11. TROUBLES WITH TRINITARIAN (RELATIONAL) THEISM: TRINITY AND GUNK

1. Introduction

Classical Theism presents considerable theoretical problems. Process Theists or, alternatively, Open Theists, in particular raise a number of objections about the “newness” in God (dynamic omniscience) and the God-World relation. Both non-standard theisms propose a dynamic-relational (Trinitarian) account of God in order to solve these problems: God and the World are mutually really related (in all the different degrees of pantheistic or panentheistic accounts) because God is relation in Himself. The present paper is based on the following assumption: in order to have a God who can “change” – and hence a “coherent” theism – it is necessary to develop a Trinitarian Metaphysics (TM) and a corresponding Trinitarian Ontology (TO).

Hereafter, TM will be used to refer to a metaphysics that situates a Relational Ontology (RO) in a Trinitarian vision of God. It is not a metaphysics that discovers arbitrary ternary structures in the World. The term TO, while currently rather fashionable, does not indicate a ‘systematic theoretical account’ and is quite vague. We shall therefore replace it with the more precise notion of RO.

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The contemporary Trinitarian debate largely focuses on dogma defense.\(^4\) While it is difficult to draw a balance, I am persuaded, along with other authors, that mystery is an unavoidable constituent of the Trinitarian doctrine (a robust trinitarianism is suspect).\(^5\) In any case, let us assume that a Trinitarian God is the best account of the divine achievable by human reason alone (without the mediation of the Scripture).\(^6\)

Therefore, God is a “we” of love, both a distinction and unity between Father-Son-Spirit. God is the eternal event of love, characterized by a kind of relation called “love”.\(^7\) This social model implies that relations, in God, are not only formal (opposed relations, relative opposition)\(^8\)

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8 The problem with divine opposed relations (Nicolas Jean-Hervé, *Sintesi Dogmatica* (Città del Vaticano: LEV, 1991, vol.1), the highest degree of abstraction that permits the description of the divinity as one and triune, is that they are real, while also being formal relations (Emery, 96–99; Paul Thom,
but are also real love relations among three persons that are one.\(^9\) These three persons are distinct due to their mutual relations but, at the same time, they are those relations fully in act (are verbs\(^{10}\)), and one relational essence. Relations are ontologically manifest in the processions:\(^{11}\) God is the act of generation.\(^{12}\) Evidently, Being is here replaced by a Trinitarian dynamism of love,\(^{13}\) understood as a relational event. “Event” re-expresses the static concept of “essence” in a dynamic and personalistic form\(^{14}\). “Love” links together two apparently irreconcilable concepts: “eternal being” and “eternal event”.\(^{15}\)

The term event, when indicating both the intra-trinitarian self-donation and an activity of God (e.g., His knowledge), is used analogically. “Love” does not only refer to a psychological state of God, to the activity of Being-Goodness,\(^{16}\) but also to the eternal ontological event

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\(^{9}\) In my opinion, Latin and Social Trinitarianism (and their variations) are both indispensable, but insufficient (cf. Friedman L. Russell, *Medieval Trinitarian Thought from Aquinas to Ockham* (Cambridge: CUP, 2010), pp. 5–49.


\(^{12}\) Cf. White, 2016; God ‘just is his act of begetting the Son and of spirating […] The persons are pure relations and thus purely actual as persons. […] the persons are purely actual ‘receivers’, inscrutable as such a notion might be’ (James E. Dolezal, ‘Trinity, Simplicity and the Status of God’s Personal Relations’, *IJST*, 16 (2014) 79–98, p. 92).


of (self)-distinction\textsuperscript{17} and unification by inter-penetration (perichoretic communion); intra-trinitarian love is neither a state (like “knowing”) nor an action, but a process of (eternal) distinction-recomposition, dissimilar to any kind of worldly event.\textsuperscript{18} Logically, the terms used to express this event are oxymoronic: eternal generation,\textsuperscript{19} relatio subsistens\textsuperscript{20} (and perichoresis\textsuperscript{21}). This God-Event is no longer the Esse Ipsum:\textsuperscript{22} there is a process of mutual donation between persons that are at the center of mutual activity\textsuperscript{23} and, as a whole, God in themselves (His nature). We realize that the terms process, love and event can be used to describe the Trinity if these terms are understood in a completely different way from common use. We have no image of the divine event (activity).

Nevertheless, perichoresis makes it possible to interpret God as a process. Process Theology (PT) and Classical Trinitarianism (CTr) share the belief that God is essentially “social”,\textsuperscript{24} but conceptualize this idea differently: in PT, God’s relationality arises as sociality with the World; in CTr, on the contrary, relationality is within God. According to CTr, PT should not identify the Trinity with the conceptual triads of Process Philosophy, understand the World as a part of the Immanent

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\textsuperscript{20} The term “relation”, as applied by Aquinas to God, loses all its common characteristics and becomes incomprehensible (Karen Kilby, ‘Aquinas, the Trinity and the Limits of Understanding’, \textit{LIST}, 7 (2005), 414–27.

\textsuperscript{21} For an attempt to rationally explain perichoresis through non-standard mereology, cf. Aaron J. Cotnoir, ‘Mutual Indwelling’, \textit{Faith and Philosophy}, 34 (2017), 123–51. However, the Trinity is never a distinction among “parts” (perichoresis remains a metaphor).


\textsuperscript{23} “Duo amantes sed una amatio” (cf. David Coffey, \textit{Deus Trinitatis} (Oxford: OUP, 1999), pp. 54–58.

\textsuperscript{24} “Social” in different degrees, as the latin vs social trinitarianism debate attests (but, as said before, I interpret both as two unavoidable, complementary and necessary faces of CTr).
Trinity, claim that the Trinity is a contingent configuration of God due to Incarnation, consider the members of the Trinity (a society of societies) as an intermediate level – subsociety – of the personally organized “actual occasions”, or claim that divine persons emerge from a Creativity Field. Equally, in order to be faithful to the intuition of CTr, process trinitarianism must affirm that God is eternally social (divine persons are eternally the divine essence): before, during, and after the creation. PT has the merit of highlighting the relation between God’s “becoming” and His “relationality”: a Relational-God is a Dynamic-God, although it must be stressed that God has His proper mode of becoming. This means that the World is neither a necessