacy and interaction which cooperation with one does not. It has its own unique values. Why would these values not matter as much as those unique to the three-membered relation? And why would the point that a 'love unit' is less than perfect if it remains wholly self-absorbed apply to pairs but not trios, or apply less forcefully to a trio?"[287]

To my knowledge, these qualms were never calmed down. If the first divine person should originate a second one, and these two should originate a third one, because ethically fulfilled marriages share and reproduce, then the three divine persons should beget yet another or more divine persons for the most fulfilled marriages and families reproduce abundantly. This latter, axiological statement is, philosophically, no more and no less controversial than that of Swinburne's. And nobody will deny it *because* more reproduction brings in no new kind of good, measured by some abstract category applied to the manner of reproduction. If family is the model for supreme persons and their supreme love, then the most fulfilled homes are included in the model, too. But then we do not end up with only three divine persons. Familial analogies prove too much. Fortunately for the doctrine of the existence of no more than three divine persons, the intuition (if we have any such intuition at all) that the supreme love of supreme beings should involve origination of a certain sort because ideal families reproduce that way is far from being evidently true.

I want to add yet another note. It seems to me that even assuming the familial ideal, neither of the following propositions is clearly true: (i) sharing divinity is better than having it on one's own; (ii) cooperating with another to share divinity is better than sharing on those two's own; (iii) adding another one divine person to share with him divinity does *not* enhance the overall goodness; (iv) adding another one divine person to share with him divinity enhances the overall goodness. If (i) and (ii) are evident, (iv) is evident, too – which prevents the

[286] E. C. Feser, "Swinburne's Tritheism," op. cit., p. 179.
[287] B. Leftow, "Anti Social Trinitarianism," op. cit., p. 241.

demonstration of no more than three divine persons (and so of precisely three divine persons). If (i) and (ii) are not evident, (iv) is not evident either – which prevents the demonstration of at least three divine persons.

The plausible result of the above jabs is that Swinburne's argument for the existence of three divine persons, even when construed as *a posteriori*, is not p-evidently sound. Again, all the other so far proposed candidates for such *a posteriori* argumentative insight into the truth of the Trinity doctrine are even less probative. I conclude nobody has attained p-evident knowledge of the truth of the Trinity doctrine by way of an *a posteriori* argument not referring to testimony. Further, as was stated, nobody has acquired immediate, evident, *a posteriori* knowledge of the truth of the Trinity doctrine, independent of religious experience and testimony. So it strongly seems true that human evident *a posteriori* knowledge of the logical (analytic) possibility of the Trinity doctrine, from the truth of the doctrine, not from testimony, and independent of religious experience hasn't been implemented. This leaves not only the epistemic category 1.1.2 plausibly vacuous (at least so far), but, in conjunction with the result for the category 1.1.1, also the whole category 1.1 plausibly vacuous (at least so far). Let's move to the next category in our partition.

1.2. Human evident knowledge of the logical (analytic) possibility of the Trinity doctrine, from the truth of the doctrine, from testimony, independent of religious experience.

Once more, I put aside mystical visions and experiences of an immediate revelation in which God, or some supernatural entity, would testify for the Trinity doctrine or some other claim evidently entailing the doctrine. These would not count for they would constitute religious experience. Let's shift our attention to arguments for the Trinity doctrine proceeding from testimony.

Is the truth of the Trinity doctrine p-evident from ordinary human testimony or some ordinary historical resources which rely on testimony? Hardly. There appears to be no such testimony or historical data, and no such successful demonstration from them available in any published work. The so far and in fact proposed testimonial reasons – propositions, arguments and evidences – for Christianity (or for something close to it) available in books or articles, or observed by senses, won't do. If somebody believes otherwise, he is free to make us know in what folio such a jewel has been hiding.

In fact, the denial of the availability of evident knowledge the truth of Christianity by mere apologetics is implied in the writings of a great number of Christian authors who write, or reflect on, this discipline. This denial is involved in the proclamation that Christian apologetics, given the evidential resources it in fact has at its disposal, cannot provide us with complete certainty, whereas certainty is understood in an epistemic and *not* merely subjective sense.[288] In the following note, I provide a lengthy list of such Christian authors and their works.[289] The list displays tellingly how common the given position has been.

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[288] For different notions of certainty, consult Baron Reed, "Certainty," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Winter 2011 Edition)*, E. N. Zalta (ed.), http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2011/entries/certainty (accessed November 27, 2011).

[289] Hugo Grotius (1583 – 1645), *The Truth of the Christian Religion*, London, William Baynes 1829, bk. II, sect. XIX.

Rodrigo de Arriaga (1592 – 1667), *De fide divina*, disp. 2, sect. 5, subsect. 2, n. 46, in R. de Arriaga, *Cursus theologicus*, Vol. V, Lyons, Sumptibus Laurentii Anisson, & Soc. 1651. Cf. Sven K. Knebel, "Rodrigo de Arriaga (1592-1667) in die fallibilistische Theorie der katholischen Glaubensgewissheit," in *Unsicheres Wissen: Skepticizmus und Wahrscheinlichkeit 1550 – 1850*, Carlos Spoerhase, Dirk Werle and Markus Wild (eds.), Berlin and New York, Walter de Gruyter 2009, pp. 318, 324, 327-330, 336-337.

William Chillingworth (1602 – 1643), *The Works of William Chillingworth*, Philadelphia, Rev. R. Davis 1844, pp. 166, 114-116, 203, 221, 403, 430-431, 740-741.

John Tillotson (1630 – 1694), *The Works of the Most Reverend Dr. John Tillotson*, London, Printed for J. Round in Exchange Alley 1728, pp. vi-vii, 16, 23-24, 562.

John Wilkins (1614 – 1672), *Of the Principles and Duties of Natural Religion*, J. Tillotson (ed.), London, Printed for R. Chiswall, W. Battersby, and C. Brome 1699, pp. 23-26.

Joseph Glanvill (1636 – 1680), *Essays on Several Important Subjects in Philosophy and Religion*, London, Printed for John Baker by J. D. 1676, pp. 7-9; *Sadducismus Triumphatus: or Full and Plain Evidence Concerning Witches and Apparitions*, London, Printed for S. Loundes 1688, p. 73.

J. Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, op. cit., bk. I, ch. I, # 5; bk. IV, ch. III, ch. XI, # 10, ch. XV, #2, ch. XVI, ## 8 and 14, ch. XVII, # 16; and *The Works of John Locke*, Vol. II, London, Printed for W. Otridge and Son 1812, pp. 292-293. On Grotius, Chillingworth, Tillotson, Wilkins, Glanvill, and Locke, cf. H. G. Van Leeuwen, *The Problem of Certainty in English Thought 1630-1690*, op. cit., chs. II, III, and V. On Locke, see also Joseph Houston, *Reported Miracles: A Critique of Hume*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 1994, pp. 46-50.

George Berkeley (1685 – 1753), *Alciphron: or, the Minute Philosopher in Seven Dialogues*, Dublin, Printed for William Williamson 1757, dial. VII, sect. 1 and 33.

G. W. Leibniz, *Sämtliche Schriften und Briefe*, Series I, Vol. XIII, Gerda Utermöhlen and Sabine Sellschopp (eds.), Berlin, Akademie Verlag 1987, pp. 535 and 554; Series VI, Vol. I, op. cit., pp. 515, 522, 552-553; Series VI, Vol. IV, op. cit., p. 2291. Cf. M. R. Antognazza, *Leibniz on the Trinity and the Incarnation*, op. cit., pp. 18-19, 33, 57-59, 61-62, 68, 118-119, 131, 163.

Pierre-Daniel Huet (1639 – 1721), *Traité philosophique de la foiblesse de l'esprit humain*, London, Jean Nourse 1741; *Against Cartesian Philosophy*, Amherst, Humanity Books 2003, pp. 132-137, 204 (see also "Translator's Introduction" by Thomas M. Lennon, ibid., pp. 19, 29-30). Initially, though, Huet was driven to work on the latter book by his desire to construe an argument for the truth of the Christian religion which would be no less clear and plain than the arguments of geometry; see P.-D. Huet, *Memoirs of the Life of Peter Daniel Huet*, Vol. II, John Aikin (ed.), London, Printed for Longman, Hurst, Rees, and Orme, Paternoster Row; and Cadell and Davies, Strand 1810, pp. 156-157. On Huet's reflections on apologetics, see Antoine Arnauld (1612 – 1694), *Oeuvres de Messire Antoine Arnauld*, Vol. III, G. Du Pac De Bellegarde and J. Hautefage (eds.), Paris-Lausanne, Sigismond D'Arnay et Cie 1775, p. 425; Richard Henry Popkin (1923 – 2005), *The History of Scepticism: From Savonarola to Bayle*, New York, Oxford University Press 2003, ch. 17; A. Dulles (1918 – 2008), *A History of Apologetics*, op. cit., pp. 171-172; and T. M. Lennon, *The Plain Truth: Descartes, Huet, and Skepticism*, Leiden and Boston, Brill 2008, pp. 14-15, 23, 32-33, 49-54.

Joseph Butler (1692 – 1752), *The Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed, to the Constitution and Course of Nature*, New York, Robert Carter & Brothers 1858, "Introduction"; cf. A. Dulles, *A History of Apologetics*, op. cit., pp. 183-185.

Louis-Eugène Bautain (1796 – 1867), *Philosophie du christianisme: correspondance religieuse de L. Bautain*, Vol. II, Paris and Strasbourg, For H. de Bonnechose 1835, pp. 63-64, 179-180. Cf. A. Dulles, *A History of Apologetics*, op. cit., pp. 235-236.

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The reasons proposed for this modest verdict have been diverse, though mutually compatible. Some of these thinkers appeal to the very nature of historical or testimonial knowledge, some to the contingent nature of historical events or to the free and deductively unpredictable will of God, some to both of these grounds, and some to yet another kind of considerations. I do not suggest, of course, that all such Christian authors take historical apologetics as epistemically worthless or Christian historical evidence as unable to provide a specifically Christian belief with some sort of probability. On the contrary, they mostly hold that historical apologetics renders Christian belief reasonable, credible, and probable (in some sense). But they do display modesty in the said respect: their writings imply that by means of Christian apologetics we cannot attain evident (as opposed to epistemically justified or, in some sense, merely probable) knowledge of the truth of Christianity. Again, in this point R. Swinburne and T. McGrew agree with this tradition of apologetic – or, if you prefer, meta-apologetic – reflection.[290] I think a mere list of the apologetic reasons so far proposed for the truth of Christianity will help to explain why. For the sake of arrangement, let's classify them, howbeit roughly and, to a certain extent, vaguely.

Reasons have been proposed for *bare* theism (the claim that God exists) which do not include among their evidence *specific historical* data. In Swinburne's terminology, the reasons for bare theism which do not include specific historical data constitute the discipline of *bare* natural theology.[291] Among the reasons of bare natural theology, in turn, are such whose *a posteriori* evidence (if any), historical or not, is neither extensive nor very specific. Such *a posteriori* evidence, typically, need not be based on testimony.

I include into this category of reasons or arguments within bare natural theology especially the reasons or arguments from: apprehending something than nothing greater can be apprehended (remember Anselm); one's having a tremendous idea of God (recall Descartes); abstract objects (like propositions, numbers, sets, counterfactuals, universals, truth-values); change, efficient causality, contingency, gradation of perfections, final causality (recall Aristotle and Aquinas); an analysis of what it means for real existents to exist really (Aquinas, Barry Miller, W. F. Vallicella); the possibility of an efficient cause (see Scotus); enduring existence (see David Braine); a need of a sufficient reason for the existence of the universe (recall Leibniz and Samuel Clarke); the universe as an interacting whole (defended by William Norris Clarke); the beginning of the universe (check Kalām cosmological arguments against infinite past and physical cosmogonies on the very early, hot, dense, and small stage of the known universe and its beginning; both employed mainly by W. L. Craig); the simplicity of laws of nature (championed by Swinburne) or the effectiveness of mathematics (pondered on seminally by Mark Steiner); consciousness (e.g., intentionality, qualia, colors); moral values or moral norms or knowledge of them; aesthetic values or knowledge of them; the fact of certain highly abstract

[290] Cf. R. Swinburne, *The Existence of God* (op. cit., pp. 14, 136-37, 155, 329-30), for Swinburne's rejection of the claim that the available evidences are, individually or jointly, deductively demonstrative even of (bare) theism. *A fortiori*, the same rejection is made by Swinburne concerning Trinitarian theism; see his book *The Christian God*, op. cit., p. 191. The McGrews do not believe even in successful deductive, as opposed to merely probabilistic, demonstrations of the existence of the external world; cf. T. and L. McGrew, "Psychology for Armchair Philosophers," op. cit. For T. McGrew's qualms about deductive arguments in historical apologetics, cf. his "Miracles," op. cit., ## 2.2.1 and 2.2.2.

[291] See R. Swinburne, "Natural Theology, Its "Dwindling Probabilities" and "Lack of Rapport" ", *Faith and Philosophy* 21, No. 4 (2004), pp. 533, 535.

knowledge (in mathematics or logic); opportunities for humans to do significant good and evil (Swinburne's theme); one's own and ordinary religious experience (Swinburne again); the general spread, both diachronic and synchronic, of reported putative miracles or of certain sorts of religious experience (Swinburne once more); the overall distribution of goods and evils (J. Butler); fortunate coincidences (G. N. Schlesinger, J. F. Sennett); the common consent, both diachronic and synchronic, that God, or a God-like entity, exists; the transformation of a person's character upon acting on religious belief (P. K. Moser). It should be granted these arguments of bare natural theology do not make p-evident Christianity, or the Trinity doctrine. They succeed in this neither individually nor jointly. Of course, we should also put aside here apologetic reasons arising from one's own religious experience.

Among the reasons of bare natural theology are also those whose *a posteriori* evidence *is* relatively extensive or relatively specific. And such evidence typically needs to be based on testimony, at least partially.[292] I include into this category of reasons or arguments within bare natural theology especially the reasons or arguments from minute scientific data such as: laws of nature and physical constants allowing for carbon-based life or intelligent life; external astrophysical conditions allowing for intelligent life on Earth or for investigation of outer space from Earth; biochemical complexity of life on Earth or of its particular life-forms (i.e., so called design arguments).[293] Again, these arguments of bare natural theology do not make it p-evident,

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[292] Here's a related point on historical scholarship, which, however, could be easily amended for any other discipline. The point was made by Samuel Hinds (1793 – 1872), an English historian, apologist and logician, and a co-author of *History of the Christian Church in the First Century* (London, Griffin, Bohn, and Company 1862), together with the English theologian, philosopher, historian, apologist, and logician John Henry Newman (1801 – 1890). "The most industrious and able scholar, after spending a life on some individual point of evidence … must, after all, (it would seem,) rest by far the greater part of his faith, immediately on the testimony of others; as thousands in turn will rest their faith on his testimony … even the most learned are no further exceptions to this case, than in the particular branch of evidence which they have studied. Nay, even in their use of this, it will be surprising, when we come to reflect on it, how great a portion must be examined, only through statements resting on testimony of others." S. Hinds, *An Inquiry into the Proofs, Nature, and Extent of Inspiration, and into the Authority of Scripture*, Oxford, W. Baxter 1831, pp. 34-35. Bradley Monton (*1972), a prominent young figure in contemporary American analytic philosophy of religion, noted recently the common need to rely on the authority of certain physicists in connection with design arguments from life-permitting physical constants. See his *Seeking God in Science: An Atheist Defends Intelligent Design*, Buffalo, Broadview Press 2009, pp. 80-82.

[293] For well-disposed treatments of versions of the listed arguments of bare natural theology, see especially J. P. Moreland and W. L. Craig (eds.), *The Blackwell Companion to Natural Theology*, op. cit; A. Plantinga, "Two Dozen (Or So) Theistic Arguments," in *Alvin Plantinga*, Deane-Peter Baker (ed.), New York, Cambridge University Press 2007, pp. 210-227; P. J. Kreeft and R. K. Tacelli, *Handbook of Catholic Apologetics*, op. cit., ch. 3; Christopher F. J. Martin, *Thomas Aquinas*, op. cit.; L. Novák, *„Scire Deum esse"*, op. cit. (on Scotus's argument); B. Miller, *From Existence to God: A Contemporary Philosophical Argument*, London and New York, Routledge 1992; W. F. Vallicella, *A Paradigm Theory of Existence: Onto-Theology Vindicated*, Dordrecht, Kluwer Academic Publishers 2002; D. Braine (*1940), *The Reality of Time and the Existence of God: The Project of Proving God's Existence*, Oxford, Clarendon Press 1988; W. N. Clarke, *The One and the Many: A Contemporary Thomistic Metaphysics*, Notre Dame, University of Notre Dame Press 2001; R. Swinburne, *The Existence of God*, op. cit., especially ch. 14; M. Steiner (*1942), *The Applicability of Mathematics as a Philosophical Problem*, Cambridge (Massachusetts) and London, Harvard University Press 1998; Dean L. Overman, *A Case against Accident and Self-Organization*, New York, Rowman & Littlefield 1997; Stephen C. Meyer (*1958), *Signature in the Cell: DNA and the Evidence for Intelligent Design*, New York, HarperOne 2009; Guillermo Gonzalez (*1963) and Jay Wesley Richards, *The Privileged Planet: How Our Place in the Cosmos is Designed for Discovery*, Washington, Regnery Publishing, Inc. 2004; J. Butler, *The Analogy of Religion*, op. cit.; G. N. Schlesinger, "Miracles," in *A Companion to Philosophy of*

whether separately or in a combination, that Christianity, or the Trinity doctrine, is true. If they did, there would seem to be no need for those having the reasons of bare natural theology at their disposal to expand it into a ramified (Christian) natural theology.

What Swinburne calls *ramified* natural theology is what I've called Christian apologetics. Others call it fundamental theology, historical apologetics, or simply apologetics. This discipline is constituted by the reasons of bare natural theology *and*, in addition to them, by the reasons for Christian theism which proceed from relatively *specific historical* data.[294]

Such data are involved in the reasons from: the extent of consent, both diachronic and synchronic, about there being a sort of after-life; reported paranormal phenomena; a consensus of biblical scholars on certain historical matters (repeatedly surveyed by G. R. Habermas); external historical or archeological corroboration of the Bible; external historical evidence for datation or authorship of certain parts of the bible; internal evidence for the genre of certain parts of the Bible; overall coherence of certain parts the Bible; apparently undesigned coincidences in details among parts of the Bible (a sort of reason recently revived by T. McGrew); the absence of contemporary competitive accounts; the history of Israel, whether ancient, 1st century or later (an issue employed, e.g., by J. H. Newman); prophecies (favorites of Pascal, Leibniz, and Newton); the deeds, character, teaching or sufferings of Jesus of Nazareth; testimonies for miracles (especially for the resurrection of Jesus, highlighted by Habermas, Swinburne, McGrew, W. L. Craig, and Licona), testimonies for revelations or for extraordinary religious experiences; the spread of the Christian religion in the early centuries of the CE (lauded in the writings of Augustine and Aquinas); the lasting existence of certain public monuments or practices, instituted since an event of apologetic significance (a point pressed by Charles Leslie); the continuity of existence, organization or teaching of Christian churches (explored by Swinburne); intellectual, moral or other sort of eminence certain Christians in human history (especially those canonized); moral, intellectual or other sorts of fruitfulness of the Christian religion.

These historical arguments have been buttressed in some writings by considerations of: the morally, cognitively or otherwise wretched human condition; the existence or significance of human free will; *a priori* and *a posteriori* non-historical considerations on behalf of the Trinity doctrine; moral goodness or intellectual erudition of personally known Christian believers; fortunate coincidences in human history; and also by addressing the extent of evil in the world, and the reasons proposed for religions incompatible with Christianity.[295]

Religion, P. L. Quinn and C. Taliaferro (eds.), op. cit., pp. 362-363; J. F. Sennett, *The Reluctant Disciple*, op. cit., ch. 5; Loren Meierding, "The *Consensus Gentium* Argument," *Faith and Philosophy* 15, No. 3 (1998), pp. 271-297; P. K. Moser, *The Evidence for God: Religious Knowledge Reexamined*, New York, Cambridge University Press 2010. From the arguments of bare natural theology, Swinburne includes into his overall cumulative case only versions of the arguments from: the existence of the universe, the beginning of the universe (as supported by physical science), simplicity of laws, laws and physical constants well-disposed to (intelligent) life and formation of aims and intentions, consciousness, moral awareness, provisions for morally significant deeds, and the general spread of religious experience.

[294] Cf. R. Swinburne, "Natural Theology, Its "Dwindling Probabilities" and "Lack of Rapport" ", op. cit., pp. 533, 535-538. See also his books *The Resurrection of God Incarnate*, op. cit., pp. 209-212; *Faith and Reason*, op. cit., pp. 110-118 and ch. 7; *Revelation*, op. cit., pp. 347-350, 355-356; *Was Jesus God?*, op. cit., pp. 5, 25, 86.

[295] For both the historical reasons of ramified natural theology and the mentioned buttressing considerations, see especially the following works. Stephen E. Braude (not a theist), *Immortal Remains: The Evidence for Life After Death*, Lanham, Rowman & Littlefield 2003; W. H. Turton, *The Truth of Christianity*, op. cit.; N. L. Geisler, *Baker*

This completes my list of the main sorts of reasons and considerations so far proposed in Christian apologetics. The list is not meant to be exhaustive. Each listed kind has various instances. Of course, I do not intend to discuss each kind exhaustively, whether in terms of its instances or further sub-kinds. In fact, I do not list the kinds by their representative examples. The list and arrangement of apologetic reasons was provided simply to recall or convey the idea of what Christian apologetics is about and what is the nature of its reasons. I think the survey could, by its mere statement, explain why the significant part – indeed, even the majority – of Christian apologists and Christian writers reflecting on Christian apologetics has opined that this cannot, as such, bring out evident knowledge of the truth of the Christian religion. With this assessment my own experience of reading Christian apologetics for several years concurs. I've seen many apologetic reasons, but never one which would make it *evident* to me that Christianity, or the Trinity doctrine, is *true* (as opposed to epistemically justified or, in some sense, merely probable). It also seems to me very plausible that the so far proposed reasons of Christian apologetics make neither Christianity, nor the Trinity doctrine, evident (independently, at least, of religious experience). It also seems to me that this is true whether we take the reasons of Christian apologetics individually, in a combination, or all of them together. I've encountered writings of several apologists who believe otherwise.[296] What I found were assertions that this or

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Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics, op. cit.; P. J. Kreeft and R. K. Tacelli, *Handbook of Catholic Apologetics*, op. cit.; A. Dulles, *A History of Apologetics*, op. cit.; R. Swinburne, *The Resurrection of God Incarnate*, op. cit., especially ch. Appendix: Formalizing the Argument; R. Swinburne, "Natural Theology, Its "Dwindling Probabilities" and "Lack of Rapport" ", op. cit., sect. II; R. Swinburne, *Faith and Reason*, op. cit., ch 7; R. Swinburne, *Revelation*, op. cit., especially ch. Appendix: Formalizing the Argument; R. Swinburne, *Was Jesus God?*, op. cit., especially pp. 59-60, 77, 83-85, 112-113, 126-133, 166-170; T. and L. McGrew, "The Argument from Miracles," op. cit.; T. McGrew, "Miracles," op. cit.; T. McGrew, audio interviews on historical apologetics and internal evidences (including undesigned coincidences) and external evidences for the historical reliability of the Bible, available via http://www.apologetics315.com/2011/08/audio-resources-by-tim-mcgrew.html (accessed November 9, 2011); Hugh G. Gauch, Jr., John A. Bloom and Robert C. Newman, "Public Theology and Scientific Method: Formulating Reasons That Count Across Worldviews," *Philosophia Christi* 4, No. 1 (2002), pp. 45-88; R. C. Newman, J. A. Bloom and H. G. Gauch, Jr., "Public Theology and Prophecy Data: Factual Evidence That Counts for the Biblical World View," *Journal of The Evangelical Theological Society* 46, No. 1 (2003), pp. 79-110; Brian Hebblethwaite, *In Defence of Christianity*, Oxford, Oxford University Press 2005, chs. 3, 4, 6 (general historical considerations about the fruitfulness of Christian religion); Stewart C. Goetz, "The Argument from Evil," in *The Blackwell Companion to Natural Theology*, op. cit., ch. 8. From the historical reasons for Christian religion, Swinburne employs those arising from: external historical corroboration for the authorship and datation of the (New Testament) gospels, Acts, and St. Paul's letters; a consensus of biblical scholars; internal marks of genre, authorship and the overall coherence between the gospels, Acts, and Paul's letters; the history of the Old Testament Israel; life and sayings of Jesus of Nazareth; early testimonies for Jesus's resurrection and for Jesus's tomb being found empty a couple of days after his crucifixion; the continuity of organization and of teachings of Christian churches. Swinburne also considers: the morally and cognitively disconsolate human condition; the existence and significance of human free will; and metaphysical arguments for the Trinity doctrine. He addresses in detail the problem of evil and, to some extent, competitive religions. T. McGrew focuses on the history of the 1st century Israel; external historical and archeological corroboration of the gospels, Acts, and Paul's letters, and of their authorship and datation; internal evidence for their datation and authorship (including the evidence of undesigned coincidences); the overall coherence of the gospels and Acts; a consensus of biblical scholars; life and teaching of Jesus of Nazareth; early testimonies for Jesus's resurrection.

[296] I provide the following list of such Christian authors and their works.

R. Llull, *Disputatio fidei et intellectus*, in R. Llull, *Opera omnia*, Vol. IV, Ivo Salzinger (ed.), Mainz, Mayer 1722. On Llull, see especially G. Vázquez, *Commentariorum, ac disputationum In primam partem Sancti Thomae*, Vol. II, op. cit., disp. 133. Llull's attempts to argue out Christianity, however, are rather metaphysical than historical.

Juan de Lugo (1583 – 1660), *Disputationes scholasticae, et morales de virtute fidei divinae*, Lyons, Sumpt. Phillipi Borde, Laurentii Arnaud, & Claudii Rigaud 1656, disp. 1, sect. 7. According to S. K. Knebel ("Rodrigo de Arriaga (1592-1667) in die fallibilistische Theorie der katholischen Glaubensgewissheit," op. cit., p. 318), this is the most voluminous treatise on the virtue of faith in the era of Baroque scholasticism. For a excellent and brief, although critical, exposition of Lugo's views on faith, see V. Šanda, *Synopsis theologiae dogmaticae specialis*, Vol. I, op. cit., § 123, pts. A and C.

Miguel de Elizalde (1616 – 1678), *Forma verae religionis quaerendae et invendia*, Naples, Apud Hyacinthum Passerum 1662, q. 31.

T. González de Santalla, *Manuductio ad conversionem mahumetanorum*, Vol. I, op. cit., lib. 2, cap. 1-6. González was a disciple of Elizalde. Both tried to make Christianity evident by means of historical inputs. They appeal to purported testimonies evidently coming from witnesses neither willing to deceive, nor deceived by someone or something else, and in a position to know reliably whether what they testified for was true. Both were influenced by the mathematical ideal of philosophical method they observed in some works of R. Descartes. Both were among the first to insist that Christianity could be rigorously demonstrated, though only *in attestante*. But their own writings do not proceed more geometrico (i.e., from distinctly laid definitions, to axioms, to theorem or lemmas, to conclusions). See also A. Dulles, *A History of Apologetics*, op. cit., pp. 154-156. Notably, the mathematical ideal was deemed by Leibniz as unsuitable for the exposition of positive reasons of Christian apologetics and theology (see M. R. Antognazza, *Leibniz on the Trinity and the Incarnation*, op. cit., ch. 9). Pascal was of the same opinion (see his *Thoughts*, op. cit., sect. I). Appeal to historical data is essential for all the remaining members of this list.

Edward Worsley (1605 – 1676), *Reason and Religion. Or the Certain Rule of Faith*, Antwerp, Michael Cnobbaert 1672, pp. 570-579.

Nicolas "Jean" Filleau de la Chaise (1631 – 1688), "A Discourse on Monsieur Pascall's Thoughts and Meditations," pp. 271-274; "A Discourse on the Proofs of the Truth of the Books of Moses," pp. 329-332; "That there is another kind of Demonstration, and as certain as that of Geometry," pp. 368-375; all in B. Pascal and N. Filleau de la Chaise (the latter under the pen-name Bois de la Cour), *Monsieur Pascall's Thoughts, Meditations, and Prayers*, London, Printed for Jacob Tonson 1688. Cf. W. L. Craig, *Reasonable Faith*, op. cit., pp. 214-215. Filleau de la Chaise was a disciple of Pascal. Yet, it is doubtful Pascal agreed with his student that apologetics can strictly guarantee the truth of Christianity. Cf. B. Pascal, *Thoughts*, op. cit., # 564; C. M. Natoli, *Fire in the Dark*, op. cit., pp. 75 and 93.

M. Knutzen, *Philosophischer Beweis von der Wahrheit der christlichen Religion*, op. cit. Cf. the introduction ibid., by U. L. Lehner.

Nils Wallerius (1706 – 1764), *Praenotiones theologicae*, 6 vols., Stockholm, Sumptibus Laurentii Salvii 1756-1765. Both Knutzen (mentioned in this dissertation already) and Wallerius (who was a Swedish philosopher, theologian, mathematician, and logician) were inspired by the expository method of the German philosopher, mathematician, logician and theologian Christian Wolff (1679 – 1754). However, the positive arguments of Wolff's main apologetic work – *Theologia naturalis methodo scientifica pertractata*, 2 vols., Frankfurt and Leipzig, Officina libraria Rengeriana 1736-1737 – belongs rather to bare natural theology than to ramified (historically loaded) natural theology. See also A. Dulles, *A History of Apologetics*, op. cit., pp. 192-193; and Tore Frängsmyr, "Christian Wolff's Mathematical Method and its Impact on the Eighteenth Century," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 36, No. 4 (1975), pp. 662-668.

Charles Leslie (1650 – 1722), *A Short and Easy Method with Deists, Wherein the Certainty of the Christian Religion is Demonstrated by Infallible Proof from Four Rules*, *in a Letter to a Friend*, Cambridge, William Hilliard 1805.

Giovanni Perrone (1794 – 1876), *Tractatus de vera religione*, especially cap. 4; in G. Perrone, *Praelectiones theologicae*, Vol. I, Paris, J. Leroux and Gaume Fratres 1854. Perrone was a teacher of J. H. Newman in Rome. Cf. A. Dulles, *A History of Apologetics*, op. cit., pp. 238, 242-244, 246-247, 289.

that argument or evidence, or an accumulation of certain arguments or evidences, demonstrates the truth of Christianity with complete certainty and without a shred of doubt. What I haven't found is something more than mere assertions of this kind or, at best, sweeping allusions, simply appended to the eulogized arguments or evidences. Sometimes these apologetic arguments were, or evidence was extensive, but, by my own lights, they never evidently guaranteed their conclusion, contrary to the assurance of these authors.

They make proclamations such as: the infidel can prove to himself strictly scientifically God's existence, veracity and wisdom and also the fact of God's revelation of certain doctrines (so V. Šanda). Some (e.g., J. Gredt) remark that a certain, and supposedly evidently obtaining, mass of historical evidence would be evidently left without explanation or sufficient reason if Christianity wasn't true. Some just report that a certain accumulation of apologetic reasons, including the historical ones, makes it evident that Christianity is true (J. de Lugo, P. H. Furfey). Some authors of this latter kind at the same time concede that this inference need not be reconstructed (Furfey, N. Filleau de la Chaise); it may remain logically unanalyzed, so to speak.[297] Others suppose the exclusion of irrational fear of error that a believer enjoys in faith on

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J. Gredt, *Die aristotelisch-thomistische Philosophie*, Vol. II, op. cit., ## 564, 566, 568-569, 614, 617. Ad PSR 568.
V. Šanda, *Synopsis theologiae dogmaticae specialis*, Vol. I, op. cit., § 121, # 4; cf. § 116, # B.7.
Paul Hanly Furfey (1896 – 1992), *Three Theories of Society*, Washington, The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy 2007, pp. 86-87.

With some plausibility we can include into this list also W. Poynter's *Evidences and Characters of the Christian Religion*, op. cit., ch. III.

[297] P. H. Furfey (*Three Theories of Society*, op. cit., chs. 9-10) sees himself in agreement with J. H. Newman, concerning the points that (i) Christianity is apologetically evident, but (ii) it need not be explained how exactly. As for (i), in 1843 Newman published sermons he had given at the University of Oxford. In the thirteenth sermon, we read: "… as to the difficulty of detecting and expressing the real reasons on which we believe, let this be considered, – how very differently an argument strikes the mind at one time and another, according to its particular state, or the accident of the moment. At one time it is weak and unmeaning, – at another, it is nothing short of demonstration." (J. H. Newman, *Fifteen University Sermons Preached Before the University of Oxford Between A.D. 1826 and 1843*, London, Longmans, Green, and Co. 1909, p. 271.) It may well be, however, that Newman made such occasional insights dependent on religious experience. Anyway, what we have here is just another assertion of insight. As for (ii), a few pages earlier Newman writes that: "No analysis is subtle and delicate enough to represent adequately the state of mind under which we believe, or the subjects of belief, as they are presented to our thoughts." (Ibid., p. 267.) He was expressly and repeatedly skeptical to attempts at a logically detailed, apologetic, deductive demonstration. His further remarks on this point are worth quoting. In 1841, still as an Anglican, he wrote in a letter to the London Times: "Life is not long enough for a religion of inferences; we shall never have done beginning, if we determine to begin with proof. We shall ever be laying our foundations … We shall never get at our first principles. … [For then] you must prove your proofs and analyse your elements, sinking farther and farther, and finding 'in the lowest depth a lower deep,' … [However, l]et no one suppose that in saying this I am maintaining that all proofs are equally difficult, and all propositions equally debatable. Some assumptions are greater than others, and some doctrines involve postulates larger than others, and more numerous." (In J. H. Newman, *Discussions and Arguments on Various Subjects*, London, Longmans, Green, and Co. 1907, p. 295; quoted by himself later in his famous *Grammar of Assent*, ch. 4, § 3.) In a letter of December 8, 1849, already after his conversion to Catholicism (which had taken place between 1843 and 1845), Newman commented disapprovingly on those apologists in Rome, perhaps including his teacher G. Perrone, who "think proofs ought to be convincing which in fact are not" and "are accustomed to speak of the argument for Catholicism as a demonstration, and to see no force in objections to it, and to admit no perplexity of intellect which is not directly and immediately wilful." (In Wilfrid Ward, *The Life of John*

someone else's authority (= cognitive competence and veracity) is rational only if it is evident to the believer, although not with irresistible assent, that the authority obtains and testifies for the believed claim (Šanda). Others threaten that if it can't be apologetically evident that Christianity is true, then infidels can't be converted (T. Gonzalez).

Anyway, none of these hints is helpful. I mean, none of them is helpful in making Christianity, or at least the Trinity doctrine, apologetically evident. Assertions that this or that putative fact, or a collection of putative facts, guarantees the truth of Christianity do not guarantee evidently sound demonstration. Piling up a heap of evidences and adding behind them "hence, it's evident that Christianity is true" won't do either. Or, it hasn't yet, to my knowledge. The general problem is always the same, and the same as everywhere else. Either some involved inference is not evidently valid, or some involved premise is not evidently true, or both. Let me illustrate.

To take one simple example, I will consider now the argument for the resurrection of Jesus, authored by the English polemicist Charles Leslie (1650 – 1722) and published in his slim (c. 60 pp. long) book, boldly named *A Short and Easy Method with Deists, Wherein the Certainty of the Christian Religion is Demonstrated by Infallible Proof from Four Rules, in a Letter to a Friend* (1697). Leslie's exposition of the argument fills up only a half of his book. In brief, he writes a historical claim is true with (utter) certainty if it certainly satisfies the following four criteria:

> (i) "That the *matter of fact* be such, as that men's outward senses, their *eyes* and *ears*, may be judges of it."
> (ii) "That it be done publicly in the face of the world."
> (iii) "That not only public *monuments* be kept up in memory of it, but some outward *actions* to be performed."
> (iv) "That such *monuments*, and such *actions* or *observances*, be instituted, and do commence from the *time*, that the *matter of fact* was done."[298]

Henry Cardinal Newman, Based on His Private Journals and Correspondence, Vol. I, New York, Longmans, Green, and Co. 1912, p. 247; cf. A. Dulles, *A History of Apologetics*, op. cit., p. 246.) In 1850, Newman wrote: "For myself, I would simply confess that no doctrine of the Church can be rigorously proved by historical evidence: but at the same time that no doctrine can be simply disproved by it. Historical evidence reaches a certain way, more or less, towards a proof of the Catholic doctrines; often nearly the whole way …" (In J. H. Newman, *Certain Difficulties Felt by Anglicans in Catholic Teaching*, Vol. II, London, Longmans, Green, and Co. 1900, p. 312.) In *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent* (published in 1870), ch. 8, § 2, we read: "It is plain that formal logical sequence is not in fact the method by which we are enabled to become certain of what is concrete …"; such matter are "… too subtle and circuitous to be converted into syllogisms, too numerous and various for such conversion, even were they convertible …"; they "… baffle our powers of analysis and, and cannot be brought under logical rule, because they cannot be submitted to logical statistics." (London, Longmans, Green, and Co. 1903, pp. 288 and 301; similarly and notably, B. Pascal, *Thoughts*, op. cit., section I; and G. K. Chesterton, *The Everlasting Man*, op. cit., Pt. II. ch. IV.) But, in ch. 10, §2, of the *Grammar*, we find a conciliatory remark: "I am suspicious … of scientific demonstrations in a question of concrete fact, in a discussion between fallible men. However, let those demonstrate who have the gift … For me, it is more congenial to my own judgment to attempt to prove Christianity in … [an] informal way …" (Pp. 410-411, ibid.) Here, in contrast with his earlier opinions, Newman may well be conceding a logically reconstructed, rigorous, apologetic demonstration of Christianity can be, in principle, performed. In that case, Newman's motivation for this change of opinion concerning the point (ii) is unknown to me.

[298] C. Leslie, *A Short and Easy Method with Deists*, op. cit., p. 12; italics original. Cf. also p. iv of the preface by William Jones (ibid.).

The overall point is this. Leslie thinks the historical claim of the resurrection of Jesus certainly satisfies all the four conditions, and so is infallibly demonstrated as true. The resurrection, in turn, is taken by Leslie – together with similarly attested miraculous works of Jesus, the early spread of the Christian religion, early testimonies and martyrdoms for its truth, prophecies – as infallibly demonstrating the truth of Jesus's teaching, and so demonstrating also the truth of the Christian religion, understood as consisting in that teaching. (Leslie also argues the marks are satisfied by the historical claims to the effect that Moses brought a nation from Egypt through the Red Sea and by other miracle claims recorded in the first five books of the Bible.) We will take a closer look at Leslie's argument for the resurrection of Jesus.

The mark (i) is viewed by Leslie as surely satisfied by the resurrection story because Jesus was, in Leslie's opinion, surely proclaimed as appearing to people after his resurrection, speaking to them, eating food with them, or inviting them to touch him. In other words, if Jesus was resurrected in the proclaimed way, then this fact was apparent to normal human senses. All humans, rightly positioned and with common sense organs, concepts and degree of attention, would observe the resurrected Jesus. The mark (ii) is taken by Leslie as surely fulfilled because the resurrected Jesus was proclaimed to appear to many people, sometimes in groups, including his disciples and a group of more than 500 people at once. The resurrection of Jesus, if it happened as told, took place publicly and was notoriously performed in the presence of many witnesses. The mark (iii) is satisfied by the Christian commemoration of baptism, the last supper, by the transfer of the day of worship from Saturday to Sunday, and by the Christian priesthood. (For the miraculous works of Moses, Leslie mentions Saturday Sabbath, circumcision, and the Levite priesthood.) All these Christian institutions play the role, among other roles, of a lasting public monument of the resurrection of Jesus, and are conjoined with certain lasting public action. Finally, the mark (iv) is satisfied because these public monuments and actions founding took place shortly after the story of the resurrection of Jesus was proclaimed. They were instituted at the time of the alleged event.[299] The first two marks are designed by Leslie to ensure that the original witnesses of the alleged resurrection were neither deceived nor deceiving. Hallucinations of such a sort and extent are taken by Leslie as impossible. So is conspiracy. The last two marks are designed to ensure that the original testimonies for it were not invented much later. The commemorating public monuments and actions relate themselves c. to the year 30 CE. So, these monuments and actions have been performed since the time when the event is told to happen. Anybody who would much later make up a monument or action commemorating the resurrection of c. 30 CE, and the original testimonies for it from that time, could not have made many people believe that the monument or the action had been continued or performed since the time of the alleged event. The people would know that they had never heard of the monument or action before, and so would not take part in it.[300]

In short, Leslie's argument for the resurrection story from its satisfaction of the marks (i)-(iv) seems to consist in the following line of thought. Because it is certain that (iv*) since the time of the alleged resurrection of Jesus, (iii*) many people have performed baptism, the last

[299] See ibid., pp. 29-30, 52-53.

[300] See ibid., pp. 12-14. I thank T. McGrew for drawing my attention to Leslie's argument from the four marks and for an explication of some of its parts (in correspondence). I do not claim, however, that my interpretation of the argument agrees with McGrew's.

supper, Sunday (instead of Saturday) worship, or the ministry of Christian priesthood in commemoration of the claim (among other claims) that many people testified that they observed by their senses the resurrected Jesus at that time, it is certain that (ii*) many people, in fact, (i*) testified at that time that they observed the resurrected Jesus by their senses. And because the latter is certain, the resurrection of Jesus is, in turn, certain, too.

Apparently, all the work the marks (iii) and (iv) do here is to support the marks (i) and (ii). That is, given satisfaction of the marks (i) and (ii), the marks (iii) and (iv) add no further support for the resurrection. If this is a correct reading of Leslie's argument, the interesting part of Leslie's argument is not the step to the resurrection, which is rather common and in Leslie's rendering also undeveloped. The remarkable part is focused in the relatively easily accessible evidence – i.e., the satisfaction of the marks (iii) and (iv) – for a commonly proclaimed evidence – i.e., the satisfaction of the marks (i) and (ii) – for the resurrection of Jesus.

Leslie himself summarizes as follows:

> "… the cause is summed up shortly in this ; though we cannot see, what was done before our time ; yet by the marks, which I have laid down concerning the certainty of *matters of fact*, done before out time, we may be as much assured of the truth of them, as if we saw them with our eyes ; because, whatever *matter of fact* has all the four marks before mentioned, could never have been received, but upon the conviction of the outward senses of all those, who did receive it, as before is demonstrated. Therefore this topic … does stand upon the conviction even of men's outward senses …"[301]

These are brave words. In a reaction, I doubt them as follows. First, fulfillment of the marks (iii) and (iv) is *not* evident or completely certain. It is exceedingly unlikely that someone who proposed in some late period a monument or action commemorating that the resurrection of Jesus happened in c. 30 CE would also succeed in making many people believe that the monument or the action had been continued or performed c. since 30 CE. But even given the people knew that they had never heard of the action before, it still is *not evidently* altogether *impossible*, although it is exceedingly unlikely, that the impostor would eventually make the people believe that they had. Second, even given the marks (iii) and (iv) are met evidently or certainly, the marks (i) and (ii) aren't. For even assuming that since the time of the alleged resurrection of Jesus many people have performed the last supper etc. in commemoration of the claim that many testified that they met the resurrected Jesus, it is not evidently impossible that the first commemorators were deceiving (conspiring) or deceived (hallucinating or cheated) about the first witnesses. Thirdly, even if all the four marks are satisfied, it is not evident from them alone that the resurrection happened. For even if many people testified in c. 30 CE that they saw, heard or touched the resurrected Jesus after his death, whether individually or in groups, it is *not* evidently impossible that they were deceiving or deceived about that. And this will remain true even when we assume that all these witnesses were sane, many of them suffered much for, and none of them benefited anything from bearing this kind of testimony. When explaining the importance of the last two marks, Leslie himself uses the terminology of moral impossibility,

[301] Ibid., pp. 45-46; italics original. Proclamations of demonstration are also present in the title of Leslie's book and on its pp. 10-11, 30-31.

which is commonly used for a scenario viewed as approaching strict impossibility, without implying the scenario is strictly impossible. Leslie writes:

> "… suppose any man should pretend that yesterday he divided the Thames, in presence of all the people of London, and carried the whole city, men women, and children, over to Southwark, on dry land, the waters standing like walls on both sides ; I say, it is *morally* impossible, that he could persuade the people of London, that this was true, when every man woman, and child could contradict him, and say that this was a notorious falsehood, for that they had not seen the Thames so divided, nor had gone over on dry land."[302]

Here, Leslie sounds quite modest. Elsewhere, as we have seen in the preceding quote, his wording is more vehement.

Remarkably, according to T. McGrew satisfaction of the four criteria by a historical claim simply does *not* generally entail the truth of the historical claim. There is some antecedent probability that the claim is false which leaves some probability of its falsehood even when the marks are taken into account. More promising could be to say that the marks jointly rule out the falsehood of the claim effectively, rather than strictly, and make the claim reasonable, rather than demonstrated. In McGrew's own words:

> "… there is *not* a *necessary* connection between an event's satisfying the criteria and its being true. In this case, perhaps the most promising approach would be to argue that the criteria *effectively* rule out explanations other than the truth of the claim. … Leslie … holds that, as the claim of the resurrection meets all four criteria …, the certainty of the matter of fact in question is "demonstrated." This rather bold claim opens the possibility of refutation of Leslie's principle by counterexample, though reportedly Conyers Middleton [1683 – 1750], a contemporary of Hume whose critique of the ecclesiastical miracles was notable for its thoroughness, searched vainly for years for a counterexample to Leslie's principle. Be that as it may, … [Leslie's] argument may also be constructed on the basis of a more modest principle, such as that if any reported event meets all four of these criteria, then it is *reasonable* to accept its historicity. … Intuitively, extreme antecedent improbability *ought to carry some weight* in our evaluation of the credibility of a factual claim."[303]

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[302] Ibid., p. 13; my italics.

[303] T. McGrew, "Miracles," op. cit., # 2.2.2; my italics. I believe Middleton's efforts, though not his name, are reported in *Christianity Against Infidelity; Or, the Truth of the Gospel History* (Cincinnati, John A. Gurley 1849), authored by the American theologian and apologist Thomas Baldwin Thayer (1812 – 1886). "Leslie's Short Method with Deists is the best work on the subject of this section [Argument from Existing Institutions] ever written, and is altogether unanswerable. The writer lays down four marks or rules which are "incompatible with any imposture that ever yet has been, or can possibly be." An attempt was made by a sceptical gentleman in Scotland to find an imposture having all these four marks; but having examined the history and religion of all nations, and having for twenty years been on the inquiry and search, he at last gave it up as a hopeless task. The work is what it professes to be, a " Short Method," containing about forty pages, and should be read by all, believers and unbelievers." (Ibid., pp. 277-278.) Still, it is one thing not to be able to find a counterexample to a rule, and another to say a counterexample is therefore *logically* impossible, let alone *evidently*, or utterly certainly, logically impossible. Analogically, if one searched frantically but in vain for a human jumping three yards high, he could plausibly come to a conclusion of physical impossibility of such a feat. But it does not seem true he would be entitled to infer logical impossibility of it. But it does seem he should not be completely certain, and should not take it as evident, that it is logically impossible that a human jumps three yards high.

Finally, Leslie's subsequent appeals to other apologetic evidence, besides that for the resurrection of Jesus, do not suffice to make the truth of Christianity *evident*, in spite of his talk of an "infallible demonstration." Nevertheless, I do not wish to deny his brief book provides a significant contribution to the project of arguing that specifically Christian beliefs have epistemically positive status and enjoy some sort of probability. That is all on Leslie's argument, which has been examined here as an instructive yet concise example of attempts to render Christianity apologetically evident.

I will add now one final comment related to the epistemic category 1.2 from our partition of the ways of how to make the logical (or analytic) possibility of the Trinity doctrine p-evident. Then I will make state a conclusion both about the category 1.2 and the whole category 1.

I'd like to remark that there's something suspicious about the above mentioned proposal according to which one should take Christianity (or, say, at least the Trinity doctrine) as evidently entailed by some evidence. More accurately, such a proposal is suspicious when conjoined with saying nothing about how, exactly, Christianity is entailed by the evidence. Maybe I would be said by someone at this moment: you either see it is, or you don't; there's nothing else to add. Well, I don't; I really don't see it. I do concede, however, that sometimes something is evident to somebody, although he can adduce any further information which would clarify the matter. E.g., at times it may be explicitly evident to me that: for any p, $\sim(p \,\&\, \sim p)$; this appears red; $2 + 2 = 4$; or for any p, q, $((p \rightarrow q) \,\&\, p) \rightarrow q$. And if asked why any of these propositions is true, I doubt I should but invite the inquirer to just ponder carefully on any of those propositions again. However, and this is what I want to stress, all of them are very simple; i.e., simple in an intuitive sense I won't try to explore here. In contrast, the accumulation of apologetic reasons proposed as entailing Christianity has always been far from simple. So at least at this point there seems to be no parallel to which the advocate of the evident and primitive entailment of Christianity could appeal. In fact, as I have already pointed out, most of apologetics makes non-deductive claims of support for Christianity. The advanced cumulative cases of R. Swinburne and T. McGrew are no exception to this common rule.[304]

[304] I wish to add a note on Aquinas and his intellectual and religious tradition. In his *Summa contra gentiles* (op. cit.), St. Thomas avers as follows. The sole way to convince unbelievers of the truth of Christianity is from the authority of the Bible, confirmed by miracles (bk. 1, ch. 9, n. 2). Such miracles, including prophecies, are available. They show manifestly that Christianity comes from God (bk. 3, ch. 154, n. 8-9). The most certain sign is the conversion of the world to Christian faith and its morals by simple and humble men (bk. 1, ch. 6, n. 3). From ancient prophecies, it is manifest that this happened as a result of God's design (ibid., n. 1). In *Summa Theologica* (op. cit.), we find two interesting remarks on the miracles of Jesus. Although each separate argument for his resurrection would not suffice in itself for showing manifestly the reality of this event, all taken collectively (omnia simul accepta) manifest it perfectly. Aquinas mentions arguments from the following testimonies for the resurrection of Jesus, which are reported in the New Testament: human testimonies; the sayings of the angels the day when Jesus was resurrected; and Jesus's own assertions, supported by his miracles, reported, again, in the same document (III, q. 55, a. 6, ad 1). Aquinas also writes that Jesus's persecutors had evident signs of his divinity, in his miraculous works III, q. 47, a. 5, co.). But we may put this latter case aside, as it would constitute extraordinary religious experience (on my definition of religious experience). And the rest is, de novo, just asserting stuff. A. Dulles (*A History of Apologetics*, op. cit., p. 121), e.g., justly commented on Aquinas's argument from the early spread of Christianity: "… one may put a good many questions that Thomas does not answer. To show that this was not explicable through natural causes would require an unimaginably complicated historical and psychological investigation. In an Augustine,

In the end, it really looks as if nobody has attained p-evident knowledge of the truth of the Trinity doctrine by way of an *a posteriori* argument from testimony. And as was stated already, nobody has acquired immediate, evident, *a posteriori* testimonial knowledge of the truth of the Trinity doctrine, independent of religious experience. So it is plausible that human evident *a posteriori* testimonial knowledge of the logical (analytic) possibility of the Trinity doctrine, from the truth of the doctrine, and independent of religious experience hasn't been realized. This leaves the epistemic category 1.2 vacuous (so far).

This result, in turn, together with the results concerning the categories 1.1.1 and 1.1.2, leaves the whole category 1 vacuous. That is, I contend that our hitherto inquiries within the partition make it plausible that humans haven't accomplished, independently of religious experience, evident knowledge of the logical (analytic) possibility of the Trinity doctrine from the *truth* of the doctrine. Let's move to the second half of our partition, covering ways how to know evidently, and independently of religious experience, the logical (analytic) possibility of the Trinity doctrine, but not from its truth.

IV.1B. Possibility of the doctrine p-evident not from its truth?

First we will take a look at the following broad category.

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whose tactics are manifestly rhetorical, this argument seems quite appropriate; but in Thomas, with his penchant for metaphysical correctness, it is hardly satisfying." More generally, there were discussions among Catholic intellectuals whether the denial of evident, or completely certain, soundness of apologetic reasons is compatible with the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church. In this context, I will mention only two cases. (For others, see *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, op. cit., ## 156 and 812; the pope Leo XIII's encyclical *Aeterni Patris*, # 5; and H. Denzinger's and A. Schönmetzer's *Enchiridion symbolorum*, ## 2765-2769, 3539.) First, in 1679, the pope Innocent XI officially denied the thesis: "Assent to faith is supernatural and useful to salvation with only the probable knowledge of revelation, even with the fear by which one fears lest God has not spoken." (According to S. K. Knebel, "Rodrigo de Arriaga (1592-1667) in die fallibilistische Theorie der katholischen Glaubensgewissheit," op. cit., nt. 23, this thesis was maintained in the works of these three Baroque scholastics: J. Martínez de Ripalda, John Punch /1603 –1661/, and Bartolomeo Mastri da Meldola /1602 – 1673/.) It is an open question, however, what was meant as the upper bounds for something being "only probable." Secondly, in 1907, the pope Pius X officially denied that: "The assent of faith is ultimately based [ultimo innititur] on a sum [congerie] of probabilities." Here, the same interpretational query as before looms in: what is here implicitly understood as the margin of mere probability? Moreover, the statement may concern the rather technical question in what the so called *motive of faith* consists. (On this subject, cf. E. Worsley, *Reason and Religion*, op. cit., pp. 571, 574, 577; and V. Šanda, *Synopsis theologiae dogmaticae specialis*, Vol. I, op. cit., § 118 and § 121, # 2b.) And this is an issue distinct from the one whether mere apologetics makes, or can make, Christianity evident. (In § 124, # A.2, ibid., Šanda provides us with an analogy which could be exploited in this context. Think of St. Augustine. In a sense, one can most firmly adhere to an opinion because of Augustine's authority, at least provided she explored whether a particular book maintaining this opinion was written by Augustine. But when she examines the reasons on the basis of which this book is attributed to Augustine, she cannot assert with complete firmness that the book is really Augustine's work.) Kindred, subtle ambiguities spoil other attempts to depict the doubt about the indubitability of apologetics as unorthodox. Notably, F. de B. Vizmanos, expressly no fan of giving precedence to non-deductive approach to apologetics, concedes that this method is, from the Catholic perspective, perfectly orthodox ("La apologetica de los escolasticos postridentinos," op. cit., pp. 445-446).

2.1. Human evident knowledge of the logical (analytic) possibility of the Trinity doctrine, not from the truth of the doctrine, not from testimony, and independent of religious experience.

The denial of such evident human knowledge of logical possibility of the Trinity doctrine is classic, although maybe less commonly stated than the denial of natural knowability of the doctrine's truth, which was noted when we were discussing the category 1.1. As has already been said above (in section II.9), several esteemed Christian philosophers held that humans can't know logical possibility of the Trinity doctrine without the help of revelation and testimony. I have named Durandus, Molina, Suárez, Valencia, and Leibniz. But there were, or are, also yet more Christian thinkers of this sort of opinion.[305] Suárez, who was an exceedingly well-read scholar, even writes (in the mentioned place) it seems to be an opinion of "all theologians." This isn't an altogether accurate sociological estimation. But, coming from Suárez's erudition, it suggests natural unknowability of logical possibility of the Trinity is, historically, a majority position among those who reflected upon this modal issue.[306] Once more, a closer look at the sub-categories of 2.1 should explain why this is the case.

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[305] Durandus of Saint-Pourçain, *In Petri Lombardi Sententias Theologicas Commentariorum IIII*, Vol. I, op. cit., q. 1, prologus, and dist. 2, q. 4. L. de Molina, *Commentaria In primam D. Thomae partem*, Vol. I, op. cit., q. 32, a. 1. F. Suárez, *De Sanctissimo Trinitatis mysterio*, op. cit., lib. 1, cap 2, n. 4, cap. 11, n. 10; cap. 12, n. 11 (cf. *Disputationes Metaphysicae*, op. cit., disp. 30, sect. 17, n. 12-14; T. Marschler, *Die spekulative Trinitätslehre des Francisco Suárez S.J. in ihrem philosophisch-theologischen Kontext*, op. cit., p. 86). G. de Valencia, *Commentariorum Theologicorum*, Vol. III, op. cit., disp. 2, q. 6, punct. 1. D. Ruiz de Montoya, *Commentaria, Ac Disputationes in primam partem sancti Thomae De Trinitate*, op. cit., disp. 43, sect. 2. For G. W. Leibniz's views on this issue, see M. R. Antognazza, *Leibniz on the Trinity and the Incarnation*, op. cit., pp. xvi-xvii. 49-50, 58-60. Other authors denying knowability of logical possibility of the Trinity doctrine by unaided natural reason are the following: W. Poynter's *Evidences and Characters of the Christian Religion*, op. cit., ch. III, p. 11; M. J. Scheeben, *The Mysteries of Christianity*, op. cit., pp. 28-29; ; V. Šanda, *Synopsis theologiae dogmaticae specialis*, Vol. I, op. cit., § 62. An interpretation by A. R. Pruss ("Faith, Paradox, Reason and the *Argumentum Spiritus Sancti* in Climacus and Kierkegaard," op. cit., pp. 17, 25, 28-29) would also include S. A. Kierkegaard into this category of thinkers. Anyway, all these authors *are* in the given context concerned about *logical*, rather than some other (and stronger), possibility. Some make it clear explicitly that they have in mind possibility in terms of conceptual compatibility (Šanda), others take here possibility in the sense of not involving a contradiction (Suárez, Ruiz de Montoya, Leibniz). The last modal characterization reminds of Aquinas's own characterization of his third kind of possibility, which is logical (cf. nt. 128 above) and notorious (at least for our authors). Finally, concerning Molina, Suárez, Valencia and Ruiz de Montoya, Baroque scholastics generally considered two kinds of possibility. In a narrow sense, something was said to be possible when something (other) was able to realize it. In a broad sense, something was said to be possible when it was logically possible. (Cf. S. Sousedík, *Filosofie v českých zemích mezi středověkem a osvícenstvím* /in Czech/, Prague, Vyšehrad 1997, pp. 125-129; P. Dvořák, *Jan Caramuel z Lobkovic: Vybrané aspekty formální a aplikované logiky* /in Czech, Prague, OIKOYMENH 2006, pp. 222-223.) But, the first kind of possibility was a non-starter to the scholastics, as its application to the Trinity would involve that the triune God was caused. (Cf. F. Suárez, *De Sanctissimo Trinitatis mysterio*, op. cit., lib. 1, cap. 11, n. 6.)

[306] In *Summa Theologica* (op. cit., II-II, q. 1, a. 5, ad 2), Aquinas writes that certain reasons employed by holy men on behalf of the truths of faith (indemonstrable by mere natural reason) are persuasive arguments (persuasiones) showing (manifestantes) that these truths of faith are not impossible. Yet, this statement can be plausibly interpreted as merely mentioning persuasive critiques of attempts to show that the truths of faith are impossible. Such reading is defended by D. Ruiz de Montoya, *Commentaria, Ac Disputationes in primam partem sancti Thomae De Trinitate*, op. cit., disp. 43, sect. 3. It is supported by *Summa Theologica*, op. cit., I, q. 1, a. 8, co. (See also Brian Davies, *The Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, New York, Oxford University Press 1993, p. 192; Gilles Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of St Thomas Aquinas*, New York, Oxford University Press 2007, p. 26.) Arguing persuasively that certain arguments for impossibility are bad, however, does not always amount to showing the thing is possible. Otherwise a host of unsound arguments for impossibility would be sufficient as a demonstration of possibility.

2.1.1. Human evident *a priori* knowledge of the logical (analytic) possibility of the Trinity doctrine, not from the truth of the doctrine, not from testimony, independent of religious experience.

This sort of knowledge might be obtained (i) immediately and self-evidently, by mere apprehension of the concepts in the doctrine, or (ii) indirectly, by way of an argument. Naturally, we will discuss the first option (i) first.

2.1.1.i. Human, self-evident, *a priori* knowledge of the logical (analytic) possibility of the Trinity doctrine, not from the truth of the doctrine, not from testimony, independent of religious experience.

In this case, we should *not* just put aside claims to self-evident *a priori* insights into the logical possibility of the Trinity doctrine from mere comprehension of the concepts in the doctrine, and independently of religious experience. Indeed, an option covered by 2.1.1 was suggested to me in correspondence by the American analytic philosopher Lydia McGrew, who is Timothy J. McGrew's wife and his main co-author. She proposed that the Trinity doctrine is evidently logically possible and not analytically false merely by careful consideration of the concepts in the doctrine itself. Notably, this proposal is in line with the thought of another apologist whose denomination is close to that of L. and T. McGrew. The English Anglican theologian Robert Jenkin (1656 – 1727) embraces, in his apologetic classic *The Reasonableness and Certainty of the Christian Religion*, the view that:

> "… what God … has plainly delivered … is plain … and it is never the less … plain … because we … are [not] able to understand how it can be. It is sufficient that the Scriptures are plain in this Doctrine, so far as we are concerned to know it; it is not necessary that the Doctrine it self should be plain in all the Controversies, which may be raised about it … The manner of the distinction of Persons, and the Unity of Essence in the Godhead, is not required to be believed, but the Thing … tho' we can know nothing of the manner of it. We know the Proposition, which is to be believed …"[307]

To put the intention of Jenkin's words otherwise, even if we cannot specify *how* it can be that the Trinity doctrine is true, there is no internal problem to it as such. The claim that the divine persons are mutually different yet all are God is plain both in its sense and logical possibility. With similar confidence as L. McGrew and R. Jenkin, R. Swinburne suggested to me, again in correspondence, that there plainly is no logical impossibility in the doctrine of the Trinity. What should I say to this kind of proposal? First, as for Swinburne, we saw (in section IV.1A, under category 1.1.1) it is seriously doubtful that he has on his mind the Trinity doctrine in our

[307] R. Jenkin, *The Reasonableness and Certainty of the Christian Religion*, Vol. II, op. cit., ch. VII, pp. 167-68. The resoluteness about intelligibility of central claims of Christian faith displayed by Jenkin is, in view of some historians of apologetics, symptomatic of English, as opposed to French, apologies in 18th and 19th century. French apologetic writers noted displayed a tendency to avow or underline certain incomprehensibility of the truths of faith. In relative contrast, this tendency wasn't so general among English apologetic writers. Cf. W. L. Craig, *Reasonable Faith*, op. cit., p. 215.

sense.[308] Secondly, however, and more importantly, I must repeat myself. It is *not* self-evident to me that the doctrine of the Trinity is logically possible (or not analytically false). Neither is it evident to the very many philosophers who have pondered on the Trinity.[309] Of course, it *may* be (epistemically speaking) be self-evident to other philosophers, including L. McGrew, Jenkin, and Swinburne. That is, it is not *evident* to me that the logical (analytic) possibility of the Trinity is not, or was not, self-evident to L. McGrew, Jenkin, Swinburne, or some other human (independently of religious experience). But, on the other hand, the logical possibility need not (epistemically speaking) be self-evident to them. That is, it is not *evident* to me that logical (analytic) possibility of the Trinity is, or was, self-evident to L. McGrew, Jenkin, Swinburne, or some other human (independently of religious experience). Positive claims to such modal knowledge have some weight. As the attentive reader will recall, I do not waive all claims to something being evidently so and so as willful overconfidence, deception, or self-deception. Still, error of an honest mistake remains an option; at least for those, including myself, who do not enjoy that bliss of modal knowledge, concerning the Trinity doctrine. I am not being partial now, in preferring the pessimistic WMST (WMST*) – which says that, independently of religious experience, nobody can see the Trinity doctrine is logically (analytically) possible – to the optimistic reports of those who claim to be a counterexample to it. *As long as* the logical (analytic) possibility is *not* evident to *me*, it is understandable that I am more impressed by the salient and widespread modal puzzlement about the doctrine. I expect most of my audience is in an epistemic position similar to mine.

It's worth pondering that the discipline of *modal epistemology* will be of little help in resolving this stalemate about self-evident logical (analytic) possibility of the Trinity doctrine. Claims to logical possibility and absence of analytic falsehood fall, of course, within purview of this branch of philosophy.[310] Let me explain why I think considerations it provides do not advance the case for self-evident logical (analytic) possibility of the Trinity doctrine. Generally, appeals to modal intuitions are weak, at least if measured by the ideal of *evidently* true modal claims. Often, modal intuitions are *not* clearly veracious. Of course, I accept that we see evidently that something is logically (analytically) possible if we see evidently that it is true. But now we are interested in obviousness of possibility independent of obviousness of actuality. We

[308] As Swinburne wrote to me, plainly there is no logical impossibility in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed. Swinburne expressed his qualms about logical possibility of the Athanasian Creed, though. Being an Eastern Orthodox, he is not much bothered about it. However, as some would be displeased with English apologists because of their dissolving the distinction between truths of faith and truths of natural reason, some criticized Swinburne for his specific attempts to make Christian mysteries plainly logically possible. As he advances their intelligibility, he at the same time, and in some respects, fails to do justice to their strict mysteriousness. Cf. the following comment by W. P. Alston ("Swinburne and Christian Theology," op. cit., p. 56). "I feel that he [i.e., Swinburne] has been too successful in making the doctrine [of the Trinity] intelligible. By pushing it so far in the direction of tritheism, he has robbed it of the mystery that has traditionally and, I think, rightly been taken to be one of its distinctive features. Instead of something we will understand only when we see the Triune God face to face, it becomes something that any bright philosophy or theology student can clearly grasp here and now."

[309] Cf. the authors mentioned in nts. 234 and 305 above. Consider also the whole perennial philosophical and theological discussion of and search after a theory of the Trinity, reported e.g. by D. Tuggy in "Trinity," op. cit.

[310] For its survey, see Anand Vaidya, "The Epistemology of Modality," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Winter 2011 Edition)*, E. N. Zalta (ed.), http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2011/entries/modality-epistemology (accessed November 16, 2011).

may raise the following general question: is there a way to see that something is possible (logically or analytically) when we do not see that it is true? Some would suggest that conceivability of a proposition – or, better, vivid imaginability of its truth – is a sure guide to its logical possibility (and absence of analytical falsehood).[311] Yet, this claim, that something is possible because we can conceive or imagine it vividly, seems false, as it stands. We can imagine vividly – or even draw logically impossible physical objects**.** Just take a look at certain famous drawings by the Dutch graphic artist Mauritz Cornelius Escher (1898 – 1972).[312] What's more, our imagination is quite faint.[313] Some complex things we claim to imagine vividly are *not*, in fact, imagined vividly. We imagine vividly only some parts of them. For instance, we can imagine, exactly, neither 1032 chairs in our house, nor an infinity (say, aleph-zero) of chairs on an infinitely extended wold. It is even doubtful we imagine vividly certain relatively simple material configurations, such as a completely empty room. For one thing, as A. R. Pruss (quoted already in section III.1) comments on this particular example:

> "… it is not at all clear that we can imagine vacuum. Our language may itself be a giveaway of what we imagine when we imagine, as we say, a room *filled* with vacuum –indeed we are not really imagining an empty room."[314]

Worse, vivid imaginability is of little use for certain *metaphysical* modal claims. How could we imagine vividly, say, the *non-existence* of God, the existence of *God*, the *Trinity*, or two people *forgiving* each other without an outward action? Indeed, especially the Trinity doctrine is far from being modally perspicuous.[315]

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[311] An epistemic principle defended by T. and L. McGrew in their "Psychology for Armchair Philosophers," op. cit.

[312] Specifically on Escher in the context of modal epistemology, see *Conceivability and Possibility*, Tamar Szabó Gendler and John Hawthorne (eds.), New York, Oxford University Press 2004, pp. 63, 202, 362-365.

[313] Which fact was utilized by Descartes in his argument from the inefficiency of imagination in depiction of geometrical figures to the distinction of imagination and pure intellect and for the immateriality of the latter. See his *Oeuvres*, op. cit., Vol. V, p. 162; Vol. VII, pp. 71-72.

[314] A. R. Pruss, "Empty Rooms and Modal Imagination," May 2, 2008, http://alexanderpruss.blogspot.com/2008/05/empty-rooms-and-modal-imagination.html (accessed May 6, 2011); italics original. Cf. P. van Inwagen, *God, Knowledge & Mystery*, op. cit., pp. 19-21.

[315] Cf. M. J. Scheeben: The mystery of the Trinity is "… more than any other … buried in the depths of the Godhead. The Blessed Trinity is the mystery of mysteries, before which even the seraphim veil their countenances, singing with astonished wonder their thrice-repeated "Holy." [Cf. Isaiah 6: 3.] … by natural means we cannot positively perceive or prove even this possibility [of the Trinity]. Once we have been convinced by inerrant faith of the existence of the Trinity, we must presume that its possibility involves no contradiction. … But without revelation, or prescinding from it, we have nothing that could vouch for the possibility. The objection could be raised that also in the case of the attributes of the divine nature, e.g., omnipresence, eternity, or liberty, we cannot positively grasp and demonstrate their possibility and the absence of contradiction. … But … the incomprehensibility of these objects is not so profound as that of the Trinity …" (*The Mysteries of Christianity*, op. cit., pp. 25 and 28-29). M. R. Antognazza (*Leibniz on the Trinity and the Incarnation*, op. cit., p. 70) ranks the mystery of the Trinity as "the most problematic of all" the Christian mysteries. For similar comparative evaluations of the incomprehensibility of the Trinity doctrine, see G. Berkeley, *Alciphron*, op. cit., dial. VII, sect. 3; and V. Šanda, *Synopsis theologiae dogmaticae specialis*, Vol. I, op. cit., § 62. M. Stuart (*Letters on the Trinity, and on the Divinity of Christ*, op. cit., p. 23) quotably remarked: "All acknowledge the difficulty of the subject ; I regret to say, that some have not refrained from treating it as though it were more within their comprehension than it is."

The American philosopher Stephen Yablo has written, notoriously for epistemologists of modality, about a special sort of conceiving which, as he views it, could be our *fallible* guide to possibility of things whose actuality is not known.[316] In this context, Yablo thinks of metaphysical possibility (which he does not explain). Because metaphysical possibility appears to involve logical possibility, Yablo's suggestion should be mentioned. Conceiving, as envisaged by Yablo, is not mere usage of words that would be descriptive of the thing or situation conceived. It is not even mere entertaining an idea that is not so far as one can see *a priori* logically impossible. It is rather like vivid imagining. But it does not necessarily involve having an image of something extended in the mind. When you conceive this Yablo-way a proposition, you conceive a more or less determinate situation which you take to be one in which the proposition holds. Yablo suggests that such conceiving of *x* is always evidence for *x*'s being possible.[317] But, first, even if Yablo is right about this point, such conceiving need *not* confer that the thing so conceived is possible *evidently*. In any case, it confers such evident modal knowledge about the Trinity doctrine neither to me nor to many others. Secondly, if "possible" is understood as logically possible, claims about logical modal status (including logical possibility) are themselves logically non-contingent (as in the modal system S5), and "evidence for" involves raising logical probability of that for which it is evidence, it is far from clear that anything, including Yablo-conceiving, can be evidence for the logical possibility of anything.

So far, the chances for the epistemic 2.1.1.i being non-empty look slim. In a discussion, L. McGrew suggested to me, however, a general account of modal epistemology of logically (or analytically) possible propositions the truth of which need not be known. Is it of any further help to the option 2.1.1.i? Not at all, in my opinion. For it does not advance the case for 2.1.1.i being non-empty a bit. Let me explain. In a sense, one can imagine vividly some logically (analytically) impossible situations, L. McGrew acknowledged. But in the proper sense of the word, she contended, one can't do this. More specifically, one cannot imagine them vividly in a *clear and distinct* way which would make it evident that they are logically possible. Similarly, in a sense, one can conceive, or even Yablo-conceive, a logically impossible situation. But in the proper sense of the word, one can't. Improper conception, like a model missing something relevant

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[316] See S. Yablo, "Is Conceivability a Guide to Possibility?," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 53, No. 1 (1993), pp. 1-42.

[317] J. H. Sobel (*Logic and Theism*, op. cit., pp. 95-96, 555, 602) argues against this claim of Yablo as follows. Let's define the concept of a *dragoon* as follows: *x* is a dragoon $=_{df}$ it is *possible* that *x* exists if and only if *x* actually exists and *x* is a dragon. Thus, it is *possible* that some *x* is a dragoon if and only if some *x* in fact is a dragon. But, presumably, some people Yablo-conceive that some *x* is a dragoon. No *x* is in fact a dragon, however; as these people have always known. So, it is not possible that some *x* is a dragoon. So, it is not true that if we Yablo-conceive of *x*, then *x* is always possible; and it is not true that Yablo-conceiving of *x* is in all cases evidence for *x*'s being possible. So much for Sobel's attempt at a refutation of Yablo's thesis. The gimmick in Sobel's argument could be the stipulation that in virtue solely of the concepts themselves, it is *possible* that something is a dragoon only if something *actually is* a dragon. In a reaction to this, the putative guiding principle could be modified to the effect that, firstly, if we Yablo-conceive of *x* and *x* is not like dragoons and similarly modally queer constructs, then *x* is always possible; and that, secondly, Yablo-conceiving of *x* when *x* is not like dragoons is always evidence for *x*'s being possible. But wouldn't that adjustment of Yablo's suggestion be somewhat *ad hoc*? How would we justify such a modified epistemic principle? And how would we expound in a systematic, non-question-begging manner why the added clause is needed?

about the modelled, does not have aspects corresponding to all the modally relevant aspects of the state of affairs, proposition or entity. As L. McGrew wrote:

> "E.g., in a visual illusion picture [like Escher's], some things are drawn and others aren't but are rather suggested to the mind. The mind contemplates the logically possible picture and vaguely reaches out towards parts of the picture or propositions about the picture not actually shown which are in fact logically incompatible and cannot be realized all at once."[318]

In contrast, McGrew continued, any proper conception and any proper (vivid) image has, by definition, aspects that correspond to all the aspects of the entity, proposition or state of affairs which are relevant to its logical possibility. It is like a model that has all that is modally relevant about the thing modelled. Hence, it is (logically) impossible that there is a proper conception of something logically impossible. Thus anything imagined or conceived properly is logically possible. So here we have a rationale for the principle that everything properly conceivable or imaginable is logically possible. The rationale also includes an explanation why some entities or states are *not* conceived properly.

However, how do we know that we *have* a modally proper concept (or image) when we have it? How do we know that we have a conception or vivid image that *has* aspects that correspond to *all* the aspects of the entity, proposition, or state of affairs that are relevant to its logical possibility? What if some aspect of the conception which makes the thing logically impossible has gone unnoticed? Isn't it, in fact, regular in logic, mathematics, and, especially, in philosophy that what one had thought possible was later shown impossible due to some not readily and easily seen clash of contradictory features or entailments of the thing envisaged? Well, according to L. McGrew, sometimes it is simply self-evident to us that the thing envisaged is logically possible, although its actuality is not known. And least at those times, we have a modally proper conception of it. As there is no clear reason that you need to have a general method for determining when something is evident to you in order that something be evident to you (see section I.1), there is also no clear reason that you need to have a general method for determining when something is self-evidently logically possible in order for something to be self-evidently logically possible. Propositions about logical (analytic) modalities are just a kind of propositions among other kinds. And self-evidently true propositions ascribing logical (analytic) possibility are just a kind of evident propositions.

Still, self-evident logical (analytic) possibilities seem to be available only in quite *simple* cases. Cases like what? E.g., the logical (analytic) possibility of the mental states we're having right now but with some other clothing on us, or there being more or less people than there actually are in a certain room at certain time.[319] "Simple" relates here rather to a degree of

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[318] L. McGrew in correspondence. As for Sobel's dragoons, one could plausibly deny they are conceived properly as long as they are meant to be dragons – hence, implicitly, (i) contingent and spread among different possible worlds – yet at the same time, explicitly, (ii) all tracking whichever possible world is actual or (ii*) all restricted to the particular possible world which is actual. W. L. Craig criticizes Sobel for the apparent incompatibility of (i) and (ii) (in the review article "Sobel's Acid Bath for Theism," *Philosophia Christi* 8, No. 2 /2006/, pp. 482-484). But, Sobel's "actual world," figuring in his definition of a dragoon, refers rather *de re* (or, in other words, rigidly) than *de dicto* (or, non-rigidly). Therefore, the criticism of incompatibility between (i) and (ii*) is more on the spot.

[319] James Van Cleve ("Conceivability and the Cartesian Argument for Dualism," *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 64, No. 1 /1983/, p. 37) provides another example. It is self-evident that nothing is both round and square. Similarly, we

cognitive strain than to number of entities considered. Extrapolations from relevantly identical cases may allow us to take in huge, even infinite, collections. For instance, arguments by the so called *mathematical induction* (which is a deductive inference form) may pattern a model for such extrapolations. Of course, our ability of vivid imagination would seem to remain daunted by multitudes in cases of another kind. But, anyway, that need not interest us as long as we are exploring specifically metaphysical modal claims, in the first place those to the logical (analytic) possibility of the Trinity doctrine. So how do we see the logical (analytic) possibility (if there is any) in the *not* quite simple cases? How do we say that, say, it is logically (analytically) possible that: God exists, God does not exist, only the physical universe exists, the physical universe does not exist, gratuitous evil exists, every actual thing or state has an explanation, or that the Trinity exists?

L. McGrew replied:

> "I think the non-simple cases … are going to have to be broken down as much as possible into steps of reasoning which you can see clearly and distinctly. (And I would add that what one person can clearly and distinctly conceive is sometimes going to be different from what another person can clearly and distinctly conceive.) … Usually the most important thing is concept regimentation."[320]

If applied to the case of the Trinity doctrine, this proposal reduces to the following idea. When its concepts are carefully explicated, the doctrine should be evidently logically possible to you. If it isn't, you are not very good and intellectually perspicuous in the matters of Trinitarian metaphysics. Either way, we're back in the stalemate we set out from: a certain group, which is a minority among those who explored the issues (and includes L. McGrew), claims that there is self-evidently no logical impossibility in the doctrine of the Trinity. The majority, on the other hand, says this logical possibility is not self-evident to her. It is up to the reader to decide for himself who is right. I have intimated already (in section III.2) why I believe the Trinity doctrine is not self-evidently logically possible. The Trinity doctrine, of course, has been regimented and analyzed carefully, with one's eye kept on the question of whether it is logically possible. It hardly needs *more* conceptual regimentation in this respect, speaking on the level of the amount of subtle meditation and metaphysical distinctions that was deserved to it in the literature. Distinctions between kinds of being, essence, existence, substances, persons, individuals, relations, ontological principles, simplicity, unity, and even between kinds of metaphysical distinctions themselves have been applied. On the level of individual philosophers exploring theories of the Trinity, these riches of metaphysics were not appropriated by all, right. But those who tried and failed to see self-evidently the logical possibility of the Trinity doctrine are by no measure rare. It may be that all of the latter were not careful or smart or receptive (say, keen, honest, and not emotionally blocked). But looking at their work, ascription of such defects to them seems incorrect. Finally, it may be (epistemically speaking) that some theory of the Trinity

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just see self-evidently that it is possible there are creatures with eyes but no ears. P. van Inwagen, although he thinks we are largely ignorant of modal matters remote from everyday life, reports he knows, e.g., that it is possible that the table that was in a certain position at noon have then been two feet to the left of where it in fact was (see his "Modal Epistemology," *Philosophical Studies* 92, No. 1 /1998/, pp. 69-70; *God, Knowledge & Mystery*, op. cit., pp. 12-14).

[320] In correspondence.

would be self-evidently logically (analytically) possible if carefully pondered over and over. But given what is my acquaintance with the theories of the Trinity on offer and their recurrent problems,[321] I would not bet on this hope. At least, even upon long-term exploration I am not aware of any theory of the Trinity which would be, by my lights, self-evidently logically possible (or self-evidently not analytically false). This assessment of mine reflects the state of the art – not only current, but since long ago

To take one especially important example a conceptually advanced theory of the Trinity, let's consider the so called *supposit theory*. I pick it for four reasons. First, it is historically the dominant theory of the Trinity within Latin (or, Western) Christian religion.[322] This brand of

[321] Cf. again D. Tuggy, "Trinity." On the specific problems of Swinburne's aggregative social theory of the Trinity, see especially E. C. Feser, "Swinburne's Tritheism," op. cit., pp. 175-184; W. P. Alston, "Swinburne and Christian Theology," op. cit., pp. 35-57; and B. Leftow, "Anti Social Trinitarianism," op. cit., pp. 203-249. As for aggregative Social Trinitarianism as such, M. C. Rea ("Polytheism and Christian Belief," op. cit., pp. 133-148) argued recently, and persuasively in my opinion, that this position is not relevantly different from a certain *polytheistic* Amun-Re theology of ancient Egypt's New Kingdom period (1550 – 1070 BCE); this theology acknowledges a trinity of gods. On the problems of non-aggregative social theories, see D. Howard-Snyder, "Trinity Monotheism," op. cit., pp. 375-404; cf. W. L. Craig's "Trinity Monotheism Once More: A Response to Daniel Howard-Snyder," op. cit., 101-113. Craig is the main advocate of aggregative Social Trinitarianism. Basically, he asseverates it is metaphysically (and so also logically) possible for several persons to be proper parts of just one being. The triune God is composed to three minds, which are persons, analogously to the way Cerberus, canine guardian of the underworld in ancient Greek mythology, was supposed to be composed of three canine individuals. Howard-Snyder, alluding to Siamese twins, doubts overlapping individuals are to be counted as one being. In response, Craig, alluding to two-headed animals (turtles, snakes, and calves), assures they are to be so counted. Recently, ontological proposals were published which imply such counting (see. e.g., Barry Smith and Berit Brogaard, "Sixteen Days," *Journal of Medicine and Philosophy* 28, No. 1 (2003), pp. 45-78). Many authors, however, opposed this perspective. *Pace* Craig, it is more intuitive to count overlapping individuals, especially when they are persons, as more than one being (substance), than to count them as only one being (substance). For a sustained defence of this position, see Patrick Lee and Robert P. George (*1955), *Body-Self Dualism in Contemporary Ethics and Politics*, New York, Cambridge University Press 2008, pp. 7-9, 41-42, 44-49. In the more specific Trinitarian context, the triune God was classically taken as *not* composed of proper parts. Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, op. cit., I, q. 30, a. 1, ad 4; F. Suárez, *De Sanctissimo Trinitatis mysterio*, op. cit., lib. 1, cap. 10, n. 8-9; D. Ruiz de Montoya, *Commentaria, Ac Disputationes in primam partem sancti Thomae De Trinitate*, op. cit., disp. 38; and G. W. Leibniz, *Remarques sur le livre d'un Antitrinitaire Anglois*, as cited in M. R. Antognazza, *Leibniz on the Trinity and the Incarnation*, op. cit., p. 107 (cf. also ibid., pp. 213-216).

[322] See, e.g., the following authors and passages. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, op. cit., I, q. 29; *Summa contra gentiles*, op. cit., bk. 4, chs. 5, 9-10, 38; *Quaestiones disputatae de potentia Dei*, op. cit., q. 9 (cf. G. Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of St Thomas Aquinas*, op. cit., pp. 116-119, 126, 133, 146-147, 290). John Duns Scotus, *Quaestiones in librum primum sententiarum*, dist. 2, q. 4, in John Duns Scotus, *Opera omnia*, Vol. VIII, Paris, Louis Vivès 1893 (for other places in Scotus, see R. A. Cross, *Duns Scotus on God*, Burlington, Ashgate 2004, pp. 127-152). William of Ockham, *Quodlibeta Septem*, op. cit., quodl. 4, q. 7. L. de Molina, *Commentaria In primam D. Thomae partem*, Vol. I, op. cit., q. 29, a. 2; q. 32, a. 1. F. Suárez, *De Sanctissimo Trinitatis mysterio*, op. cit., lib. 3, cap. 3-4, lib. 4, cap. 1-4, 11-12 (cf. T. Marschler, *Die spekulative Trinitätslehre des Francisco Suárez S.J. in ihrem philosophisch-theologischen Kontext*, op. cit., chs. 5-6). D. Ruiz de Montoya, *Commentaria, Ac Disputationes in primam partem sancti Thomae De Trinitate*, op. cit., disp. 31, sect. 4-5; disp. 88; see also ibid. index: suppositum. G. W. Leibniz, *Sämtliche Schriften und Briefe*, Series I, Vol. XI, op. cit., pp. 228-233 (cf. M. R. Antognazza, *Leibniz on the Trinity and the Incarnation*, op. cit., pp. 31-33, 71-73, 78-79, 106-107, 115-118, 122-125, 153-154, 158-160, 214-216, 238-239). On the supposit theory in Western middle ages, cf. also R. A. Cross, *The Metaphysics of the Incarnation: Thomas Aquinas to Duns Scotus*, New York, Oxford University Press 2002 (e.g., pp. 7-9, 264); and A. J. Freddoso, "Human Nature, Potency, and the Incarnation," *Faith and Philosophy* 3, No. 1 (1986), pp. 27-53. A detailed discussion of supposits as such is provided by the French philosopher and theologian Philip of the Blessed

Christianity was more productive in its philosophical speculation than the Eastern (or, Greek) one. Secondly, the supposit theory is a metaphysically sophisticated achievement. Indeed, in my judgment it is the most promising theory of the Trinity so far formulated, in respect of logical (and analytic) possibility of the claim that there is just one God and three persons each of which is God. (I won't try to substantiate this overall comparative assessment in this dissertation.) Yet, third, the supposit theory of the Trinity is generally unknown among contemporary philosophers and theologians, both analytical and non-analytical.[323] Fourth, the theory was embraced, among others, by John Duns Scotus, who was also interpreted by some authors as the one who tried to show by unaided natural reason (without appeals to revelation and testimony) that the Trinity doctrine is logically possible if explicated along the lines of the supposit theory.[324] Details and terminology of distinct proposals of the supposit theory vary from one proponent to another or even from one exposition by the same author to another. But its core may be laid out as follows.

As I have said, there are items supposed which enjoy a peculiar kind of ontological unity, a kind of unity had, e.g., by people and higher animals and plant, but not, say, by aggregates of people or animals. I have called such items beings or substances.[325]

Trinity (aka Julien Esprit, 1603 – 1670), in his *Summa Philosophica*, Vol. IV, Lyons, A. Iullierion 1648, pars 3, lib. 3, q. 20 (I owe this reference to D. Peroutka). For later discussions of supposits, see M. J. Scheeben, *The Mysteries of Christianity*, op. cit., pp. 69-73; V. Šanda, *Synopsis theologiae dogmaticae specialis*, Vol. I, op. cit., § 43; George P. Klubertanz, *Introduction to the Philosophy of Being*, New York, Meredith Publishing Company 1963, pp. 251-252; Fernand van Steenberghen (1904 – 1993), *Ontology*, Brussels, Nauwelaerts Publisher 1970, p. 278; A. J. Freddoso, "Human Nature, Potency, and the Incarnation," op. cit.; W. F. Vallicella, "*Supposita*," February 1, 2010, http://maverickphilosopher.typepad.com/maverick_philosopher/2010/01/supposita.html (accessed November 17, 2011); W. F. Vallicella, "More Christology: Freddoso on *Supposita*," February 11, 2010, http://maverickphilosopher.typepad.com/maverick_philosopher/2010/02/more-christology-freddoso-on-supposita.html (accessed November 17, 2011); W. F. Vallicella, "Substance and *Suppositum*: Notes on Klubertanz," February 16, 2010, http://maverickphilosopher.typepad.com/maverick_philosopher/2010/02/substance-and-suppositum.html (accessed November 18, 2011).

[323] For instance, the supposit theory is not distinctly explicated in D. Tuggy's entry "Trinity" (op. cit.) in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. I must note, though, that the entry is expressly focused, in the first place, on formulations of and recent scholarly disputes about Trinitarian theories which have been pursued since the revival of analytic philosophy of religion in 1960's. Within the supplement "History of Trinitarian Doctrines," Tuggy mentions elements of the supposit theory in sections (4.1 and 4.2) on Aquinas and Scotus. Yet he never identifies the whole of the theory, common to these two philosophers, and many others.

[324] F. Suárez (*De Sanctissimo Trinitatis mysterio*, op. cit., lib. 1, cap. 2, n. 4) reads this way – quite plausibly – Scotus, *Quaestiones in librum primum sententiarum*, op. cit., dist. 2, q. 4. As for the sort of possibility under Scotus's consideration, it is apparently the logical one, characterized in terms of not including a contradiction (see ibid.). Moreover, other kinds of possibilities Scotus operates with are, in his opinion, coextensive with logical possibility. Cf. L. Novák, *„Scire Deum esse"*, op. cit., chs. 6.2 and 6.3. Tuggy's report about the current and wide-spread lack of appreciation of Scotus on the Trinity is symptomatic of the current status of the supposit theory in general. Scotus's "… theory hasn't been much discussed; few Christian thinkers past or present have claimed to understand it. Since the Reformation era, many theologians and philosophers have been impatient with this sort of confident metaphysical speculation, preferring to dismiss it as learned nonsense." (D. Tuggy, "Trinity," op. cit., supplement "History of Trinitarian Doctrines," # 4.2. I need to add a caveat, however. It would be misguided to say that few past Christian thinkers have claimed to understand the supposit theory, as opposed to some its particular version, for, as I have said, this theory was standardly accepted for extended periods by Christian thinkers of the West.

[325] In *Categories* (http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/categories.html; accessed November 17, 2011), sect. 1, pts. 2 and 5, Aristotle calls entities such as individual men and horses "primary substances." This usage has been common

The world comprises many different substances. Some substances cluster themselves into aggregates. For instances, a human is, in contrast to any such aggregate it is a member of (say, his family), a substance. Substances and aggregates of substances display a different sort of unity. The unity of an aggregate of substances arises when some substances (say, people) become proper parts of a whole (say, a localized crowd), within which the substances are united by a certain bond (say, a certain room) to which all the substances have a certain relation (say, to be spatially in it). As has also been said, substances have a sort of unity. But this unity is, in comparison to the unity of any aggregate, somewhat stronger. Although spatial substances can be spatially included in something, or be proper parts of something, no substance has substances as its spatial or proper parts.

Furthermore, sensible substances, like higher animals and plants, have certain features or determinations. They are such and such, rather than other. E.g., they may be white, two-feet long, in the market, double as something, yesterday, sitting, have shoes on, cutting, or being cut.[326] This is due to their features. Such determining features of substances have been commonly called accidents. Accidents are entities different from the substances they modify. The introduction of accidents as entities distinct from substances explains ontologically how substances can change in many familiar ways. For, apparently, sensible substances often change (their location, size, or other features) without perishing. Such a change changes a substance in time while the substance is preserved: the same substance occurs in both terms (i.e., extreme phases) of the change; the substance has one feature at a moment, and then another. When undergoing change of this sort, the substance varies by altering its accidents, which modify it. In this accidental respect or aspect, which belongs to it, the substance is changing. But in both terms of such a change, it is the numerically same substance. The substance in the two terms of such a change is not to be counted as more than one substance, although the sets of its accident in the two terms are to be counted as more than one set. Further yet, substances have features or determinations (accidents). Yet substances themselves are not features (accidents) of anything. Put in a common terminology, substances are items which never inhere in anything. In contrast, accidents are apt to inhere (in substances).[327]

So far I've tried to convey especially the concept of a substance and the concept of an accident. More is needed, however, to convey the supposit theory of the Trinity. To explain

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among Aristotelian philosophers, including scholastics. (Cf. Josef De Vries, *Grundbegriffe der Scholastik*, Darmstadt, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft 1983, "Substanz und Akzidenz".) However, in *Metaphysics* (op. cit., bk. VII, ch. 17) he calls primary substances forms, which are specific ontological principles of items like individual men and horses. (Cf. Christopher Shields, "Aristotle," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy /Fall 2011 Edition/*, E. N. Zalta /ed./, http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2011/entries/aristotle, # 10; accessed November 17, 2011; S. Marc Cohen, "Aristotle's Metaphysics," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy /Spring 2009 Edition/*, E. N. Zalta /ed./, http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2009/entries/aristotle-metaphysics, ## 5-7, accessed November 27, 2011.) In any case, the sense in which I write of beings and substances is close to the sense in which Aristotle wrote of primary substances in the *Categories*.

[326] Examples taken from Aristotle, *Categories*, op. cit., sect. 1, pt. 4.

[327] An elegant recent account of this general Aristotelian picture of the world (concerning substances, aggregates, changes of substances, and accidents) is S. Sousedík, *Indentitní teorie predikace* (in Czech), Prague, OIKOYMENH 2006, chs. I and II. Cf. Howard Robinson, "Substance," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Winter 2009 Edition)*, E. N. Zalta (ed.), http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2009/entries/substance (accessed November 19, 2011).

ontologically how each substance and accident is what it is, each of them is attributed an ontological principle called *essence* or nature. Essence of an entity (substance or accident) is the inherent ontological principle of *what* this entity is, as opposed to which characteristics this entity has. A distinction is then made between specific essence and individual essence. *Specific essence* of some entity (substance or accident) *x* is the ontological principle, inherent to *x*, of what *x* is, except for that which is individual in what *x* is.[328] Individual essence of some entity *x* is the ontological principle, inherent to *x*, of what *x* is, including that which is individual in what *x* is. Inherent ontological principle which turns the specific essence of an entity *x* into *x*'s individual essence is called *individual difference*. Of course, this shift is not temporal, but in the order of ontological principles. In many entities there is a difference, independent of our thought, between individual essence, specific essence, and individual difference. But it is not implied that each entity with individual essence also has specific essence and individual difference as ontological principles constituting the individual essence and distinct from it, independently of our thought. It may be that some entity has a simple, non-composite individual essence. Now we are in a position to introduce the concept of a supposit.

Another ontological principle, besides individual essence, is needed to explain ontologically how substances, having individual essences, are set. For, we are told, it is a large ontological step from an individual substantial essence to its bearer. For instance, it is a large step from Socrateity to Socrates. Although Socrateity is individual, it is not Socrates yet.[329] What turns individual substantial essence into its bearer is called suppositality or subsistence. *Suppositality* of some substance *x* is the ontological principle, inherent to *x*, of there being a bearer of *x*'s individual essence. Accordingly, a *supposit* (or, *suppositum*) is defined as a bearer of an individual substantial essence. Importantly, *person* is defined as a supposit of rational nature (essence).

The ramifications for the picture of the Trinity are emerging. Sure, many, and understandably, will wonder: aren't supposits just substances, and *vice versa*, aren't substances just supposits? Not quite and always, says the supposit theory of the Trinity. Where there is a substance, there is a supposit, and where there is a supposit, there is a substance, so to speak. But one substance can have – or, if you prefer, exist in – more than one supposit. In brief, the supposit theory of the Trinity consists in the claim that there is just one substance which is God, but there are (just) three supposits such that each of them is a person and God. Put even more briefly, the sole substance named as God has (exactly) three personal supposits. Therefore, we should count divine substance just once. Yet to the question "how many divine supposits are there?," we should answer: three. This rather striking peculiarity on the side of the divine substance is further explained by all three divine supposits bearing (and so sharing) the same

[328] Sometimes Aristotelian philosophers also write of essence in a sense which is on the level of objective concepts. (On objective concepts, see section II.3 above.) In this sense, essence of some entity *x* is an objective concept which corresponds to the right answer to the question "what is it?" applied to *x*, which (i.e., the answer) does *not* express which characteristics *x* has – as opposed to what *x* is – and *does* express everything about what *x* is, except for that which is individual in that what *x* is. Cf. L. Novák and P. Dvořák, *Úvod do logiky aristotelské tradice*, op. cit., pp. 68-71; S. Sousedík, *Indentitní teorie predikace*, op. cit., p. 48.

[329] Cf. L. Novák and P. Dvořák, *Úvod do logiky aristotelské tradice*, op. cit., pp. 64-65. I am obliged especially to L. Novák for his explication of the idea of supppositality, supposits, and the whole supposit theory of the Trinity. All the remaining confusion is my own.

individual essence. This, in turn, is explained by the divine substance having three suppositalities. The divine substance is named as the Trinity. Its individual essence, often named as Godhead, is commonly taken as simple (i.e., not constituted by distinct specific essence and individual difference). Finally, it is taken as metaphysically impossible that there are several substances which share the same specific divine essence. In this sense, divine essence is unique. All of this suggests several contrasts between, on the one hand, divine substance, and, on the other hand, human substances. First, divine substance has more than one suppositality, and more than one supposit; each human substance, however, has just one suppositality and just one supposit. Secondly, divine substance has a simple individual essence; each human substance has a composite individual essence. Thirdly, divine substance does not have a repeatable specific essence; human substances have a specific nature which is repeated in many of them. Both the supposit theory of the Trinity and the contrasts of the Trinity with other personal substances are neatly expressed in the following diagram by Lukáš Novák (an author whose thoughts have already been helpful in section II.3).[330]

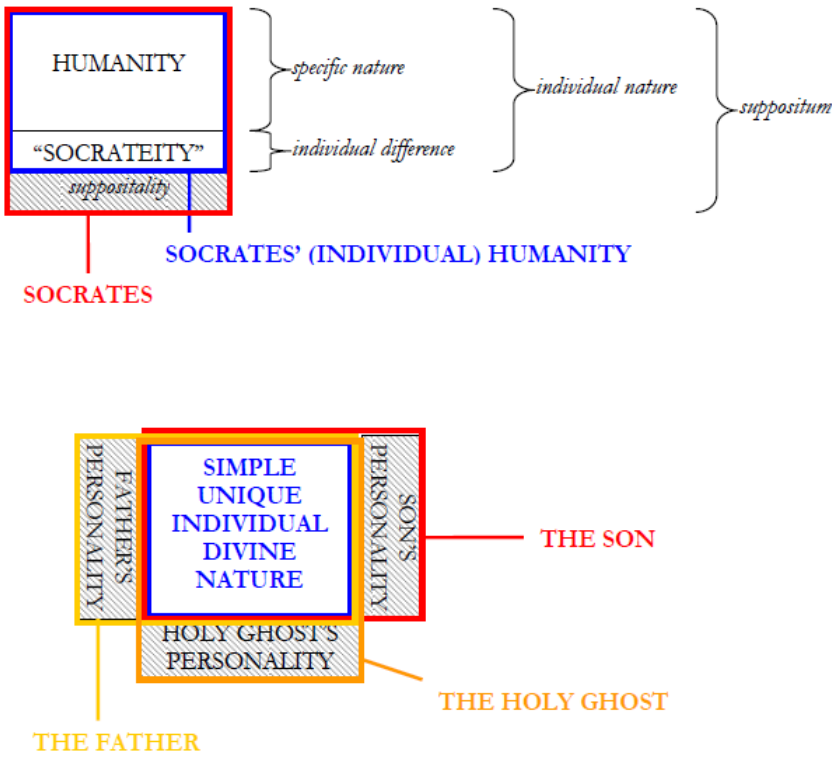

Diagram 4 (by L. Novák). The supposit theory of the Trinity. With a comparison of essences (natures) and the number of supposits and suppositalities between (i) the substance Socrates and (ii) the substance triune God (the Trinity). Individual essences (natures) are in blue. Supposits are in red and two shades of orange.

[330] Available at http://www.skaut.org/ln/docs/trinity.pdf (accessed November 18, 2011).

Notably, the doctrine of the *Incarnation* – that Jesus of Nazareth is a human being and God (for he is both a human being and the Son) – is understood as implying that Jesus is both a human being and the second divine supposit. This, in turn, is explained by this supposit's assuming and sustaining a certain individual human essence: the individual human essence of Jesus. Finally, the divine substance is taken as simple also in the sense of not being modified by any accidents. In a technical sense, accidents modifying Jesus pertain to his human nature, but not to his divine nature.[331] So much is my explanation of the supposit theory of the Trinity (and for the supposit theory of the Incarnation).

Now, what is important for us is that a question remains unanswered: what is the difference between something being a substance and something being a supposit? Do not these two concepts amount to the same? If they do, apparently no substance has more than one supposit, and the supposit theory of the Trinity is logically impossible (and analytically false). The advocate of the supposit theory of the Trinity may introduce the concept of substance by way of examples, as I have done. Then he may define a supposit as a bearer of an individual essence of a substance, as I have done, too. But now he faces the problem that it seems that the definition of supposit is a (correct real) definition of substance. Or, at least, it is not evident that the definition of supposit is *not* a definition of substance. At this moment, the advocate may reply that it is not evident that the definition of supposit *is* a definition of substance. But even if he is right, this will not make the supposit theory evidently logically (analytically) possible. For the absence of evident impossibility does not automatically amount to the absence of impossibility.

The advocate of the supposit theory could also try to define substance and supposit as follows.[332] Something is a substance if and only if it has *at least* one suppositality. Something is a supposit if and only if it has *just* one suppositality. So it may be that a substance has more than one suppositality, and so more than one supposit. But, if asked "what is suppositality?," the advocate will hardly say anything beyond the mere remark that suppositality is the ontological principle responsible for supposits being supposits. As has been said, suppositality of some substance x is the ontological principle, inherent to x, of there being x's supposit. But now we are back at the question, so far not resolved evidently, whether it is logically (analytically) possible for a substance to have more than one supposit.

Finally, some advocates of the supposit try to clarify further, what they mean when they say that something is a supposit. Definitions of supposit have been proposed. All of them I am aware of are purely negative and captured, I believe, in the following attempt: x is a supposit if and only if x is (i) individual (i.e., not repeatable), (ii) not an accident, (iii) not an aggregate of

[331] On the supposit theory of the Incarnation, see especially V. Šanda *Synopsis theologiae dogmaticae specialis*, Vol. II, Freiburg im Briesgau, B. Herder 1922, §§ 207-216. The main puzzle is whether it is logically possible that some accident belongs to one of x's natures but not to some other, while both natures are borne by the same supposit x. In the transubstantiation theory, the doctrine of the Eucharist – that Jesus of Nazareth is bodily present where consecrated bread or wine are present – is explained by replacement of the substances(s) of bread and wine by the substance Jesus, whereas the accidents of bread and wine remain, as they are supernaturally sustained in existence, though they do not inhere in or modify Jesus. On the transubstantiation theory of the Eucharist, see V. Šanda, ibid., §§ 270-278; cf. A. R. Pruss, "The Eucharist: Real Presence and Real Absence," in *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophical Theology*, T. P. Flint and M. C. Rea (eds.), op. cit., ch. 23. Here, the puzzle is whether it is logically possible that some substance is bodily present "under" bodily accidents, but isn't modified by any of them.

[332] As was suggested to me by L. Novák in correspondence.

substances or accidents, (iv) not a proper part of a substance, and (v) not an inherent ontological principle of a substance or an accident.[333] So we are once more back at the problem of whether it is logically (analytically) possible for a substance to have more than one supposit. For it is not evident that this definition of supposit is *not* a definition of substance. And if it is, it is not logically (analytically) possible to say truly that something is just one substance in more than one supposit. Indeed, to many the just adduced definition of supposit will positively seem like a definition of substance. As A. J. Freddoso himself (quoted in section II.1), who is an advocate of the supposit theory of the Trinity and the Incarnation, concedes:

> "… the concept of a suppositum is remarkably akin to that of an Aristotelian primary substance … Indeed, had it not been for the doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation, medieval Christian thinkers would never have been led to assert that suppositum and substance … are distinct concepts."[334]

Maybe somebody will say at this moment that the mere fact that without revelation people would not suspect the concepts are distinct does not entail that it is not evident, without reference to revelation, that they are. True, I concede. But the mentioned putative fact does not entail that it is evident that the concepts are distinct either. Actually, and this is important for us, it is, at least, not self-evident that the concepts are distinct. Hence, I contend, it is not self-evident that the supposit theory of the Trinity is logically (analytically) possible. I do not proclaim, however, that it *is* self-evident that the theory is logically impossible, nor that the theory must seem logically impossible to every informed and rational human inquirer. Personally, I would recommend to the advocate of this view of the Trinity to convey the concept of a substance by examples; to define a supposit as a bearer of an individual substantial essence; and to suggest that it is *not* evident that the definition of the latter concept is a correct definition of the former. It could be added that it in fact seems that the supposit theory is logically possible when we take into account the certain reasons for it being implied by what was revealed. Still, none of this would seem to commit one to the claim that the supposit theory of the Trinity is self-evidently logically (or analytically) possible.

This completes my comments on the supposit theory of the Trinity, which was chosen for discussion as an advanced and instructive, yet currently not well-known candidate for a self-evidently logically possible explication of the Trinity doctrine. I believe we saw the theory is far from being a successful candidate for this epistemic status. Other formulations of the doctrine fare in this respect no better. I can't expose them here in any detail, but I have provided my reader with several hints and references supporting such evaluation. Having also skimmed over and explored above other main yet failed ways of how the Trinity doctrine might be self-evidently, and independently of religious experience, logically (analytically) possible such, self-

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[333] Cf. the general characterizations of supposits in: William of Ockham, *Quodlibeta Septem*, op. cit., quodl. 4, q. 7; V. Šanda, *Synopsis theologiae dogmaticae specialis*, Vol. I, op. cit., § 43; M. J. Scheeben, *The Mysteries of Christianity*, op. cit., pp. 70-71; G. P. Klubertanz, *Introduction to the Philosophy of Being*, op. cit., pp. 251-252; W. F. Vallicella, "*Supposita*," op. cit.; W. F. Vallicella, "More Christology: Freddoso on *Supposita*," op. cit.

[334] A. J. Freddoso, "Human Nature, Potency, and the Incarnation," op. cit., sect. I. Cf. L. de Molina, *Commentaria In primam D. Thomae partem*, Vol. I, op. cit., q. 32, a. 1; and D. Ruiz de Montoya, *Commentaria, Ac Disputationes in primam partem sancti Thomae De Trinitate*, op. cit., disp. 41, sect. 5.

evident insight hasn't been accomplished. Which leaves the epistemic category 2.1.1.i empty. Now what about an *a priori* argument for the logical or analytic possibility of the Trinity doctrine?

2.1.1.ii. Human, evident, argumentative, *a priori* knowledge of the logical (analytic) possibility of the Trinity doctrine, not from the truth of the doctrine, not from testimony, independent of religious experience.

Within this category, I will consider first a non-probabilistic argument by the contemporary American analytic philosopher Peter van Inwagen (*1942). Then I will consider a probabilistic argument. Van Inwagen's feat may be deemed as the most precisely formulated argument so far for logical possibility, though not directly for the truth, of the Trinity doctrine. In one of his papers, van Inwagen presents the argument expressly as one for the doctrine not being "logically self-contradictory."[335] In an older and more technical presentation of the same argument, however, he lays out a more modest goal: to show that the doctrine "allows no formal contradiction" in a particular system of formal relative-identity logic, called by him RI-logic. In other words, the modest goal was to show that "no contradiction can be derived in RI-logic," and so the doctrine is at least "formally consistent."[336] In my terminology (introduced in section II.4), this amounts to the goal to show that the doctrine is not a logical falsehood in RI-logic. So his humble aim was to show that the Trinity doctrine does not entail a self-contradictory proposition solely in virtue of certain logical words of RI-logic which occur in the sentence expressing the doctrine. Still, I will take van Inwagen for his later word and explore whether his argument could make the Trinity doctrine evidently logically possible. In expressing as briefly as I can the core of van Inwagen's convoluted attempt, I will often follow, and sometimes modify, its reconstruction by the American analytic philosopher Michael Cannon Rea.[337]

Van Inwagen's *RI-logic* is a particular set of formation rules and rules of inference. Its vocabulary consists of certain predicates of English (which could be substituted by their equivalents in other ordinary languages), the usual connectives of sentential logic, variables, and the universal and existential quantifiers, and punctuation marks. The vocabulary does *not* include the sign for absolute identity. Salient among the included predicates are relative-identity predicates, which (i) are of the form "is the same N as" and (ii) are satisfied only by Ns. E.g., the predicate "is the same man" in the sentence "Tully is the same man as Cicero" is a relative-identity predicate for its use implies that Tully and Cicero are men. On the contrary, the predicate "is the same color as" in the sentence "The Taj Mahal is the same color as the Washington Monument" is not a relative-identity predicate for its use does not imply that these two are colors.

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[335] P. van Inwagen, "Three Persons in One Being: On Attempts to Show That the Doctrine of the Trinity is Self-Contradictory," op. cit., pp. 83, 96-97. I note it is irrelevant that elsewhere van Inwagen calls as "logically possible" that which can be seen to be possible (*simpliciter*) on the basis of logical and semantic considerations alone. See his "Modal Epistemology," op. cit., p. 71; and *God, Knowledge & Mystery*, op. cit., pp. 12-13. I am simply considering his arguments as candidates for establishing logical possibility of the Trinity doctrine, in my sense of logical possibility. Moreover, in the paper "Three Persons in One Being," van Inwagen does seem to mean by the word "not logically self-contradictory" that what I mean by the word "logically possible."

[336] See P. van Inwagen, *God, Knowledge & Mystery*, op. cit., pp. 7-8, 221, 245, 254-257.

[337] M. C. Rea, "Relative Identity and the Doctrine of the Trinity," *Philosophia Christi* 5, No. 2 (2003), pp. 434, 437-442.

The rules of inference of RI-logic are the rules of quantifier logic (in a system of natural deduction), enhanced by the two following rules for manipulating relative-identity predicates. First, the rule of symmetry: from $\alpha I\beta$, infer $\beta I\alpha$. Second, the rule of transitivity: from $\alpha I\beta$ and $\beta I\gamma$, infer $\alpha I\gamma$. Here, "*I*" represents any relative-identity predicate, and the first three letters of Greek alphabet represent any variables. The inference rules of RI-logic do *not* include the rule of indiscernibility of (absolute) identicals: from any premise, infer $\alpha = \beta \rightarrow (F\alpha \leftrightarrow F\beta)$. Here, "=" represents what is called absolute identity (as said, this sign isn't in the vocabulary of RI-logic), and "*F*" represents any predicate in the vocabulary of RI-logic. Further, RI-logic does not include any analogue of the rule of indiscernibility of (absolute) identicals. Hence even what van Inwagen calls, before he refuses to admit it, The Proposed Rule is missing: from any premise, infer $\alpha I\beta \rightarrow (F\alpha \leftrightarrow F\beta)$. He's also unwilling to receive into RI-logic any specific variation on The Proposed Rule with a particular relative-identity predicate in place of *I*. Apparently, above all he's unwilling to receive the rule: from any premise, infer $\alpha B\beta \rightarrow (F\alpha \leftrightarrow F\beta)$, where B stands for the relative-identity predicate "is the same being as" (or, alternatively, "is the same substance as," "is the same *ousia* as," or "is the same individual nature as"). Now this should be enough for a broad idea about RI-logic.[338]

With it in hand, certain central theses of Trinitarian theology, which together obviously entail the Trinity doctrine (as I have defined it in section II.6), can be translated into RI-logic. Suppose there are three persons each of which is God: the Father (from whom the other two proceed), the Son (who proceeds from the first and from whom proceeds the third), and Holy Spirit (who proceeds from the other two). Further, all are the same being, but different persons. Finally, suppose there is no other being which is God.

Let B stand for the relative-identity predicate	"is the same being as."
Let G*x* abbreviate	"*x* is God & $\forall$y(*y* is God $\rightarrow$ *x*B*y*)."

Then:

G*x* is the RI-logic equivalent for	"*x* is God and there is no other being which is God."

Let F, S, and H stand, respectively, for the predicates "is the Father," "is the Son," and "is the Holy Spirit."[339]

Then:

F*x* is the RI-logic equivalent for	"*x* is the Father,"

[338] Further details in P. van Inwagen, *God, Knowledge & Mystery*, op. cit., pp. 231-246; and "Three Persons in One Being," op. cit., pp. 86-96.

[339] Here, the predicates stand, respectively, for definite descriptions such as "the divine person from whom other two divine persons proceed," "the divine person who proceeds and from whom another divine person proceeds," and "the divine person who proceeds from other two divine persons." Cf. P. van Inwagen, *God, Knowledge & Mystery*, op. cit., pp. 249-253; and M. C. Rea, "Relative Identity and the Doctrine of the Trinity," op. cit., pp. 439-440. Such descriptions, I take it, attempt to refer rather *de dicto* (non-rigidly) than *de re* (rigidly). On this distinction in reference by names and descriptions, see L. Novák, "Sémantika vlastních jmen a identitní teorie predikace" (in Czech), *Studia Neoaristotelica* 1, No. 1-2 (2004), pp. 10-32.

Sx for	"x is the Son," and
Hx for	"x is the Holy Spirit."
Let P stand for the relative-identity predicate	"is the same person as."

Then, given all the above stipulations:

$\exists x$(Fx & Gx) is the RI-logic equivalent for	"the Father is God and there is no other being which is God,"
$\exists x$(Sx & Gx) for	"the Son is God and there is no other being which is God,"
$\exists x$(Hx & Gx) for	"the Holy Spirit is God and there is no other being which is God,"
(RT1) $\exists x\exists y\exists z$(F$x$ & Sy & Hz & ~xPy & ~xPz & ~yPz) for	(T1) "each of the persons of the Trinity is distinct from each of the others,"
(RT2) $\exists x\exists y\exists z$(F$x$ & Gx & Sy & Gy & Hz & Gz) for	(T2) "each of the persons of the Trinity is such that it is God and there is no other being which is God," and
(RT3) $\exists x$(Gx) for	(T3) "there is just one God."[340]

So here we have the promised translation of the theses central to Trinitarian theology – i.e., (T1)-(T3) – which jointly and obviously entail the Trinity doctrine. For, admittedly, the conjunction (of the propositions expressed by the sentences) (T1)-(T3) entails that there is just one God and three persons each of which is God. In fact, the conjunction of (T1) and (T2) already entails the Trinity doctrine, because (T2) clearly entails (T3), as also (RT2) clearly entails (RT3). Now, van Inwagen proposes three similar but distinct reasons why the conjunction of (T1)-(T3) is logically possible (or at least not a logical falsehood in RI-logic). I will append my comment behind each.

First, the conjunction of (T1)-(T3) is not a logical falsehood in RI-logic. For, apparently, there are no rules of RI-logic by means of which a self-contradictory sentence could be derived from the conjunction of (RT1)-(RT3). In particular, RI-logic includes neither the rule of indiscernibility of (absolute) identicals, nor any kindred inference rule. The only identity predicates in the sentences (RT1)-(RT3) are relative-identity predicates, which do not obey the

[340] There are slight differences between van Inwagen's, Rea's, and my propositions chosen for translation into RI-logic. E.g., van Inwagen includes among them the claim that there are just three divine persons (cf. his *God, Knowledge & Mystery*, op. cit., pp. 245-249). Rea, like me, omits this specification, but, unlike me, takes Gx as abbreviating "x is divine & $\forall$y(y is divine → xBy)." All such differences are secondary and of no importance to our purposes. My own rendering was crafted to be brief and to keep a straightforward connection to our previous discussion.

rule of indiscernibility of (absolute) identicals. Hence in RI-logic, no self-contradictory sentence can be formally deduced from the conjunction of (RT1)-(RT3).[341]

There may well be certain doubts whether this is in fact true. Perhaps there's a way, which escapes our notice, how to derive a self-contradiction from the conjunction. But, it seems there isn't, so let's grant to van Inwagen this point. The real problem is that it does not suffice to establish that the conjunction is logically possible. Some sentences aren't logical falsehoods in particular formal logics, but they are in other ones. As was noted (in section II.4), this fact is reflected, for instance, in the limited expressivity of sentential logic. The sentence "something is and isn't red" is not a logical falsehood in sentential logic. But it is in predicate logic. The English analytic philosopher Peter Thomas Geach (*1916) is the earliest and most well-known contemporary advocate of a theory of relative identity, and together with van Inwagen the most well-known proponent of a relative identity theory of the Trinity.[342] In a context close to ours, he remarked that if we want to show that something does not entail something other, it is *not* enough to establish that the former and the latter instantiate together an invalid logical form in some formal logic. They might instantiate a logical schema which is invalid in a particular formal system, and also a logical schema which is valid in another formal system. If so, the latter claim is entailed by the former. For it is sufficient for this entailment to hold that they instantiate a valid logical form in some formal system (assuming the system is a correct theory of entailment). And it is not necessary for this entailment to hold that they do not instantiate a valid logical form in any formal system. In fact, any argument whose premises entail its conclusion can be represented as instantiating at least one invalid logical form of some formal logic: the form "*p* only if *q*" of sentential logic, where *p* represents the premise or the conjunction of all premises, and *q* represents the conclusion of the argument.[343] Similarly, if we want to establish that some sentence, or a conjunction of sentences, does not entail a self-contradiction (and so is logically possible), it is *not* enough to establish that that the sentence together with an (arbitrary) self-contradiction instantiate an invalid logical form in some formal logic. They might instantiate a logical schema which is invalid in a particular formal system, and, at the same time, also a logical schema which is valid in another formal system. If so, then the sentence entails a self-contradiction, and so isn't logically possible. A sufficient condition of any sentence being logically impossible is its logical falsehood in some formal system. Not yielding formally a self-contradiction in a formal system is not a necessary condition of logical possibility. In fact, any sentence, or conjunction of sentences, entailing a self-contradiction can be, together with an

[341] See P. van Inwagen, *God, Knowledge & Mystery*, op. cit., pp. 235-239, 254-255; "Three Persons in One Being," op. cit., p. 93.

[342] Relative identity theories of the Trinity may be characterized as proclaiming that in Trinitarian formulations, sentences with the words "is God" and "is not identical with" are of the form "*x* is the same F as *y*" and "*x* is not the same F as *y*", respectively. Van Inwagen, in contrast to Geach, does not embrace any tenet of any *general* theory of relative identity, such as the principle that *all* sentences of the form "*x* is identical with *y*" (or, "*x* = *y*") are incomplete, and so *any* proper identity sentence has the form "*x* is the same F as *y*." On such general points concerning identity, van Inwagen remains expressly neutral. On different general theories of relative identity and on different relative theories of the Trinity, see M. C. Rea, "Relative Identity and the Doctrine of the Trinity," op. cit., pp. 433-439.

[343] P. T. Geach, "Review of *The Five Ways: St. Thomas Aquinas's Proofs of God's Existence*. By Anthony Kenny," op. cit.,, p. 312; and C. F. J. Martin, *Thomas Aquinas*, op. cit., pp. 161-162. Similarly L. Novák, "Is God Logically Necessary?," op. cit.

arbitrary self-contradiction, represented as instantiating at least one invalid logical form of some formal logic: the form "*p* only if *q*" of sentential logic, where *p* represents the logically impossible sentence, and *q* represents the self-contradiction. If somebody replied at this moment, although I don't expect this, that no sentence which is not a logical falsehood in RI-logic is a logical falsehood in some other formal logic, it would be his responsibility to explain what makes RI-logic so special. He would bear such burden even if he made, say, the weaker claim that no sentence which is not a logical falsehood in RI-logic is a logical falsehood in some other formal logic if the only identity predicates in the sentence are relative-identity predicates.

Interestingly, van Inwagen makes the following note on RI-logic:

> "As far as I am able to tell, RI-logic has no utility outside Christian theology. … This need not raise doubts about the coherency of Christian doctrine. Like quantum mechanics and the more rarefied parts of pure mathematics, the doctrine of the Trinity treats of objects extraordinarily different from the objects of ordinary experience, ones that are perhaps sui generis."[344]

Granted, even if RI-logic is useless except for certain Christian doctrines, the doctrines may still be logically possible. And *if* we have good reasons for the doctrines themselves, we have *good reasons* that they are logically possible, and in *this* sense we have no doubts that they are logically possible. But, having good reasons does not amount to having evident knowledge. We will return to analogies of the Trinity doctrines and quantum mechanics below.

Second, van Inwagen suggests that the conjunction of (T1)-(T3) is not a logical falsehood in *any* standard formal logic. Apparently, there are no rules in any standard formal logic by means of which a self-contradictory sentence could be derived from the conjunction of (RT1)-(RT3). But this means, as van Inwagen contends in the paper where he tries to show logical possibility of the Trinity doctrine, that the conjunction is logically possible. For when no self-contradiction can be "deduced from a story by the rules of the standard logic of textbooks from any set of statements that are true in the story," the story is not "self-contradictory" (i.e., not entailing a self-contradiction), and so it is logically possible.[345]

Once more, there may well be doubts as to whether the conjunction of (RT1)-(RT3) is a logical falsehood in standard formal logic. Perhaps there's a way to derive a self-contradiction from the conjunction by means of set of rules of standard logic. In this case, I won't say it seems that there isn't, for, in the first place, I am not sure what these rules amount to. But, again, I will grant that there isn't such a way, and so that (RT1)-(RT3) is not a logical falsehood in standard formal logic. Yet, again, this concession isn't sufficient for establishing the conjunction as logically possible. For a sentence, or a conjunction of sentences, might (epistemically speaking) entail a self-contradiction, and still yield no self-contradiction by the inference rules of standard formal logic. In fact, it seems there really are such sentences. An example would be the sentence "this rose is red, but not colored." I have already cited (in section II.4) R. Swinburne's remark that:

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[344] P. van Inwagen, *God, Knowledge & Mystery*, op. cit., pp. 243-244.
[345] P. van Inwagen, "Three Persons in One Being," op. cit., pp. 96-97.

> "It follows from no logical system that '*x* is red' entails '*x* is coloured'; and that is a lot more obvious than most entailments. … no model will show that '*x* is red' entails '*x* is coloured'."[346]

Remarkably, van Inwagen is aware of the fact that standard logic need not generally guarantee what he calls possibility *simpliciter*:

> "It hardly follows that, because a certain thing cannot be proved to be impossible by a certain method, it is therefore possible in any sense of 'possible' whatever. Suppose that the infallible Standard Atlas marks many islands as uninhabitable, none as inhabitable, and makes no claim to completeness in this matter. We could, if we liked, say that the islands marked 'uninhabitable' in the Standard Atlas were "cartographically uninhabitable." In doing this, we should be calling attention to the fact that our knowledge that these islands were uninhabitable had certain source. But would there then be any sense in saying that an island was "cartographically inhabitable" just in case that it was *not* cartographically *un*inhabitable? Very little, I should think. We *could* use words this way, but if we did we should have to recognize that "cartographical inhabitability" was not a species of inhabitability."[347]

What is, according to van Inwagen, possibility *simpliciter*? He explains:

> "Take physical possibility, possibility given the laws of nature. A proposition is physically possible if its conjunction with the laws of nature is … well, *possible*. Possible *tout court*. Possible *simpliciter*. Possible *period*. Explanations come to an end somewhere. I can say only that by possibility I mean possibility without qualification."[348]

Van Inwagen's possibility *simpliciter* appears close to what I have called metaphysical possibility. His point is that a proposition which can't be proved to be impossible *simpliciter* by standard logic and semantics alone need not (epistemically speaking) be possible *simpliciter*. Presumably he would add that a proposition which is logically possible (in the sense of not entailing a self-contradiction) need not be possible *simpliciter*. I think I could concede this. But, anyway, *my* point is that, analogically, a proposition which can't be proved to be impossible *simpliciter* – or logically impossible – by standard logic and semantics alone need not be logically possible.

Thirdly, van Inwagen highlights that some obviously logically possible conjunctions of sentences instantiate the same logical form in RI-logic as the conjunction of (T1)-(T3). In other

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[346] R. Swinburne, "In Defence of Logical Nominalism," op. cit., pp. 319-320. Relatedly, in P. T. Geach's remarkable opinion, the following premise of Aquinas's theistic argument from contingency (the so called Third Way) is a real entailment: if everything had the possibility of not being, at some time there would be nothing real. However, although in quantification theory there are particular cases when it is prescribed to pass from "$\forall x \exists y$ …" to "$\exists y \forall x$ …", "[o]ur existing logic does not show *this* argument to be valid. ; so much the worse for our existing logic ; we need to do more logical work on the topic of time and passing-away, discussed, e.g., in Prior's *Past, Present, and Future*, chapter viii. Till the work has been done, we cannot analyse, and therefore cannot adequately judge, the arguments of the Third Way." P. T. Geach, "Review of *The Five Ways: St. Thomas Aquinas's Proofs of God's Existence*. By Anthony Kenny," op. cit.,, p. 312; italics original.

[347] P. van Inwagen, "Modal Epistemology," op. cit., pp. 71-72; italics original. Repeated verbatim in van Inwagen's *God, Knowledge & Mystery*, op. cit., p. 13.

[348] Ibid., p. 72.

words, some obviously logically possible conjunctions of sentences are translated into RI-logic with the same strings of symbols, though different interpretation of these symbols. Van Inwagen's published examples of such conjunctions, though instructive and mnemonically helpful, always concern barking or prancing dogs, and so are rather unedifying, as he acknowledges. I will present one canine example of this sort, though slightly and marginally modified, to keep in better touch with our discussions. Let's suppose there are three dogs: Fido (which barks at the other two), Snoopy (which is barked at by the first and barks at the third), and Homeboy (which is barked at by the other two). Further, all are of the same breed, but at sale for different prices. Finally, suppose there is no dog of another breed. Now, we can translate this hypothetical and prosaic canine story into RI-logic in the same way as the lofty Trinitarian claims (T1)-(T3).

Let B stand for the predicate "is the same breed as."
Note: This is not a relative-identity predicate, for its application does not imply that things to which it is applied are breeds.

Let G*x* abbreviate "*x* is a dog & ∀y(*y* is a dog → *x*B*y*)."

Then:
G*x* is the RI-logic equivalent for "*x* is a dog and there is no dog of another breed."

Let F, S, and H stand, respectively, for the predicates "is Fido," "is Snoopy," and "is Homeboy."

Let P stand for the predicate "is the same price as."
Note: This is not a relative-identity predicate, for its application does not imply that things to which it is applied are prices.

Then:

∃*x*(F*x* & G*x*) is the RI-logic equivalent for "Fido is a dog and there is no dog of another breed,"
∃*x*(S*x* & G*x*) for "Snoopy is a dog and there is no dog of another breed,"
∃*x*(H*x* & G*x*) for "Homeboy is a dog and there is no dog of another breed,"

(RT1*) ∃*x*∃*y*∃*z*(F*x* & S*y* & H*z* & ~*x*P*y* & ~*x*P*z* & ~*y*P*z*) for
(T1*) "each of the three is of different price than the others,"

(RT2*) $\exists x \exists y \exists z(Fx \,\&\, Gx \,\&\, Sy \,\&\, Gy \,\&\, Hz \,\&\, Gz)$ for (T2*) "each of the three is such that it is a dog and there is no dog of another breed," and

(RT3*) $\exists x(Gx)$ for (T3*) "there are only dogs of one breed."

According to van Inwagen, the conjunction of (T1*)-(T3*) is obviously logically possible. He does not say expressly whether *a priori* or *a posteriori*, but it seems he would choose the former tag. If the conjunction was proclaimed by somebody to be obviously logically possible *a posteriori*, I could just add this discussion of van Inwagen's third reason to my discussion of the epistemic *a posteriori* category 2.1.2, because my defeaters for this reason would remain the same. As van Inwagen also notes, the conjunction of (T1*)-(T3*) is not a logical falsehood in RI-logic, for otherwise it would be logically impossible, which it obviously isn't. Though on the canine reinterpretation, B and P do not stand for relative-identity predicates, (T1*)-(T3*) have the same translation into – or, if you prefer, the same logical form in – RI-logic as (T1)-(T3). In van Inwagen's own words:

> "It is important to realize that the "three dogs" reinterpretation of our predicates is not intended to provide a model (in any sense) for the Trinity. For one thing, 'is the same price as' and 'is the same breed as' are not even RI-predicates [i.e., relative-identity predicates]. The only purpose of the reinterpretation is to show that for no sentence is it possible to derive both that the sentence and its negation from … [the canine story] by [the rules of] Transitivity, Symmetry, and the rules of quantifier logic. The argument is essentially this: If a contradiction can be formally deduced from … [the canine story], then the story … is inconsistent; but that story is obviously consistent."[349]

In sum, the conjunction of (T1*)-(T3*) therefore, instantiates the same logical form in – or, has the same translation into – RI-logic as the conjunction of (T1)-(T3). And the first conjunction is obviously logically possible. I am willing to grant both of these claims. But, I ask, so what? How does it follow that both conjunctions are logically possible? That there is a common logical form (or, translation) between two sentences, or conjunctions of sentences, in some system of formal logic does not generally entail that both sentences are logically possible. Otherwise, some explicitly self-contradictory, and so logically impossible, sentences would be logically possible, for they share with some obviously logically possible sentence at least one logical form in (or, translation into) some system of formal logic: the form "*p*" of sentential logic. E.g., the logically impossible "some red things aren't red" has the same form in sentential logic as the logically possible "all green things are green." Van Inwagen may well reply here that he isn't inferring logical possibility from sharing a logical form with an obviously logically possible story in *some* formal logic, but from sharing in *RI-logic*. He expressly opines that the conjunction of Trinitarian sentences such as (T1)-(T3) is logically possible because if it wasn't, the canine story wouldn't be logically possible either.[350] This suggests the following principle: each sentence which shares

[349] P. van Inwagen, *God, Knowledge & Mystery*, op. cit., p. 255.
[350] See P. van Inwagen, "Three Persons in One Being," op. cit., pp. 96-97.

in RI-logic the same logical form (or, translation) with a logically possible sentence is logically possible. However, in contrast, it is not true that, for instance, each sentence which shares in sentential logic the same logical form (or, translation) with a logically possible sentence is logically possible. But, again, what makes RI-logic special? Why are counterexamples to the former principles ruled out? Van Inwagen does not say. In fact, there are counterexamples. I will provide the following one. Suppose there are three roses, extravagantly named after Greco-Roman goddesses: Flora (which overshadows the other two), Selene (which is overshadowed by the first and overshadows the third), and Hera (which is overshadowed by the other two). All are of the same hue, but of different colors. (Here the impossibility obviously looms into the story.) Finally, there is no rose of another hue. Now, we can translate this hypothetical and prosaic canine story into RI-logic in the same way as the lofty Trinitarian claims (T1)-(T3).

Let B stand for the predicate "is the same hue as."
Note: This is not a relative-identity predicate, for its application does not imply that things to which it is applied are hues.

Let G*x* abbreviate "*x* is a rose & ∀y(*y* is a rose → *x*B*y*)."

Then:
G*x* is the RI-logic equivalent for "*x* is a rose and there is no rose of another hue."

Let F, S, and H stand, respectively, for the predicates "is Flora," "is Selene," and "is Hera."

Let P stand for the predicate "is the same color as."
Note: This is not a relative-identity predicate, for its application does not imply that things to which it is applied are colors.

Then:

∃*x*(F*x* & G*x*) is the RI-logic equivalent for "Flora is a rose and there is no rose of another hue,"
∃*x*(S*x* & G*x*) for "Selene is a rose and there is no rose of another hue,"
∃*x*(H*x* & G*x*) for "Hera is a rose and there is no rose of another hue,"

(RT1**) ∃*x*∃*y*∃*z*(F*x* & S*y* & H*z* & ~*x*P*y* & ~*x*P*z* & ~*y*P*z*) for
(T1**) "each of the three is of a different color than the others,"

(RT2**) $\exists x\exists y\exists z(Fx \,\&\, Gx \,\&\, Sy \,\&\, Gy \,\&\, Hz \,\&\, Gz)$ for (T2**) "each of the three is such that it is a rose and there is no rose of another hue," and

(RT3**) $\exists x(Gx)$ for (T3**) "there are only roses of one hue."

The conjunction of (T1**)-(T3**) is obviously logically impossible. For it is obviously logically impossible that some things are of the same hue, but of different colors. Even if the conjunction of (T1**)-(T3**) is not a logical falsehood in RI-logic, it is logically impossible. Though on the rosary reinterpretation, B and P do not stand for relative-identity predicates, (T1**)-(T3**) have the same translation into – or, if you prefer, the same logical form in – RI-logic as the Trinitarian (T1)-(T3) and the canine (T1*)-(T3*). So, given that the conjunction of (T1*)-(T3*) is logically possible, the conjunction of (T1**)-(T3**) constitutes a counterexample to the principle that each sentence which shares in RI-logic the same logical form (or, translation) with a logically possible sentence is logically possible. A formal argument could be mounted for the logical impossibility of the rosary story (T1**)-(T3**) if we added to the inference rules of RI-logic the following one: from any premise, infer $\sim\alpha P\beta \rightarrow \sim\alpha B\beta$. Put another way, things which do not share their color never share their hue. The argument would be almost identical to the below hypothetical argument from the assumption if the Father and the Son aren't the same person, then they are not the same being.[351] However, in terms of persuasiveness, such argument would add nothing to the plain and simple statement of the logically impossibility of there being some things which share a hue but not a color.

At this moment, somebody – perhaps van Inwagen himself – may well reply that although the refuted principle has counterexamples, its weaker modification doesn't. This modification could be: each sentence, or conjunction of sentences which is such that (i) the only identity predicates in it relative-identity predicates, and (ii) it shares in RI-logic the same logical form (or, translation) with a logically possible sentence, is logically possible. Forsooth, so far I haven't been able to find a clear counterexample to this intricate rule. But, of course, that does not make the modified principle evidently correct.

Remarkably, M. C. Rea proposes a formal derivation of self-contradiction from the conjunction of (RT1) and (RT3), which is the RI-logic equivalent of the Trinitarian sequence (T1)-(T3).[352] More accurately, a self-contradiction is already derived from the conjunction of (RT1) and (RT2), as (RT3) isn't mentioned in it. The derivation employs the principle: $\forall x\forall y(x \neq y \rightarrow \sim xBy$; where "$\neq$" represents the negation of absolute identity, and B stands for the predicate "is the same being as." In more ordinary words, things which are not absolutely identical are never the same being. I will reproduce Rea's argument here with certain modifications. In particular, my rendering will not employ the concept of absolute identity, and so will not use the sign for its negation. The argument continues from (RT3) onwards.

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[351] Except for different interpretation of the involved symbols and the two following modifications. First, instead (RT7), insert (RT7') $\exists x\exists y(xBy \,\&\, \sim xPy)$. Second, instead of the assumption behind (RT8), insert another assumption: $\forall x\forall y, \sim xPy \rightarrow \sim xBy$.

[352] See M. C. Rea, "Relative Identity and the Doctrine of the Trinity," op. cit., pp. 440-441.

(RT4) $\exists x\exists y\exists z$(F$x$ & x is God & $\forall m$(m is God → xBm) & Sy & y is God & $\forall m$(m is God → yBm) & Hz & & z is God & $\forall m$(m is God → zBm).

From (RT2), by the definition of Gx.

(RT5) $\exists x\exists y\exists z$(F$x$ & Sy & Hz & xBy & xBz & yBz) From (RT4).

(RT6) $\exists x\exists y\exists z$(F$x$ & Sy & Hz & xBy & xBz & yBz & ~xPy & ~xPz & ~yPz)

From (RT5) and the assumption: $\forall x\forall y$, if x satisfies one of the predicates F, S, H, and y satisfies another, then ~xPy.

(RT7) $\exists x\exists y$(Fx & Sy & xBy & ~xPy) From (RT6), by simplification.

(RT8) $\exists x\exists y$(xBy & ~xBy) From (RT7) and the assumption: $\forall x\forall y$, if Fx & Sy & ~xPy, then ~xBy; by simplification.
A self-contradiction.

Van Inwagen would not demur to the assumption about the predicates F, S, and H, adduced under (RT6). It accords with his own position,[353] and is entailed by central Trinitarian theses. He would not accept, of course, the assumption behind (RT8) as plainly begging the question against Trinitarian belief. And he would not concede the principle that two different persons (divine or not) are never the same being. Yet, *if* both of the two assumptions behind (RT6) and (RT8) hold with logical necessity, then the conjunction of (T1) and (T2) is logically impossible, and so is the conjunction of (T1)-(T3). Of course, van Inwagen would remind us that it is, at least, not altogether clear that two different persons are, with logical necessity, never the same being. But, so far, it isn't altogether clear that this general modal claim is *not* true. Worse, as Rea remarks, it is rather compelling that that two things which are not absolutely identical are never the same being. Similarly, to many people it is a rather compelling principle that two things which are not the same person (whether divine or not) can never be the same being. And these people will be inclined to take the assumption adduced behind (RT8) as logically necessary. In any case, van Inwagen offers nothing which would establish evidently that this assumption is not logically necessary.

To sum up the main points of our discussion of van Inwagen, none of the three reasons for logical possibility of the conjunction of central Trinitarian theses such as (T1)-(T3) entails evidently that the conjunction is logically possible. First, not being a logical falsehood in RI-

[353] Cf. P. van Inwagen, *God, Knowledge & Mystery*, op. cit., pp. 249-253.

logic does not guarantee evidently and generally logical possibility. Secondly, being a logical falsehood in no standard formal logic does not generally guarantee logical possibility. Thirdly, neither sharing the same logical form in RI-logic with a logically possible sentence generally guarantees logical possibility. Granted, *if* some of these reasons would be an evident guarantee of logical possibility, then the conjunction of (T1)-(T3) would be evidently logically possible, and so would be the Trinity doctrine. But that's an "if" van Inwagen hasn't succeeded to satisfy.[354]

As the second main candidate within the epistemic category 2.1.1.ii, I will consider the suggestion that the logical probability of the Trinity doctrine on some information is p-evidently non-minimal. Granted, if this suggestion was true, it could be p-evident that the Trinity doctrine is logically possible and not analytically false. As I argued, it can be p-evident that every analytically false proposition has minimal logical probability on any given information if it has any logical probability on the information at all (see especially the premise (6.1) in section III.4A). I have also argued that it can be p-evident that each proposition which is not analytically false is logically possible (see especially the lemma (2.1*.I) in the same section). So, p-evident non-minimal logical probability of the Trinity doctrine on some information would yield p-evident logical and analytic possibility of the doctrine. In turn, this would, very plausibly, yield the conclusion that it can be p-evident that the Trinity doctrine is not analytically false, and that it can be p-evident that doctrine is logically possible.

But how could it be seen *a priori* (and independently of religious experience, etc.) that the logical probability of the Trinity doctrine is on some proposition non-minimal? The proposal that the doctrine has non-minimal probability on itself – for it is entailed by itself – is a non-starter. For one thing, as long as it is not clear whether the doctrine is logically (analytically) possible, it is not clear whether it has some relation of logical probability to itself at all.[355] It would also prove too much to say that every proposition entailed by itself has non-minimal logical probability on some information, and so is logically possible. For every proposition entails itself, including any explicit self-contradiction.

More promising would be to state that the Trinity doctrine has p-evidently non-minimal logical probability on the premises of some argument for the doctrine. As we are discussing the category 2.1.1.ii, it should be some *a priori* argument. My opinion has been that the most promising argument *a priori* argument for the Trinity doctrine is Richard Swinburne's modification of the argument by Richard of St. Victor. Let's recall a summary of this modification. The supremely loving divine person G_1 would originate supremely loving divine person G_2 with whom he would share his goods, and the supremely loving divine persons G_1 and G_2 would originate cooperatively another divine person G_3 with whom G_1 and G_2 would together

[354] My final note concerns *God, Knowledge & Mystery* (op. cit.), p. 219, where van Inwagen concedes, somewhat surprisingly, that the conjunction of (T1)-(T3) "… cannot be seen even to be possible by the use of human reason." Here, presumably, he has on his mind human possibility *simpliciter* and reason unaided by revelation. This position accords with his own version of modal skepticism, according to which we are largely ignorant of modal matters remote from everyday life (see his "Modal Epistemology," op. cit., pp. 69-70; and *God, Knowledge & Mystery*, op. cit., pp. 11-14). I believe one of the upshots of my discussion of van Inwagen is that he should consider seriously also the option that the conjunction of (T1)-(T3) cannot be seen by unaided human reason as *logically* possible (in my sense of logical possibility).

[355] See nt. 204 above.

share their goods. Here's a sketch of how this Trinitarian argument from supreme love might be employed in an attempt to see p-evidently and *a priori* that on some information the Trinity doctrine has non-minimal logical probability.

(i) It's *a priori* p-evident that on some background information (say, on a particular set of apologetic reasons or evidences) *A*, the proposition that (*B*) there is just one God and one perfectly morally good divine person G_1, has non-minimal logical probability.

(ii) It's *a priori* p-evident that on the information (*A*&*B*), the proposition that (*C*) G_1 is loving supremely, has non-minimal logical probability.

(iii) It's *a priori* p-evident that on the information (*A*&*B*&*C*), the proposition that (*D*) the divine person G_1 originates another supremely loving divine person G_2 with whom G_1 shares his good, has non-minimal logical probability.

(iv) It's *a priori* p-evident that on the information (*A*&*B*&*C*&*D*), the proposition that (*E*) the two divine persons G_1 and G_2 originate another divine person G_3 with whom G_1 and G_2 share their good, has non-minimal logical probability.

(v) So, it's *a priori* p-evident that on the information *A*, the conjunction (*B*&*C*&*D*&*E*) has non-minimal logical probability. (See my general remarks below on logical probability of conjunction as a function of logical probabilities of its conjuncts.)

(vi) So, it's *a priori* p-evident that on the information *A*, the conjunction (*B*&*D*&*E*) has non-minimal logical probability. (For everything entailed has at least the logical probability of the entailing; see premise (8.1) in section III.4A.)

(vii) But, it's *a priori* p-evident that the conjunction (*B*&*D*&*E*) entails the Trinity doctrine.

(viii) So, it's *a priori* p-evident that on some information the Trinity doctrine has non-minimal logical probability. (For everything entailed has at least the logical probability of the entailing.)

This looks neat. However, I am still not impressed. Though I am willing to grant (i) and (ii), the step (iii) appears to me as begging the question. It still *isn't* evident that *D* has non-minimal logical probability on (*A*&*B*&*C*), because it is *not evident* that the negation of *D* is *not* entailed by (*B*). Put otherwise, it remains an open question whether there could be just one God and more than one divine person (i.e., person which is God).[356] Perhaps some people would say at this moment that matters are the other way around: *D* p-evidently has non-minimal logical probability on (*A*&*B*&*C*), and from this we know p-evidently that *D* is logically possible and not analytically false. But this suggestion reduces either to the original deductive Trinitarian argument that (*a priori* p-evidently non-minimally logically probable) *C* entails *D*, which has been addressed already under category 1.1.1; or to the proclamation that it is simply self-evident that *D* has non-minimal logical probability on (*A*&*B*&*C*). If confronted with this latter position, I would ask its advocate: is the non-minimal logical probability evident to you immediately, in the manner some people would profess in case of the statement that Spike the Texan can swim with 90% logical probability given that 90 % of Texans can swim is the only relevant information? Or is non-minimal logical probability of *D* on (*A*&*B*&*C*) as plain to you as, say, the claim that the

[356] Similarly E. C. Feser, "Swinburne's Tritheism," op. cit., pp. 179-180.

logical probability of a ball being white given it is either white or black is 1/2, or the claim that the numeral 6 gets the logical probability of 1/6 given the dice is symmetrical? Maybe you will assure me approvingly. Then I'm sorry; I don't believe you. Oh sorry, I'm not sorry. By my lights, the only lights I have, *B*, *C*, and *D* are not that simple. On the contrary, they involve claims which have been intellectually tortuous to many thinkers. Hence they are not on a par with other and quite simple statements. My lights may well be in many respects more limited than yours'. But in the respect under present consideration, I have no reason to believe you are so extraordinarily bright. In fact, it should be apparent to you that from my perspective there are good reasons to disbelieve you, and to label your proclamations of self-evident non-minimal logical probability of *D* on (*A*&*B*&*C*) as mere assertions.[357]

I will not address in detail the suggestion that *a priori* p-evidently logically (analytically) possible existence of just one God entails the Trinity doctrine by way of a p-evidently sound *a priori* argument. Again, as is substantiated under the category 1.1.1, the main *a priori* argument for this entailment fails.

Now I'm done with what I take to be the main arguments within the epistemic category 2.1.1.ii. My evaluation, together with my evaluation of 2.1.1.i, leaves the whole category 2.1.1 unpromising. It can be plausibly concluded that human evident *a priori* knowledge of the logical (analytic) possibility of the Trinity doctrine, proceeding neither from the truth of the doctrine, nor from testimony, and independent of religious experience, hasn't been acquired. We move on.

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[357] Interestingly, most Baroque scholastics disbelieve that the Trinity doctrine could be known as "probable" apart from divine revelation. (See L. de Molina, *Commentaria In primam D. Thomae partem*, Vol. I, op. cit., q. 32, a. 1; F. Suárez, *De Sanctissimo Trinitatis mysterio*, op. cit., lib. 1, cap. 11, n. 10; D. Ruiz de Montoya, *Commentaria, Ac Disputationes in primam partem sancti Thomae De Trinitate*, op. cit., disp. 33, sect. 2, disp. 41, sect. 3 and 5, disp. 43, sect. 2.) With this position Leibniz agreed. (See M. R. Antognazza, *Leibniz on the Trinity and the Incarnation*, op. cit., pp. 18, 33, 57, 61-62, 131, 163.) At least in Baroque scholasticism, however, "probable" did not always mean *more probable than not*. (Cf. F. Suárez, *De fide theologica*, op. cit., disp. 4, sect. 2, n. 6; J. Martínez de Ripalda, *Tractatus Theologici, & Scholastici de virtutibus fide, spe, et charitate*, op. cit., disp. 3, sect. 5-6; disp. 6, sect. 5; disp. 6, sect. 5.) And as for the involved kind of probability which Baroque scholastics and Leibniz have in mind, presumably its interpretation was implicitly logical, or epistemic, or hybrid. (Cf. J. Franklin, *The Science of Conjecture*, op. cit., pp. 17, 139, 326; M. R. Antognazza, *Leibniz on the Trinity and the Incarnation*, op. cit., pp. 5, 17-19, 57, 62, 119, 167-168.) Finally, Suárez holds that without revelation the truth of the Trinity doctrine not only can't be known as "probable," but one cannot even give to the doctrine a (reasonable) opiniative or timid assent. This position even seems to Suárez to be held by all theologians (*De Sanctissimo Trinitatis mysterio*, op. cit., lib. 1, cap. 11, n. 10). In fact, there were some exceptions to this rule, such as T. González de Santalla, *Manuductio ad conversionem mahumetanorum*, Vol. II, lib. 3, cap. 3, § II, Madrid, sumptibus Salmanticensi Academia Sacrae Theologiae 1687. Moreover, Aquinas (*Summa contra gentiles*, op. cit., bk. 1, chs. 8-9) writes that the truths of faith which transcend all the demonstrative industry of natural reason prescinding from revelation can be supported by some weak and probable reasons available for the declaration of these truths and for the exercise and consolation of the faithful, though not for the convincing of opponents. Suárez (*De Sanctissimo Trinitatis mysterio*, op. cit., lib. 1, cap. 12, n. 8-10) emphasizes these three motives of Aquinas for employing such reasons, but he does not address Aquinas's remark that such reasons are "probable." Anyway, neither González's nor Aquinas's assessment of metaphysical reasons (prescinding from the revelation) for the Trinity doctrine as "probable" is clearly in conflict with my position that such reasons do not make the doctrine evidently *logically* probable. In the given context, both González and Aquinas may well mean simply some other than the logical kind of probability.

2.1.2. Human evident *a posteriori* knowledge of the logical (analytic) possibility of the Trinity doctrine, not from the truth of the doctrine, not from testimony, independent of religious experience.

Within this category, prominent are arguments for the logical (analytic) possibility of the Trinity doctrine from mundane analogies. Prominent have been analogies with man, especially with his psychological constitution. Human analogies are: memory, understanding, and will; understanding, affection, and will; the mind, her word, and its sense; the mind, the mind's object, and the mind's knowledge of the object; subject, object, and subject-object; lover, his loved object, and the lover's love for the object; the mind, the mind's knowledge, and the mind's love; the mind, the mind's knowledge of itself, and the mind's love of itself (or the mind's willing itself); a man's invisible self, the visible expression of himself in a picture or poem, and the response of this picture or poem to himself; a husband, his wife, and their child (remember Swinburne's variation on Richard of St. Victor). Some compare the Trinity to inanimate phenomena: the root, trunk, and branches of the tree; the fountain, the stream, and the rivulet; the fountain, the rivulet, and the water; the form, the fragrance, and the medicinal efficacy of the flower; the fat, the wick, and the flame in the candle; shell, yolk, and albumen of the egg; liquid, vapor, and ice; the cloud, the rain, and the rising mist; flame, burning, and light (or heat); sunlight, rainbow, and heat; three colors in a rainbow spectrum; the solar disc, the radius, and the light of the sun; the actinic, luminiferous, and calorific principles in the ray of light; color, shape, and size. Mathematical, geometrical, and logical parallels were offered: $1 \times 1 \times 1 = 1$; three sides of a triangle (primarily equilateral); length, breadth, and thickness; thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. Finally, a host of analogies proposed on behalf of a plurality (and not specifically of a trinity) of persons: people with multiple personality disorder; people who under certain conditions display disjoint spheres of consciousness because their hemispheres do not communicate; a flame igniting many other flames without diminishing itself; the particle and wave nature of (behavior of) light; a statue and the lump of bronze (or clay) the statue is made of being mutually distinct yet counted as just one material object (on account of having all of their matter in common); the basic mathematical imaginary number i such that $i \times i = -1$.[358]

What should we make of all this? I will first reply to the currently popular epistemic analogy of, on the one hand, the belief in a plurality of persons in one being with, on the other hand, the belief in the wave-particle duality of light. Then I will address briefly a generally characterized cumulative *a posteriori* case from Trinitarian similitudes for the logical (analytic) possibility of the Trinity doctrine.

The British theologian and particle physicist John Charlton Polkinghorne (*1930),[359] together with R. Swinburne,[360] P. van Inwagen,[361] and others,[362] highlight the scientific

[358] For surveys of most of these Trinitarian similitudes, see D. Ruiz de Montoya, *Commentaria, Ac Disputationes in primam partem sancti Thomae De Trinitate*, op. cit., disp. 33, sect. 2, and disp. 44; Augustus Hopkins Strong (1836 – 1921), *Systematic Theology: A Compendium and Commonplace-Book*, Vol. I, Philadelphia, American Baptist Publication Society 1907, pp. 344-347; J. E. Brower and M. C. Rea, "Understanding the Trinity," op. cit., pp. 145-147.

[359] J. C. Polkinghorne, *The Way the World Is: The Christian Perspective of a Scientist*, Louisville, Westminster John Knox Press 2007 (1st ed. 1983), pp. 25-26, 67, 124, 126; "The Metaphysics of Divine Action," in *Chaos and Complexity: Scientific Perspectives on Divine Action*, Robert John Russell, Nancey Murphy and Arthur Robert Peacocke (eds.), Vatican, Vatican Observatory Publications and The Center for Theology and the Natural Sciences

observation that any beam of light has causal properties both of a stream of particles moving in space (as evinced by photoelectric effect, the Compton effect, and the effect of irradiating a photographic plate) and of a change in a field of electromagnetic force (as evinced by diffraction and interference). It seems outright logically (analytically) impossible that a light beam is both a stream of particles and an electromagnetic change. Still, light beams behave both ways. Sometimes a beam has effects of a stream, sometimes of a field wave. All the evidence that scientists have says that *any* light beam would have either effect under appropriate conditions. This speaks against the weird – or, *ad hoc* – hypothesis that some light beams are streams of particles and other are waves in electromagnetic fields. Yet, according to some authors, scientists still cannot specify any scenario describing *how* it can be true that light behaves both ways.[363] At least, so far we know of no *single familiar* entity which would serve for the wave-particle duality of light as a model. The result is that, with respect to the scientific evidence, any light beam probably behaves both like a stream and wave. (And a similar duality occurs at the level of individual photons and also electrons.)

I think we should concede that the *logical* probability of the dual behavior can be, with respect to the scientific evidence, *p-evidently* non-minimal (for somebody). By implication, I should also concede that the proposition about the dual behavior of light, to which this non-minimal logical probability accrues, can be p-evidently logically possible and not analytically false (for somebody). Now, L. McGrew suggested to me in correspondence an intriguing *epistemic* analogy of the proposition reporting the wave-particle duality of light with the Trinity doctrine. As said, so far there isn't any known scenario how the Trinity doctrine could be true. At least, there is no familiar entity which would explain clearly how something can be both one being and three persons. Still, assuming one admits it can be p-evidently non-minimally logically probable, on a body of (scientific) evidence, that light *is* both particles and waves, he should also admit it can be p-evidently non-minimally logically probably, on a suitable body of apologetic evidence, that God both is one being and three persons. This was, in sum, L. McGrew's objection to me.

(Berkeley) 2000, pp. 154-155; *Science and Providence: God's Interaction with the World*, Philadelphia and London, Templeton Foundation Press 2005, pp. 32-33; *Science and Creation: The Search for Understanding*, Philadelphia and London, Templeton Foundation Press 2006, pp. 29, 71, 84-85, 99-100, 111; *One World: The Interaction of Science and Theology*, Philadelphia and London, Templeton Foundation Press 2007, pp. 44, 53-54, 99-101, 114, 126; *Quantum Physics and Theology: An Unexpected Kinship*, New Haven and London, Yale University Press 2007, pp. 15-17, 23-25, 33-37, 56-61, 74, 90-93; *Theology in the Context of Science*, New Haven and London, Yale University Press 2009, pp. 22-29, 147.

[360] R. Swinburne, *The Coherence of Theism*, op. cit., pp. 67-73.

[361] P. van Inwagen, *God, Knowledge & Mystery*, op. cit., pp. 220, 224-227, 243-244; *The Possibility of Resurrection and Other Essays in Christian Apologetics*, op. cit., pp. 13-14.

[362] See Herbert McCabe (1926 – 2001), "Aquinas on the Trinity," in *Silence and the Word: Negative Theology and Incarnation*, Oliver Davies and Denys Turner (eds.), Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 2004, pp. 79-80; Panos A. Ligomenides, "Scientific Knowledge as a Bridge to the Mind of God, " pp. 86-87, and Argyris Nicolaidis, "Relational Nature," p. 101, in *The Trinity and an Entangled World: Relationality in Physical Science and Theology*, J. C. Polkinghorne (ed.), Grand Rapids and Cambridge, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company 2010.

[363] This is an opinion of R. Swinburne and D. Berlinski. J. C. Polkinghorne opines quantum mechanics resolve the paradox and fully understands the wave-particle duality. P. van Inwagen reports this is not a universally received wisdom among philosophers of physics and physicists.

Indeed, the Trinity doctrine and many popular reports on the wave-particle duality of light are somewhat kindred. As the American agnostic philosopher and mathematician David Berlinski (*1942) writes cheerfully, with his eye on those who motivate their atheism by natural science:

> "Light *is* both a wave and a particle, and it *is* both a wave and a particle at the same time. This conclusion embodies a mystery, one that no subsequent analytical efforts have dissolved. The mystery will not appear entirely unfamiliar to Christians persuaded of the threefold aspect of the deity. If light *is* a particle and a wave, religious believers might observe, God is a Father, a Son, and a Holy Ghost. This is not an analogy that has captured the allegiance of scientific atheists."[364]

Perhaps you have been told on several similar occasions, as I have, that what the laws of microphysics say hasn't been explicated or pictured by anybody in familiar terms. So, in this sense, the laws remain a mystery. Again, I grant this. Yet, I do *not* agree with a vital point of L. McGrew's argument. I admit something *different* than what she proposes. I concede it can be p-evident that with logical probability, non-minimal with respect to the results of certain experiments, light *behaves* both like particles and waves. I do *not* concede that some beam of light *is*, p-evidently with such logical probability, both a stream of particles and a wave. Assuming at least for now the apparent logical impossibility, or at least the lack of obvious logical possibility, of anything being both a stream of particles and a wave, I am far from admitting something is both a stream of particles and a wave with p-evidently non-minimal logical probability. I admit humans so far have no clearly and sufficiently similar model for the Trinity; although more or less close analogies have been proposed since immemorial. To the extent that it is p-evidently logically impossible and analytically false – and not merely not p-evidently not logically impossible and not analytically false – that a stream of particles moving in space is a wave of an electromagnetic (non-corpuscular) field, to that extent I am not willing to grant to this dual *identity* even epistemic possibility, epistemic justification, and good argument. But I allow for all of these epistemic goods for the proposition that all light beams *behave* both like streams and waves.

It seems that I am not alone in making such a division. Both philosophers of physics and scientists are aware of the distinction, although is one of a philosophical sort. Van Inwagen made this related comment:

> "Fr. Polkinghorne's position on the wave-particle duality is that quantum field theory *shows* how an electron can be both a wave and a particle (i.e., can be both diffracted on its way to a detector and give up its energy to the detector in a particle-like manner). My impression from reading popular works on quantum mechanics is that not all physicists and philosophers of physics are willing to say this. If there is indeed real disagreement on this point, I expect it is philosophical disagreement: disagreement about what counts as *really* having "shown how something can be." One man's "showing how something can be both *X* and *Y*" is another's man "constructing a formalism that allows you to treat something as both *X* and *Y* without getting into trouble." "[365]

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[364] D. Berlinski, *The Devil's Delusion: Atheism and Its Scientific Pretensions*, New York, Basic Books 2009, pp. 92-93; my italics.
[365] P. van Inwagen, *God, Knowledge & Mystery*, op. cit., nt. 4 on p. 225; italics original.

This should be enough on the current epistemic analogy of the Trinity and light. But can't we establish p-evidently the logical (analytic) possibility of the Trinity doctrine by gathering all the Trinitarian similitudes together? I don't think so. Or, rather, I think we can't. It is *not* viable to proceed by the following general pattern, which I take to capture cumulative cases for logical (analytic) possibility of the Trinity doctrine.

> (i) It's *a posteriori* p-evident that object x_1 has properties f_1 and g_1, object x_2 has properties f_2 and g_2, etc.
> (ii) It's p-evident that all the *f*'s and *g*'s are relevantly similar to the target properties f_n and g_n.
> (iii) So, it's *a posteriori* p-evident that it is logically possible that the target object x_n has both the target properties f_n and g_n.

Here, f_1 may stand for the property of *being a human*, g_1 for the property of *having memory, understanding, and will*, f_2 for the property of *being a flame*, g_2 for the property of *igniting many other flames without diminishing itself*, etc., f_n for the property of *being a substance*, and g_n for the property of *existing in three persons.*

The specific Trinitarian obstacle to any applications of the adduced argumentative pattern is that there are no observed properties which are apparently relevantly similar to the pair of target properties of *being a substance* and *existing in three persons*. That is, there are no p-evidently exemplified properties which are p-evidently relevantly similar to the pair of target properties *being one substance* and *being in more than one person*. Indeed, no observed thing in nature satisfies them both.[366] On the other hand, the relevancy of similarity of the proposed and undeniably observed analogies, or things in nature, for demonstrating the possibility of the Trinity doctrine is spurious.[367] E.g., memory, understanding and will of no observed mind constitute a plurality of persons. And no observed self-lover is three persons. Multiple personality disorders and non-communicating hemispheres do not count, because it is, of course,

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[366] Similarly D. Ruiz de Montoya, *Commentaria, Ac Disputationes in primam partem sancti Thomae De Trinitate*, op. cit., disp. 43, sect. 4; G. W. Leibniz (see M. R. Antognazza, *Leibniz on the Trinity and the Incarnation*, op. cit., pp. xvi, xviii, 57, 73, 107-108, 208, 216); M. J. Scheeben, *The Mysteries of Christianity*, op. cit., p. 28; V. Šanda, *Synopsis theologiae dogmaticae specialis*, Vol. I, op. cit., § 62. Cf. also Richard of St. Victor, *De Trinitate*, op. cit., lib. 4, cap. 8.

[367] Augustine of Hippo, the most outstanding proponent of images or vestiges of the Trinity in the creation (and of its psychological analogies in the first place), deemed the images as immeasurably inadequate (incomparabiliter impar) in their likeness to the Trinity. See his *On the Trinity* (http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1301.htm; accessed November 23, 2011), bk. XV, ch. 23, n. 43 (see also ch. 11, n. 20; cf. C. V. Pospíšil, *Jako v nebi, tak i na zemi*, op. cit., pp. 41, 339-343). In line with Augustine, Aquinas writes of models of the Trinity that even the likeness taken from the highest creatures falls short in the illustration of divine things (*Summa Theologica*, op. cit., I, q. 27, a. 1, co.; cf. B. Davies, *The Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, op. cit., pp. 192-193; G. Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of St Thomas Aquinas*, op. cit., pp. 26-31). Disparateness of the Trinity and its analogies is acknowledged also by D. Ruiz de Montoya, *Commentaria, Ac Disputationes in primam partem sancti Thomae De Trinitate*, op. cit., disp. 33, sect. 2, disp. 43, sect. 2, disp. 44; G. W. Leibniz (see M. R. Antognazza, *Leibniz on the Trinity and the Incarnation*, op. cit., pp. xviii, 83, 281-282); M. Stuart, *Letters on the Trinity, and on the Divinity of Christ*, op. cit., pp. 34-35; T. V. Tymms, *The Ancient Faith in Modern Light*, op. cit., pp. 38-39; M. J. Scheeben, *The Mysteries of Christianity*, op. cit., pp. 36, 46-47; and A. H. Strong, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. I, op. cit., pp. 344-347.

doubtful that they make for a plurality of *persons* in the sense employed in the Trinity doctrine. That is, the relevancy of certain similarity of such distempers and neurological curiosities to the Trinity is highly debatable.

R. Swinburne himself is well aware of the general limits of analogical arguments for logical (and analytic) possibility.[368] So are other Christian believers when it comes to Christian mysteries, including the Trinity doctrine. As the American philosopher and historian C. Stephen Evans pointed out:

> "Doubts can always be raised about the closeness of the analogy, and indeed the Christian herself will insist that all strictly earthly analogies will be limited. (It seems true that all analogies are limited to some degree; otherwise they would provide more than an analogy.) If a really close analogy is provided, doubts could be raised about the coherence of the analogue itself, or its proper description."[369]

That is, the observed analogies to the Trinity doctrine are of doubtful importance for the question of its logical possibility. For them, the step (ii) is spoiled. And at the point when proposed analogies resemble the doctrine enough, they are observed no more, and share with it its unclear modal status.[370] For them, the step (i) is spoiled. No proposed Trinitarian analogy, and no set of proposed Trinitarian analogies, satisfies both (i) and (ii).

Accordingly, the most promising attempt to achieve human evident *a posteriori* knowledge of the logical (analytic) possibility of the Trinity doctrine, not from the truth of the doctrine, not from testimony, and independent of religious experience, are a failure. This leaves not only the epistemic category 2.1.2 plausibly vacuous (at least so far), but, in conjunction with our result for the category 2.1.1, also the whole category 2.1 plausibly vacuous (at least so far). Lastly, let's treat the last category of our partition.

2.2. Human evident knowledge of the logical (analytic) possibility of the Trinity doctrine, not from the truth of the doctrine, from testimony, independent of religious experience.

The treatment of this category has three main parts. I will make a short note on a non-probabilistic argument for the logical possibility of the doctrine from the failure of all its opponents to demonstrate its logical impossibility. Comments will be made on probabilistic arguments from testimonial evidence for the doctrine's logical possibility. I will also try to draw several points from certain hints of George Berkeley, Francisco Suárez, and David Hume.

Suppose somebody claimed:

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[368] Cf. R. Swinburne, *The Coherence of Theism*, op. cit., pp. 47-48, 73.

[369] C. S. Evans, *The Historical Christ and the Jesus of Faith*, op. cit., p. 126.

[370] Note that logical (analytic) possibility of an idea isn't automatically established by its theoretical or practical usefulness. E.g., although imaginary numbers may well be a very profitable device in mathematics, science, or technology – as they enable us to solve certain mathematical problems or infer future observations – it is, nevertheless, arguably logically impossible, and analytically false, that something lasts for 2i seconds, or that something is 2i yards long, whereas $i = \sqrt{(-1)}$. Cf. J. P. Moreland and W. L. Craig, *Philosophical Foundations for a Christian Worldview*, op. cit., p. 319 and ch. 16.

(i) It's p-evident (from testimony) that there have been many attempts to demonstrate that the Trinity doctrine is not logically (analytically) possible.
(ii) It's p-evident that none of these attempts is evidently sound.
(iii) So, it's p-evident (from testimony) that the Trinity doctrine is logically (analytically) possible.

Such an argument might become more promising if the doctrine also (ii*) seemed logically (analytically) possible or (ii**) was generally agreed to be logically (analytically) possible. Though (ii*) is satisfied for some of its defenders, (ii**) plausibly isn't met. In any case, even if (ii**) was met and (i), (ii), and (ii*) were satisfied by everybody, it still would not follow that (iii) is satisfied by somebody. If there are many proposed arguments for the logical impossibility of a particular proposition, and the premises of each include a false premise or do not entail the conclusion evidently, it still does not generally follow that the particular proposition is logically possible. Its logical impossibility might still be entailed in a way nobody has noticed. That is, from mere deficiency of those arguments it still isn't evident that the proposition against which they are directed is logically possible. It is a large step from the claim that it is *not* evident that a particular proposition is *not* logically (analytically) possible, to the claim that it *is* evident that it is *not* true that the proposition is not logically (analytically) possible. In short, non-evident logical impossibility does not universally amount to evident logical possibility. More generally and schematically, non-evidentness of *p* (whether modal or not) is one thing, evidentness of not-*p* another. Or, absence of evidentness is not evidentness of absence.[371]

But shouldn't we presume such a proposition to be logically possible under such conditions? I do not deny this recommendation. A systematic, uninterrupted failure of all the hitherto opponents of logical possibility of a particular proposition may well rationally bolster one's rational confidence in the proposition's logical possibility, in some sense of the word "rational." But this is a different matter from saying that the failure of opponents makes the logical possibility evident. We will move now to some probabilistic arguments fit for the epistemic category 2.2.

L. McGrew objected to me in correspondence that the logical probability of the Trinity doctrine or Christianity is evidently (or, rather, p-evidently) raised by certain testimonial data, and so the Trinity doctrine evidently is logically (and analytically) possible. As she put it:

[371] Similarly: D. Báñez, *Scholastica Commentaria in Secundam Secundae Angelici Doctoris partem*, op. cit., q. 1, a. 4, col. 57; J. Martínez de Ripalda, *Tractatus Theologici, & Scholastici de virtutibus fide, spe, et charitate*, op. cit., disp. 6, sect. 5; D. Ruiz de Montoya, *Commentaria, Ac Disputationes in primam partem sancti Thomae De Trinitate*, op. cit., disp. 43, sect. 2-3; G. W. Leibniz (see M. R. Antognazza, *Leibniz on the Trinity and the Incarnation*, op. cit., pp. xvii-xviii, 18-19); John Lange, "The Argument from Silence," *History and Theory* 5, No. 3 (1966), pp. 290-291, 301; R. Swinburne, "Analytic/Synthetic," op. cit., pp. 38-39; R. Swinburne, *The Coherence of Theism*, op. cit., pp. 274-275; John Woods, Andrew Irvine and Douglas Walton, *Argument: Critical Thinking, Logic and the Fallacies*, Toronto, Prentice Hall 2004, p. 61; Klaas J. Kraay, "Absence of Evidence and Evidence of Absence," *Faith and Philosophy* 24, No. 2 (2007), nt. 35; T. Williamson, *The Philosophy of Philosophy*, op. cit., pp. 153-155; W. L. Craig, "Must the Atheist Be Omniscient?," op. cit.; W. L. Craig, " "Must the Atheist Be Omniscient?" Re-Visited," op. cit.; Christopher Stephens, "A Bayesian Approach to Absent Evidence Reasoning," *Informal Logic* 31, No. 1 (2011), nt. 3 and pp. 62-63.

> "We can see evidently that what we know by evidence must be coherent. A proposition that is incoherent cannot be confirmed by evidence. … Hence, the proposition, "The Trinity exists" must … be coherent. … a proposition cannot be confirmed empirically if it has zero probability."

As I have noted above (in nt. 206), it is controversial whether it is (logically or analytically) impossible to confirm empirically a proposition with zero probability. R. Swinburne thinks so.[372] Harold Jeffreys, though, proposes a sort of a counterexample:

> "For instance, a continuous variable may be equally likely to have any value between 0 and 1. Then the probability that it is exactly 1/2 is 0, but 1/2 is not an impossible value."[373]

Indeed, the initial probability of a hypothetical randomizer's choosing 1/2 from the continuous interval of real numbers between 0 and 1 seems to be zero. At least, such an evaluation accords with measure probability theory (conjoined with number theory). But if we then saw the randomizer as displaying the numeral of 1/2, then, on such observation, the probability of the randomizer's choosing the given number from the given interval would be zero no more. Perhaps some qualms about logical possibility of this scenario prevent the alleged counterexample from being entirely cogent.

In any case, L. McGrew's argument for logical possibility of the Trinity doctrine from its probabilistic confirmation by certain data may be construed without the somewhat dubious principle that it is (logically or analytically) impossible to confirm empirically a proposition with prior zero probability. The basic idea is the logical probability of the Trinity doctrine (or Christianity) is with respect to some collection of information p-evidently non-minimal and greater than its logical probability with respect to a less inclusive collection of information. Granted, if this was true, it could be p-evident that the Trinity doctrine is logically possible and not analytically false. As has been argued in this dissertation, it can be p-evident that every analytically false proposition has minimal logical probability on any given information if it has any logical probability on the information at all. Further, it was argued it can be p-evident that each proposition which is not analytically false is logically possible. So, p-evident non-minimal logical probability of the Trinity doctrine with respect to information implies p-evident logical and analytic possibility of the doctrine. Therefore, it could be p-evident that the Trinity doctrine is not analytically false, and it could be p-evident that the doctrine is logically possible.

But, *is* the logical probability of the Trinity doctrine (or Christianity) *evidently* raised by some new, additional information and with respect to some background information? Not to me. Is it to you? If so, then tell me how and what is the new evidence and what is the background information. Again, is the increment in logical confirmation evident to you immediately – in a manner similar to the manner some people would profess in case of the statement that Spike the Texan can swim with 90% logical probability given that 90 % of Texans can swim is the only relevant information? If so, there's a crucial difference between your and our epistemic position. And the difference is hardly believable, too. For the Trinity doctrine (and, *a fortiori*, Christianity) is not epistemically on a par with such simple statements.

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[372] See R. Swinburne, *Epistemic Justification*, op. cit., pp. 62-66, 244; J. H. Sobel, "To My Critics with Appreciation: Responses to Taliaferro, Swinburne, and Koons," op. cit., p. 263.
[373] H. Jeffreys, *Theory of Probability*, op. cit., p. 21.

But maybe logical confirmation of the Trinity doctrine (or Christianity) is or was p-evident to somebody by a p-evidently correct probabilistic rule for measured logical probabilities? Let's consider briefly and generally applications of these three rules:

(i) Bayes's theorem (simple form), $P(T|Q) = P(T) \times P(Q|T) / P(Q)$;
(ii) Theorem of total probability, $P(T|E) = P(Q|E) \times P(T|E\&Q) + P(\sim Q|E) \times P(T|E\&\sim Q)$;
(iii) Logical Reflection Principle, $Pr_t(T|P_{t+n}(T) = r) = r$.

Variations on these rules are common in probabilistic epistemology.[374] Here, T abbreviates the Trinity doctrine, Q some logically (analytically) possible testimonial information (say, Jesus of Nazareth, or some sage, or saint, or martyr, taught T), and E another one (e.g., certain esteemed historians have taught Q). Background information is implicit (and consisting, say, of the evidences employed in the arguments of bare natural theology, which were listed under the epistemic category 1.2). P measures logical probability. Pr_t measures rational degree of belief with respect to all the relevant evidence available at time t. P_{t+n} measures logical probability with respect to all the relevant evidence available at later time $t+n$.

Maybe some will say that p-evidently, both $P(T|Q)$ and $P(T|E)$ are greater than $Pr(T)$. But, again, this does not help a bit. As for (i), it remains doubtful, from the standpoint of evidentness, whether $P(T)$ is positive (non-zero) and whether $P(Q|T)$ is defined (measured). As for (ii), the doubt about non-zero degree of the inverse probabilities (likelihoods) $P(T|E\&Q)$ and $P(T|E\&\sim Q)$ lurks here, too. This may appear counterintuitive at a first glance, but not at the second, as we will see in a moment. I can also address an epistemological variation on (ii), combining rational degrees of belief with logical probabilities:

(ii*) $Pr(T|E) = Pr(Q|E) \times P(T|E\&Q) + Pr(\sim Q|E) \times P(T|E\&\sim Q)$.[375]

Such an attempt, however, is spoiled by the same doubt about its logical part as (ii). Concerning (iii), a sudden realization that $P_{t+n}(T) = r$ could raise one's rational degree of belief in T *if* the realization was correct. But all over again, that's a big "if" if followed by "*evidently* correct." And, anyway, my focus has been on logical probability, not on probabilistic degree of belief. I

[374] For variations on all the three rules, cf. W. Talbott, "Bayesian Epistemology," op. cit. As for (i), cf. James M. Joyce, "Bayes' Theorem," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall 2008 Edition)*, E. N. Zalta (ed.), http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2008/entries/bayes-theorem (accessed November 26, 2011); J. Hawthorne, "Inductive Logic," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Winter 2011 Edition)*, E. N. Zalta (ed.), http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2011/entries/logic-inductive (accessed November 26, 2011), # 3.3; *Bayes's Theorem*, R. Swinburne (ed.), New York, Oxford University Press 2005. As for (ii), cf. Richard C. Jeffrey (1926 – 2002), *Subjective Probability: The Real Thing*, New York, Cambridge University Press 2004, chs. 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, and 3; L. McGrew, "Probability Kinematics and Probability Dynamics," *Journal of Philosophical Research* 35, No. 1 (2010), pp. 89-105. As for (iii), cf. Bas C. van Fraassen (*1941), "Rational Belief and Probability Kinematics," *Philosophy of Science* 47, No. 2 (1980), pp. 165-187; A. Plantinga, *Warrant: The Current Debate*, op. cit., pp. 125-126, 143, 148-161; P. F. A. Bartha, *By Parallel Reasoning*, op. cit., pp. 272-274.

[375] J. Hawthorne ("*Degree-of-Belief* and *Degree-of-Support*: Why Bayesians Need Both Notions," op. cit., pp. 288-89, 298-99, 304, 308-312) commends combining subjective probability of the evidence (certain or not) with its logical likelihood when one tries to determine posterior subjective probability of the given hypothesis. I define the concept of subjective probability and distinguish two concepts of rational degree of belief below (in section VI.3A).

hope I am allowed now to leave the suggestion that the logical probability of the Trinity doctrine (or Christianity) is p-evidently raised by certain testimonial data behind me as barren.

The same critique should be applied to the slightly different proposal that the logical probability of the Trinity doctrine or Christianity is p-evidently non-minimal on certain testimonial data. Well, is it? Immediately? Hardly. Neither the Trinity doctrine, nor Christianity, nor apologetic testimonial evidences are that perspicuous. Piling up the evidences in an attempt to see p-evidently that the Trinity doctrine or Christianity have non-minimal logical probability with respect to them taken jointly will only raise more dust. So is the Trinity doctrine p-evidently non-minimally logically probable by means of some rules of probability? We have just discussed several ones without any promising prospect.

Consider, as a paradigmatic apologetic example, these two propositions: Jesus taught the Trinity doctrine (abbreviated *Q*, as above), and Jesus taught no falsehood (abbreviated as *I*, for "infallible").[376] I concede that both P(*Q*) and P(*I*) are non-minimal on some bodies of information. As I have hinted, the case for *Q* could lean on some esteemed New Testament scholars. The case for the non-minimal logical probability value of *I* need *not* proceed from another strict mystery of Christianity: the doctrine of the Incarnation, which entails that Jesus is God. This article of faith is no less problematic, relative to the focus of this dissertation, than the mystery of the Trinity. That is, it is not p-evident that the Incarnation doctrine is logically (analytically) possible. But many would deem it p-evident that the proposition that Jesus was an infallible prophet, whether merely human or not, has non-minimal logical probability, with respect to some testimonial evidence. Let's grant this. Still, even if both P(*Q*) and P(*I*) are non-minimal, with respect to some information, it does not, by itself, follow that P(*Q*&*I*) is a function of P(*Q*) and P(*I*) *if Q* and *I* are probabilistically independent. But that need not be. Granted, *if* the logical probability of (*Q*&*I*) is p-evidently non-minimal on some information, then the logical probability of *T*, entailed by the conjunction, is p-evidently non-minimal on that information, too. (See especially the premise (8.1) in argument I above.) But does the conjunction really have non-zero logical probability? That is, p-evidently?

Let's consider logical probability of conjunctions in general. Universally, logical probability of a conjunction of two propositions on a third proposition (information) is determined by the two separate logical probabilities, one on the given information, the other on this information with the additional assumption that the first proposition is true.[377] That is,

> for any proposition *p*, *q*, *r*, if (i) there are some logical probabilities of both *p* on *r* and of *q* on the conjunction of *r* and *p* (measured by P(*p*|*r*) and P(*q*|*r*&*p*), respectively), then (ii)

[376] Cf. especially R. Swinburne, "Natural Theology, Its "Dwindling Probabilities" and "Lack of Rapport" ", op. cit., sect. II; *Revelation*, op. cit., ch. Appendix: Formalizing the Argument.

[377] See Richard Threlkeld Cox (1898 – 1991), *The Algebra of Probable Inference*, Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins University Press 1961, p. 4; J. Franklin, "Resurrecting Logical Probability," op. cit., p. 292.

> the logical probability of the conjunction of p and q on r (measured by P(p&q|r)) is determined by the two former logical probabilities.

As stated, the assumption is that we have two (sets of) propositions, there are *some* (measured) relations of logical probability which one of the two bears with respect to a third proposition, and which the other of the two proposition bears with respect to the same third proposition in conjunction with the first. If either of these two relations of logical probability (or its measured degree) is missing, there is no issue about *deriving* some (measured) logical probability of the conjunction of the two propositions on the third one. But if both of these two logical probabilities arising from the fixed information are given, the support given by the third proposition to one of those two, and, in turn, the support given by the third together with the first to the second one engenders the support given by the third proposition to the conjunction of the other two. This chain of support is like a linear chain of force transmitters which can only transmit further what they took over, handing over the force of the same or lesser degree than they received. In other words:

> for any proposition p, q, r, if (i) there are some logical probabilities of both p on r and of q on the conjunction of r and p (measured by P(p|r) and P(q|r&p), respectively), then (ii) the logical probability of the conjunction of p and q on r (measured by P(p&q|r)) is *equal* to the first logical probability *weighted* by the second logical probability (i.e., P(p&q|r) = P(p|r) × P(q|r&p)).

As we recall, the concept of logical probability is the one of propositional support. To the extent r supports p, and p in conjunction with r, in turn, support q, to that extent r supports the conjunction of p and q. There is no addition to this support on the side of r, for r can't support the conjunction via ~p. So the logical probability of the conjunction of p and q on r is equal to one of the two separate logical probabilities weighted (mediated) by the other. Rendering again the same by an analogy, according to the rule of hypothetical syllogism, for any p, q, r, if r entails p and p entails q, then r entails q. In such a case, entailment of p by r amounts to entailment to q by r. In the case when r supports p to some degree and r together with p support q to some degree, the degree of support given to the conjunction of p and q by r is directly proportional to the former two supports. Anyway, the principle – that every conjunction's probability is the product of the probabilities of one of its conjuncts and of the rest given the first conjunct is true – has been embraced throughout the thinking of probability, and is known as the (general) Conjunction Rule.

Let's return to our specific apologetic issue, concerning the claims that Jesus taught the Trinity doctrine (Q), and that Jesus taught no falsehood (I). Even if both P(Q) and P(I) are non-minimal, with respect to some information, it still does not follow that P(Q&I) is non-minimal, too. Consider first P(Q&I) by the lens of P(I) and P(Q|I). We weigh the first separate logical probability by the second one. *If* this second one is positive (non-zero), the resulting conjunctive logical probability is positive, too. But is it, really? It may well *seem* so to many. But is it or has it been so *p-evident* for anybody? Hardly. There remains a genuine, even if only theoretical, doubt about the positive logical probability value because the logical (analytic) possibility of T still isn't p-evident in the first place. If it is not clear that the Trinity doctrine (T) is logically

possible (or not analytically false), we have some reason to be cautious about the claim that somebody making no mistakes as a teacher *really* taught *T*. No matter how hard we try, we are still not able to rule out clearly that *T* is logically (analytically) impossible. So we are not able to rule out p-evidently that P(*Q*|*I*) is zero. The same sort of worry lurks when we try to settle on positive P(*Q*&*I*) by means of P(*Q*) and P(*I*|*Q*). If it still isn't clear that *T* is logically possible (or not analytically false), we have a reason to be cautious about the claim that somebody teaching *T* taught no falsehood. No matter how hard we try, we are still not able to rule out p-evidently that *T* is logically (analytically) impossible. Hence we are not able to rule out p-evidently that P(*I*|*Q*) is zero. Granted, *if* it is or was p-evident to somebody that (*Q*) Jesus taught the Trinity doctrine *and* (*I*) no falsehood, then it is or was p-evident to somebody that the Trinity doctrine is logically (analytically) possible. But why grant the antecedent?

Note also that already our result for the epistemic category 2.1.2 indicates that nobody has succeeded in achieving p-evident knowledge that the Trinity doctrine is logically (analytically) possible. Testimonial apologetic reasons for the Trinity doctrine cast no additional light on the modal status of the doctrine. This brings us to the final part of our treatment of the category 2.2.

Quotably, the Irish philosopher and theologian George Berkeley (1685 – 1753) makes his fictional infidel opponent Alciphron press the following point:

> "The concurring testimony of sincere and able witnesses hath without question great weight in human affairs. … But … no testimony can make nonsense sense: no moral evidence can make contradictions consistent." [378]

We could similarly say with the same plausibility: no available testimony of sincere and able witnesses makes the Trinity doctrine or Christianity p-evidently logically (analytically) possible. Of course, Berkeley does not concede to Alciphron that Christianity – and especially the mystery of the Trinity – *is* logically impossible. And I have never assumed or claimed in this dissertation that it is, or that it seems to me, logically impossible or analytically false. What is notable, however, is that Berkeley never argues for logical possibility of the mystery from the probability it enjoys with respect to certain testimonial reasons. He apparently knows such procedure would be improper. Here an objection arises: does not Berkeley deem the mystery of the Trinity probable with respect to certain apologetic testimonial reasons? Yes, he does.[379] So, the objection continues, does not he deem the mystery *logically* probable with respect to those reasons? Not clearly, I reply; for he does not specify his notion of probability.

Let me add another historical point. At least two Baroque scholastics opined that it is not a true general principle that when a proposition is evidently credible, then it is always evidently possible. These two scholastics were Francisco Suárez (1548 – 1617) and Juan Martínez de Ripalda (1594 – 1648).[380] I will cite just Suárez, as his expression is clearer and Ripalda adds nothing substantive:

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[378] G. Berkeley, *Alciphron*, op. cit., dial. VII, sect. 1.

[379] See ibid., dial. V, VI, VII, sect. 1.

[380] F. Suárez, *De fide theologica*, op. cit., disp. 4, sect. 2, n. 6 and 9; J. Martínez de Ripalda, *Tractatus Theologici, & Scholastici de virtutibus fide, spe, et charitate*, op. cit., disp. 6, sect. 5. In sect. 7, n. 95 (ibid.), Ripalda also embraces the possibility of something being credible and false, together with the possibility of something being incredible and

> "… *in general* [loquendo in communi], … something impossible can be made credible [aliquid impossibile potest fieri credibile], because *credibility is taken from an extrinsic medium and from testimony which can repose on an impossible thing* [quia credibilitas sumitur ex medio extrinseco et testimonio quod potest cadere in rem impossibilem]; and therefore *from the negation of evident possibility the negation of evident credibility does not follow* [et ideo, ex negatione evidenter possibilis, non sequitur negatio evidenter credibilis]; and although in our faith nothing is credible which is not possible, faith is only certain but not evident [et quamvis in nostra fide nihil sit credibile, quod non sit possibile, hoc tamen solum est, non autem evidens]; and therefore *from evident credibility does not follow evident possibility* [et ideo ex evidentia credibilitatis non sequitur possibilitatis evidentia]."[381]

It seems Suárez means here by "credibility" some sort of rationality of belief.[382] And, presumably, a belief based on testimony, or on a sum of several testimonies, is viewed by him as credible when the testimony apparently comes from a witness, or a group of witnesses, neither willing to deceive, nor deceived (by someone or something), and in a position to know reliably whether what is testified is in fact true. Further, Suárez views Christianity as credible. Indeed, he considers Christianity as *evidently* credible. On this point, he is in line with the statements of Ripalda, Aquinas, and others.[383] Indeed, Suárez appears to view Christianity as evidently probable, even in the sense of its being evidently (and significantly) more probable than not.[384] Is he, then, in conflict with the principle that anything with non-minimal logical probability is *not* analytically false, and so logically possible? Not clearly. First, Suárez does not specify the kind of probability on his mind. Secondly, although he may well be interpreted as referring to *logical* possibility and *p-evidentness*, he merely says in it that it is not a *generally* correct principle that from evident credibility follows evident possibility. That is, it is (logically) possible that a

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true. (Cf. S. K. Knebel, "Rodrigo de Arriaga (1592-1667) in die fallibilistische Theorie der katholischen Glaubensgewissheit," op. cit., pp. 336-337.) Similarly D. Báñez, *Scholastica Commentaria in Secundam Secundae Angelici Doctoris partem*, op. cit., q. 1, a. 4, col. 54-57. I thank D. D. Novotný for drawing my attention to the passage from Suárez.

[381] F. Suárez, *De fide theologica*, op. cit., disp. 4, sect. 2, n. 9; my italics.

[382] See F. Suárez, *De fide theologica*, op. cit., disp. 4, sect. 2, n. 7-8. Ripalda (in the mentioned place) characterizes credibility in moral terms, as honest belief.

[383] See F. Suárez, *De fide theologica*, op. cit., disp. 4, sect. 2-4 (especially sect. 2, n. 4-9, sect. 3, n. 1 and 12); J. Martínez de Ripalda, *Tractatus Theologici, & Scholastici de virtutibus fide, spe, et charitate*, op. cit., disp. 6, sect. 5, disp. 8, sect. 5; Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, op. cit., II-II, q. 1, a. 4, ad 2. This influential par by Aquinas states that Christian believers have reasons of credibility which make them see that they ought to believe the truths of faith; without seeing this, they would not believe these truths. (In *Summa contra gentiles*, op. cit., bk. 3, ch. 154, n. 8, Aquinas seems to make a stronger claim: that the reasons of credibility make the truths of faith manifestly true. I have tried to address this assertion of Aquinas in nt. 304 above. Also in *Summa Theologica*, op. cit., II-II, q. 2, a. 9, ad 3, Aquinas is more modest: Christian believers have sufficient motives for believing, for their belief is confirmed by miracles and by the inward instinct of the divine invitation of the Holy Spirit, so they do not believe lightly.) G. W. Leibniz requires for those who believe on someone's authority that the authority is evident to them (*Opera omnia*, Vol. V, op. cit., p. 144; cf. *Leibniz on the Trinity and the Incarnation*, op. cit., 105-106, 126, 133, and nt. 100 on p. 257). R. Descartes is of the same opinion (*Oeuvres de Descartes*, op. cit., Vol. IXA, pp. 208-209). J. Gredt believes the authority of certain witnesses makes it evident that it is good for a rational being to believe the truths of Christian faith (*Die aristotelisch-thomistische Philosophie*, Vol. II, op. cit., # 566).

[384] See F. Suárez, *De fide theologica*, op. cit., disp. 4, sect. 2, n. 5-6.

proposition is (p-)evidently credible (to somebody), but not (p-)evidently (logically) possible. As for Suárez's statement that faith is certain, it has been a religious commonplace, found in the writings of Aquinas and many others. The statement has meant several different things, compatible with the claim that faith is neither p-evident, nor evident (whether apart from testimony or not). For instance, the statement that faith is "certain" may mean that (i) whatever is revealed by God must be, given his veracity and wisdom, true; or that (ii) God's revelation, veracity, and wisdom is the noblest motive of believing a proposition; or that (iii) Christian believers adhere most firmly to the content of Christian faith.[385]

Hypothetically, we could present Suárez with very specific questions. Is it logically possible that *Christianity* is p-evidently credible to somebody with respect to apologetic reasons of credibility, but isn't evidently logically possible? And, more interestingly for our purposes, is, or has there been anybody to whom Christianity is, or was, not only p-evidently credible, but also p-evidently logically possible? To my knowledge, in his writings Suárez provides no answer to either of these two questions. Anyway, my point is the following. It does seem correct that evident credibility does not generally entail evident logical (analytic) possibility. Further, it also seems that p-evident non-logical probability does not generally entail p-evident logical (analytic) possibility. Now it may seem to someone that certain proposed apologetic reasons for Christianity, or at least for the Trinity doctrine, are special, in contrast to certain other proposed reasons, or to all proposed reasons for non-Christian and non-Trinitarian world views. That is, certain proposed reasons make Christianity, or at least the Trinity doctrine, not only p-evidently credible, but also p-evidently logically (analytically) possible – at least for those who consider these reasons carefully. This suggestion, however, seems to me to be false. And it should seem false to all those, including Suárez, who think that *non-testimonial* reasons, discussed under the epistemic category 2.1, make neither Christianity nor the Trinity doctrine p-evidently logically (analytically) possible. For, so to speak, testimonial reasons cast no additional light of p-evident insight on the issue of whether Christianity or the Trinity doctrine is logically (analytically) possible. Similarly, if one thinks that some non-Christian or non-Trinitarian world views are not p-evidently logically (analytically) possible, even if p-evidently credible for some of their adherents at some times, then he should also acknowledge that the Trinity doctrine and Christianity are not p-evidently logically (analytically) possible either. For, apparently, proposed apologetic reasons for Christianity are not, in the given respect, relevantly different from the reasons proposed on behalf of those non-Christian and non-Trinitarian world views. By this, of course, I do not want to imply that proposed apologetic reasons for the Trinity and Christianity are not different in any other respect from reasons proposed for competitive world views. By no means. Proposed Trinitarian and Christian reasons may well be superior to reasons proposed for competitive religions and world views. Both the Trinity and Christianity may well be logically probable (*simpliciter*), while any position incompatible with them may well be logically improbable. Both the Trinity and Christianity may well be credible (with respect to all the available evidence), while any position incompatible with them may well be incredible. Both the

[385] See the following places, respectively, for these three accounts of the certitude of faith. (i) Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on the Gospel of St. John* (http://dhspriory.org/thomas/SSJohn.htm; accessed November 26, 2011), ch. 4, lect. 5, n. 662; cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, op. cit., # 157; (ii) V. Šanda, *Synopsis theologiae dogmaticae specialis*, Vol. I, op. cit., § 122; (iii) ibid., § 124, # A.2; Thomas Aquinas, *Quaestiones disputatae de veritate*, op. cit., q. 10, a. 12, ad 6.

Trinity and Christianity may well be evidently credible (for somebody), while any position incompatible with them may well be incredible. But, I contend, neither Christianity nor the Trinity doctrine is p-evidently logically (analytically) possible (with respect to all the available evidence). At the same time, I admit that positions incompatible with the Trinity doctrine are not p-evidently logically (analytically) possible (with respect to all the available evidence).

In making my final argument against p-evident logical (analytic) possibility of the Trinity doctrine derived from apologetic testimonial reasons, let me make a qualified use of a skeptical weapon of the most devastating calibre: a quote from the Scottish philosopher, historian and economist David Hume (1711 – 1776). Arguably, Hume is not only the most influential philosopher ever to write in English [386] and the chief model of doing philosophy for contemporary philosophers in English speaking countries, [387] but also the most influential philosopher ever to write in English on historical apologetics. [388] In his famous essay "Of Miracles" (1748), Hume famously asseverates that:

> "… there is not to be found, in all history, any miracle [(i)] attested by a sufficient number of men, of such unquestioned goodsense, education, and learning, as to secure us against all delusion in themselves; [(ii)] of such undoubted integrity, as to place them beyond all suspicion of any design to deceive others; [(iii)] of such credit and reputation in the eyes of mankind, as to have a great deal to lose in case of their being detected in any falsehood; [(iv)] and at the same time, attesting facts, performed in such a public manner, and in so celebrated a part of the world, as to render the detection unavoidable: All which circumstances are requisite to give us a full assurance in the testimony of men."[389]

A couple of caveats are in order. I do not mean to endorse this passage as true. If maximal or almost maximal credibility or any kind of maximal or almost maximal probability falls within the scope of Hume's term "full assurance," then it is, in my opinion, far from clear that historiography does not provide full assurance that a miracle has happened. Furthermore, it is not clear that satisfaction of all four conditions is necessary for full assurance that a miracle happened. For one thing, one can loose much (by persecution, imprisonment, torture, or killing) even if he does not enjoy any recognizable credit. In this respect, the intention with which Hume offers his four conditions differs from the intention with which Charles Leslie proposes his four marks (discussed under category 1.2), designed to afford at least moral certainty that a historical story – miraculous or not – which meets them is true. Leslie considers his quaternion sufficient but not necessary for this certainty. [390] Finally, it is not clear that no testimony found in historiography satisfies the four conditions Hume lays out. As T. McGrew and L. McGrew wrote in an assessment of the just quoted passage coming from his pen:

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[386] William Edward Morris, "David Hume," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall 2011 Edition)*, E. N. Zalta (ed.), http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2011/entries/hume (November 28, 2011).
[387] *The PhilPapers Surveys*, November 2009, http://philpapers.org/surveys (accessed November 28, 2011), sect. Demographic statistics.
[388] See J. Houston, *Reported Miracles: A Critique of Hume*, op. cit.
[389] D. Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, Peter Millican (ed.), New York, Oxford University Press 2007, Sect. X, Pt. II, # 15.
[390] See C. Leslie, *A Short and Easy Method with Deists*, op. cit., p. 33.

> "This is a bald assertion, question begging if taken at face value. The orthodox opponents of the deists were quite familiar with such objections and had argued at length and with force that the testimony of the apostles met every *reasonable* standard of evidence one could require."[391]

The McGrews cite at length a summary of a careful reply to the objection of Hume's sort, authored by the English apologist and theologian Samuel Chandler (1693 – 1766). Chandler's summary is also worth reproducing here for reasons of fair contrast, though it was published four years earlier than the passage from Hume. Chandler writes about the writers who recorded the New Testament testimonies for the resurrection of Jesus, and then about the apostles' testimony for the resurrection:

> "… all the Characters of Integrity appear in these Writers, that *can possibly be demanded or desired*. The very Inconsistencies that at first View they seem to be chargeable with, *shew* at least there was no Contrivance amongst them, to deceive others. They make no Scruple to tell us, that the first Appearances of Christ were to a few Women, with whose single Testimony they well knew the World would be far from being satisfied. They seem to have concealed no Circumstances of Christ's Appearances, however exceptionable they might possibly be in some Mens Opinion and Judgment. They plainly assure us, that the Disciples imagin'd the first Accounts of the Resurrection, to be mere Dreams and Tales, and unsupported imaginations, and were not in the least disposed to receive or credit them. *It doth not appear* that they could have any present Interests to answer, by the Accounts they gave, if they had not known them to be true; or that they were set on to write them by Persons, who either could reward them, or receive themselves any worldly Advantages from the Publication of those Accounts to others. …
>
> Now though 'tis *scarce possible* to conceive how any one Person could be deceived in the Proof that was given of the Resurrection, yet were they all deceived? What, was there not one of the Apostles, not one of those who were with them, not one of the Hundred and Twenty, or Five Hundred, that had Eyes to see, or Ears to hear, or Hands to feel, or Judgment to discern? *Were they all deluded with a fantastick Appearance*, and the Senses of such a Variety of Persons all absolutely imposed on, and deceived*? What Credibility is there in such a Supposition? Or* did they all agree to support a Lye, a known Lye, an incredible, obnoxious, and *dangerous Lye?* A few might have kept the important Secret, had the whole Affair been a Fraud. But *could* such a Secret ever be preserved where so large a Number was privy to it? Were they so steady and true to a Falsehood, as that neither Interest nor Persecution could move them to discover it?"[392]

The McGrews add:

> "… Chandler makes these remarks only in summary after he has spent more than a hundred pages surveying and addressing the objections of adversaries to the credibility of the Gospel account of the resurrection and the character of the witnesses in particular. And this is only one of the works in which Chandler develops the historical argument. Measured against this standard, Hume's bare *assertion* counts for *nothing*."[393]

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[391] T. and L. McGrew, "The Argument from Miracles," op. cit., p. 651; my italics.
[392] S. Chandler, *The Witnesses of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ Re-examined: And their Testimony Proved entirely Consistent*, London, Printed for J. Noon and R. Hett 1744, pp. 133, 141-142; my italics.
[393] T. and L. McGrew, "The Argument from Miracles," op. cit., p. 652; my italics.

As I have made a couple of caveats in a reaction to Hume, I will also make some in reaction to Chandler and the McGrews. First, even supposing the New Testament records are accurate concerning the apostles' testimony for the resurrection of Jesus, one might wonder whether the testimony satisfies fully the four conditions required by Hume. Is the number of the apostles (twelve) "sufficient" for Hume to give us "full assurance" about the resurrection? Was their education and learning sufficient? Were the testified facts public enough and the given part of the world celebrated enough? Hard to say, as long as we can't ask Hume to specify his vague expression of the four conditions. But both Chandler and the McGrews would in the first place doubt that full satisfaction of the four conditions is necessary for a reasonable belief that the resurrection occurred, if these conditions are understood strictly. Secondly, and more importantly, it is not my intention to decide in this dissertation whether history can give us a "full assurance" (in Hume's sense, whatever this sense was) that a miracle took place, or that Christianity is true, or that the Trinity doctrine is true. Neither is my aim to resolve in this dissertation the problem of whether history yields us a "credible" belief (e.g. in Suárez's or Chandler's sense, whatever their senses were, exactly) in the resurrection, in the Trinity, or in the Christian vision of the world. I also do not try to determine that miraculous, Trinitarian or specifically Christian claims meet every "reasonable standard of evidence" (whatever the McGrews mean here by "reasonable"). Yet, thirdly, although I concur with the McGrews that the cited passage from Hume is in many ways problematic, I would not say that it "counts for nothing" when compared with careful historical apologetics. The very manner of speaking of the McGrews and Chandler suggests there remains a scrap of doubt about their conclusions. I believe they would acknowledge this. Granted, Hume, on the other hand, would not be satisfied with such concessions. He tried to show that historical apologetics can't provide credibility, probability, or rationality to miracles or any purportedly revealed religion. But, fourthly, the four marks in the passage from Hume inspire, or bring home, the following point which motivated their whole exposition. Even if the four marks were suited for the Trinity doctrine and all of them held p-evidently, and so gave us, in some loose sense, "full assurance" that certain miracles took place, this would not be automatically sufficient to make the logical (analytic) possibility of the Trinity doctrine p-evident. For marks such as those four entail p-evidently neither the truth nor logical (analytic) possibility of the doctrine with which they are connected. And this remains to be the case even when they are supplemented with yet further auxiliary assumptions. Let me explain.

Suppose for now, merely hypothetically, that the claim that (*M*) several miracles were performed by Jesus of Nazareth in his own explicit support of the Trinity doctrine and with his own explicit appeal to God's authorization of this doctrine by these miracles, was (i*) attested by thousands of eye-witnesses of unquestioned good sense, education, and learning; (ii*) of undoubted moral integrity and sanity; (iii*) who would all have a great deal to lose in credit and reputation if detected in any deceit, and who were all persecuted, imprisoned, tortured, and killed because of their testimony; whereas (iv*) this testimony was bored in such a public manner and in so celebrated a part of the world and at such a time that the detection of deceit would be unavoidable. Suppose further that (v) Jesus was a man of unquestioned moral integrity and sanity, and a teacher of morally impeccable doctrines. And suppose, finally, (vi) an omniscient, omnipotent, and morally perfect God exists. Now, given all these six assumptions, does it *clearly* follow from them that the Trinity doctrine is *true*? Some would say yes. Perhaps because, in their

opinion, the miracles mentioned in *M* would constitute an *evident* seal, conferred by the truthful God on the Trinity doctrine. But I don't think so. For one thing, although it is *not* credible, it is not clearly impossible that all the eye-witnesses were victims of a massive and collective hallucination, imposed on them, say, by aliens or other wicked yet advanced beings. (To use Chandler's words, what if they were "all deluded with a fantastick Appearance, and the Senses of such a Variety of Persons all absolutely imposed on, and deceived?") Granted, this is a wanton, far-fetched and absolutely groundless supposition. But the point is that the supposition is not ruled out evidently, even assuming what we are for now assuming.[394] For instance, the McGrews and Swinburne, although they criticize hallucination theories of the resurrection appearances vehemently, never insinuate that it is altogether impossible that the witnesses were hallucinating. But I hear an objection coming: an omniscient, omnipotent, and morally perfect God would not permit such misuse of his authority and such massive deception of mankind. It really *seems* so. But, again, is it *evident* that he wouldn't. If God allows some evidence for positions incompatible with Christianity, what makes it clearly impossible that he would not allow massive and misleading reasons for Christianity itself or the Trinity doctrine?[395] What if God respected the freedom of aliens or other beings to deceive humankind extensively?[396] The contention that omniperfect God couldn't go that far in his permissiveness, because the salvation of humans would be at stake, presumes that one's salvation would depend on the truth-value of one's worldview. This presumption, however, is rather strange and, in any case, far from established. Once more, Swinburne, notably, though he argues that it is very unlikely that God would allow for a combination of the available evidence for the Christian religion if this religion wasn't true, never writes as if this was altogether impossible.[397] Now, substantially the same considerations apply to the issue whether our assumptions evidently entail that the Trinity doctrine is logically (analytically) possible. Although it is *not* credible, it is not clearly impossible that all the eye-witnesses were victims of a massive and collective hallucination, imposed on them, say, by aliens, who wanted to induce humankind in belief in a logically (analytically) impossible doctrine. Admittedly, with all the in fact and so far available testimonial reasons for the Trinity doctrine we are in a worse position to know p-evidently the logical (analytic) possibility of the Trinity doctrine than we would be if we knew p-evidently that all the six assumptions of this par

[394] D. C. Allison, Jr. (*Resurrecting Jesus*, op. cit., pp. 334, 339-340, 347) regards a similar scenario as a hindrance to complete certainty of the claim that Jesus was raised by God: perhaps Jesus was raised by aliens who were playing a cosmic joke on humans.

[395] Cf. Richard Otte, "Review of Richard Swinburne, *The Resurrection of God Incarnate*," *Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews* 10 (2003), http://ndpr.nd.edu/news/23553/?id=1329 (accessed November 26, 2011).

[396] Cf. D. Howard-Snyder, "Was Jesus Mad, Bad, or God? … or Merely Mistaken?," in *Oxford Readings in Philosophical Theology Volume 1: Trinity, Incarnation, and Atonement*, M. C. Rea (ed.), New York, Oxford University Press 2009, pp. 204-207. See S. T. Davis, "The Mad/Bad/God Trilemma: A Reply to Daniel Howard-Snyder," http://www.lastseminary.com/trilemma/The-Mad-Bad-God Trilemma - A Reply to Daniel Howard-Snyder.pdf (accessed November 26, 2011), sect. IV. In this response, Davis – who, by the way, consulted his paper with R. Swinburne (see nts. 7 and 24) – moves merely on the level on plausibility, not apodicticity.

[397] See R. Swinburne, *The Resurrection of God Incarnate*, op. cit., pp. 4-5, 213, 215; *Faith and Reason*, op. cit., pp. 237-239; *Revelation*, op. cit., pp. 351-352; *Was Jesus God?*, op. cit., 85-86, 132-133; "Authority of Scripture, Tradition, and The Church," in *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophical Theology*, T. P. Flint and M. C. Rea (eds.), op. cit., p. 22.

are true. So, *a fortiori*, the actually available testimonial reasons for the Trinity doctrine do not suffice to make it p-evident that the Trinity doctrine is logically (analytically) possible.

Okay, that's enough! I will make a conclusion not only about the present epistemic category 2.2, but also about our whole partition of ways to know the logical (analytic) possibility of the Trinity p-evidently. The most promising attempts to achieve human evident *a posteriori* knowledge of the logical (analytic) possibility of the Trinity doctrine, not from the truth of the doctrine, from testimony, and independent of religious experience … well, just fail. Again. This leaves not only the epistemic category 2.2 plausibly vacuous (at least so far), but, in conjunction with our results for the categories 2.1 and 1, also our *whole* partition plausibly vacuous (at least so far). Accordingly, it strongly seems that no human so far has acquired p-evident insight that the Trinity doctrine is logically (analytically) possible. Yet, admittedly, many humans have tried to acquire such insight, as attested by the main attempts I have been addressing. In my opinion, but not only mine, this, in turn, suggests that it *can't* be p-evident that the Trinity is logically (analytically) possible; which is what WMST (WMST*) says. I will say more about the modal step in another section (IV.3). But for now, several other observations are in order, although the last one will be only additional.

IV.2. Interlacing notes

In this section, five distinct points are to be made. First, our discussion of probabilistic attempts to establish logical or analytic possibility of the Trinity doctrine (under epistemic categories 2.1.1 and 2.2) should make us suspicious of the objection that the doctrine can, of course, be p-evidently logically possible for it can, of course, have p-evidently non-minimal logical probability. Some people, when presented with my arguments I and II, will be tempted to retort that my modus ponens is their modus tollens. That is, while I say that Christianity and the Trinity doctrine *can't* have non-minimal logical probability p-evidently (conclusions (7) and (10) of arguments I and II) because the Trinity doctrine *can't* be logically or analytically possible p-evidently (WMST and WMST*), such opponents would say that the Trinity doctrine *can* be logically and analytically possible p-evidently because Christianity or the Trinity doctrine *can* have non-minimal logical probability p-evidently. Hopefully, after our enquiries this latter position remains attractive at best superficially, but not on sustained reflection.

Second, some could object that I have not addressed *all* attempts, or at least all reasonable distinguished attempts, to demonstrate the logical or analytic possibility of the Trinity doctrine that have been proposed in human history. Of course not! This fact is hardly worth mentioning; though I mentioned it at the start of section IV.1. Still, lest some keen critic is misled into belief that my project to defend WMST (WMST*) has a soft point in this concession of mine, two platitudes of the human epistemic condition shall be highlighted. First, we reason defeasibly almost all the time. Second, we reason defeasibly the way I have done quite often. As for the first point, everybody is invited to compare the number of his own theoretical and everyday beliefs with the number of evidently sound arguments he knows. I recommend starting, for instance, with the belief that one day one will die, or that dead people (usually) stay dead. As for the second point, consider beliefs you reject simply because you know about no good reason to

embrace them, although they are not, from your perspective, clearly ruled out by your beliefs for which, as you see it, you have good reasons. Perhaps you disbelieve in the existence of ether or telepathy, a conspiracy behind the death of J. F. Kennedy, the medicinal efficacy of homeopathy, stories about amazing feats performed by Hindu yogis or Buddhist llamas, or whatever. In all, or almost all, such cases you will not only think that these things are not real, and that *you* have no good reasons to believe that they are real, but also that there are *no* good reasons for them available out there. Still, as said, some of the things of this sort won't be clearly ruled out by your own beliefs. It also will not be clearly ruled out by your beliefs that somebody hidden to you has, at some time and somewhere, proposed some good arguments or evidences for such beliefs which seem utterly unsubstantiated to you. But, under certain circumstances, if you haven't heard of such good reasons, it will justly seem to you nobody has. And it will seem so to strongly especially if you *have looked* for such good reasons thoroughly, and in conditions favorable to such enquiry (as opposed to those of poverty or lawlessness, or lack of relevant education, books, articles, or tools). Moreover, if competent experts exploring the proposed arguments and evidences are in overall agreement that there are no such good reasons and evidences, this consensus of theirs will bolster the appearance that there really are no such good reasons and evidences. If, overall, the experts are not biased against the conclusion for which the explored reasons are proposed, so much the better. But, in fact, once you have explored the issue carefully for yourself and with the relevant education, sources of information, and tools, then opinion polls among experts pale for you in epistemic significance. Granted, even if you spent your whole and livelong life, together with other parapsychologists, in a vain search for good evidence for telepathy, an omitted library containing 18th century documents of undeniable historical value and proving a case of public telepathy beyond every reasonable doubt might escape the notice of all. So, granted, a systematic failure to find a good reason for a particular does *not* make it *evident* that such an argument hasn't been proposed by anybody. But a systematic failure to find a good reason for a particular does make it *plausible* that such an argument hasn't been proposed by anybody. And it does so even when not absolutely all attempts or their variations have been checked. Similarly, I contend, my discussion of our partition makes it plausible that nobody has seen p-evidently that the Trinity doctrine is logically (analytically) possible. While I haven't waded through all the Trinitarian attempts or all their diverse types, and although I have addressed here only what is arguably their strongest sample, I think I have done enough to make it acceptable the conclusion of this section IV.1. That is, although many talented, motivated, and equipped investigators have tried to see (independently of religious experience) the Trinity doctrine as logically possible, none of them have succeeded.

Take note that now I am *not* backtracking from the goal of my dissertation. For one thing, I have *not* been trying to make it *evident*, by means of this section IV.I, that it can't be p-evident that the Trinity doctrine is logically (analytically) possible. I have been trying merely to make it *acceptable* – or, *plausible* – that it hasn't been p-evident that the Trinity doctrine is logically (analytically) possible. In like manner, the section IV.3 will explicate merely why it is plausible – or, why it seems to me true – that it *can't* be p-evident that the Trinity doctrine is logically (analytically) possible. Accordingly, my arguments I and II (laid out in section III) were designed to make it plausible, *not* evident or p-evident, that it can't be p-evident that Christianity has non-minimal logical probability. Truly, outside my field of knowledge might lie a decisive demonstration, independent of religious experience, that the Trinity doctrine, or even Christianity,

is logically possible, not analytically false, or logically probable. But I have no choice but to go on the basis of the knowledge I *have* and on the basis of the inquiries I *have* undertaken. Just as I do – like everybody else – in other affairs of life, whether practical or theoretical.

As for the question of expert consensus, as I have tried to document, there appears to be a strong consensus of Christian scholars – who are not biased against logical possibility of the Trinity – at least on the point that the Trinity doctrine hasn't been, and even can't be, p-evidently logically possible from its truth (category 1) or apart from testimony (category 2.1). I am less sure what has been the majority opinion about the availability of demonstrating just the doctrine's logical possibility from testimony (category 2.2). But I have tried to provide a considered judgment of what it should be.

Finally, let me add five examples of the *philosophical* practice of inferring from the claim that a notable argument or most developed argument, or a relatively small collection of notable or most developed arguments, of a certain sort does not enjoy a certain desired epistemic property to the conclusion that no proposed argument of that sort has that property.

The Hungarian philosopher of mathematics and science Imre Lakatos (1922 – 1974), in his famous philosophical book-length treatment on the history of proofs of Euler's theorem, tried to display that none of the discussed attempts proves the theorem beyond doubt; that, *therefore*, no attempt proves the theorem beyond doubt; and that, *therefore*, mathematical theorems in general are never really proved beyond doubt.[398] Euler's theorem states that any (convex) 3D shape with flat planes and edges (e.g., a cube or a dodecahedron) satisfies the following formula. If the number of its faces is f, the number of its edges is e, and the number of its vertices is v, then $f + v = e + 2$. The theorem served to Lakatos as a paradigm casting doubt on the infallibility of the most treasured mathematical achievements. It isn't important for us whether Lakatos was fair in his choice and epistemological assessment of particular attempts to prove Euler's theorem. It seems he was, though. Neither is it of any importance for us whether his choice to focus on Euler's theorem – as a paradigmatic example of the most rigorous mathematical results – was fair in the first place. It may well be that it wasn't. According to the distinguished American mathematician John Horton Conway (*1937), Euler's theorem is atypical in mathematics, for its terms are hard to be defined there properly.[399] What *is* instructive for us is Lakatos's premise that if a single yet most developed mathematical argument fails, in a sense, then all mathematical arguments fail, in that sense.

The next two examples come from Alvin Plantinga (an author encountered in sections II.3 and II.9). In his first book, he argues that, in a (strict) sense, there are no successful arguments for or against the existence of God. He purports to establish this by means of assessment of several most plausible arguments for and against.[400] In the referred-to book, an argument is said by Plantinga to be a successful argument just when its premises, together with self-evident or (broadly logically) necessary propositions, (i) jointly entail or probabilify the

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[398] I. Lakatos, *Proofs and Refutations: The Logic of Mathematical Discovery*, John Worrall and Elie Zahar (eds.), Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 1977.

[399] See J. H. Conway, "Subject: Re: heuristic," December 9, 1995, http://mathforum.org/kb/plaintext.jspa?messageID=1375599 (accessed November 28, 2011). I owe this reference to a critical note on Lakatos in J. Franklin, *What Science Knows*, op. cit., pp. 136-137. Cf. P. F. A. Bartha, *By Parallel Reasoning*, op. cit., pp. 155-156, 171.

[400] A. Plantinga, *God and Other Minds*, op. cit., Pts. I and II.

conclusion and (ii) are all obviously true and accepted by nearly every sane human (and (iii) jointly entail or probabilify the conclusion only by inferences whose validity is obvious or accepted by nearly every sane human).[401] Plantinga argues that there is no known successful theistic argument by reviewing what he takes as the most plausible candidates: an argument from contingency, two ontological arguments, and a design argument. Similarly, he argues that there is no known successful atheistic argument by considering an argument for incompatibility of evil and God, an argument from a sort of unverifiability of theism, a paradox of omnipotence, and an ontological argument for the non-existence of God. At the same time, Plantinga defends rationality of theistic belief by means of highlighting the obvious rationality of belief in other minds, together with certain similarities between the design argument and an analogical argument for other minds. But the parallel which is salient for me is one between inferences of another sort. Plantinga means: if the main known arguments of natural theology and atheology are not successful, then no known argument of natural theology and atheology is successful. I mean: if the main hitherto attempts to see p-evidently that the Trinity doctrine is logically (analytically) possible fail, then all such hitherto attempts fail.

Let's see a further example taken from Plantinga's writings. In his penult book, he argues that no proposed historical apologetic argument shows Christianity is (epistemically) probable with respect to what nearly all those conducting the inquiry take for granted.[402] By mean of this procedure Plantinga wanted to motivate Christian epistemologists to take more seriously a model according to which rationality (or, in his words, warrant) of the Christian belief, rather than from historical evidence, stems from common Christian religious experience (bestowed upon Christian believers by the Holy Spirit). Plantinga's argument is based on the fact that, the longer a conjunction of claims in historical apologetics is, the lower its probability is (on the fixed information of that what nearly all those conducting the inquiry take for granted). Again, I will not inquire here whether this fact yields to Plantinga the conclusion he aims at. It may well not, for one may well be justified in higher (lower bounds of the) involved probabilities than Plantinga suggests, and so the justified probability of the given conjunction of apologetic claims will be quite high, although lower that the justified probability of any of its conjuncts.[403] In the context of our present investigation, the salient moment is Plantinga's detailed application of his principle of dwindling probabilities to only one historical apologetic argument for Christianity: to the one by Swinburne, summed up in Swinburne's book *Revelation*. Plantinga's treatment suggests that if Swinburne's historical apologetics does not provide substantive epistemic warrant for Christianity, then no historical apologetics does, and so Christians must look elsewhere than into history for a decent source of rationality of their faith. This makes sense given Plantinga's (just) judgment that Swinburne provides the most developed historical apologetics to date, measured by comprehensiveness and precision.

My fourth example comes from a metaphysical paper by A. J. Freddoso, defending, among several other claims, that the laws of nature are metaphysically necessary, because they are rooted in the natures or essences of natural substances. What is interesting for us, here and

[401] See ibid., pp. vii-viii and 4. The amendments in the parentheses are implicit in Plantinga's account.
[402] A. Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief*, op. cit., pp. 268-280, 402.
[403] Cf. especially R. Swinburne, "Natural Theology, Its "Dwindling Probabilities" and "Lack of Rapport" ", op. cit., sect. II; R. Swinburne, *Revelation*, op. cit., ch. Appendix: Formalizing the Argument; T. and L. McGrew, "The Argument from Miracles," op. cit., 644-650; and D. A. Johnson, *Truth without Paradox*, op. cit., ch. 5.

now, is not Freddoso's convoluted, though admittedly precisely explicated, reasoning why we should believe that the laws of nature are metaphysically necessary. It is rather the following couple of sentences:

> "The fact is, I think, that there are no compelling arguments against the view of laws I am taking here. This judgment is borne out by a brief survey of some of the best contemporary work on laws of nature."[404]

Freddoso then devotes three pages to addressing two papers and one book, each written by three chosen contemporary and esteemed adversaries (Fred Dretske, Michael Tooley, and David Malet Armstrong). That's fine, as these three pages constitute merely a proper part of one single section in one single (thirty page) paper. The moral is as follows. If a plausible judgment that no compelling arguments have been proposed against a particular philosophical position is sometimes borne out by means of a several pages long survey of several, though not all, notable arguments against this position, so much the more it may be plausibly borne out by means of a much longer and thorough, though not absolutely exhaustive, survey that no compelling arguments have been proposed for some particular position.

The fifth and last example is Aquinas's comment on metaphysical reasons for the Trinity doctrine. These are reasons like the one by Richard of St. Victor, updated by R. Swinburne (and discussed in section IV.1A, under category 1.1). They proceed by mere natural reason, apart from revelation. According to Aquinas, though such reasons explicate the doctrine or bolster its credibility, they do not demonstrate it sufficiently. This, in his opinion, is clear from a consideration of three such reasons alleged: (i) from the infinity of God's goodness, which should communicate itself in an infinite way in the procession of divine persons; (ii) from p impossibility of a delightful possession of a good without fellowship; and (iii) from psychological analogies concerning the production of words and love in our own minds. Aquinas writes:

> "We must not … think that the trinity of persons is adequately proved by such reasons [per has rationes sufficienter probetur]. This becomes evident when we consider each point [hoc patet per singula]; [(i)] for the infinite goodness of God is manifested also in creation, because to produce from nothing is an act of infinite power. For if God communicates Himself by His infinite goodness, it is not necessary that an infinite effect should proceed from God: but that according to its own mode and capacity it should receive the divine goodness. [(ii)] Likewise, when it is said that joyous possession of good requires partnership, this holds in the case of one not having perfect goodness: hence it needs to share some other's good, in order to have the goodness of complete happiness. [(iii)] Nor is the image in our mind an adequate proof in the case of God, forasmuch as the intellect is not in God and ourselves univocally."[405]

Indeed, with Aquinas's ample help we have already addressed reasons like these, under the epistemic category 1.1 of our partition. More interesting in the present context is his willingness

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[404] A. J. Freddoso, "The Necessity of Nature," op. cit., p. 237.
[405] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, op. cit., I, q. 32, a. 1, ad 2; cf. *Summa contra gentiles*, op. cit., bk. 1, chs. 8-9.

to proclaim all purely metaphysical reasons for the Trinity doctrine as insufficient demonstrations on the basis of an inspection of only several of them. That is all for my four examples of the philosophical practice of substantiating a particular hopelessness of a particular sort of reasons by a consideration of several notable ones.

Here's the fourth point of this section. In the case that we like precision in philosophy, we will wonder how the following inference could be reconstructed logically. If (i) one looks for p-evident reasons for logical possibility of the Trinity doctrine, (ii) in conditions favorable to such enquiry (as opposed to those of poverty or lawlessness, or lack of relevant education, books, articles, or tools), and (iii) finds no such reasons, then, probably, (iv) logical possibility of the Trinity doctrine has not been p-evident to anybody. Here, "probability" may be interpreted as logical or epistemic probability (whereas the latter is to be understood as rational degree of belief). Let E stand for the conjunction of (i) through (iii), and $\sim H$ for (iv). Accordingly, H stands for the claim that logical possibility of the Trinity doctrine has been p-evident to somebody. I think the inference from E to $\sim H$ should *not* be reconstructed as employing probabilistic modus tollens. In other words, the inference should not be logically reconstructed like this: if H, probably $\sim E$; but E; so, improbably, H – and so, probably, $\sim H$. Probabilistic modus tollens states: for any p, q, ($P(q|p)$ is high & $\sim q$) $\rightarrow$ $P(p)$ is low. Of course, for any p, $P(p)$ is low $\rightarrow$ $P(\sim p)$ is high. Probabilistic modus tollens, however, is not correct. Otherwise we could proceed: if this person is an American, then, very likely, this person is not a Congressman; yet this person is a Congressman; so, it is very *unlikely* that this person is an American.[406] But, quite to the contrary, given a person is a Congressman, he *is* very *likely* an American. I suggest the inference would be best reconstructed from by means of Bayes's theorem, which is arguably valid. Its simple ratio form states:

> for any p, q, r, $P(p|q)/P(r|q) = (P(p)/P(r)) \times (P(q|p)/P(q|r))$; given all the probability values on the right side are measured on the common scale [0; 1], and both $P(r)$ and $P(q|r) > 0$.

One of the advantages of ratio forms of Bayes's theorem is that probabilities *odds* are often more easily accessible than probabilities *as such*. Accordingly, considering the equation

$$P(\sim H|E)/P(H|E) = (P(\sim H)/P(H)) \times (P(E|\sim H)/P(E|H)),$$

where all the remaining relevant background evidence is kept implicit, it could be plausibly defended that while $P(\sim H)/P(H)$ is, at least approximately, ≥ 1, $P(E|\sim H)/P(E|H) >> 1$, and so $\sim H$ is significantly more probable than not. But I won't elaborate on this proposal, as this part of my dissertation is already too long, and as I have substantiated the inference from E to $\sim H$ already, though on an intuitive and less technical level.[407]

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[406] An example adapted from Raymond S. Nickerson, *Cognition and Chance: The Psychology of Probabilistic Reasoning*, Mahwah and London, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., Publishers 2004, p. 426.

[407] For more thoughts on reasoning from absent evidence, see J. Lange, "The Argument from Silence," op. cit., pp. 288-301; C. Stephens, "A Bayesian Approach to Absent Evidence Reasoning," op. cit., pp. 56-65; Ulrike Hahn and Mike Oaksford, "A Bayesian Approach to Informal Argument Fallacies," *Synthese* 152, No. 2 (2006), pp. 241-270; Elliott Sober, "Absence of Evidence and Evidence of Absence," *Philosophical Studies* 143, No. 1 (2009), pp. 63-90.

My last – fifth – additional note of this section concerns whether the truth, or at least logical possibility, of Christianity, or at least of the Trinity doctrine, has been evident from religious experience. Even if it has, this would not be in conflict with our results thus far, which pertain to p-evidentness of the given matter – i.e., its evidentness independent of religious experience – and do not pertain to its evidentness as such. In my opinion, some humans might have had such religious visions or experiences in which the truth of Christianity or the reality of the Trinity was evident to them.

Yet, at the same time, I am reserved to the view according to which *common* religious experience makes Christianity or the Trinity doctrine evidently true or evidently logically possible. The actual phenomenology of the phenomenon which has been called in religious epistemology as the internal (or inner) testimony (or witness, or instigation) of God (or of the Holy Spirit) does not, on its own, seem to provide its experiencers with such *immediate* insights.[408] Neither does common religious experience seem to be a datum from the features of which one could *demonstrate* by an evidently sound argument the truth or logical possibility of the Trinity or even Christianity. Swinburne and the McGrews have been similarly reserved on the evidential force of common religious experience.[409]

Now, *what* is the phenomenology of *common* religious experience? Swinburne provides us with an apposite description of common *theistic* religious experience.

> "Just as I become aware of someone's presence by hearing a voice, or become aware of the door opening by feeling the draught, so some people become apparently aware of God by hearing a voice or feeling a strange feeling, or indeed just seeing the night sky. But occasionally perceptions do not involve any sensory element at all (any patterns in a visual field, noises, smells, and so on); one just becomes aware that something is so. The blind may become aware of the presence of the furniture, though they do not have a feeling by means of which they become aware of it; or we become aware of whether our hand behind our back is facing upwards or downwards, though there is no 'feeling' which tells us which it is … Analogously, some religious experiences are such that it seems to the subject that God is present although there is no sensation by which the experience is mediated."[410]

I suspect ordinary Christians would say they have phenomenologically similar awareness of the *truth* of Christianity; at least from time to time, like when praying, living rightly or suffering with equanimity. Though, again, it does not seem that most of them would say that they, on such occasions, know the truth in a fashion close to their knowing something evidently.

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[408] For recent writings in the epistemology of internal testimony of the Holy Spirit, see W. J. Abraham, "The Epistemological Significance of the Inner Witness of the Holy Spirit," op. cit., pp. 434-450; W. J. Abraham, *Crossing the Threshold of Divine Revelation*, op. cit., pp. 47-50, 64, 76, 96-97, 111, 124, 186; G. R. Habermas, *Dealing with Doubt*, Chicago, Moody Press 1990, ch. VIII; A. Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief*, op. cit., especially Pt. III; W. L. Craig, "Classical Apologetics," op. cit., pp. 28-38, 53-55; J. P. Moreland and W. L. Craig, *Philosophical Foundations for a Christian Worldview*, op. cit., ch. 7; W. L. Craig, *Reasonable Faith*, op. cit., pp. 35, 39-47; John M. DePoe, "Evidentialism, Reformed Epistemology, and the Holy Spirit," and http://www.johndepoe.com/Evidentialism_RE_Holy_Spirit.pdf (accessed November 29, 2011); K. Kwan, "The Argument from Religious Experience," op. cit., pp. 498-501, 516-517.

[409] Cf. R. Swinburne, *Revelation*, op. cit., pp. 171-172, 187-188, 218, 352-353; "Authority of Scripture, Tradition, and the Church," op. cit., pp. 21, 27. As for the McGrews, I gather my impression from correspondence with them.

[410] R. Swinburne, *Is There a God?*, Oxford, op. cit., pp. 137-138.

Further, I don't know whether such awareness has any significant force leastways in terms of epistemic justification, rationality, or credibility. A general confidence in the truth of Christianity, a sense of peace, a feeling that God is present, immense, or loving are not self-authenticating in philosophy. In general, one can have such (non-sensory or phenomenologically thin) feelings about many things, however crazy.[411] So, in general, having such experiences is scarcely favorable, if favorable at all, to the claim that Christianity or the Trinity doctrine is true.[412] Of course, I do not mean all experiences of any sort are subjected to such worry. With respect to their evidential force, common religious experiences may be easily viewed as different from experiences of other sorts. Because of this, one could easily disagree with an analogy Swinburne draws: if the blind person has awareness that he is approaching a middle-sized material object, this is something that he himself can test easily or that he can be told by palpably credible witnesses. This option is absent in the case of common religious experience.[413] Granted, in case of certain extraordinary or overwhelming religious experience, the test could be (epistemically) superfluous for the experiencer (though not for others). But now we are discussing ordinary, common religious experience. Perhaps some would object that compelling or overwhelming religious experiences, including phenomenologically thick visions, *are* common and ordinary. My anecdotal evidence, however, suggests otherwise. So does Swinburne's.[414] Apparently, to the majority of Christian believers with common religious experiences or feelings, neither Christianity nor the Trinity is evident. Otherwise attempts to argue positively on behalf of Christianity or the Trinity doctrine from other inputs than religious experience would be popularly seen by such Christians not as *hopeless* (as is, perhaps, today the case), but, on the contrary, as *superfluous* (at least epistemically and for themselves).[415]

Furthermore, even if in most Christian believers the belief that Christianity is true is properly basic in the (externalist) sense made recently well-known in analytic epistemology – i.e., produced by non-defective, cognitive, reliable faculties in a suitable environment, while not based on other beliefs[416] – this will not suffice to make Christianity or the Trinity doctrine evident for them. Externalist warrant is one thing, evident insight another. Still, Plantinga has

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[411] For similar worries, consult J. Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, op. cit., bk. IV, ch. XIX ("Of Enthusiasm").

[412] So I'm skeptical to Aquinas's thesis that the inner witness of the Holy Spirit is the main source of faith's credibility. (See *Summa Theologica*, op. cit., II-II, q. 2, a. 9, ad 3.) Of course, according to Aquinas the content of faith is neither self-evidently true, nor demonstrable by mere natural reason (ibid., q. 1, a. 1, 4, 5). It's also worth noting that he writes that the light of faith (lumen fidei) makes Christian believers "see" ("videre") what they believe. But, as he explains, by this he alludes to the habit of faith as directing the human mind to assent to the content of faith (ibid., q. 1, a. 4, ad 3).

[413] I owe this point to L. McGrew.

[414] Cf. the places in Swinburne's writings referred to in nt. 397 above. T. McGrew (in correspondence) expressed his opinion that he does not think that compelling religious experiences are common among Christians. Interestingly, Plantinga himself had several such religious experiences (see his spiritual autobiography "A Christian Life Partly Lived," in *Philosophers Who Believe*, K. J. Clark /ed./, op. cit., pp. 51-52).

[415] Cf. John Bishop, *Believing by Faith: An Essay in the Epistemology and Ethics of Religious Belief*, New York, Oxford University Press 2007, pp. 74, 98; W. F. Vallicella, "Christianity and the Law of Identity: Evidentially on a Par?," October 17, 2007, http://lists.powerblogs.com/pipermail/maverickphilosopher/2007-October/002524.html (accessed May 5, 2011); Gary Gutting, *What Philosophers Know: Case Studies in Recent Analytic Philosophy*, New York, Cambridge University Press 2009, p. 118.

[416] See A. Plantinga, *Warrant and Proper Function*, op. cit.; *Warranted Christian Belief*, op. cit.

also been the chief contemporary proponent of the thesis that Christianity is *evidently* true to exemplary Christian believers, at least at times, due to the inner testimony given to them by the Holy Spirit. But, at the same time, he distinguishes exemplary (or, in his words, "paradigmatic") cases of faith from typical cases, and concedes that those of the latter sort do not enjoy such perspicuousness, as is evinced by their less than complete certainty. Plantinga writes:

> "… even the best and most favored of us are subject to doubt and uncertainty … faith always contains a portion of unbelief. It is only in the *pure and paradigmatic* instances of faith that there is any 'utter certainty'. … For the person of faith (at least in the *paradigmatic* instances), the great things of the gospel seem *clearly true*, *obvious*, *compelling*. She finds herself convinced – just as she does in the case of clear memory beliefs or her belief in elementary truths of arithmetic. … Again, [this holds in] the *paradigmatic* cases; but of course the fact is the conviction and belief involved in faith come in all degrees of firmness. As Calvin puts it, "in the believing mind certainty is mixed with doubt" and "we are troubled on all sides by the agitation of unbelief." In *typical* cases, therefore, as opposed to *paradigmatic* cases, degree of belief will be less than maximal. Furthermore, degree of belief, on the part of the person who has faith, *typically* varies from time to time, from circumstance to circumstance."[417]

In like manner, typical non-obviousness of logical possibility of Christianity and of the Trinity to the most of Christian believers might be stated, evinced by frequently less than complete certainty of those of them who pondered on the modal issue. At least, the actual nature of ordinary Christian religious experience does not seem to involve any such modal obviousness, nor does it seem to allow for a demonstration of logical or analytic possibility of the Trinity doctrine. In any case, this issue is extrinsic to my project of a defence of WMST and WMST*. Let's move down to the last segment of this defence. Within it, several explications shall be offered why to infer from the general hitherto failure to see p-evidently logical (analytic) possibility of the Trinity doctrine the psychological impossibility of such knowledge.

IV.3. The modal step

The chief idea of this section may be stated quite simply. Apparently, (i) many motivated and talented humans have tried thoroughly to see evidently and independently of religious experience that the Trinity doctrine is logically (analytically) possible; moreover, all this in conditions favorable to such enquiry (as opposed to those of poverty or lawlessness, or lack of relevant education, books, articles, or tools). In fact, this is already indicated in the preceding section IV.1, where a representative sample of such theoretical efforts was considered. Still, (ii) no human has accomplished to see p-evidently that the Trinity doctrine is logically possible. This was argued in

[417] A. Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief*, op. cit., pp. 260 and 264; my italics. Cf. also Andrew Chignell, "Epistemology for Saints: Alvin Plantinga's Magnum Opus," *Books and Culture*, September (2001), http://www.booksandculture.com/articles/2002/marapr/10.20.html (accessed November 29, 2011); J. Bishop, *Believing by Faith*, op. cit., pp. 97-99; G. Gutting, *What Philosophers Know*, op. cit., pp. 118-121.

sections IV.1 and IV.2. So, plausibly, (iii) it can't be p-evident that the Trinity doctrine is logically possible.

As we recall, the term "can't" in (iii) is to be understood as psychological impossibility, which was discussed in the above section II.9. Therefore, upon unpacking according to the account of psychological impossibility proposed in that section, (iii) amounts to the following disjunction. (i*) It is logically impossible that it is p-evident to a human that the Trinity doctrine is logically possible; or (ii*) it is metaphysically impossible that it is p-evident to a human that the Trinity doctrine is logically possible; or (iii*) it is logically incompatible with the laws of nature that it is p-evident to a human that the Trinity doctrine is logically possible; or (iv*) it is logically incompatible with a proposition truly reporting the hitherto history of the universe that it is p-evident to a human that the Trinity doctrine is logically possible; or (v*) the chance – given the laws of nature, the hitherto history of the universe, and conditions favorable to human knowledge acquisition – that it is p-evident to a human that the Trinity doctrine is logically possible is minimal or almost minimal.

It is intuitive, I contend, that (iii) is true, given (i) and (ii). For one thing, if both (i) and (ii) were true, but (iii) wasn't, then it would be a rather incomprehensible mystery. To appreciate this point, note that (iii) is not true if and only if it *can* be p-evident that the Trinity doctrine is logically possible, whereas "can" is understood as psychological possibility (also discussed in section II.9). This claim amounts to the following conjunction. (i**) It is logically possible that it is p-evident to a human that the Trinity doctrine is logically possible; (ii**) it is metaphysically possible that it is p-evident to a human that the Trinity doctrine is logically possible; (iii**) it is logically compatible with the laws of nature that it is p-evident to a human that the Trinity doctrine is logically possible; (iv**) it is logically compatible with any proposition truly reporting the past history of the universe that it is p-evident to a human that the Trinity doctrine is logically possible; and (v**) the chance – given the laws of nature, resources of the past history of the universe, and conditions favorable to human knowledge acquisition – that it is p-evident to a human that the Trinity doctrine is logically possible is neither minimal nor almost minimal. But, if this conjunction was true, how could both (i) and (ii) be true? In other words, if all the conjuncts were met, how could all the keen and motivated scholars with all their leisure, books, and comfortable reading rooms fail to find a way how to see p-evidently that the Trinity doctrine is logically possible? The right answer seems to be that if the conjunction was true, then it would not be the case that both (i) and (ii) are true. But they are. Hence, by modus tollens, the conjunction is not true. Therefore, by equivalence of the negation of the conjunction with (iii), (iii) is true.

When I asked rhetorically, how "could" the negation of (iii) be obtained if (i) and (ii) are true, I wasn't foreshadowing that these two latter claims (jointly) *entail* (iii), less that they *evidently* entail (iii). They don't; or, in any case, not evidently to me. By means of my rhetorical questions, I was merely suggesting that assuming (i) and (ii), (iii) seems true. Indeed, (iii) seems probable on (i) and (ii). "Probable" in which sense? In several, including the logical one (and also the epistemic one, explicated in section VI.3A below).

Perhaps somebody will object that, as probability is not generally monotonous, some additional relevant evidence might counterbalance (i) and (ii) and so make (iii) in the end improbable. It might, it might. If there only *was* such evidence. But is there? Well, there isn't, it seems. We have *already* tried to take all the relevant evidence into account (in section IV.1).

And although it is not outright evident that we did not miss something significant (as was admitted in section IV.2), the thoroughness of our investigation indicates we didn't (as was explained in the same section). Of course, would-be p-evidentness from religious experience of the truth or logical possibility of the Trinity doctrine would not count as relevant.

Again, there are several parallels to the inference of (iii) from (i) and (ii) in philosophy and theology. Let's survey three examples.

M. J. Scheeben (quoted at length in section IV.1A, category 1.1.1) devotes the second chapter of his fairly classical theological book *The Mysteries of Christianity* to a defence of indemonstrability of the truth of the Trinity doctrine by mere natural reason. The chapter contains two sections devoted to the "Negative Proof [Nachweis] of the Indemonstrability of the Mystery [of the Trinity]. Criticism of Attempts to Establish [aufzuweisen] the Truth of the Trinity by Means of the Unaided Reason."[418] Scheeben assesses several purely metaphysical arguments for the given conclusion, and opines such arguments are not proper demonstrations. Interestingly for us, he also ventures to write that this verdict strongly supports his claim that the Trinity doctrine *cannot* – in a sense he does not specify – be demonstrated by unaided reason. In short:

> "… the *in*demonstr*ability* of the divine Trinity has received *striking confirmation* [entschieden bewährt] from our review of the various attempts at [its] rational demonstration …"[419]

Here, Scheeben moves directly from the assessment of several notable metaphysical Trinitarian arguments to natural indemonstrability of the doctrine. The present dissertation rather chops such seamless presentation into two: from a review of notable attempts of the given sort to the failure of all attempts of this sort; from this to the given sort of impossibility of success.

Let's approach two philosophical examples. In philosophy, certain theses are deemed substantive, important, interesting, or central. It's hard to provide a general account of what makes a philosophical thesis substantive in this sense, so I will simply provide a partial list of common examples. Substantive philosophical theses are those stating: the in/correctness of classical logic; those stating internalism/externalism and non/foundationalism about epistemic justification; anti/evidentialism in ethics of belief; historical non/skepticism; scientific anti/realism; anti/realism about universals; non/Platonism about abstract objects; anti/essentialism about non-trivial properties of individuals; the in/correctness of various causal principles and principles of sufficient reason; A-/B-theory of time; non/naturalism; substance and property monism/dualism; non/animalism about personal identity; anti/determinism; non/compatibilism about free will; a/theism; non/Molinism about divine foreknowledge; im/proper basicality of world view beliefs; the non/existence of (particular) miracles; the non/existence of the after-life; anti/cognitivism, anti/realism, and anti/objectivism in metaethics; the approval/denial of the is-ought gap; anti/consequentialism; moral im/permissibility of abortions and euthanasia, the non/existence of the moral duty to alleviate world hunger, etc. I hope we get the idea.

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[418] M. J. Scheeben, *The Mysteries of Christianity*, op. cit., p. 29 (title of the first of these two sections; the second is titled "Continuation of the Criticism").
[419] Ibid., pp. 42-43; my italics.

According to John Bishop, an Australian philosophical expert on the epistemology of faith,[420] it is not untypical of central philosophical debates that the various positions embraced in them are evidentially ambiguous. For examples, he points to debates between various forms of realism and anti-realism about universals, and between compatibilists and incompatibilists over free will.[421] What does "evidentially ambiguous" mean? In Bishop's account, a proposition *p* is evidentially ambiguous just when the total relevant evidence shows neither *p* nor ~*p* to be significantly more probable than not (in some sense of "probable") *and* is systematically open to viable overall interpretation both on the assumption that *p* and on the assumption that ~*p*, analogically to the way the well-known drawing of the duck-rabbit is open to two viable perceptual *Gestalts*.[422] In Bishop's opinion, also theism, among other central philosophical theses, is an evidentially ambiguous proposition. In other words, our total evidence shows neither the existence of God nor its denial to be significantly more probable than not, and is systematically open to two either theistic, or atheistic interpretation.[423] It is not my business to agree, disagree, or assess the claim that a/theism is evidentially ambiguous. Though Bishop states that the thesis of the evidential ambiguity of theism has become attractive amongst philosophers due to the unabated continuance of their debates about the existence of God, he acknowledges the thesis itself is contentious. At the same time, he declares it should not be contentious that a consideration is needed of what its implications are. He lays out some of these implications in the referred-to book, but he does not try to establish the thesis itself. More importantly for our momental concerns, Bishop also acknowledges that *assuming* all the hitherto attempts to show theism or atheism (or, generally, for a particular central philosophical thesis) as non-revisable and significantly probable fail, then it would seem that all such attempts *must* fail. Yet, he specifies the involved modality and abstains from trying to elaborate further on this point. Here are Bishop's own words:

> "… an examination of attempts at disambiguating between theistic and atheistic/naturalistic interpretations of the world might bring to light the fact that there is some systematic, *principled* reason why such attempts fail. Both theism and naturalism (roughly, the thesis that the world is just as depicted according to our best – or, perhaps rather, our ideally completed – scientific theories) seem able to provide viable overall interpretations of our total evidence. *If*, furthermore, each side seems to have available resources capable of meeting any new challenge from the other, then it might begin to seem that evidential ambiguity is here somehow *necessary*. Yet to try actually to establish the truth, let alone the *necessary* truth, of the evidential ambiguity of theism would be a major and controversial undertaking – and one I shall certainly not attempt."[424]

In certain contrast to Bishop, I *have* attempted (in the present part IV of this dissertation) to establish – or, rather, make plausible – the *psychological* necessity of there being no p-evident knowledge of logical (analytic) possibility of the Trinity doctrine. I am not sure whether this is a

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[420] See J. Bishop, *Believing by Faith*, op cit.; and "Faith," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall 2010 Edition)*, E. N. Zalta (ed.), http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2010/entries/faith (accessed December 1, 2011).
[421] J. Bishop, *Believing by Faith*, op. cit., p. 70.
[422] Ibid., pp. 20-21, 71.
[423] Ibid., pp. 68-76.
[424] Ibid., p. 73; my italics.

major undertaking, but, hopefully, I've done enough to make this necessity considerably less controversial.

Here comes the second philosophical example. The contemporary American philosopher W. F. Vallicella (already quoted in section II.1) is writing a book on metaphilosophy, which tentatively defends the metaphilosophical thesis that by philosophical considerations alone no substantive philosophical thesis can be evidently (compellingly, decisively) shown as true. In this sense, all substantive philosophical problems are, in Vallicella's opinion, intractable. Interestingly, if the metaphilosophical thesis itself is both true and a substantive philosophical thesis, then it can't be evidently demonstrated by philosophical methods. Vallicella is aware of this. That is why he endorses the metaphilosophical thesis tentatively.[425] This position of his does not appear incoherent. Similarly, it does not appear incoherent to claim – as I have in fact claimed – that it is plausible, though neither p-evident nor evident, that a particular proposition (e.g. that the Trinity doctrine is logically possible) can't be p-evident. In a couple of his available posts, Vallicella sketches the following defence of the intractability of substantive philosophical problems. For any substantive philosophical problem, no amount of extra information and careful thinking has settled the problem philosophically. So, probably, no information and no careful thinking have settled the problem; so, probably, it is impossible to settle the problem philosophically.

> "That the main problems *haven't* been solved does *not entail* that they *cannot* be solved. But if over centuries the best minds have made no headway with them, then that would seem to count as evidence of intractability, *defeasible evidence* to be sure, but evidence nonetheless. … When I say that the main problems are intractable, I mean that they are *insoluble in principle*, and not because of some contingent and remediable deficiency. It is not that we lack sufficient information or that we fail to think clearly about the information we have. We seem to have all the information we need to solve the problem of universals if it is indeed a genuine problem and one that can be solved. The same holds for the mind-body problem. Impressive advances in brain science since the time of Descartes have brought us no nearer a solution to the mind-body problem. And any additional information we acquire even up to the point of exhaustive information will not help. For what we lack is not information but understanding."[426]

> "… although the problems are genuine, deep, perennial, and important, they also seem intractable. The evidence for this is *inductive*: study the problems, study the solutions, and then ask yourself in all intellectual honesty and putting aside all one's ideological desires whether even one of the problems has been *definitively* solved."[427]

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[425] Cf. my interaction with Vallicella at W. F. Vallicella, "The Court of Philosophy," June 14, 2011, http://maverickphilosopher.typepad.com/maverick_philosopher/2011/06/the-court-of-philosophy.html (accessed December 1, 2011).

[426] W. F. Vallicella, "Notes on the Intractability of Philosophical Problems," January 9, 2007, http://lists.powerblogs.com/pipermail/maverickphilosopher/2007-January/001842.html (accessed December 1, 2011); my italics.

[427] W. F. Vallicella, "*Nescio Ergo Blogo?* More on Progress in Philosophy," June 18, 2007, http://lists.powerblogs.com/pipermail/maverickphilosopher/2007-June/002228.html (accessed December 1, 2011).

Once more, it is not our business to judge here the thesis of the intractability of the main philosophical problems. Perhaps you think that although the thesis would be plausible or probable for you in the case that you haven't had answered definitively (and by philosophical resources alone) any important philosophical questions, the thesis in fact is neither plausible nor probable for you because you in fact have answered definitively some important philosophical question, regardless of Vallicella's incredulous stare and the endlessness of philosophical disputes. If so, accept my congratulations and wish of even more philosophical power to you. I have no stakes in your being mistaken about *all* philosophical conquests of yours. (But avoid proclaiming to have seen p-evidently logical or analytic possibility of the Trinity or their non-minimal logical probability.) What is notable now is Vallicella's move from the failure of the hitherto attempts to solve a particular sort of problem in a particular way to the impossibility of their solving in this way. How is this impossibility understood by Vallicella? When asked, he replied he means here Plantinga's broadly logical impossibility (discussed in section II.9).[428] As I have already noted, this modality appears identical to metaphysical impossibility (in my sense, introduced in the same section and in nt. 92). By definition, metaphysical impossibility of p-evident human knowledge of logical (analytic) possibility of the Trinity doctrine entails the psychological impossibility of such knowledge. So if we amended Vallicella's thoughts to our issue, the psychological impossibility would ensue. So much for the parallels of inferring the claim that (iii) it can't (in the sense of psychological impossibility) be p-evident that the Trinity doctrine is logically (analytically) possible from the claims that: (i) many motivated and talented humans have tried thoroughly to see p-evidently that the Trinity doctrine is logically possible; in conditions favorable to such enquiry; and (ii) no human has accomplished to see p-evidently that the Trinity doctrine is logically possible.

How should this inference be reconstructed logically? Let $\sim H$ stand for (ii); as in IV.2 where (ii) was named as (iv). Let E^* stand for (i), and H^* for (iii). Let E stand, as in IV.2, for the evidence that one looked for p-evident reasons for logical possibility of the Trinity doctrine, in conditions favorable to such enquiry, yet found no such reasons. One option would be to apply again the simple ratio form of Bayes's theorem to H^* given E^* and $\sim H$. Then we obtain the equation

$$\mathrm{P}(H^*|E^*\&\sim H)/\mathrm{P}(\sim H^*|E^*\&\sim H) = (\mathrm{P}(H^*)/\mathrm{P}(\sim H^*)) \times (\mathrm{P}(E^*\&\sim H|H^*)/\mathrm{P}(E^*\&\sim H|\sim H^*)),$$

where all the remaining relevant background evidence is implicit, and P measures logical or epistemic probability. Like in section IV.2, it could be plausibly defended that $\mathrm{P}(H^*)/\mathrm{P}(\sim H^*) \geq 1$, $\mathrm{P}(E^*\&\sim H|H^*)/\mathrm{P}(E^*\&\sim H|\sim H^*) >> 1$, and so H^* is significantly more probable than not.

I want to suggest yet another reconstruction. It is one by means of the Theorem of total probability. Perhaps we remember (from section IV.1B, category 2.2) its simple ratio form states:

> for any p, q, r, $\mathrm{P}(p|q) = \mathrm{P}(r|q) \times (\mathrm{P}(p|q\&r) + \mathrm{P}(\sim r|q) \times (\mathrm{P}(p|q\&\sim r)$; given all the probability values on the right side are measured on the common scale [0; 1].

[428] See W. F. Vallicella, "The Court of Philosophy," op. cit.

An advantage of such a reconstruction would be its vivid incorporation of the result coming from the reconstruction sketched in section IV.2. Applying the Theorem of total probability to H^* given E and E^*, and employing the evidential force of $\sim H$, we get the equation

$$P(H^*|E\&E^*) = P(\sim H|E\&E^*) \times P(H^*|E\&E^*\&\sim H) + P(H|E\&E^*) \times P(H^*|E\&E^*\&H).$$

Plausibly, both $P(H|E\&E^*)$ and $P(H^*|E\&E^*\&H)$ are defined, though low. The first two terms on the right side of this equation are more important. Let's sketch roughly an estimation of each of them in turn. Using, again, the simple ratio form of Bayes's theorem, we get a second equation,

$$P(\sim H|E\&E^*)/P(H|E\&E^*) = (P(\sim H|E)/P(H|E)) \times (P(E^*|E\&\sim H)/P(E^*|E\&H)),$$

where, arguably, $P(\sim H|E)/P(H|E) >> 1$ (see section IV.2), and $P(E^*|E\&\sim H)/P(E^*|E\&H) \geq 1$, and so $P(\sim H|E\&E^*)$ is high.

Using the simple ratio form of Bayes's theorem once more, we get a third equation

$$P(H^*|E\&E^*\&\sim H)/P(\sim H^*|E\&E^*\&\sim H) =$$
$$(P(H^*|E)/P(\sim H^*|E)) \times (P(E^*\&\sim H|E\&H^*)/P(E^*\&\sim H|E\&\sim H^*)),$$

where, arguably, $P(H^*|E)/P(\sim H^*|E) \geq 1$, and $P(E^*\&\sim H|E\&H^*)/P(E^*\&\sim H|E\&\sim H^*) >> 1$, and so also $P(H^*|E\&E^*\&\sim H)$ is high. To appreciate the penult estimate, realize that on $\sim H^*$ many investigators have a decent (albeit small) chance to acquire p-evident knowledge of the logical possibility of the Trinity doctrine. Therefore, failure of them all is improbable on $\sim H^*$. Not so on H^*. Turning with the estimations from the two latter equations back to the first equation, H^* ends up as plausibly significantly more probable than not. However, I won't elaborate on such technical proposals in greater detail, as I have substantiated intuitively the inference from E^* and $\sim H$ to H^* at the beginning of this section.

This completes my explication of why to infer from the general hitherto failure to see p-evidently logical (analytic) possibility of the Trinity doctrine the psychological impossibility of such knowledge. It also completes my whole defence of WMST and WMST*. The main part of this defence is negative and critical. It is also lengthy. But it has to be, for the positive conclusion that WMST and WMST* are true arises only by way of such a critical and thorough overview. I am not aware of any other promising procedure.

Of course, similar critical reviews could be construed directly, for instance, on behalf of our sub-conclusions, in arguments I and II, that (5) the Trinity doctrine cannot be p-evident, that (5*) Christianity cannot be p-evident, and that (3*) Christianity cannot be p-evidently not analytically false. I have focused on WMST and WMST* because attempts to demolish them have been more common in literature, and because they enable to infer that (7) the Trinity doctrine cannot have p-evidently non-minimal logical probability, and the main conclusion of arguments I and II that (10) Christianity cannot have p-evidently non-minimal logical probability. As I said at the beginning of part IV of this dissertation, I do not rule out that a procedure similar to mine could be employed to support the claim that it can't be p-evident that the Trinity is

logically impossible or analytically false. At the same place an explication was given as to why this route is not pursued here.

The next part of this dissertation replies to objections against the principle that any analytic falsehood has (at best) minimal logical probability, and against the principle that any entailing proposition has at least the logical probability of the entailed proposition.

V. On Further Objections

The preceding part IV replied to objections against WMST and WMST*, which both figure in arguments I and II (presented in part III), as steps (1) and (3), respectively. If there are any remaining qualms about arguments I and II, they presumably pertain to the following two rules. (i) Every analytically false proposition has minimal logical probability on any given information, if it has any logical probability on the information at all. (ii) On any given information, every proposition entailing some other proposition has logical probability equal to or lower than the logical probability of the entailed proposition – if the latter has any logical probability on the information at all. The principle (i) was appealed to in both arguments I and II. (See especially the premise (6.1) in section III.4A.) The principle (ii) was appealed in argument I. (See especially the premise (8.1) in the same section.) Although I have argued for both (i) and (ii) already (in part III), two interesting challenges to (i) have been presented in literature. I treat them in the next two sections (V.1 and V.2). The third section (V.3) considers shortly whether there are objections against (ii).

V.1. Keynes's wavering

A troubling objection could be mounted from the seminal work on logical probability: *A Treatise on Probability* by J. M. Keynes (encountered already in sections II.1 and II.2). In chapter I, Keynes characterizes his concept of logical probability in these words:

> "When once the facts are given which determine our knowledge, what is probable or improbable in these circumstances has been fixed objectively …" (§ 2)
> "Between two sets of proposition … there exists a relation … This relation is the subject matter of the logic of probability." (§ 7)
> "In its most fundamental sense, I think, … [probability] refers to the logical relation between two sets of propositions, which … I have termed the probability-relation. It is with this that I shall be mainly concerned …" (§ 5)

In these passages, Keynes seems to be suggesting that his concept of logical probability is identical to the one we have identified and explicated above. That is, logical probability between propositions is determined solely in virtue of the content of the propositions. I believe many have interpreted Keynes this way. But now consider the *Treatise*, ch. II, § 11:

> "What we know and what probability we can attribute to our *rational beliefs* is subjective in the sense of being relative to the individual. But given the body of premisses which our subjective powers and circumstances supply to us, and given the kinds of logical relations, upon which arguments can be based and which *we have the capacity to perceive*, the conclusions, which it is rational for us to draw, stand to these premisses in an objective and wholly logical relation. Our *logic* is concerned with drawing conclusions by a series of steps of certain specified kinds from a limited body of premisses." (My italics.)

What should one make of this passage? I suggest three alternatives of interpretation. First, in this passage from chapter II, Keynes proposes that logical probability, including logical probability of analytic falsehoods, is *not* determined solely in virtue of the contents of the concepts explicitly included in the propositions. This casts doubt on the principle that every analytic falsehood has, whether we know it as such or not, on any information at best minimal logical probability. But, unfortunately, then Keynes just contradicts what he apparently says in chapter I. Secondly, maybe Keynes *never* meant his "logical probability" to be wholly determined by propositional contents. But then the wording from chapter I of his *Treatise* would be misguided. And what's worse, Keynes would misguide others into thinking that logical probability is wholly determined that way. Or, thirdly, Keynes does not talk in the passage from ch. II about his view of logical probability, but rather about some kind of rational degree of belief. Whence then, however, the word "logic"? Anyway, this seems to us as the most charitable option.[429] And, if the last interpretation is not the right one, then so much the worse for Keynes's coherence, or at least for his wording.

V.2. Franklin's triangle argument

More recently, the Australian philosopher, mathematician, and historian of probability James Franklin (*1953) has defended the ascription of non-extremal *logical* probabilities to mathematical propositions which, so far, have been neither proved nor disproved conclusively. By non-extremal logical probability I mean probability outside, and disjoint with, both the extremes of maximal and minimal logical probability. Hence, if a proposition has non-extremal logical probability on the given information, it has on it logical probability which is neither minimal, nor maximal. Therefore, each proposition with non-extremal logical probability on the given information has on it non-minimal logical probability. Because Franklin is a proponent of logical interpretation of probability and his argument amounts to the best hitherto case for non-extremal logical probabilities for some analytically false propositions, I shall quote him at some length.

> "… in mathematics, the typical case is that [the evidence] *e* does entail [the considered hypothesis] *h*, though this is perhaps as yet unknown. If, however, P(*h*,*e*) is really 1, how is it possible in the meantime to discuss the (non-deductive) support that e may give to h, that is, to treat P(*h*,*e*) as not equal to 1? In other words, if *h* and *e* are necessarily true or false, how can P(*h*,*e*) be other than 0 or 1?
>
> The answer is that, there can be many logical relations between two propositions … Before the Greeks' development of deductive geometry, it was possible to argue

[429] R. Swinburne (*Epistemic Justification*, op. cit., p. 70) prefers the second interpretation. T. McGrew agreed, in correspondence, with my choice.

All equilateral (plane) triangles so far measured have been found to be equiangular

This triangle is equilateral

Therefore, this triangle is equiangular

> … when deductive geometry appeared, it was found that there was also a deductive relation, since the second premise alone entails the conclusion. This discovery in no way vitiates the correctness of the previous non-deductive reasoning, or casts doubt on the existence of the non-deductive relation. … It is common to discuss induction using only examples from the natural world, such as, 'All observed flames have been hot, so the next flame observed will be hot' and 'All observed ravens have been black, so the next observed raven will be black'. … [But in mathematics] induction works just as well … there seems to be no reason to distinguish the reasoning involved here from that used in inductions about flames or ravens."[430]

Presumably, when writing "necessarily true or false," Franklin means logically necessary or logically impossible. Or so I will read him for the sake of the argument. Furthermore, as we have seen (in part III), each logically necessary proposition is analytically true, and *vice versa*; and every logically impossible proposition is analytically false, and *vice versa*. But according to the principle under present consideration, analytically true and analytically false propositions always have maximal (one) and minimal (zero) logical probability, respectively – if they have a logical probability on the given information in the first place. In fact, Franklin appears to concede this, though in terms of propositions which are necessarily false. An explanation of universally minimal logical probability for analytical falsehoods has already been given in this dissertation (see the premise (6.1) in section III.4A). An explanation of universally maximal logical probability for analytical truths would be analogical. Another way to appreciate this could be extracted from the observation that measured probabilities of any proposition and of its negation are always disjoint and adding up to a probabilistic certainty (that is, maximal probability value). I may accept that the considered, though at the given time conclusively undecided, mathematical propositions are determined in their truth-value analytically.[431] If they aren't, they need not interest me for then they constitute no counterexample to at best minimal logical probability for all analytic falsehoods. It follows that any of the as yet conclusively undecided mathematical propositions has either maximal (one), or minimal (zero) logical probability, if it has any logical (measured) probability on the given information at all. By contrast, Franklin's wording suggests there *is* a non-extremal, and so non-minimal, logical probability of the latter on the former.

In short, it could seem that Franklin defends that that with respect to the evidence ancient Greek geometers had, the presumably analytic truth that all plane equilateral triangles are equiangular has, by enumerative induction from those many cases for which it was tested, logical probability lower than 1. So its presumably analytically false negation has with respect to that evidence logical probability greater than 0.

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[430] J. Franklin, "Non-Deductive Logic in Mathematics," op. cit., pp. 14-16. See also J. Franklin, "Resurrecting Logical Probability," op. cit., p. 286; and *What Science Knows*, op. cit., pp. 9, 111, 117, 167-169.

[431] See section II.5; R. Swinburne, *An Introduction to Confirmation Theory*, op. cit., p. 59; R. Swinburne, *Epistemic Justification*, op. cit., pp. 175-176; H. Gaifman, "Reasoning with Limited Resources and Assigning Probabilities to Arithmetical Statements," op. cit., p. 103.

I am inclined to think that Franklin suspects no problem here because when presenting the above triangle argument he is not concerned primarily about non-deductive *logical* relations. That is, when presenting the triangle argument, he is not concerned about *logical* probability in my sense, but rather about non-extremal rational degree of belief, yielded by the understanding of inconclusive reasons. He evaluates what was rational for the ancient geometers to believe, with respect to what they were aware of, then logical probability. I will explain this shift of concern in later sections (VI.3C and VI.3D). In this section, I will argue that, *pace* Franklin, that induction to non-contingent claims is disanalogous to induction in more mundane contexts, given that it is *logical* probability which is being evaluated. Notably, that there is some disanalogy here was also suspected by R. Swinburne in the context of discussing logical probability,[432] and also by Alan Baker, a chief contemporary philosopher of non-deductive methods in mathematics, in the context of non-logical probability (degree of belief).[433]

I think at least the suspicion about logical probability is right. In brief, the difference is that in the geometrical case, the conclusion is presumably analytically true and (so) its negation analytically false, hence their logical probabilities, which are objective, are not determined solely by inductive relations or patterns. The rest of this section (V.2) explicates this in more detail.

V.2A. Bernoullian induction

Remarkably, J. Franklin is an adherent of the so called Bernoullian reconstruction of the logic of induction from enumeration of instances with a given property in a sample – and from the proportion of the property within the sample – to the proportion of the property within the whole population. He also embraces Bernoullian reconstruction of the inference from the population proportion of a given property to an instance from the same population having the property. In this favor of the Bernoullian approach, Franklin has allies in such philosophers as Donald Cary Williams (1899 – 1983), David Charles Stove (1927 – 1994), Henry Ely Kyburg, Jr. (1928 – 2007), Scott Campbell, and also Timothy and Lydia McGrew.[434] This solution Franklin deems as the "… leading argument as to why induction is justified …"[435] I think that's a fair appraisal. The

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[432] Cf. R. Swinburne, *An Introduction to Confirmation Theory*, op. cit., pp. 59-64.

[433] Cf. A. Baker, "Is There a Problem of Induction for Mathematics?," in *Mathematical Knowledge*, Mary Leng, Alexander Paseau and Michael Potter (eds.), Oxford, Oxford University Press 2007, pp. 65-66, 68, 71; "Non-Deductive Methods in Mathematics," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall 2009 Edition)*, E. N. Zalta (ed.), http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2009/entries/mathematics-nondeductive (accessed May 13, 2011), # 3.2; "Experimental Mathematics," *Erkenntnis* 68, No. 3 (2008), pp. 336-338, 341.

[434] D. C. Williams, *The Ground of Induction*, Harvard, Harvard University Press 1947; D. C. Stove, *The Rationality of Induction*, New York, Oxford University Press 1986; H. E. Kyburg, Jr., "The Justification of Induction," *Journal of Philosophy* 53, No. 12 (1956), pp. 394-400; H. E. Kyburg, Jr., "Tyche and Athena," *Synthese* 40, No. 3 (1979), pp. 415-438; S. Campbell and J. Franklin, "Randomness and the Justification of Induction," *Synthese* 138, No. 1 (2004), pp. 79-99; T. McGrew, "Direct Inference and the Problem of Induction," in *Probability Is the Very Guide of Life*, H. E. Kyburg, Jr. and Mariam Thalos (eds.), Chicago and La Salle, Open Court Publishing 2003, pp. 33-60; T. and L. McGrew, *Internalism and Epistemology*, op. cit.; ch. 7; John Vickers, "The Problem of Induction," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall 2010 Edition)*, E. N. Zalta (ed.), http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2010/entries/induction-problem (accessed May 30, 2011), # 7.1.

[435] J. Franklin, *What Science Knows*, op. cit., p. 13.

Bernoullian solution consists in an application of the so called *Bernoulli's theorem* and a repeated application of *proportional syllogism* (also known as statistical syllogism or as direct inference). Let's explicate the idea of proportional syllogism first. Suppose you are considering what is the proportion, within a particular population, of those things which have a particular property *G*. If you knew the proportion within the population of things, then you could – or so I assume for now with Franklin – evaluate by proportional syllogism the logical probability that a particular thing from the population has the property *G*. You would do it in the same way as when you assess that, say, Spike the Texan can swim with 90% logical probability given that 90 % of Texans can swim is the only relevant information you have. Proportional syllogism is of the following general form.[436]

> *F*s have property *G* at least in proportion α.
> *a* is an *F*.
> Hence, given no other relevant information,
> [with probability ≥ α]
> *a* has *G*.

The involved notion of relevance is tricky. But the idea seems to be that the probability of the conclusion is determined solely by exemplification of the above form (by the involved propositions). In such a case, this proportion is of the same value as the lower bounds of the probability of the conclusion.

With an idea of the logic of proportional syllogism in hand, let's face the perennial question typically arising when facing the problem of enumerative induction. How can we figure out the proportion of the given property within a population of all things of a given type? At this moment, it is useful to consider yet another population: the population of all possible distinct *n*-fold samples from the original population of things of the considered type, where *n* is some fairly large natural number. The reason why this is useful is Bernoulli's theorem. It is to the effect that for any property *G*, as *n* grows larger, the proportion α of *n*-fold samples whose members have *G* in a proportion within a finite distance ε from the proportion of *G* in the original population of things, however small yet positive ε is, approaches 1 asymptotically. Due to the theorem, you can choose comfortably an arbitrarily small yet non-zero ε, and α arbitrarily close to 1 yet not equaling 1, and then determine, by a mathematical formula, the minimal *n* you then need. Or, alternatively, you can determine ε from *n* and α. Yet another option is to determine α from ε and *n*. Thus, having an *n*-fold sample from the original population of things, knowing the proportion of *G* within it, and having no other relevant information, you can deem, by proportional syllogism, the (logical) probability to be at least α that the sample's proportion of *G* matches, within ε, the proportion of *G* in the (original) population of things from which the sample comes. For instance, for $n \geq 2000$, any *n*-fold sample yields the accuracy margin $\varepsilon \leq 0.05$ and the probability threshold $\alpha \geq 0.95$.[437] In that case, with probability ≥ 0.95 the sample's proportion is that of the population's, +/− 0.05.

[436] Cf. T. and L. McGrew, *Internalism and Epistemology*, op. cit., pp. 141-144.
[437] Cf. T. McGrew, "Direct Inference and the Problem of Induction," op. cit., p. 41.

Even a unit (that is, 100%) sample proportion may be appropriated. so that we may say correctly that it approximates the population proportion closely. Polynomial variables – opposed to the binomial ones with exactly two contradictory and exhaustive values (like *has* p vs. *does not have* p) – can be tackled, too. Indeed, infinitely structured variables – including continuous ones with uncountably many values – can be absorbed. This is all a result of non-trivial mathematics which I will flatly assume. Fortunately, it is already intuitive, even apart from technicalities, that large samples which we have no reason to suspect of being biased or deliberately skewed should be quite similar in the distribution of properties to their populations.[438]

Still, at this place I want to express two worries concerning specific and less intuitive cases of induction involving infinities. Already these worries cast doubt on the mathematical application of the Bernoullian inductive inference by proportional syllogism from sample to the original population. First, it seems Bernoulli himself, together with some philosophers who make use of his exquisite theorem,[439] assumes the considered original population of things to be *finite*. In contrast, some mathematical domains are, or at least may well be, (actually) infinite. Indeed, they are taken as such by most mathematicians and by most philosophers of mathematics. Consequently, some thinkers have displayed doubts about the application of induction to such mathematical domains.[440] But, presumably, the whole Bernoullian induction may be adjusted to infinite populations; including, e.g., an amendment of the concept of a *proportion* within an *infinite* population.[441] This is, though, an advanced issue for professional mathematicians, and not for me, to judge. Second, we face another technical problem with infinities, once more better appreciated by the mathematician than the layman. The problem relates to situations in which we want to infer a *precise* (not merely interval) population proportion of the given property; e.g. that *all* the things in the population have the property. As Franklin, himself a mathematician, noted to me in correspondence, whether you can infer probabilistically a precise population proportion depends on whether there are infinitely many possible precise population proportions – as there, in fact, often seem to be when the population is infinite. If the options of precise population proportion are infinitely many, we can hardly ascribe a non-negligible posterior probability to any of them, Franklin contends, even after observing the sample proportion. Still, he continues, there remains a possibility to appeal to some epistemological or ontological theory which would give to some set of precise population proportions a prior probabilistic advantage over all the other proportions. If so, which proportions are to be preferred? Those of one, zero, a half, and the like. Why prefer them in terms of prior probability (before we observe the sample proportion)? They could be preferred because of some theory about simplicity as evidence for truth, or

[438] Cf. T. and L. McGrew, *Internalism and Epistemology*, op. cit., pp. 145-146; S. Campbell and J. Franklin, "Randomness and the Justification of Induction," op. cit., pp. 79-82; J. Franklin, *What Science Knows*, op. cit., pp. 13-14; John Allen Paulos, *Innumeracy*, New York, Penguin Books 2000, ch. 5, section "Two Theoretical Results"; R. S. Nickerson, *Cognition and Chance*, op. cit., op. cit., pp. 12-13, 49, 239, 299-302, 414-19, 433-34.

[439] Cf. S. Campbell and J. Franklin, "Randomness and the Justification of Induction," op. cit., p. 81.

[440] Cf. Alan Baker, "Is There a Problem of Induction for Mathematics?", in *Mathematical Knowledge*, Mary Leng (ed.), Oxford, pp. 61, 66, 73; "Experimental Mathematics," *Erkenntnis* 68 (2008), p. 337.

[441] As declared by J. Franklin in correspondence. Cf. also R. Swinburne, *An Introduction to Confirmation Theory*, op. cit., p. 16; R. Swinburne, "Introduction," in *Justification of Induction*, op. cit., pp. 14-15; R. Swinburne, *Epistemic Justification*, op. cit., p. 58; J Franklin, "Resurrecting Logical Probability," op. cit., p. 296.

because of some essentialist or natural kind account of the world's structure.[442] Such philosophical attempts to justify inferences to precise population proportions taken from infinitely many options (given an infinite population) haven't been firmly established. On the contrary, they are rather controversial. So doubts spawned by the infinity of possible precise population proportions are graver than those arising from the infinity of some mathematical populations. Nevertheless, for the sake of my main critique of the case for non-extremal (measured) logical probabilities of certain and presumably analytically false mathematical claims, I put both of the two transfinite worries aside. Both are unnecessary for my main critique. Besides, a resolution of the second worry is unnecessary for a version of the inductive case I am going to comment on right now.

V.2B. A Bernoullian triangle argument

In the following section, I will slightly modify Timothy McGrew's Bernoullian explication of the logic of enumerative induction, in order to make it fit to Franklin's triangle argument. This argument shall be also understood in this section as concerned with logical probability. McGrew's contribution is the latest and also straightest account of the Bernoullian approach I am aware of. Moreover, Franklin himself approves McGrew's explication.[443] In my opinion, the reconstruction of the triangle argument suggests that some of its assumptions are false.

Suppose that for some n, we have an n-fold sample S of equilateral (plane) triangles, all of which are equiangular.

> *1*. For any property *G* and any population, at least α of all (possible) distinct n-fold samples from the population exhibit a proportion of *G* that approximates closely the population proportion of *G*. (Premise; Bernoulli's theorem.)
>
> *2*. S is an n-fold sample from the population of all (possible) distinct equilateral triangles. (Premise.)
>
> Hence, given no other relevant information, by proportional syllogism from (*1*) and (*2*), [with logical probability $\geq \alpha$]
> *3*. For any property *G*, the sample S's proportion of *G* approximates closely its population proportion.
>
> *4*. For *G* = equiangularity, S has the 100% proportion of *G*. (Premise.)

[442] Cf. J. Franklin, "Resurrecting Logical Probability", op. cit., pp. 281, 285, 288, 294; Mark A. Changizi and Timothy P. Barker, "A Paradigm Based Solution to the Riddle of Induction," *Synthese* 117, No. 3 (1999), pp. 419-484; Hilary Kornblith, *Inductive Inference and Its Natural Ground*, Cambridge (Massachusetts), MIT Press 1995; R. Swinburne, *Epistemic Justification*, op. cit., pp. 49-51, 82-102, 241-42.
[443] Cf. S. Campbell and J. Franklin, "Randomness and the Justification of Induction," op. cit., nt. 8.

Hence, from (3) and (4),
5. For *G* = equiangularity, the population proportion of *G* approximates closely 100%.

Suppose also we may infer probabilistically from (*1*), (*2*), and (*4*), and given no other relevant information, the precise population proportion:
[with logical probability ≥ α*]
*5**. For *G* = equiangularity, the population proportion of *G* equals 100%.

6. This triangle *a* is equilateral. (Premise.)

Hence, given no other relevant information, by proportional syllogism from (*5*) and (*6*),
[with logical probability ≈ 1]
7. This triangle *a* is equiangular.

Similarly, by proportional syllogism from (*5**) and (*6*),
[with logical probability = 1]
7. This triangle *a* is equiangular.

The first probabilistic proviso (i.e., ≥ α) bears not only on (*3*) and (*5*), but also on (*7*). The second one (≥ α*) applies not only to (*5**), but also to (*7*). Moreover, to (*7*) the third (≈ 1) and the fourth (= 1) apply. As for the last bearing on (*7*), the fourth proviso applied has no diminishing impact for it is of a unit value. In unconditional notation, the results are:

$P(3) \geq \alpha$;
$P(5) \geq \alpha$;
$P(5^*) \geq \alpha^*$;
$P(7) \geq \alpha x$, for $x \approx 1$;
$P(7) \geq \alpha^*$.

In conditional notation, the results are:

$P(3|K\&2) \geq \alpha$;
$P(5|K\&2\&4) \geq \alpha$;
$P(5^*|K\&2\&4) \geq \alpha^*$;
$P(7|K\&2\&4\&6) \geq \alpha x$, for $x \approx 1$;
$P(7|K\&2\&4\&6) \geq \alpha^*$;

where *K* stands for the remaining background information.

How close the mentioned approximations are to the population proportion and to the probability of one could be made more precise by margins of error. Anyway, (*5*) is logically stronger than

(*5**); so, I surmise, $\alpha > \alpha^*$. If (*1*) is analytically true, as Bernoullian probabilists assume,[444] we need not make it explicit in the conditional notation of the results, for (*1*) is entailed already. But everyone is free to add (*1*) into the notation. As for (*1*), (*3*), (*5*), and the first inference to (*7*), one can choose an arbitrarily close yet non-perfect level of close approximation to the population proportion, and α arbitrarily close to 1 yet not equaling 1, and then determine the minimal *n* he needs. Or one can determine the closest justified level of approximation to the population proportion via *n* and α if these two are the inputs. Or one can evaluate α from the *n* he knows and from his chosen level of approximation. So long as *n* is large, one may be satisfied with α and gratified with his level of close approximation to the population proportion. As for (*5**) and the second inference to (*7*), I similarly concede that, with a homogenous sample, one can have a perfect approximation to the population proportion, and an α^* arbitrarily close to 1 yet not equal to 1, and that then one determine the minimal *n* he needs. Or one can evaluate α^* from the *n* and the perfect approximation. So long as *n* is large, one may be satisfied both with α^* and the perfect approximation. For instance, for $n \geq 2000$, any *n*-fold sample yields a close approximation to the population proportion and the probability threshold $\alpha \geq 0.95$. In like manner, I concede, such a large sample, if it is homogenous, always yields a perfect approximation to the population proportion and the probability threshold $\alpha^* \geq y$, for $y <$ yet ≈ 0.95.

Neither of the listed results as such amounts yields a non-extremal logical probability. 100% logical probabilities are no less extremal for the reason that it *is* true to say about them that they are greater than or equal to some threshold lower than 100%. But Franklin seems to suggest that with a large sample, he would ascribe to all the listed propositions – (*3*), (*5*), (*5**), (*7*) – and with respect to the sample proportion, probability values closely approaching yet excluding the extreme of 1.

In conditional terms and with a large *n*, both α and α^* approach 1, and the non-extremal results are:

$P(3|K\&2) <$ yet ≈ 1;
$P(5|K\&2\&4) <$ yet ≈ 1;
$P(5^*|K\&2\&4) <$ yet ≈ 1;
$P(7|K\&2\&4\&6) <$ yet ≈ 1;
$P(5|K\&2\&4) > P(5^*|K\&2\&4)$.

This would yield for all the corresponding negations – $\sim(3)$, $\sim(5)$, $\sim(5^*)$, $\sim(7)$ – probability values closely approaching yet excluding the opposite extreme of 0:

$P(\sim3|K\&2) >$ yet ≈ 0;
$P(\sim5|K\&2\&4) >$ yet ≈ 0;
$P(\sim5^*|K\&2\&4) >$ yet ≈ 0;

[444] Cf. T. and L. McGrew, *Internalism and Epistemology*, op. cit., pp. 144-145; S. Campbell and J. Franklin, "Randomness and the Justification of Induction," op. cit., pp. 79-82; J. Franklin, *What Science Knows*, op. cit., pp. 13-14.

P(~*7*|*K*&*2*&*4*&*6*) > yet ≈ 0;
P(~*5*|*K*&*2*&*4*) < P(~*5**|*K*&*2*&*4*).

Assuming the probabilities are logical and all the negations are analytically false, we would have here counterexamples to the general principle of at best minimal logical probability for all analytically false propositions.

Now, *are* the negations analytically false? It seems that once a proposition is fixed, its modal status is fixed, too, and objectively so. But which modal status you should ascribe depends on *what* proposition you are considering. I have assumed it is analytically true that any (plane) equilateral triangle is equiangular. So if the negated propositions are all specific enough in their content, then any of them is analytically true, and so any of their negations is analytically false. That is, if (*3*) specifies the sample S to be one of equilateral triangles, (*5*) and (*5**) specify the population to be of triangles of the same sort, and (*7*) specifies the triangle *a* as an equilateral triangle, then, presumably, all *these* propositions are analytically true and all their negations are analytically false. But if so, then there's a knot in the triangle argument. The clause "given no other information relevant to the logical probability" is integral to the proportional syllogism for (*3*), on which the step to (*5*) and also the second proportional syllogism for (*7*) are based. The clause is crucial also for the first proportional syllogism for (*7*), and for the step to (*5**). Without the clause of no other relevant information, these inferences will not get off the ground.

As for the proportional syllogism for (*3*) and the first proportional syllogism for (*7*), there *is* some additional information going beyond the instantiation of the form of proportional syllogism. It hides in the inferred propositions (*3*) and (*7*) themselves. The logical probability of both is *different* from the logical probability they get solely by considering them indirectly, in an abstract and roundabout way, as satisfying together with certain other propositions and with a specific proportion the form of proportional syllogism. Both propositions (*3*) and (*7*), we assume, are analytically true. So their logical probability is in both cases maximal (if any), and equal to 1 when measured on the common scale. The condition of no other relevant information is not satisfied. Not clearly, in any case. Of course, if (*3*) and (*7*) are analytically true, as we are assuming here, their logical probabilities do not change by adding further information. And it is also true that their logical probabilities are $\geq \alpha \approx 1$. Still, the clause of no other relevant information is not satisfied.

An objection could arise at this moment from an idea of *approximative* proportional syllogism. Such proportional syllogisms could be said to exemplify the following form.

*F*s have property *G* at least in proportion α.
a is an *F*.
Hence, given no other *non-negligibly* relevant information,
[with probability $\approx z \geq \alpha$]
a has *G*.

But, the objection continues, there is *no* non-negligibly relevant information in the case of the proportional syllogisms to (*3*) and (*7*). P(*3*|*K*&*1*&*2*) ≈ (*7*|*K*&*5*&*6*) ≈ 1. I reply as follows. First, the words "approximate" and "negligible" are vague and context-sensitive. Which is fine, generally. But the problem is that in the context of the *present* inquiry – whether logical

probabilities of (*3*) and (*7*) are lower than 1, even if only a tiny little bit – the information consisting in their analycity cannot be automatically viewed as only negligibly relevant. And if we state margins for what counts here as a negligible probability, so long as the margins *include the 100% value*, we have not shown that the resulting probability is *not* 100%.

As for the inference to (*5**), there is, again, some additional relevant information, hiding in (*5**) itself. Remember, we are assuming now (5*) is analytically true. So I doubt once more that the condition of no other relevant information is satisfied.

I conclude that *if* (*3*), (*5*), (*5**), and (*7*) are analytically true, then the proportional syllogism for (*3*), the first proportional syllogism for (*7*), and the inferences to (*5**), and to the striking conclusion that their logical probabilities are lower than 100% are blocked. The reason is that the condition of no other relevant information is not (clearly) satisfied. Therefore, the inference that ~(*3*), ~(*5*), ~(*5**), and ~(*7*) have non-zero logical probabilities is blocked, too.

V.2C. Additional note

If (*3*), (*5*), (*5**), and (*7*) are *not* analytically true, their non-extremal logical probabilities and the resulting non-extremal logical probabilities of their negations would be no counterexample to at best minimal logical probability of all analytical falsehoods. Indeed, if (*3*), (*5*), (*5**), and (*7*) are not specific enough in their content, they are not analytically true and neither of their negations is analytically false. And then there need not be any knot in Franklin's argument about equilateral triangles, even if understood as concerned about logical probabilities. But then, of course, it ceases to be a counterargument to the principle that any analytically false proposition has at best minimal logical probability on any given information, if it has any logical probability on the information in the first place.

Interestingly, T. McGrew, who agreed with me in correspondence that no analytically false proposition ever has non-minimal logical probability, seems to embrace, together with L. McGrew, non-minimal logical probabilities for propositions describing analytic falsehoods indirectly, and non-maximal logical probabilities for propositions describing analytic truths indirectly. Examples of such indirect descriptions are: *this particular formula in this trustful textbook is correct*; *this particular formula in this trustful textbook is incorrect*; *this mathematical statement which looks right really is such*; *this mathematical statement which looks right in fact isn't*.[445] To suggest an analogy, as one does not fail to see that a proposition – say, 2 + 3 = 5 – is true when he considers it *as such* and carefully, he still can fail to see it is true when he considers it hastily or under a roundabout description (say, under the general description *a proposition which appears evident*).[446] Similarly, a roundabout rendering of an analytically true proposition may yield logical probability lower than 1 for the rendering, and a roundabout

[445] Cf. T. and L. McGrew, *Internalism and Epistemology*, op. cit., pp. 109-110; see also pp. 42-43 ibid.

[446] Cf. R. Descartes, *Oeuvres de Descartes*, Vol. VII, pp. 36, 65-70; A. Kenny, *Descartes: A Study of his Philosophy*, Bristol, Thoemmes Press 1995, pp. 193-194; A. Kenny, "The Cartesian Circle and the Eternal Truths," *The Journal of Philosophy* 67, No. 19 (1970), pp. 685-700; T. and L. McGrew, *Internalism and Epistemology*, op. cit., pp. 106-108, 137; B. Reed, "Certainty," op. cit., # 3.

rendering of an analytically false proposition may yield logical probability higher than 0 for the rendering. But this does not bother me. For in such cases non-extremal logical probabilities pertain rather to indirect, abstracted or formal analogues of analytically non-contingent propositions than to analytically non-contingent propositions themselves.

This distinction may pass unrecognized when one is not concerned with *logical* probability but rather with *degrees of belief*. There are probabilistic works defending non-extremal degrees of belief for some (presumably analytic) mathematical truths and falsehoods. Let's consider an example of such works in which the manner of description *is* taken into account. It was proved that there is a particular relation (the precise nature of which is unimportant here), call it R, such that if a and ξ are natural numbers and ξ is a prime $> a$, then $R(a, \xi)$ never holds. Furthermore, the so-called Rabin's theorem says that for any non-prime natural number, at least 3/4 of the natural numbers exceeded by it are in the relation R with respect to it. Hence, it is mathematically proven that if ξ is a natural number and less than 3/4 of the natural numbers exceeded by it are in the relation R with respect to it, then ξ is always prime. But instead of checking the proportion of R among *all* the natural numbers lesser than ξ, you may check *some* of them for R randomly. That's easier if ξ is large, and easier than deductive checks of primality, too. So long as in your random search you don't encounter a number holding R with respect to the tested number ξ, you have an indication, which grows stronger with the amount of numbers checked, that the tested number ξ is prime. In other words, given that all non-primes have at least 3/4 abundance of witnesses of their non-primality among smaller natural numbers, the persistent failure to find a witness of a particular natural number ξ buttresses more and more the confidence that ξ is prime. The Israeli philosophical and mathematical logician Haim Gaifman, in a paper defending assigning (non-logical) probabilities to arithmetical statements (which statements he views as analytically true[447]), uses Bayes's theorem – and the assumption that both ξ and the tested numbers smaller than ξ are picked randomly from a certain range of numbers (2^{100} to 2^{1000}), and the mathematically known proportion of primes for that range ($\geq$ 1/1000) – to conclude that given a certain number of only negative tests (i.e., 10), the probability that ξ is prime is very high ($> 1 - 1 / 2^{10}$), though not maximal. Remarkably, Gaifman announces he is presupposing throughout that the tested number is considered indirectly under some abstract description which does not say what number, exactly, it is. At the same time, however, he is not willing to change the value of probability – of a non-logical sort – after the specification has been provided. He writes:

> "So far this is a standard piece of statistical reasoning. It makes no difference that h [i.e., the hypothesis that ξ is prime] is a mathematical conjecture about ξ, as long as we are not given a mathematical description of that number. In this situation 'ξ' figures as some non-mathematical specification, like 'the number tested on occasion Ξ'. Alternatively, we can treat it as an unstructured name about which we know only that it denotes some number. The situation changes if we add an equality of the form:
>
> $$\xi = t,$$

[447] Cf. H. Gaifman, "Reasoning with Limited Resources and Assigning Probabilities to Arithmetical Statements," op. cit., p. 103.

where 't' is a mathematical term that constitutes a mathematical description of ξ; e.g.,

$$\xi = 2^{400} - 593.$$

With ξ thus specified, we can check directly, by a non-probabilistic computation, if it is prime. But we may choose to ignore the additional information that $\xi = t$ if we judge that the price of extracting from it the required answer is too high. Yet, we use this information in order to substitute 'ξ ' by 't ' in the sentence 'ξ is prime'. If h' is the hypothesis that t is prime, we conclude that $P(h' \mid e) > 1 - 2^{-10}$."[448]

As was hinted, because Gaifman isn't talking about logical probability, I am not bothered. If he was, I would be. My point here was rather to illustrate that the idea of indirect or roundabout descriptions of presumably analytic truths and falsehoods looms ahead even in works defending non-extremal (though non-logical) probabilities. Anyway, even if the manner of rendering (direct or indirect) makes no difference to the degrees of belief concerning mathematical and as yet definitively undecided propositions, it makes a difference once the shift is made to logical probabilities.

Indeed, the rendering under which the Trinity doctrine is considered could make a difference to the obviousness of logical (analytic) possibility, and so to the obviousness of non-minimal logical probability. For considering not the Trinity doctrine itself, but, rather that *some proposition or other, aptly expressed by the words of the Trinity doctrine is true*, it is plausible that it is, or at least can be, p-evident that this latter proposition is logically possible and not analytically false. Here, the roundabout consideration says to us *more* about the identity of the particular target proposition than the roundabout consideration in Gaifman. The propositions *the number tested on occasion Ξ is prime* gives us less clues about the identity of the particular proposition for which they are roundabout than if we are given the words by which the proposition is aptly or commonly expressed. It would be more informative to say that *the number commonly referred to as "$2^{400} - 593$" is prime*; or *some proposition or other aptly expressed by the words of "$2^{400} - 593$ is prime" is true*. What is important here is that all such roundabout renderings are, as it seems, logically possible, not analytically false, and even (psychologically) possibly so. Plausibly, what is a common or an apt expression is a logically and analytically contingent matter. So, the cause of worry about non-minimal logical probability of the proposition *some proposition or other aptly expressed by the words of the Trinity doctrine is true* falls away. But such a shift to roundabout rendering changes nothing about the psychological impossibility of p-evidentness of logical (analytic) possibility of the *Trinity doctrine itself*. My arguments I and II were concerned rather with the Trinity doctrine than its words.

Let's consider some instructive analogies. A grandmother who is a layman in mathematics, for example, may have heard that all mathematicians agree on the truth of Bernoulli's theorem. It may well be evident to her that the proposition *something called "Bernoulli's theorem" is true* even if she has no specific idea what that theorem, exactly, says.

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[448] H. Gaifman, "Reasoning with Limited Resources and Assigning Probabilities to Arithmetical Statements," *Synthese* 140 (2004), p. 111; see also pp. 109-10, 112-13; I. Hacking, "Slightly More Realistic Personal Probability," pp. 312-13; D. Garber, "Old Evidence and Logical Omniscience in Bayesian Confirmation Theory," op. cit., pp. 111-12, 117.

Or she may learn from her mechanic that she has a short in her car's alternator. I need not deny that it can be p-evident to her that it is logically possible that there is something called "alternator" in her car which has a "short."[449]

Further the grandma may have gathered some religious ideas. Believing in the Almighty, she has some idea of omnipotence which she, however, cannot explicate to her grandson, an agnostic grad student proclaiming to have no coherent idea of what "omnipotence" could mean. But if pressed by this tactless inquirer, she could appeal to a roundabout description. I believe, she could say, in an "omnipotent" being in the sense entertained by certain authorities – say the authors of the New Testament or theologians. In like manner, R. Swinburne points out about the thorny concept of omnipotence that:

> "… Catholics and Orthodox, and to some extent Protestants, defer to experts to tell them what God's omnipotence etc involves; and experts defer to official credal pronouncements or at any rate authoritative theologians. So, for example, the concept of omnipotence … is not the one which English or Latin (but not necessarily Greek) etymology might suggest … to the atheist in the street; but that of theological tradition. In the case of omnipotence, this means Aquinas's concept—for it was his understanding of omnipotence which has dominated subsequent theological thought."[450]

The point is more general than the issue of omnipotence, for sure. The grandma may also retort to her grandson: I believe in "the Blessed Trinity" in the sense entertained by certain authorities. This should not imply she is merely parroting the words. She may well have some very general understanding of what it means to say that "the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God, but there is only God." But perhaps she doesn't have any grasp of her own of what this means, and *is* just parroting. That would be hard to tell. Remarkably, either way her case isn't special. As has been observed in philosophical literature, beliefs in something not quite, or not at all, understood are pervasive not only in laymen religious talk, but also in the talk of all people talking about a scientific field outside their expertise. A related note was made recently by A. R. Pruss (quoted already in sections III.1 and IV.1), actually even in explicit connection with the Trinity doctrine:

> "The phenomenon of holding a proposition *p* to be true without understanding it is an interesting one in general. It might, for instance, explain ordinary linguistic practice when an educated layman makes a statement couched in scientific language which she does not fully understand, but from which she nonetheless can draw implications that she can understand. The same analysis might be brought to bear on the case of religious mysteries. For instance, a religious person need not claim to actually possess the concept Trinity to claim to believe that the doctrine of the Trinity is true. She might, for instance, believe that there exists a proposition very aptly

[449] I owe the alternator example to L. McGrew.

[450] R. Swinburne, "*Logic and Theism*, by Jordan Howard Sobel," review article, *Mind* 115, No. 458 (2006), p. 483. When treating the issue of omnipotence, Aquinas says, among other things: "All confess that God is omnipotent; but it seems difficult to explain in what His omnipotence precisely consists: for there may be a doubt as to the precise meaning of the word 'all' when we say that God can do all things." *Summa Theologica*, op. cit., I, q. 25, a. 3, co.

> expressible by the words of the Creed and that this proposition is true, without herself having a grasp of that proposition …"[451]

I concede that as long as one adheres rather to the practice of a purely roundabout consideration of the Trinity doctrine (not grasping its meaning at all) than to considering the doctrine/proposition directly or as such, my arguments I and II are inapplicable. When doing so, such a person is taking part in a fairly general type of activity, which seems common and not limited to philosophical and theological issues. But as soon as the person entertains the Trinity doctrine itself – as, at least, philosophers, theologians, and reflective persons do – my argument I and II receive a handhold to loom in.

V.2D. The upshot

The main conclusion of this section (V.2) is that Franklin's triangle argument, if construed as concerned with *logical* probability, does not establish non-minimal logical probability for some mathematical analytic falsehood. If the mathematical truths concerning plane equilateral triangles are analytically true, then their negations are analytically false, and the argument includes a false presumption of no other relevant information. If these truths are not analytically true, then their negations aren't either, and non-extremal logical probabilities may be ascribed without any danger to the principle of at best minimal logical probability for all analytic falsehoods.

These caveats may be easily amended for parallel inductive cases on behalf of mathematical propositions; including the most famous, yet still undecided, mathematical conjecture, bearing the name of the German mathematician Christian Goldbach (1690 – 1764). As said (in section II.5), Goldbach's conjecture states that any even number, except 2, equals the sum of two prime numbers. It is often viewed as in some sense probabilified, though not conclusively, by induction from those many – by 2007, c. 10^{18} – even numbers (greater than 2) for which it has been positively tested, without a single counterinstance. Even here, the

[451] A. R. Pruss, *The Principle of Sufficient Reason*, op. cit., p. 199. As reported on p. 208 (ibid.), roundabout propositions and beliefs are deemed as far from ideal or sufficient, under certain circumstances. "[…] Kierkegaard seems to think that many people of Denmark are wrong that they are even thinking the […] thought that: I am a Christian. One way to make coherent sense of this is to say that such a Dane thinks that he thinks a thought with the logical form *I am a* ... and further thinks that the blank in the thought is filled in with the same concept that the Apostles expressed by the word "Christian". (It is a little bit more complicated than that, actually, because Kierkegaard also throws into question the "I" part of the thought.)" See also A. R. Pruss, "Orthodoxy and the Ordinary Believer," June 3, 2008, http://alexanderpruss.blogspot.com/2008/06/orthodoxy-and-ordinary-believer.html (accessed December 2, 2011); Michael A. E. Dummett (1925 – 2011), "The Social Character of Meaning," in M. Dummett, *Truth and Other Enigmas*, Harvard, Harvard University Press 1978, pp. 420-430; P. Forrest, "In Defence of Antropomorphic Theism," *European Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 3, No. 1 (2011), pp. 113-114.

probability relation is not of the logical sort. Or so I have contended. At least, I am aware of no plausible argument that the non-extremal probability is of the logical sort.

V.3. Logical omniscience

As was argued (in part III), every proposition entailing some other proposition has, on any given information, logical probability equal to or lower than the logical probability of the entailed proposition – if the latter has any logical probability on the information at all. As noted at the same place, a corresponding principle is also commonly held: probabilistic *degrees of belief* require that "the probability of any conjunction of sentences be no greater than any of its deductive consequences." For relaxing that requirement "would block the derivation of almost all the important results in Bayesian epistemology."[452]

The said requirement is one among others, constituting with him the requirement of logical omniscience in probability. The principle of such omniscience states: all deductive logical truths have probability one; all deductive inconsistencies have probability zero; the probability of any sentence, or any conjunction of sentences, is no greater than any of its deductive consequences. Still, arguments were proposed against logical omniscience in probability.[453] Amongst them, defence of non-extremal probabilities for mathematical propositions (discussed in the preceding section IV.2) is a special case. It is beyond the scope and need of this dissertation to assess whether the arguments are powerful and at the same time also enabling for Bayesian epistemologists to have all the results they wish to have. To my knowledge, *none* of the arguments against the principle that the entailed always has at least the *logical* probability of the entailing is concerned with *logical* probability. All of them are concerned with probability in another sense: in the sense of the degree of belief or rational degree of belief. So all these arguments seem compatible with everything I have said about logical probability constraints.

This ends my replies to the remaining chief objections against my arguments I and II, apart from those already encountered in part IV.

The next part (VI) distinguishes the claims of arguments I and II from the claims with which, quite likely, the former could still be confused.

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[452] W. Talbott, "Bayesian Epistemology," op. cit., # 6.1.

[453] H. Gaifman, "Reasoning with Limited Resources and Assigning Probabilities to Arithmetical Statements," pp. 97-119; D. Graber, "Old Evidence and Logical Omniscience in Bayesian Confirmation Theory," op. cit., pp. 99-132; I. Hacking, "Slightly More Realistic Personal Probability," op. cit., pp. 311-25; I. J. Good, *Probability and the Weighing of Evidence*, op. cit., p. 49; I. J. Good, "Corroboration, Explanation, Evolving Probability, Simplicity and Sharpened Razor," op. cit., pp. 124-25; R. C. Jeffrey, "Bayesianism with a Human Face," ," in *Testing Scientific Theories*, J. Earman (ed.), op. cit., pp. 133-156; George Pólya (1887 – 1985), *Mathematics and Plausible Reasoning*, 2 vols., Princeton, Princeton University Press 1990; R. C. Koons, *Paradoxes of Belief and Strategic Rationality*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 1992, pp. 153-154; R. Swinburne, *Epistemic Justification*, pp. 68, 240-41; Branden Fitelson, lecture "Old Evidence, Logical Omniscience, and Bayesianism" for *Epistemic and Probabilistic Updating Workshop*, Institute for Logic, Language and Computation, University of Amsterdam, September 2005, http://fitelson.org/amsterdam.pdf (accessed May 30, 2011).

VI. Related Points

Nowhere in this dissertation have assertions been made, that the Trinity doctrine or Christianity *is* logically impossible or analytically false. Both may well be logically possible and short of analytical falsehood, even if not plainly so, at least not independently of religious experience. Indeed, both may well be logically possible and not analytically false even if we cannot be clear that they are. Similarly, I have nowhere asserted that the Trinity doctrine or Christianity *is* logically *possible* or *not* analytically false. Further, I have not tried to assert or even to make a case – evident, p-evident or plausible – that the doctrine or Christianity do *not* or *cannot* have non-minimal logical probability (on all that is evident). They may well have non-minimal, or even high, logical probability, though we cannot see – at least not independently of religious experience – that they have. In any case, it is not my business to decide this question here. In like manner, nowhere in this dissertation have I ventured to claim that the Trinity doctrine or Christianity *has* minimal or low logical probability.

Still, other distinctions need to be made in terms of current analytic epistemology, lest the claims of arguments I and II be easily misunderstood. These are especially the claims that the Trinity doctrine/Christianity can't be p-evidently logically/analytically possible, and that the Trinity doctrine/Christianity can't have non-minimal logical probability (on all that is evident) p-evidently. (Captured in the steps (1), (3), (3*), (7), and (10) of arguments I and II.) Section VI.1 relates these claims to several notions of epistemic justification and of rationality, section VI.2 to notions of a good argument, and the last section VI.3 to different notions of probability (besides the logical one).

VI.1. Epistemic justification

At no place of this dissertation has it been opposed that belief in the Trinity doctrine, or in its logical (analytic) possibility, is epistemically justified or rational, that it can be epistemically justified or rational. There are several concepts of epistemic justification or rationality of belief. In what follows, the terms "epistemic justification" ("epistemically justified") and "rationality" ("rational") are equivalents. I will list here especially only those concepts of epistemic justification that R. Swinburne or T. McGrew – the two chief probabilistic philosophers of Christianity – are especially concerned about. Swinburne marshals two notions of synchronic rationality of belief and three diachronic notions of rational belief. Generally, a belief is *synchronically rational* (or, synchronically epistemically justified) when it is a rational in response to the evidential situation in which the believer finds himself at a given time. A belief is *diachronically rational* when it is rational in response to adequate investigation over time. T. McGrew operates with two notions. One is virtually identical to one of Swinburne's. The other was brought by him and L. McGrew in response to the famous Gettier problem of certain true

and apparently epistemically justified beliefs apparently not amounting to knowledge.[454] Here are six different notions of rationality or epistemic justification or rationality on which R. Swinburne or T. McGrew focus in their epistemological writings, and which I want to relate briefly to my own results. The employed epistemological terminology is Swinburne's, unless explicitly stated otherwise.

Rational$_1$ (or, synchronically subjectively justified) belief is internally based on and rendered subjectively probable (see section VI.3A) by the total evidence one has. Here, *subjective probability* is a degree of belief with respect to the total evidence which the subject should acquire according to his own specific rules (right or not) for assessing (logical) probability. *Internally based* belief is one: (i) *appearing* to (or believed by) the subject – given enough time for introspection, reflection and all the needed concepts – *as* probable on the total evidence and *as* caused or maintained by his having (or believing in) the total evidence and by the appearance (or belief) that the total evidence renders the belief probable; and *in fact* (ii) *caused or maintained* by his having (or believing in) the total evidence and by the appearance (or belief) that the total evidence renders the belief probable.[455]

Rational$_2$ (or, synchronically internally objectively justified; in T. McGrew's terminology, *justified*$_1$, internally rational, or having internally positive epistemic status) belief is internally based on and logically probable on the total (rightly) basic evidence. Naturally, something is to be classified as basic evidence when (the belief in it) is not based on other evidence (belief). E.g., all that is immediately evident to the senses or in introspection constitutes basic evidence.[456]

T. McGrew's concept of a *justified*$_2$ belief is one of a belief which is (i) justified$_1$ *and* also (ii) without there being any justified$_1$ yet *false* belief *crucial* for the former belief being justified$_1$. That is, the second condition says there is no justified$_1$ false belief such that if it wasn't justified$_1$ or if it didn't (internally) base (at least partly) the former belief, the former belief wouldn't be justified$_1$. (McGrew defines knowledge as justified$_2$ true belief. This analysis is, in his opinion, resistant to Gettier counterexamples.)

Rational$_3$ belief is: (i) based on an investigation *regarded* by the subject as having positive expected value, which equals the weighted sum of values (or personal utilities) of possible outcomes of the investigation, whereas each value is weighted by the subjective probability of the outcome (on the total basic evidence); and (ii) *regarded* by the subject as rendered subjectively probable by the results of the investigation.

Rational$_4$ (or, diachronically subjectively justified) belief *is in fact*: (i) based on an investigation with positive expected value; and (ii) rendered subjectively probable by the results of the investigation. Belief *based on an investigation* is one (i) *appearing* to (or believed by) the subject – given enough time for introspection, reflection and all the needed concepts – *as* rendered subjectively probable by the results of the investigation, and *as* caused or maintained by the investigation and by the appearance (or belief) that the results render it subjectively probable;

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[454] Cf. R. Swinburne, *Faith and Reason*, op. cit., pp. 44, 52-57, 62-63, 70-75; R. Swinburne, *Epistemic Justification*, op. cit., pp. 165-191, 212; T. and L. McGrew, *Internalism and Epistemology*, op. cit., pp. 27-33, 54-56.

[455] Cf. R. Swinburne, *Epistemic Justification*, op. cit., pp. 23, 129-133, 248; T. McGrew, *The Foundations of Knowledge*, op. cit., pp. 66-67.

[456] Cf. R. Swinburne, *Epistemic Justification*, op. cit., pp. 133-151; T. McGrew, *The Foundations of Knowledge*, op. cit., pp. 50-51, 83, 128.

and *in fact* (ii) caused or maintained by the investigation and by the appearance (or belief) that the results render it subjectively probable.

Finally, *rational*$_5$ (or, diachronically internally objectively justified) belief *is in fact*: (i) based on an investigation with positive expected value, which equals the weighted sum of values (or personal utilities) of its possible outcomes, each weighted by its correct *logical* probability on the total basic evidence; and (ii) rendered *logically* probable by the results of the investigation.

Now, for *any* of the notions of rationality or epistemic justification just listed, I have *no* idea how to argue plausibly that belief in the truth of the Trinity doctrine, or Christianity, or in its logical (analytic) possibility, is not, or even cannot, be rational or epistemically justified. Moreover, neither externalist epistemic justification is ruled out, in my opinion. E.g., to take A. Plantinga's externalist notion of epistemic warrant, why deny that the belief in the Trinity and belief that the Trinity doctrine is not analytically false are and have been in many (well-informed) people produced by their non-defective, cognitive, reliable faculties, working in a suitable environment? Perhaps there are some arguments for the denial of this. But I don't know any such arguments which would appear to me plausible. And, in any case, it is not my business here to address or defend them. Similarly, I have no stakes in arguments that neither the truth nor logical or analytic possibility of the Trinity doctrine or Christianity is or can be epistemically justified or rational, in some of the listed senses, to some or even many people (including those from our time and culture). Success of such arguments is not necessary for the plausibility of the narrow point of this dissertation. Further, I need not assert that Christianity, the Trinity doctrine or claims to their logical (analytic) possibility proposition is evidentially ambiguous in J. Bishop's sense (introduced in section IV.3). A proposition *p* is evidentially ambiguous just when the total relevant evidence shows neither *p* nor ~*p* to be significantly more probable than not *and* is systematically open to viable overall interpretation both on the assumption that *p* and on the assumption that ~*p*. As long as "shows" is *not* understood here as *shows p-evidently*, this dissertation leaves it open that understanding "probable" as *logically probable* and fleshing out *p* with Christianity, the Trinity doctrine, or a claim of their logical (analytic) possibility yields a *false* proposition. If, however, "shows" is understood as *shows p-evidently* and "probable" as *logically probable*, then I demur, pointing to parts III and IV of this dissertation.

Also some other epistemological claims would be in conflict with my results. As soon as it was claimed the Trinity doctrine, or Christianity, is, or can, be *p-evidently* internally objectively justified – i.e., is or can be evidently rational$_2$ or rational$_5$ – I would be bothered. For such claims imply that the logical probability of the Trinity doctrine, or Christianity, is or can be *p-evidently* non-minimal, or that the Trinity doctrine, or Christianity, is or can be evidently logically (analytically) possible. Which would be in conflict with the steps (1), (3), (7), or (10) of my arguments I and II. To appreciate this point, note that if, e.g., one knows *that* something is square *and* blue, then he knows it is square. He cannot know the former without knowing the latter.[457] Similarly, if one sees p-evidently *that* something has high logical probability *and* that belief in it is based in a certain way, then he sees p-evidently that it has high logical probability. He cannot see p-evidently the former without seeing p-evidently the latter. But, as I have argued, the latter cannot be seen p-evidently. Hence the former can't be seen evidently, and so neither the

[457] Cf. S. Blackburn, *Reason and Prediction*, op. cit., pp. 70-71, 76-77, 82.

Trinity doctrine nor Christianity neither is nor can be *p-evidently* internally and objectively epistemically justified – in the sense of being p-evidently rational$_2$ or rational$_5$.

In brief, I do *not* deny to the belief in the Trinity/Christianity, or in its logical/analytic possibility, any standard brand of rationality/epistemic justification. But I do deny to this belief that it is *p-evidently* rational/epistemically justified in some of those (above listed) senses which construe the rational/epistemically justified belief as logically probable.

VI.2. Fine argument

Is there or can there be an epistemically good, successful or otherwise fine argument for the Trinity doctrine, Christianity, or at least for their logical or analytic possibility? Again, there are several such notions in literature. I will list some of them, with the primary emphasis on notions of the contemporary analytic philosophy of religion. Each listed notion of an epistemically fine argument will be related to the question whether it applies to some proposed or possible argument for the Trinity doctrine/Christianity or its logical/analytic possibility. Each will also be related to the question whether it applies to arguments I and II (in part III).

W. F. Vallicella (quoted already in sections II.1 and IV.3) explicates his concepts of a compelling argument and of a good argument in the following way. An argument is *compelling* for a certain human H if and only if it is (i) deductive, (ii) valid in point of (standard) logical form, (iii) free of informal fallacies (such as *petitio principii*), (iv) all the premises are true, (v) all the premises are evident to H, and (vi) all the premises are relevant to the conclusion. An argument is *good* for H just when it has all its premises and inferences reasonable (even if not non-negotiable). Not surprisingly for us (see section IV.3), in Vallicella's opinion for any substantive philosophical thesis, there is a reasonable argument for the thesis and there is also a reasonable argument for the negation of the thesis (say, about the existence of God).[458] In brief, I reject that a p-compelling argument has been or can be proposed for the Trinity doctrine/Christianity or its logical/analytic possibility. That is, I reject the existence and psychological possibility of compelling arguments with only p-evident premises for such conclusions. Perhaps, however, there has been or can be a compelling, though not p-compelling argument for any of those conclusions. Also, as my discussion of different notions of epistemic justification and rationality suggests, I do not reject good arguments for any of them. As for the status of my own arguments I and II, it has already been effectually conceded (in sections IV.2 and IV.3) that they are not compelling. For one thing, the support provided (in part IV) for the steps (1) – i.e., WMST – and (3) – i. e., WMST* – of these arguments is, avowedly, defeasible. So I do not think each of the premises of arguments I and II is p-evident or evident. But, it seems to me, the arguments I and II are good in Vallicella's sense. For all their premises and inferences seem to me reasonable. It also seems to me that those who read the preceding parts of this dissertation should be of the same opinion. About what kind of "reasonableness" am I speaking

[458] William F. Vallicella, "Compelling Arguments and Good Arguments," http://lists.powerblogs.com/pipermail/maverickphilosopher/2005-August/000527.html, accessed May 27, 2011; cf. also his "From Facts to God: An Onto-Cosmological Argument," op. cit., pp. 157, 164, 178.

here? As a reply, I suggest that all the premises and inferences of arguments I and II are at least rational$_1$, rational$_2$, justified$_1$, and justified$_2$. If asked for a reason, I simply refer to the preceding parts of this dissertation. More generally, if asked for a reason why *p* is justified or rational (in whatever sense), we, typically, simply provide reasons for *p*. In turn, if the provided reasons for *p* make *p* apparently true, they also make *p* apparently justified or rational.

Robert C. Pinto, a Canadian philosopher working in informal logic and argumentation theory, outlined what it takes for an argument to be an effective (or, compelling) argument and to be good somewhat differently than Vallicella. An argument is *effective* for a given respondent H just where H is, in the context of a dialectical debate, (i) unwilling or unable to say that some premise of the argument may well be false, and (ii) unwilling or unable to say that it may well be that all premises of the argument are true but its conclusion is false. An argument is *good* for a given respondent H just where H is, in the context of a dialectical debate, required either to assent to the conclusion, or to counterattack (by providing a reason why the conclusion is false).[459] Now, perhaps somebody has been, or can be, a respondent of an effective argument for the truth of the Trinity doctrine/Christianity or for its logical/analytic possibility. But, if so, this still does not establish that such a conclusion can be p-evident, or ever has been p-evident. For such a respondent might be unwilling or unable to counterattack dialectically merely because of some ingrained or indoctrinated beliefs; not because the soundness of the argument is p-evident to him.[460] Or such an argument might be evidently, but not p-evidently sound to him. On the other hand, I don't expect that arguments I and II shall be effective in Pinto's sense for any respondent they will ever meet. Further, perhaps somebody has been, or can be, a respondent of a good argument (in Pinto's sense) for the truth of the Trinity doctrine/Christianity or for its logical/analytic possibility. Yet, this would, in itself, create no apparent problem for my position. Having a duty, as a respondent of an argument, either to assent to its conclusion or to counterattack the argument is one thing; to see p-evidently that the argument is sound another. A duty to react in just one of the said two ways may be generated by apparent or evident, but not p-evident soundness. Finally, perhaps for some readers of this dissertation, arguments I and II are good in Pinto's sense. For those for which they aren't my dissertation creates a dialectical duty to provide a reason why some of my premises are false or why they do not support my results. Either way, the dissertation shifts the burden of proof.[461]

American philosophers of religion J. P. Moreland, W. L. Craig (both encountered in section II.6), and Stephen T. Davis define a *good* argument as one (i) having all its premises true and (ii) more plausible than their contradictories, (iii) involving no informal fallacies, and (iv) with the conclusion more plausible than its contradictory, given all the premises.[462] I have *not*

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[459] R. C. Pinto, "Dialectic and the Structure of Argument," op. cit., p. 17.

[460] Cf. A. Plantinga, "Preface to the Appendix (July 2006)," in *Alvin Plantinga*, D.-P. Baker (ed.), op. cit., p. 206.

[461] James B. Freeman, an American expert on informal logic and argumentation theory, under the thumb of Pinto defines rational acceptability of a given proposition *p* for a given person H at a given point in a given discussion. Given the commitments of H as a challenger at that time, he must either concede *p*, or make a case for ~*p*. See Freeman's book *Acceptable Premises*, op. cit.; especially pp. 26 and 32.

[462] See J. P. Moreland and W. L. Craig, *Philosophical Foundations for a Christian Worldview*, op. cit., pp. 58-59; W. L. Craig, "Classical Apologetics," op. cit., pp. 49-50; W. L. Craig, *Reasonable Faith*, op. cit., pp. 55-56; W. L. Craig, "Criteria for a Good Argument," http://www.reasonablefaith.org/site/News2?page=NewsArticle&id=8273 (accessed May 27, 2011); S. T. Davis, *God, Reason and Theistic Proofs*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press 1997, pp. 1-14.

ruled out that there are good arguments, in this sense, for the Trinity doctrine/Christianity or its logical/analytic possibility. At the same time, I do deem my arguments I and II as good, in the same sense. Apparently there's nothing incoherent about this position.

Richard Swinburne characterized a *good* argument as an argument the premises of which (i) jointly entail or probabilify its conclusion and (ii) are all known as true by those who dispute about the conclusion.[463] If knowledge of the given premises does not reach p-evidentness or the interpretation of probability is not logical, the existence or psychological possibility of good arguments, in Swinburne's sense, for the Trinity doctrine/Christianity or its logical/analytic possibility may be safely admitted. Such premises may well be known by some or even many people, including those well-informed form our culture and time. "Known" on what construal? Perhaps in the sense of *true and justified*$_2$. But it is not among the tasks of this dissertation to decide this epistemic possibility. In any case, all the premises of arguments I and II appear to me as true, justified$_2$, and jointly entailing their conclusion (10).

George I. Mavrodes, an American philosopher of religion, presents a notion of a cogent argument and a notion of a convincing argument. An argument is *cogent* for a certain human H if and only if (i) the argument is sound (i.e., all its premises are true and it is logically impossible that this is the case *and* its conclusion is false) and (ii) H knows the argument to be sound. An argument is *convincing* for a certain human H if and only if (i) it is cogent for H and (ii) H knows that each of its premises is true without having to infer any of them from its conclusion or from any other statement(s) that he knows only by an inference from the conclusion.[464] Perhaps some arguments for the Trinity doctrine/Christianity or its logical/analytic possibility have been or can be cogent or convincing, in Mavrodes's technical sense, to somebody. Perhaps even to well-informed humans from our culture and time. Expectantly, I contend my arguments I and II are cogent and convincing to me, as they should be, as seems to me, also to my reader(s). The embedded concept of knowledge may be again construed as *true justified*$_2$ *belief*.

The Australian philosopher of religion Graham Oppy (quoted in section III.1) features *successful* argument as one which would or should persuade all or at least a (significant?) non-zero percentage of reasonable people who have hitherto failed to accept the conclusion to accept it.[465] Unfortunately, this notion is a mixed bag of quite diverse marbles. We should distinguish ideally reasonable and broadly reasonable agents (cf. section VI.3C). Presumably Oppy has on his mind *broadly* reasonable human agents. Still, it may be one matter how a broadly reasonable human *would* react, upon being presented with a certain argument, and another matter how he *should* react – even if we assume, in the given context, that all the important norms or values are

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[463] R. Swinburne, *The Existence of God*, op. cit., p. 6. Cf. T. M. Crisp, "On Believing that the Scriptures Are Divinely Inspired," op. cit., p. 191.

[464] See G. I. Mavrodes, *Belief in God*, op. cit., pp. 22-35. Three decades before Mavrodes, the British philosopher George Edward Moore (1873 – 1958) operated with a concept of a *rigorous* argument. In short, a rigorous argument is a cogent argument the conclusion of which is not amongst its premises. (See G. E. Moore, "Proof of an External World," in G. E. Moore, *Selected Writings*, Thomas Baldwin /ed./, London and New York, Routledge 1993, p. 166; first publication 1939.) This modification is now unimportant. What I say in connection with cogent and convincing arguments is to be said also about rigorous arguments, too.

[465] G. Oppy, *Arguing about Gods*, New York, Cambridge University Press 2006, pp. 10-15. In this book, Oppy argues that no successful arguments for or against the existence of God have been construed, and so (probably) none is forthcoming (see especially pp. 413-416, 425-426). Oppy himself is a tentative (or, fallibilist) atheist. Cf. also G. Oppy, "Über die Aussichten erfolgreicher Beweise für Theismus oder Atheismus," op. cit., pp. 599-644.

epistemic (e.g., believing many truths and no falsehoods). In any case, this dissertation may be viewed as a lengthy explanation of why all broadly reasonable people should accept the conclusion of my arguments I and II. But it does not purport to judge whether or not there is, was or can be an argument which should make all broadly reasonable people believe in the truth or logical (analytic) possibility of the Trinity doctrine or Christianity.

The American philosopher of religion Peter van Inwagen (criticized in section IV.1B, category 2.1.1) offered three notions of a *successful* argument, all different from Oppy's notion.[466] The first proposal is expressly borrowed from Alvin Plantinga, and so is identical to his strict notion of a successful argument (explained in section IV.2 above). So, on the *first* understanding van Inwagen considers that, the premises of any successful argument (i) jointly entail or probabilify the conclusion, (ii) are all obviously true and accepted by nearly every sane human, and (iii) jointly entail or probabilify the conclusion only by inferences whose validity is obvious or accepted by nearly every sane human. I agree with van Inwagen that, under this construal, there seems to be no formulated successful argument for any substantive philosophical thesis. (The notion of a substantive philosophical thesis was introduced by way of examples in section IV.2.) The absence should be apparent from the first construal of success itself. Quite often, sanity goes hand in hand with all kinds of extreme or wild beliefs. In this respect, philosophers have been an especially skilful lot. Accordingly, there apparently are no (formulated) arguments for the Trinity doctrine, Christianity, their logical or analytic possibility, or for a negation of any of these. Of course, I do not think my arguments I and II are successful on the first criterion either.

According to the *second* criterion, an argument is successful if and only if any ideal human advocate of its conclusion, who was well-informed about the relevant evidence available in our time and culture, would, given favorable conditions, convince about the truth of the conclusion any ideal human *opponent* of the conclusion, who would be well-informed about the relevant evidence available in our time and culture. Favorable conditions mean unlimited time, a quiet comfortable room with a blackboard and chalk enough, and the like. The advocates and the opponents are meant to be ideal in the sense that they are of the highest (metaphysically) possible human intelligence and logical acumen, and they do their best to understand the argument and to evaluate it dispassionately. Now, van Inwagen disbelieves there are any successful arguments, in this second sense, for any substantive philosophical thesis. He reasons as follows. Although ideal philosophers and ideal circumstances for doing philosophy have never existed, for any substantive philosophical thesis, philosophers of and circumstances at various times and places have often approximated the ideal sufficiently. But then it is highly improbable (in some sense of the word) and highly implausible that some known argument for a substantive philosophical thesis is successful in the said sense. For if some such argument was successful, then it would probably attract the attention of the philosophical community, and, consequently, its conclusion would be probably less opposed than it, in fact, is. I think this argument of Inwagen could be reconstructed in a Bayesian way (similar to the one sketched in sections IV.2 and IV.3). However, I am much less sure than he about the truth of the assumption that for some (nay for each) substantive philosophical thesis, the real-world approximation to the ideal debate has been

[466] P. van Inwagen, "Philosophical Failure," in P. van Inwagen, *The Problem of Evil: The Gifford Lectures Delivered in the University of St Andrews in 2003*, New York, Oxford University Press 2008, pp. 37-55, 158-160.

frequent and sufficient. Therefore, unlike van Inwagen, I am open, perhaps out of vanity, to viewing my arguments I and II as successful in the second sense. Arguments I and II *might*, under ideal circumstances, persuade every ideal opponent of their conclusion (10) about its truth. But, of course, I do not expect that they would persuade every real opponent of (10). Interestingly, arguments I and II leave undecided whether successful arguments (in the second sense) have been, or can be, proposed for the Trinity doctrine, Christianity, their logical or analytic possibility. Because so long as humans can't be ideal advocates of any of these conclusions, as may well be the case, it also may well be that they have had, or can have, in their hands (objectively) successful arguments they are unable to appreciate ideally – though the arguments would be p-evident both to the ideal advocates and (eventually) also to the ideal opponents.

The *third* construal of argumentative success suggested by van Inwagen states that an argument is successful if and only if any ideal human advocate of its conclusion, who was well-informed about the relevant evidence available in our time and culture, would, given favorable conditions, convince about the truth of the conclusion a significant part of an audience of ideal human *agnostics* about that conclusion, who would all be well-informed about the evidence available in our time and culture. Here, the agnostics are meant to be ideal not only in the sense that they are of the highest (metaphysically) possible human intelligence and logical acumen, and that they do their best to understand the argument and to evaluate it dispassionately. They also have no initial opinion about the issue, and no predilection for the given conclusion or its negation. But they very much want to end up accepting either one or the other in a reasoned way. Once more, van Inwagen thinks there are successful arguments, in this third sense, in science and everyday life, he also thinks there are no successful substantive philosophical arguments. His chief reason for the latter absence is substantially the same as his chief reason for the absence of successful substantive philosophical arguments in the second sense. If a substantive philosophical argument successful in the third sense was formulated, it would probably attract the attention of the philosophical community, and so its conclusion would probably be less controversial than it, in fact, is. My qualms are, accordingly, also substantially the same as before. So I am open to viewing my arguments I and II as successful also in the second sense. Arguments I and II *might*, under ideal circumstances, persuade a significant part of an audience of ideal human *agnostics* about the conclusion (10). I do not expect that they would persuade every real agnostic about (10). It also may well be that successful arguments (in the third sense) have been, or can be, proposed for the Trinity doctrine, Christianity, their logical or analytic possibility. If humans can't be ideal advocates of any of these conclusions, it may well be that they have had, or at least can have, in their hands (objectively) successful arguments they are unable to appreciate ideally – though the arguments would be p-evident both to the ideal advocates and (eventually) also to the ideal agnostics.

To sum up, I do *not* deny that an epistemically fine argument, in several senses of the word, for the Trinity doctrine /Christianity or its logical/analytic possibility has been, or can be, construed. I deny a *p-evidently* sound argument for any of these conclusions has been, or can be, construed. Concerning arguments I and II (presented in part III of this dissertation), they are *not* p-evidently sound. They are not evidently sound either. But the preceding discussion makes them epistemically fine in several ways.

VI.3. Other probability

I have argued that logical probability of all analytic falsehoods is at best minimal (on any information or evidence). I also argued that the logical probability of the Trinity doctrine (on all which is evident), and the logical probability of Christianity (on all which is evident), cannot be p-evidently non-minimal. Still, whether or not the Trinity doctrine or Christianity is logically or analytically possible, they may well enjoy non-minimal probabilities of the non-logical kind. Perhaps even p-evidently so. In section VI.3A, I distinguish several such non-logical interpretations of probability and relate them to my results. In sections VI.3B, VI.3C, and VI.3D, I suggest that, for all that has been argued for in this dissertation, both the Trinity doctrine and Christianity may well have non-minimal or even high probability, in several non-logical senses, and even p-evidently so.

VI.3A. Kinds of probability

In this dissertation, I have assumed logical probability exists. In other words, it was assumed that there are true propositions which say that a probability has a certain value, where the concept of probability is the logical one. The concept has been understood as the ordinary language concept of support that one proposition (simple or complex) lends to another, where its values are determined solely in virtue of the contents of the concepts constituting the propositions (see section II.2). It has never been my wish to suggest that all true statements about probabilities of some kind or other are, in the end, about just one kind – the logical one. If there are sentences expressing true propositions which assert that a probability has a certain value where "probability" is used in some sense *other* than the logical sense, there surely may still be other sentences which truly assert a certain probability value in the logical sense, and *vice versa*. Now suppose there are probabilities of all the several main interpretations that have been promulgated. What are these interpretations and what would be some of their most important relations? I shall try to answer this question from the perspective of a logical probabilist who is not a monist about interpretations of probability, but a pluralist. I will provide something like a map of these relations, which will be a synthesis of several suggestions about interpretations of probability made especially by J. Franklin, R. Swinburne, T. McGrew, and J. M. Keynes.[467]

Let's list and characterize briefly several different notions – or, interpretations – of probability. The labels of credence interpretations are mine. I think my terminology helps to distinguish what is sometimes conflated.

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[467] J. Franklin, *What Science Knows*, op. cit., pp. 161-67; R. Swinburne, *An Introduction to Confirmation Theory*, op. cit., pp. 11-34; R. Swinburne, *Epistemic Justification*, op. cit., pp. 56-73, 77-79, 108-109, 159-160; R. Swinburne, "Evidentialism," op. cit., p. 683; T. McGrew in correspondence; T. and L. McGrew, *Internalism and Epistemology*, op. cit., pp. 43-44; T. McGrew, *The Foundations of Knowledge*, op. cit., pp. 9-10; J. M. Keynes, *A Treatise on Logical Probability*, chs. I-II.

By *chance* (or, propensity) I mean a degree of the tendency of a system (typically, but not necessarily, physical and at a particular time) to a specific outcome (again, typically physical and at a particular time).

Proportions (or, frequencies) are taken to obtain within actual or hypothetical classes of things or events. So we obtain the concept of *actual proportion* and *hypothetical proportion*.

Logical probability, as explicated already, is a degree of support between propositions, determined by their contents.

Ideally rational credence is a logical probability value (or a degree of belief), conditional on certain information (or evidence), ascribed (reached) by a hypothetical logically omniscient being. Logically omniscient being is meant to be one who knows all the entailments (full or partial) pertaining to the assessed (believed) proposition given the information (evidence), whose ascribed logical probability values are always correct (i.e., whose degrees of belief are always the ones uniquely indicated by logical probability on his evidence).

Humanly rational credence, more often called epistemic probability, is a logical probability value (or a degree of belief), conditional on certain information (evidence), ascribed (reached) by a human who: has the right rules (whatever they are) for assessing logical probability, masters their application considerably, knows certain entailments (full or partial) pertaining to the assessed (believed) proposition given the information (evidence), but is not logically omniscient.

Objectively moral credence is a specific degree of belief, conditional on certain evidence, that humans have a moral duty to have, independently upon whether anybody believes in this duty.

In contrast, *subjectively moral credence* is a degree of belief blamelessly (i.e., non-culpably, non-imputably, without personal guilt) believed to be objectively moral credence, given certain evidence.

Blamelessly moral credence is a degree of belief, conditional on certain evidence, assumed blamelessly.

Actual credence is a logical probability value (or degree of belief), conditional on certain information (evidence), actually ascribed (or had). Some actual credences may well be blamelessly moral credences, some other may well be not.

Finally, *hypothetical credence* is a logical probability value (or a degree of belief), conditional on certain information (evidence), certain humans would ascribe (or have) under certain conditions.

Except for the last three, it seems any of the listed notions of probability is objective. By this I mean that for any of these notions of probability (except the last three), if there are sentences, expressing true propositions, which assert that a probability has a certain value where "probability" is used in the given sense, then they are typically true independently upon whether anybody believes them. For all objective probabilities some probability calculus exists.

I do not mean the above list of probability interpretations to be the most fine-grained one. We could juxtapose individual against intersubjective credences. We could distinguish different notions of degree of belief. But I do not think these distinctions are necessary for they would not add anything important. Further, I do not mean our list of probability interpretations to be exhaustive. A pluralist logical probabilist could induce into his conceptual landscape, dominated

by logical probability, several additional probability notions. E.g., *personal credence*, similar to what R. Swinburne calls subjective probability, could be construed a logical probability value (or a degree of belief), conditional on certain (fixed) information (evidence), ascribed (reached) by a subject that has specific rules (right or not) for assessing logical probability. *Coherent personal credence* could be a logical probability value (or a degree of belief), conditional on certain information (evidence), ascribed (reached) by a subject who: has specific rules (right or not) for assessing non-deductive logical probability, has the right rules (whatever they are) for assessing deductive logical probability, masters their application considerably, knows certain entailments (full or partial) pertaining to the assessed (believed) proposition given the information (evidence), and whose ascribed logical probability values (degrees of belief) never violate a particular probability calculus. Indeed, such a notion of coherent personal credence would be similar to the one (or to the family of those) that many, perhaps most, philosophers of probability writing today have on their minds. True, they do not explicate it by means of logical probability. But, I merely said their concept is similar; not identical. Anyway, none of the said logical probabilists (Franklin, Swinburne, T. McGrew, Keynes) has much use for, or concern in, either personal credence or coherent credence. So we do not include these two notions into my scheme.[468] Those who are concerned about personal credence or coherent credence may amend it easily.

Now, I outline some of the relations between the listed interpretations of probability in the following diagram.[469]

[468] For Swinburne's lack of interest in subjective probability, cf. R. Swinburne, *Epistemic Justification*, op. cit., p. 70. For an interested logical probabilist, see J. Hawthorne, "*Degree-of-Belief* and *Degree-of-Support*: Why Bayesians Need Both Notions," op. cit., pp. 288-89, 298-99, 304, 308-312.

[469] This diagram modifies and expands the one in J. Franklin, *What Science Knows*, op. cit., p. 164.

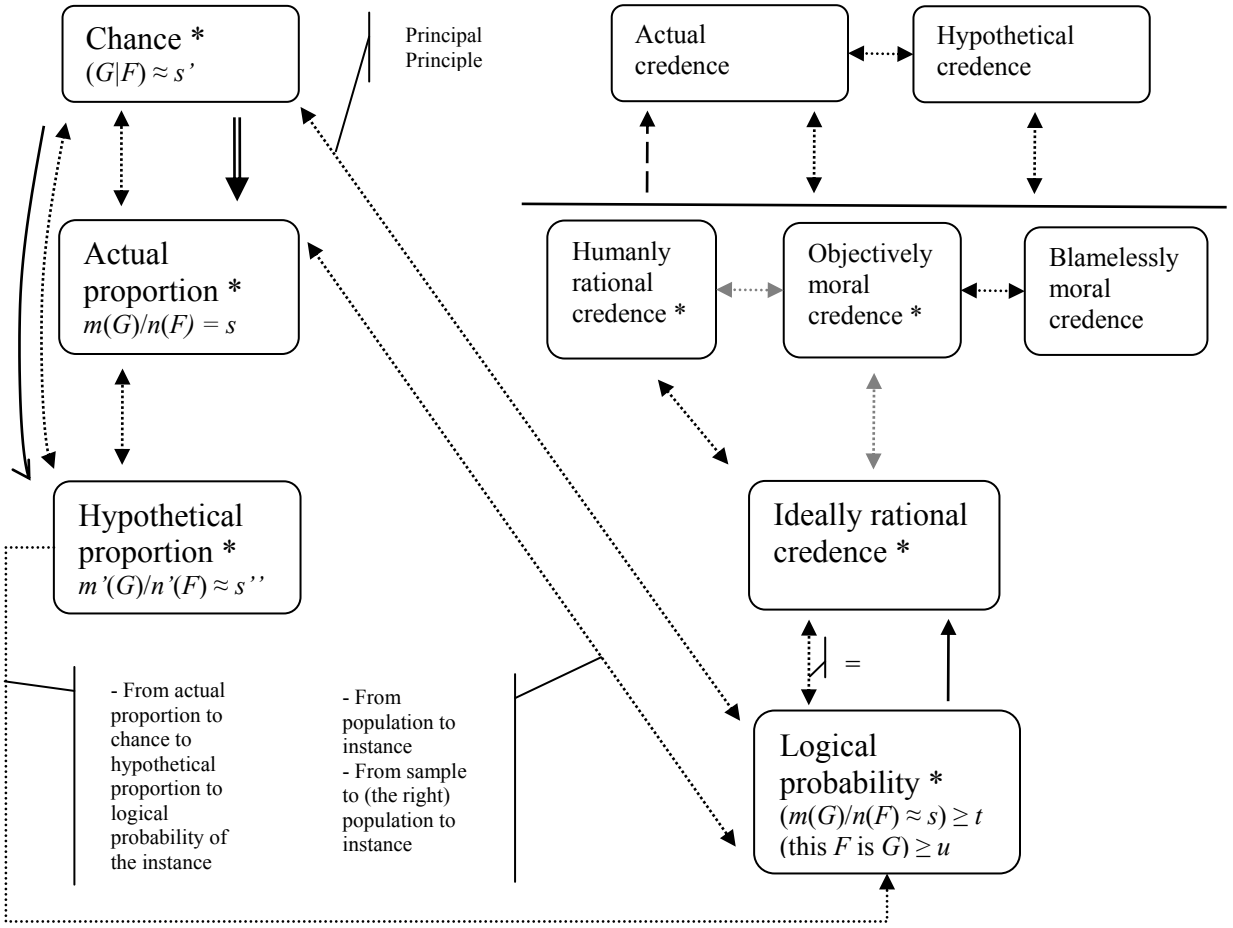

Diagram 5. Kinds of probability and their relations.

⟹ causes, ⟷ indicates, ⟷ indicates?, ⟶ grounds, ⇢ affects, * objective prob.

Let me comment on the relations captured in the diagram.

Very plausibly, we can sometimes justly infer from a specific value of one probability notion to a specific value of another. A specific actual proportion may indicate (with high logical or epistemic probability) specific chance or hypothetical proportion, and *vice versa*. Both actual proportion and chance may indicate logical probability conditional on them. The Bernoullian attitude, assumed by some logical probabilists (and explained in section V.2), derives logical probability of a particular instance (including predictions and retrodictions about it) from its population's proportion. When more populations of which the instance is a member are given – as is the common rule – one may search for the right reference class (and sometimes even apply some general guidelines for its identification). If the population proportion is not certainly identified – as is, again, the rule – the Bernoullian inductivist uses, of course, Bernoulli's theorem together with proportional syllogism. This way he derives logical probability of the

population proportion from the sample proportion. Some other logical probabilists proceed more indirectly. In their reconstructions, actual proportion indicates certain chance for it, which, in turn, indicates hypothetical proportion, which, in the end, yields logical probability for a particular instance.[470] But both strategies are compatible.[471]

Logical probability, conditional on certain information, may indicate proportion (actual or hypothetical) or chance, and *vice versa*. The direction from chance to logical probability is captured in a variation on the Principal Principle. This principle equals the value of chance with the value of credence. A slight variation on it says that given no other relevant information, chance equals logical probability.[472]

Further, logical probability and ideally rational credence are equal.[473]

Humanly rational credence of some human, or a group of humans, may indicate (with high epistemic probability) ideally rational credence; at least if it seems that the human, or the group, is not missing any important entailment (full or partial) pertaining to the assessed proposition. Similarly, and conversely, ideally rational credence may indicate humanly rational credence.

Suppose you deem it objectively valuable for humans – even if, perhaps, unattainable – to have all credences ideally rational (with respect to their evidence), and if you also believe in the existence of ethics of belief (especially of objectively moral degrees of belief). Then you may well be of the opinion that the value of ideally rational credence in a proposition (given certain information) always indicates (say, equals or approximates) objectively moral degree of belief in the proposition (given the information), *given* some objectively moral degree of belief in the proposition (on the information) exists. Interestingly, even so, you need *not* say that the value of ideally rational credence in a proposition (given certain information) always indicates (say, equals, approximates) objectively moral degree of belief in the proposition (given the information). The reason is there still may be *no* objectively moral degree of belief in the proposition (on the information) – especially if one's attitude to the proposition is morally *insignificant*. So there is nothing patently absurd in a view according to which ideally rational credence always indicates objectively moral degree of belief, and *vice versa*. A similar point could be made about the relation of humanly rational credence and objectively rational degree of belief.

Blameless credence of some human (or a human group) may indicate (with high epistemic probability) the value of objectively moral credence – at least if it seems that the human is not missing any entailment (full or partial) important for assessment of the logical probability of the believed proposition, and if it also seems that there is some corresponding objectively moral credence. On the other side, objectively moral credence for some human may indicate the value of his blameless credence – at least if the importance of the human having the

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[470] For this approach, cf. R. Swinburne, *Epistemic Justification*, op. cit., pp. 108-109.

[471] J. Franklin, who's a Bernoullian inductivist, seems to approve also the more indirect approach (like that of Swinburne) in *What Science Knows*, op. cit., p. 162.

[472] Cf. R. Swinburne, *Epistemic Justification*, op. cit., pp. 63, 77-79, 108-109.

[473] Cf. J. M. Keynes, *A Treatise on Probability*, ch. I, § 3; D. A. Gillies, *Philosophical Theories of Probability*, op. cit., pp. 30-31; R. Swinburne, *Epistemic Justification*, op. cit., p. 64; T. and L. McGrew, *Internalism and Epistemology*, op. cit., pp. 43-44.

right credence is grave, and it is also easy for him to obtain and to assess accurately the relevant evidence.

As for the relation of objectively moral credence and subjectively moral credence, which is not captured in the diagram, one's objective moral duty turns into a subjective one when acknowledged blamelessly.[474] So, objectively moral credence (if there is any) indicates subjectively moral credence for those who believe blamelessly in the former as applying to themselves. In the other direction, subjectively moral degree of some human may indicate (with high epistemic probability) objectively moral credence – at least if it seems that the human is not missing any entailment (full or partial) important for assessment of the logical probability of his (blameless) belief that his degree of belief in the given proposition, conditional on the given evidence, is an objectively moral degree of belief.

The kinds of probability mutually related thus far influence actual credences. If humans are receptive enough to the evidence (thanks to good judgment, intellectual honesty, etc.), one may expect actual or hypothetical credence to track the other probabilities in the diagram. Finally, how one actually believes a proposition sometimes indicates how he would believe another proposition, ad *vice versa*.

In the remaining three sections of this part (VI) of my dissertation, I ask whether the Trinity doctrine and Christianity might have non-minimal ideally and humanly rational credence and blamelessly moral credence, and whether they might have such credences p-evidently.

VI.3B. Ideally rational credence

With our notion of logical probability, the introduction of the notion of ideally rational credence, as expounded above, seems uncontroversial. Both R. Swinburne and T. McGrew are of the opinion that ideally rational credence always equals logical probability.[475] Neither J. Franklin nor J. M. Keynes seems to disagree. It seems we know ideally rational credence only from logical probability. So, it would seem, too, that what we said in connection with logical probability of the Trinity doctrine and Christianity is true also for its ideally rational credence. That is, the ideally rational credence of the Trinity doctrine/Christianity (on all that is evident) cannot be p-evidently non-minimal. But, for all we know, the ideally rational credence of the Trinity doctrine/Christianity (on all that is evident) may still *be* non-minimal. Matters get more complicated when we move a level up in our scheme of probability interpretations.

VI.3C. Humanly rational credence

Notably, there has been a disagreement between T. McGrew and R. Swinburne on whether the concept of humanly rational credence (i.e., epistemic probability, as opposed to logical

[474] Cf. A. Plantinga, *Warrant: The Current Debate*, op. cit., p. 17.
[475] Cf. R. Swinburne, *Epistemic Justification*, op. cit., pp. 64-71; T. and L. McGrew, *Internalism and Epistemology*, pp. 43-44; T. McGrew, *The Foundations of Knowledge*, pp. 9-10.

probability) is needed. McGrew proposes an argument against and Swinburne for it. In my opinion, both fail. McGrew criticizes Swinburne's view that although certain scientific hypotheses (e.g., Ptolemaic astronomy) had, on certain evidence and for certain humans (Ptolemaic astronomers), high humanly rational credence, they didn't have, on that evidence, high logical probability. These hypotheses did not have high logical probability because there were, on the same evidence, logically more probable alternatives (Copernican, Keplerian, Newtonian), unknown then to those scientists. In a reaction, McGrew wrote that this distinction of Swinburne

> "… appears to entail fairly sweeping skepticism regarding the logical probability of just about everything" and that it "fall[s] prey to the criticism that there exists (unbeknownst to the hapless Greek and Roman scientists) a better system of dynamics that explains the facts … [which] could have been evolved *wholly* from one's armchair."[476]

But McGrew's accusation of the apparent sweeping skepticism is far from being clearly fair to Swinburne. Actually, the accusation is, apparently, sweeping itself. Caution about logical probability of advanced scientific theories hardly amounts to doubts about logical probability of just about everything. Furthermore, McGrew himself defends logical probability as necessary and *a priori*.[477]

Now, Swinburne's favorite reason for humanly rational credence appears to be that once we introduce in place of logical probability, "we do not have to say that the ancients so persistently misjudged probabilities."[478] Presumably, saying this seems incorrect to Swinburne for the ancient astronomers were surely reasonable and judicious in their assessments; which is supposed to speak against the claim that they persistently *mis*evaluated the given probability. But here T. McGrew has a distinction to grind with: the ancient scientists could be *broadly*, but not *perfectly* reasonable – though they had approximately the same evidence as their later peers. McGrew writes:

> "… someone may be reasonable in an everyday sense but fall far short of the ideal of rationality …, just as someone may be a fine mathematician without being mathematically omniscient. Similarly, for two people to be "well-informed" is not the same thing as for them to possess precisely the same evidence. Yet in some cases of disagreement among experts we at least approximate this situation. It is interesting to note that in those cases, the experts themselves are often more than willing to accuse each other of irrationality …"[479]

That is, the Ptolemaic astronomers could well be concerned with *logical* probability, have the *right* rules for its evaluation, master their application considerably, and know many entailments (full or partial) pertaining to the Ptolemaic theory, with respect to the given body of evidence, approximately the same as there was later. But, at the same time, they could still be missing an

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[476] T. McGrew, "Review of Richard Swinburne, *Epistemic Justification*," op. cit.
[477] Cf. T. McGrew, "Evidence," op. cit., pp. 59, 61-63; T. and L. McGrew, *Internalism and Epistemology*, op. cit., pp. 43-44, 64, 80.
[478] R. Swinburne, *An Introduction to Confirmation Theory*, op. cit., p. 62. Cf. pp. 59-60, ibid., and *Epistemic Justification*, op. cit., pp. 66-67.
[479] T. McGrew, "Evidence," op. cit., p. 61.

important entailment (full or partial) pertaining to the theory. For, they weren't logically omniscient.

Unlike Swinburne, I think the plainest reason for the introduction of epistemic, as opposed to logical, probability is constituted not by intricate scientific hypotheses, but by relatively straightforward mathematical, geometrical and logical examples, like Goldbach's conjecture. It really seems that there is some reasonable value of probability, pertaining to them, which is non-minimal, and can be raised by adding certain information. It really seems that it is judicious for us to have non-extremal degrees of belief in such propositions, and even that we may model and measure our mathematical and logical learning in time by a probability calculus. *This*, I think, speaks for a need of the concept of humanly rational credence, different from the concept of logical probability.

Let's ponder what Keynes, Swinburne, and Franklin have to say on humanly rational credence in propositions like Goldbach's conjecture, and connect it to the question of humanly rational credence in the Trinity doctrine/Christianity or its logical/analytic possibility.

Keynes is ambiguous not only whether his notion of logical probability is logical in the sense I have explicated (see section V.1). His *Treatise on Probability* is also ambiguous on whether logical probability always *equals* our rational degree of belief (in our terminology, humanly rational credence).

In chapter I, § 3, of the *Treatise* we are said,

> "Let our premisses consist of any set of propositions h, and our conclusion consist of any set of propositions a, then, if a knowledge of h justifies a rational belief in a of degree α, we say that there is a probability-relation of degree α between a and h."

So, for all propositions (simple of complex) a, h, if the rational degree of belief $\Pr(a|h) = \alpha$, then the logical probability $P(a|h) = \alpha$. According to D. A. Gillies (already encountered in section II.1), Keynes suggests the converse conditional, too: for all propositions a, h, if the logical probability $P(a|h) = \alpha$, then the rational degree of belief $\Pr(a|h) = \alpha$.[480] This interpretation seems right for there does not appear any advantage for Keynes in treating the conditionals differently. I am also assuming, as I have explained above (section V.1), that Keynes's probability-relation is really logical in my sense.

Let's consider two other places from the *Treatise* which concern probability in a sense of rational belief.

> "What we know and what probability we can attribute to our rational beliefs is subjective in the sense of being relative to the individual." (ch. II, § 11)
>
> "Probability is … relative in a sense to the principles of human reason. The degree of probability, which it is rational for us to entertain, does not presume perfect logical insight, and is relative in part to the secondary propositions which we in fact know; and it is not dependent upon whether more perfect logical insight is or is not conceivable. It is the degree of probability to which those logical processes lead, of which our minds are capable … [we must] limit it in this way and make it, to this extent, relative to human powers …" (ch. III, § 12)

[480] D. A. Gillies, *Philosophical Theories of Probability*, op. cit., p. 31.

But now consider Goldbach's conjecture (*GC*) in the place of *a*, and all the successful, yet inconclusive tests for *GC* (*TS*) in the place of *h*. Taking into account Keynes's words on rational belief just quoted, he would presumably say that the rational degree of belief Pr(*GC*|*TS*) is non-extremal. But assuming either *GC* or ~*GC* is entailed by *TS*, the *logical* probability P(*GC*|*TS*) is extremal. Thus, for some *a*, *h*, the rational degree of belief Pr(*a*|*h*) = α, yet the logical probability P(*a*|*h*) ≠ α. Similarly for the converse conditional.

Swinburne prefers not to assume that Keynes meant his main kind of probability to be logical in the objective sense I have expounded.[481] I explained (in section V.1) why I am willing to make that assumption and view it as a charitable interpretation of Keynes. Chapter I of Keynes's *Treatise* suggests he did mean the concept to be logical in my objective sense. He has been commonly viewed as the intellectual father of such logical concept. Moreover, T. McGrew is both a fan of logical probability objectively determined by content of propositions and of viewing Keynes as a proponent of such probability. But McGrew thinks the last two quoted passages do not fit together well with the rest of what Keynes wrote in chapter I of the *Treatise*.[482] The contradiction disappears, however, if we view Keynes as equivocating on "rational degree of belief." In chapter I, § 3, he has in mind rather ideally rational credence, while in chapter II, § 11, and chapter III, § 12, he has in mind humanly rational credence. The latter suggested is, in fact, supported by the quotations themselves. The former fits the equality of logical probability and ideally rational credence.

For our purposes, the upshot is that Keynes seems to take some presumably analytically false propositions, with at best minimal *logical* probability (in my sense of logical probability), as having non-minimal humanly rational credence. To consider again the paradigm of *GC*, presumably either *GC* or ~*GC* is analytically true. So, either *GC* or ~*GC* is analytically false. Moreover, so far both *GC* and ~*GC* have neither minimal nor maximal humanly rational credence. Thus, either *GC* or ~*GC* is analytically false – hence having at best minimal logical probability – but at the same time receiving non-minimal humanly rational credence. All the even numbers for which *GC* has been positively tested without a single exception indicate, with high humanly rational credence that *GC* is the analytically true sheep with maximal logical probability, and that ~*GC* is the analytically false wolf with at best minimal logical probability.

With all of this Swinburne agrees. He also considers the consensus of apparently competent and sincere mathematicians about the truth of *GC* as other supporting evidence, yielding non-minimal humanly rational credence for *GC*. Similarly, in connection with the so-called Riemann's hypothesis (not Goldbach's conjecture), Franklin also highlights its surprising true consequences and its established close analogies in several fields of mathematical inquiry. This he takes as fostering epistemic probability (or, in my terminology, humanly rational credence) of the hypothesis.[483] In addition, similarly to Swinburne's positive evaluation of our humanly rational credence for *GC*, Franklin would assess as high the old Greeks' humanly rational credence for the proposition that all plane equilateral triangles are equiangular. In fact, Franklin seems to be concerned with logical probability mainly *because* he is concerned with

[481] Cf. R. Swinburne, *Epistemic Justification*, op. cit., pp. 67 and 70.
[482] T. McGrew in correspondence.
[483] See R. Swinburne, *An Introduction to Confirmation Theory*, op. cit., p. 59; *The Coherence of Theism*, pp. 45, 49-50; *Epistemic Justification*, op. cit., pp. 67-68, 71; J. Franklin, "Non-Deductive Logic in Mathematics," op. cit., pp. 5-7.

humanly rational credence ("rational degrees of belief") and moral degrees of beliefs (i.e., the ones we "should" or "ought" to have). Sometimes he even appears to be speaking about these notions under one term. So does Keynes.[484] Hence I rather view Franklin's triangle argument (section V.2) as one to the effect that some analytically false propositions have non-minimal humanly rational credence than that they have non-minimal logical probability. This reading is charitable, as it is safe from the incoherence of taking an apparently analytically false proposition as having non-minimal logical probability.

Consider now the Trinity doctrine in place *GC* or the claim of all plane equilateral triangles being equiangular. Consider, further, certain witnesses (say, Jesus of Nazareth, or some Christian sages, saints, or martyrs) and their consensus about the truth of the Trinity doctrine in place of truthful and competent mathematicians or geometers. Now, I see no problem in an ascription to the doctrine non-minimal, or even high, humanly rational credence (even for well-informed humans from our culture and time). Neither do Swinburne and Franklin. Indeed, perhaps the Trinity doctrine or even Christianity has, or can have, non-minimal, or even high, humanly rational credence evidently, or even p-evidently. Consider also the proposition that the Trinity doctrine/Christianity is not logically/analytically false. Again, I see no problem in its having high humanly rational credence, even p-evidently.[485]

There would be, of course, some disanalogies with respect to arguments for mathematical examples by way of enumerative induction. Swinburne's own argument for high epistemic probability (humanly rational credence) of logical (analytic) possibility of the Trinity doctrine would be rather Bayesian (if reconstructed logically) than simply inductive. It would proceed from testimonies of certain witnesses to the conclusion that their correct explanation is, with high humanly rational credence, that the Trinity doctrine is true, hence not logically impossible (not analytically false). The logic would not be that of enumerative induction, but rather of Bayes's theorem.[486] I have no principled objections to such a case. Perhaps it would establish high humanly rational credence of the truth and logical (analytic) possibility of the Trinity doctrine even p-evidently. Furthermore, there have been more failed attempts at a disproof of the logical (analytic) possibility of the Trinity doctrine/Christianity than at a disproof of *GC* or of the claim that all plane equilateral triangles are equiangular.[487] A systematic, uninterrupted failure of all opponents of logical (analytic) possibility of the Trinity doctrine/Christianity so far could increase the humanly rational credence of its logical (analytic) possibility. (Though it would not make it p-evident; (see section IV.1B, category 2.2.) In contrast, if we assume that all claims of logical (analytic) possibility are themselves either logically necessary (analytically true) or logically impossible (analytically false), like in the modal system S5, the logical probability of logical (analytic) possibility of the Trinity doctrine/Christianity cannot be increased. Under that assumption, the logical probability of the logical (analytic) possibility of the Trinity

[484] Cf. J. Franklin, *The Science of Conjecture*, op. cit., p. x; *What Science Knows*, op. cit., pp. 7, 16, 161-167; "Resurrecting Logical Probability," op. cit., pp. 277, 287. J. M. Keynes, *A Treatise on Probability*, op. cit., ch. I, § 2, ch. II, § 11.

[485] Cf. R. Swinburne, *The Coherence of Theism*, op. cit., pp. 48-50, 65-66; C. S. Evans, *The Historical Christ and the Jesus of Faith*, op. cit., pp. 127-128.

[486] Cf. R. Swinburne, *The Coherence of Theism*, op. cit., pp. 65-66.

[487] For rebuttals of some such anti-Trinitarian attempts, cf. D. Brown, *The Divine Trinity*, op. cit.; and N. L. Geisler, *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*, op. cit., "Trinity."

doctrine/Christianity is (if any) always either minimal or maximal. Still, as said, the tests of *GC* indicate, with high humanly rational credence that *GC* is analytically true, and so having maximal logical probability, and that ~*GC* is analytically false, and so having minimal logical probability. In like manner, hitherto failure to demonstrate logical (analytic) impossibility of the Trinity doctrine/Christianity, and competent and sincere testimonies for its truth, might yield high humanly rational credence (epistemic probability) that the claim that the doctrine/Christianity is logically (analytically) impossible is false, and so logically impossible and analytically false, and so having minimal (if any) logical probability. Evidence of the same sort might well yield high humanly rational credence that the claim that the doctrine/Christianity is logically (analytically) possible, is true, and so logically necessary and analytically true, and so having maximal (if any) logical probability. Perhaps such a case might proceed even p-evidently. But it is not my task to decide in this dissertation whether the evidence for such testimonies and such failure exists.

In short, my point in this section is as follows. I do not deny that the Trinity doctrine/Christianity and its logical/analytic possibility have, or can have, high humanly rational credence (epistemic probability) for some well-informed humans from our culture and time, even p-evidently so. And I do not deny that non-minimal and high logical probability of the Trinity doctrine/Christianity and of its logical/analytic possibility has, or can have, high humanly rational credence for some well-informed humans from our culture and time, even p-evidently so.

VI.3D. Blamelessly moral credence

Because degrees of certain beliefs make a difference whether certain important actions are performed or not, Swinburne expressly thinks it is important to have degrees of certain beliefs with sufficient belief-strength. Having and not having certain beliefs of certain strengths may be blameworthy, morally good, or blameless.[488] In his philosophical work, T. McGrew has not been much concerned about moral degrees of beliefs. Indeed, in correspondence with us McGrew displayed an aversion to treatments of probabilistic and evidential relations in moral terms. But if we are distinguishing the different concepts of probability properly, there need not be any qualms. Granted, I am aware of no detailed positive argument on behalf of the introduction of moral credences. But I am aware of no refutation of them either.

Interestingly, both J. M. Keynes and J. Franklin pay some attention to moral degrees of beliefs. In his *Treatise*, Keynes, while explicating a concept of rational credence and the concept of logical probability, mentions a moral concept of belief, too:

> "In the ordinary course of thought and argument, we are constantly assuming that knowledge of one statement, while not *proving* the truth of a second, yields nevertheless *some ground* for believing it. We assert that we *ought* on the evidence to prefer such and such a belief. We claim

[488] Cf. R. Swinburne, *Epistemic Justification*, op. cit., pp. 168-177, 185-191; *Faith and Reason*, op. cit., pp. 12-13, 30-33.

> rational grounds for assertions which are not conclusively demonstrated." (Chapter I, § 5; original italics.)

Franklin, when writing of chance as indicating other kinds of probability, inter-relates logical probability, rational credence, and moral credence, too. He expounds a version of the Principal Principle, connecting chance to all these other three notions of probability.

> "Some principle is needed to connect any such physical quantity as a factual probability [i.e., chance] to one's *rational degree of belief*. If, as a matter of physics, the *chance* of a die coming up 6 is one-sixth, what *should* one rationally believe about the next throw of the die? The physics may cause the die to come up 6 about one-sixth of the time (mostly), but what one's degree of belief *ought* to be is a matter of *logic*, not physics. The Principal Principle says that on this evidence one's degree of belief in the proposition that the next throw will land 6 *ought* to be one-sixth. That is a statement of *logical probability* …"[489]

Of course, as I have stressed, one should distinguish logical probability from other concepts. Moreover, I have suggested there is more than one notion of rational credence. I distinguish ideally and humanly rational credence. Similarly, there is more then one notion of moral credence. I distinguish the objective and the blameless one. Anyway, in correspondence Franklin repeated there is some connection between logical probability, rational credence and moral credence, and embraced both latter distinctions:

> "Deductive relations [of entailment, and also non-deductive relations of partial entailment] are objective ones between propositions, and they're normative for reasoning: we ought to believe what's logically implied [or probabilified] by the premises we believe. But we often can't in fact do that, because we can't see the logical relations … So what's actually required by logic is in a sense relative to the individual – i.e. the individual's powers of reasoning."
>
> "*Logic*, like *moral* laws, is *normative*. But you can't be obliged by anything that you (non-culpably) don't know. Invincible ignorance is a good excuse in the moral and logical cases. You're invincibly ignorant of the logical relations between the axioms of mathematics and Riemann's Hypothesis (as we all are), so those relations, *normative* as they are *in principle*, can't oblige us [subjectively] to believe the Riemann Hypothesis."
>
> "If you don't know a logical relation (e.g. of implication or of probabilistic support), it can't do anything for you. You have an excuse of invincible ignorance (as they say in moral theology) for not following it. You may still know some other logical relation between the propositions in question (e.g. a relation of weaker logical support), which you *should* then follow."

Franklin thinks his position was Keynes' position, too. Franklin also applies the part concerning moral credence to such as yet undecided mathematical propositions as Goldbach's conjecture (*GC*), Riemann's hypothesis, or (from the past perspective of old Greeks) that all plane equilateral triangles are equiangular.

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[489] J. Franklin, *What Science Knows*, op. cit., p. 167; my italics.

Consider now a mathematician whose attitude to all these propositions is morally significant, and who also: hasn't decided them by mathematical methods, knows large samples of instances satisfying them without any exception, knows several surprising true consequences following from them, and a couple of established close analogies that these propositions have in several mathematical fields (and nothing else relevant). Assume all the negations of these propositions are analytically false. I read Franklin as implying the following. For such a mathematician, the negations take on minimal logical probability (in my sense), minimal ideally rational credence, and minimal objectively moral credence. But they take on, for him, non-minimal humanly rational credence and non-minimal blameless credence. The mathematician is invincibly ignorant of the objective deductive logical relations of entailment to other known claims which guarantee the truth of all the propositions and the falsehood of all their negations. Because of these relations of entailment the objective, "in principle," moral credences for all the propositions are maximal and for all their negations minimal. Now invincible (i.e., blameless) ignorance is a lack of knowledge that a person objectively ought to have and which the person could not gain by applying diligence proportional both to the objective moral significance of the person having the knowledge and to the ease with which he could obtain and accurately assess the evidence necessary for gaining the knowledge.[490] Very plausibly, the human of the specified kind, though being a mathematician, may be invincibly ignorant of all proofs (if there are any) of any of the propositions and all disproofs of any of their negations. For gaining knowledge of some of these proofs or disproofs may well be not that important or not that easy for him. So, for all the negations of the considered mathematical propositions, though all are analytically false, his degree of beliefs in the negations may well be blamelessly non-minimal.

Interestingly, these non-minimal degrees of belief may be blameless not only when all the corresponding *objectively* moral credences are minimal, but also when all the corresponding *subjectively* moral credences are minimal. That is, the mathematician may *blamelessly* have non-minimal degrees of belief in all the analytically false negations, yet at the same time *believe* his degrees of belief *should* be minimal for all of them. This seems possible because it, in turn, seems possible to believe correctly both in a demanding moral duty and in one's own blameless inability to meet the duty (without violating other moral duties). Suppose further that one should always *try* – proportionally to the moral importance of the matter and one's resources – to meet (without violating other moral duties) what he takes to be his moral duty; and that otherwise his failure is not blameless. But the mathematician of the specified kind may have searched for proofs or disproofs accordingly, and with properly proportional efforts. So his non-minimal degrees of beliefs in the presumably analytically false mathematical propositions may be blameless.[491]

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[490] Cf. Jimmy Akin, "Ignorance – Vincible and Invincible," *This Rock* 10, No. 7/8 (1999), http://www.catholic.com/thisrock/1999/9907chap.asp (accessed May 30, 2011).

[491] In a contrast to J. Franklin, A. Plantinga contends that all humans who haven't proved *GC should not* have maximal degree of belief in *GC*. Moreover, they should not even try to have maximal belief in *GC*. He writes: "There are areas where we *ought* not to conform to the probability calculus … In these areas … coherence is not an ideal I should aim at even as I regretfully realize that I won't achieve it; nor is it merely Quixotic, as it would be to aim to run as fast as a cheetah, or swim as far as a shark …" (*Warrant and Proper Function*, op. cit., p. 174; original italics.) Plantinga, however, provides no reason for the rejection of the objective normative ideal to believe *GC* with maximal degree of belief. Remarkably, this ideal is not ruined by the concession that all humans should believe a

Consider now the Trinity doctrine/Christianity instead of *GC*, Riemann's hypothesis, and the proposition that all plane equilateral triangles are equiangular. Consider certain witnesses (Jesus of Nazareth, or some Christian sages, saints, or martyrs) and their consensus instead of the large samples of instances, the surprising true consequences, and the established analogies. Consider a human whose attitude to the Trinity doctrine/Christianity is morally significant for his life, who hasn't decided evidently whether it is true or even logically (analytically) possible, and who knows the testimonies and their consensus (and nothing other which would be relevant). Under these circumstances, I see no clear problem in his ascription to the Trinity doctrine/Christianity and its logical (analytic) possibility non-minimal, or even high, blamelessly moral credence. Perhaps such an ascription could even be p-evidently correct. *A fortiori*, the same will hold under the assumption that it is *not* true, *pace* Franklin, that minimal logical probability always yields minimal objectively moral credence.

In short, I do not deny that the Trinity doctrine/Christianity and its logical/analytic possibility have, or can have, high humanly rational credence (epistemic probability) for some well-informed humans from our culture and time, even p-evidently so.

It's time bring our whole enquiry together to a final conclusion.

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logically (analytically) non-contingent proposition only if it is evident to them. Such requirement is made by Plantinga, again in connection with *GC* (cf. *Warrant: The Current Debate*, op. cit., pp. 140-141). But the ideal under consideration says neither that all humans who haven't proved *GC* and whose attitude to *GC* is morally significant for their life should have the maximal degree of belief in *GC independently* upon whether *GC* is evident to them or not; nor that they should *try* to have maximal belief in *GC disregarding* whether *GC* is evident to them or not.

VII. Conclusion

This final part gathers the outcomes of our preceding discussion (section VII.1), and then paints them as philosophically captivating (section VII.2).

VII.1. Summing up

Here's a list of the main points on the preceding pages of this dissertation, in order of their appearance.

Evidently true conclusions are a well entrenched desideratum in philosophy. The concept of an evident proposition is sufficiently conveyed by examples. Evident are propositions such as: I think; 2 + 3 = 5; or the sum of inner angles in a plane triangle equals the sum of two right angles. Evident propositions need not be logically necessary or self-evident. Evidentness is truth-entailing. Yet, one may be wrong in thinking that something is evident to him, and also unable to provide a general method or criterion for determining when something is evident to him (section II.1).

The concept of logical probability, employed in this dissertation, is the ordinary language concept of support that one proposition (simple or complex) lends to another, where its values (measured by the standard 0–1 scale or not, precise or imprecise) are determined solely in virtue of the contents of the concepts constituting the propositions. Logical probability has been well-entrenched in analytic philosophy of religion (section II.2).

I have explicated propositions as the primary bearers of truth and falsity and sharable objects of belief, composed of (contents of) concepts (section II.3).

A logically possible proposition is characterized as one which does not entail a self-contradictory proposition (section II.4), and analytically false proposition as one which is false solely in virtue of the (contents of the) concepts in it (section II.5).

To make the impact of my investigations in the epistemology of Trinitarian belief wide, I have tried to construe the Trinity doctrine non-controversially. I chose to take it as the claim that: there are three persons such that each of them is God, and yet there is just one being (substance) which is God (II.6). Setting the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed for a model, I specified Christianity as a particular compound proposition, involving the Trinity doctrine (II.7). For my purposes, a proposition is said to be publicly evident (p-evident) just in the following technical sense: it is evident independently upon religious experience. Here, religious experience has been understood broadly: as experience, or a feeling, or an insight, which seems to the human who has it, or is taken by the human, to be: of God, or of a supernatural item, or a result of a cognitive help (inspiration) from God, or from a supernatural item, rather than a mere result of the agent's own cognitive capacities (section II.8).

Then we explored the sense in which should be understood the claims that it "can't" be p-evident to humans that the Trinity doctrine is logically possible or not analytically false. After some discussion, we settled on a notion we dubbed as psychological impossibility. Any sentence of the form "it *cannot* be p-evident that *p*" has since then been construed as equivalent with the disjunction: (i) it is logically impossible that it is p-evident to a human that *p*; or (ii) it is

metaphysically impossible that it is p-evident to a human that *p*; or (iii) it is logically incompatible with the laws of nature that it is p-evident to a human that *p*; or (iv) it is logically incompatible with a proposition truly reporting the hitherto history of the universe that it is p-evident to a human that *p*; or (v) the chance – given the laws of nature, the hitherto history of the universe, and conditions favorable to human knowledge acquisition – that it is p-evident to a human that *p* is minimal or almost minimal.

Arguments I and II were presented from the opening premise that it can't be p-evident that the Trinity doctrine is logically possible for the conclusion that it can't be p-evident that Christianity has some, but not minimal logical probability *simpliciter*. Logical probability *simpliciter* was explicated as logical probability on everything what is evident to the given human subject. The opening premise was dubbed as Weak Modal Skepticism about the Trinity Doctrine (WMST).

The nub of argument I is as follows (section III.1). If Christianity can have p-evidently non-minimal logical probability (*simpliciter*), then the Trinity doctrine can have p-evidently non-minimal logical probability, too. For it can be p-evident that the logical probability of the Trinity doctrine is not lesser than the logical probability of Christianity. If the Trinity doctrine can have p-evidently non-minimal logical probability, then the doctrine can be p-evidently not-analytically-false. For it can be p-evident that: the doctrine has non-minimal logical probability only if the doctrine is not analytically false. If the Trinity doctrine can be p-evidently not analytically false, then the doctrine can be p-evidently logically possible. For it can be p-evident that: the doctrine is not analytically false only if the doctrine is logically possible. But: the Trinity doctrine cannot be p-evidently logically possible and/or it cannot be p-evidently not analytically false. Hence, Christianity cannot have p-evidently non-minimal logical probability (*simpliciter*).

Argument II is similar (section III.2). If Christianity can have p-evidently non-minimal logical probability (*simpliciter*), then Christianity can be p-evidently not analytically false. For, it can be p-evident that Christianity has non-minimal logical probability only if it is not analytically false. If Christianity can be p-evidently not analytically false, then the Trinity doctrine can be p-evidently not analytically false, too. For, it can be p-evident that Christianity is not analytically false only if the Trinity doctrine is not analytically false. Then, proceed as in argument I.

Assuming their opening premise WMST, the results of arguments I and II are the following. It can't be p-evident that the Trinity doctrine is not analytically false (step (3) in arguments I and II; abbreviated as WMST*). It can't be p-evident that Christianity is not analytically false (step (3*) in argument II). It can't be p-evident that the Trinity doctrine is true (step (5) in argument I). It can't be p-evident that Christianity is true (step (5*) in argument II). It can't be p-evident that the Trinity doctrine has non-minimal logical probability *simpliciter* (step (7) in argument I). It can't be p-evident that Christianity has non-minimal logical probability simpliciter (step (10) in arguments I and II).

A defence of WMST – the opening premise of arguments I and II – was offered, with the aim to make it plausible, though not evident. I designed a mutually exclusive and jointly exhaustive partition of ways to know the logical possibility of the Trinity doctrine p-evidently. Then I reviewed critically several main representatives for each epistemic category of the partition (section IV.1). From the failure of all the representatives it was plausibly, though defeasibly, inferred that nobody has so far known p-evidently that the Trinity doctrine is

logically possible (section IV.2). From this general failure of all the representatives it was plausibly – though, again, defeasibly – inferred that nobody can know p-evidently that the Trinity doctrine is logically possible (section IV.3); which conclusion amounts to WMST. Virtually the same procedure applies as a defence of the claim that nobody can know p-evidently that the Trinity is not analytically false (i.e., WMST*).

I replied to an objection from J. M. Keynes's authority against the principle (employed in arguments I and II) that every analytic falsehood has on any information minimal (if any) logical probability by offering a plausible reading of Keynes, which is compatible with the said principle (section V.1). The objection against the very same principle from (enumerative) induction for (presumably analytically true) mathematical propositions was addressed by stressing a crucial peculiarity of such induction. *Logical* probabilities of *mathematical* claims are *not* to be determined solely by inductive relations or patterns. Non-logical probabilities of mathematical claims are another matter (section V.2). The literature developing non-deductive methods which yield non-extremal probabilities for presumably logically or analytically non-contingent claims presents no threat to the principle (employed in argument I) that entailed propositions have at least the logical probability of the entailing propositions. These non-deductive methods are designed for evaluation of other kinds of probability than the logical one (section V.3).

Finally, I have taken considerable pains to make it clear that this dissertation does *not* rule out any of the following options (see part VI). The Trinity doctrine/Christianity is true. The Trinity doctrine/Christianity is logically possible/not analytically false. The Trinity doctrine/Christianity has been (for somebody), or can be, evidently true, though not p-evidently so. The Trinity doctrine/Christianity has been (for somebody), or can be, evidently logically possible/not analytically false, though not p-evidently so. The Trinity doctrine/Christianity has non-minimal/high logical probability *simpliciter* (for well-informed humans from our time and culture). Belief in the Trinity doctrine/Christianity has been, or can be, epistemically justified (for well-informed humans from our time and culture.) Belief that the Trinity doctrine/Christianity is logically possible/not analytically false has been, or can be, epistemically justified (section VI.I.). Belief in the Trinity doctrine/Christianity has been, or can be, well-argued. Belief that the Trinity doctrine/Christianity is logically possible/not analytically false has been, or can be, well-argued (section VI.2). Belief in the Trinity doctrine/Christianity has non-minimal/high non-logical probability (for well-informed humans from our time and culture). Belief that the Trinity doctrine/Christianity is logically possible/not analytically false has non-minimal/high non-logical probability (section VI.3).

VII.2. So what?

As has been said in the preceding section, arguments I and II make it plausible that *if* we are unable to see evidently apart from religious experience that the Trinity doctrine is logically possible, then we are unable to see this way that: Christianity is true; there is just one God in three persons; either of these two latter claims has some but not minimal (zero) logical probability with respect to all that is evident to us. In the case that the antecedent is not true, it still should not be contentious that its implications need to be considered. This dissertation

attempted to lay out some of them, in the first place those in the consequent. Again, I think I have shown that what I take to be consequences of the antecedent really are its consequences, even if I did not succeed in showing that the antecedent is true.

Clearly, on a construal of Christianity not involving the Trinity doctrine, my arguments might have no foothold to boot from. But, dropping the doctrine would be a drastic policy, at least from the perspective of a historically standard form of the Christian religion. Besides, the doctrine of Incarnation – that Jesus of Nazareth is a human but also God – could provide a foothold for a case argument very similar to arguments I and II. This line of thought wasn't pursued here, in order to carry on the whole enquiry in sufficient detail, yet within (broadly) reasonable limits of space and time.

Assuming humans can't see evidently apart from religious experience that the Trinity doctrine/Christianity is true/has non-minimal logical probability, *and* given that one does *not* expect to have a religious experience (in this life), or at least not a religious experience which would make any of these claims evident to him, he should expect that it will never be evident to him (in this life) that the Trinity doctrine/Christianity is true/has non-minimal logical probability, and that none of this would ever be evident to him however hard he would try. In fact, I think the second assumption reflects the epistemic condition of most humans, including Christians. Many people have not had a religious experience, and (so) have no reason to expect to have one. Or, rather, they have a reason to expect none. And most of those people who have had a religious experience, haven't had a compelling religious experience which would make for them any of the considered claims evident, and (so) have no reason to expect any such experience. Or, rather, they have a reason to expect none. Apparently, Christians are no exception to this rule; not even Christians with common specifically Christian religious experiences (cf. section IV.2 above).

Still, on my construal of the sense in which humans *can't* see evidently apart from religious experience this or that (dubbed as psychological impossibility) is relative to resources of past history. Presumably, the so far available empirical evidence and conceptual tools are important here. *If* the body of available empirical evidence changed significantly, perhaps it would become (psychologically) possible to see evidently apart from religious experience that the Trinity doctrine/Christianity is true/has non-minimal logical probability (on the enhanced body of all that is evident). However, I do not expect such an evidential shift. Frankly, I even have no idea what it could look like.

Is there a reason to expect a revelatory drift in conceptual tools? I don't think so. Apparently, the relevant conceptual tools are those of philosophy: conceptual analysis, logic and semantics. But, philosophy, unlike other disciplines, does not move in predictable directions. Perhaps somebody is inclined to view it as not moving at all, with each generation of philosophers recycling, whether knowingly or unknowingly, substantially identical arguments and counterarguments as the preceding generations. It appears to be a moral of the history of philosophy, and also of the history of historical apologetics and anti-apologetics, that the positive reasons and objections for any substantive philosophical thesis are ever the same, and boil down to several main types.[492] Yet, even if the philosophical premises and moves remain the same, are

[492] A point motivating and stressed by T. McGrew's site *Library of Historical Apologetics*, http://historicalapologetics.org (accessed December 6, 2011). See also G. Oppy, *Arguing about Gods*, op. cit., p. 413;

not philosophical tools advancing? Did not Aristotle significantly improve the logical acumen of his time, and did not Frege, in turn, significantly improve on Aristotle's logic? Isn't it undeniable that Pascal made a set of principles of probability much better known and understood than they were before, and that Andrey Nikolaevich Kolmogorov (1903 – 1987) contributed peremptorily to careful thinking about probability by his first axiomatization of its constraints (published in 1933)? Fortunately, I need not deny any of this. First, bear in mind that psychological impossibility of p-evident truth/non-minimal logical probability of the Trinity doctrine/Christianity is, in principle, compatible with the truth/non-minimal logical probability of the Trinity doctrine/Christianity being p-evident due to a future conceptual development in philosophy. As said, psychological impossibility has been understood as relative to past history. Nevertheless, there are no prospects and no indication of some development in philosophical methods which would suffice to make the truth/non-minimal logical probability of the Trinity doctrine/Christianity evident. For instance, as illustrated in this dissertation (in section IV.1, category 2.1.1), the logic of relative identity has been ineffectual in proving the logical possibility of the Trinity doctrine. And, anyway, even if philosophical tools and methods make an amazing improvement useful for Trinitarian considerations, this would likely take place in a long run. But, remember, in the long run we are all dead. So, I don't think there will be relevant shifts in the body of available empirical evidence changed or in philosophical methods thanks to which it would become psychologically possible to see evidently and apart from religious experience that the Trinity doctrine/Christianity is true/has non-minimal logical probability. And if there will be such shifts, I don't think any living philosopher will catch up with an opportunity to take advantage of them.

Still, should it really *matter* – at least to philosophers of religion – that the truth/non-minimal logical probability of the Trinity doctrine/Christianity can't be *evident apart from religious experience* to anybody, given the epistemic resources past history provides; that to most living people the truth/non-minimal logical probability of the Trinity doctrine/Christianity will never likely be *evident* (by religious experience or not); and that also in the *distant* future the truth/non-minimal logical probability of the Trinity doctrine/Christianity will never likely be evident apart from religious experience? It has, in fact, already been conceded (in part VI and in the preceding section VII.1) that the truth/non-minimal logical probability of the Trinity doctrine/Christianity may well still be epistemically justified, well-argued, have clearly high non-logical probability, etc. So what's up, then? Has it been shown that a philosopher who's also a Christian is missing something of importance? As the Australian analytic philosopher of religion and probability Peter Forrest remarks on disturbing philosophical conclusions in general:

> "Philosophy is like a horror movie, or one of Descartes' dreams. Once you form a clear and distinct idea of the monster it ceases to be frightening and becomes merely comical – a dyspeptic dinosaur or a grumpy octopus – and the only decision is whether to destroy or domesticate."[493]

W. L. Craig, "Information Overload," http://www.reasonablefaith.org/site/News2?page=NewsArticle&id=8181 (accessed December 6, 2011).

[493] P. Forrest, "In Defence of Antropomorphic Theism," op. cit., p. 105.

As, I hope, this dissertation has made apparent in many details, to destroy the monster of psychological impossibility of p-evident Trinitarian insight is, plausibly, unworkable. But some will wonder whether this psychological impossibility isn't, in the end, a domesticated and utterly immaterial cognitive limitation on the human part.

Well, I don't think so. Granted, the cognitive limitation isn't fatal for a philosopher who thinks the Trinity doctrine or even Christianity is true. But it is a limitation important for him to realize in case he pursues evident knowledge in matters he deems crucial. For such a philosopher, being submitted to the said cognitive limitation is like being systematically chewed by a gummy tiger. Not lethal, but definitely annoying.[494]

The plausibility of the cognitive limitation deprives the Christian philosopher of prospects to fulfill the classical ideal of evidentness in matters viewed by him as of utmost importance: the truth of Christianity and of the Trinity doctrine.

It also deprives him of prospects to fulfill this ideal with respect to the conclusion of the non-minimal logical probability of Christianity and the Trinity doctrine. Remember, logical probability is a fundamental kind of probability. It determines (wholly or together with other factors) rational belief. Or so the most advanced probabilistic philosophers of Christianity and apologists (like R. Swinburne and T. McGrew) believe. Initially, it would appear that it should be easy to establish by philosophical methods some but not minimal logical probability of the Trinity doctrine, or even of Christianity, with respect to one's evidently true (or, non-controversially properly basic) premises. *Prima facie*, this looks like an extremely modest goal. But, upon reflection, this feat plausibly comes out as unfeasible. Apart from (extraordinary) religious experience, and with the hitherto available epistemic resources, nobody can have the maximally sublime – i.e., evident – knowledge that the logical probability (perhaps the most important sort of probability) of Christianity or the Trinity doctrine is non-minimal from what is evident to him. Though the target threshold couldn't be more unpretentious, it escapes p-evident evaluation.

All these upshots of our inquiry strike me as far from trivial. For one thing, as was stated in the introduction (section I.1), it is worth inquiring whether it can be p-evident that the Trinity doctrine or Christianity is true or have non-minimal logical probability (on all that is evident). In short, it is worth inquiring whether Christianity or the Trinity doctrine is true. Hence it is also worth inquiring whether they can be true or have non-minimal logical probability evidently apart from religious experience. The answer that they can't is, therefore, worth stating.

For a philosopher who rejects Christianity or the Trinity doctrine, my negative conclusions may be good news. In the end, however, he will likely be discontented, due to the concessions I have made outside the narrow limits of these conclusions. But you can't please everybody. (Perhaps another principle of psychological impossibility.)

On the other hand, for a philosopher who has embraced Christianity or the Trinity doctrine – and who has thirsted for evident philosophical conclusions concerning their truth, logical possibility, or decent logical probability – there is, besides the concessions of mine concerning their epistemic justification etc., also good news. Indeed, it is hidden within the bad news of my main conclusions themselves. Tired of searching for an evident demonstration of the truth, logical possibility, or decent logical probability of Christianity, he has now in hand a

[494] I owe this delightful parable to Sean Choi (who made it in another context).

plausible reason to lower his high standards. After relaxing for a while, he may continue. This time, however, not in the search for evident reasons of these claims – that would be a waste of time – but for reasons which would make them merely epistemically justified or well-argued. But the enquiry whether *this* (relatively) relaxed case is feasible is beyond the scope of this dissertation. It will need to wait for another day.

It is a vice to lower one's high standards prematurely. Yet it is also a vice to exact them blindly. Aristotle's philosophical dictum (quoted in section II.1) was to seek exactness in each area to the extent that the nature of the subject allows; not to the extent of ignoring the signals which the nature of the subject emits. Keeping this in mind, we are permitted to let the gummy tiger be our friend, humbling us in each area where we meet him. But, at the same time, also liberating us from excessive philosophical strain.

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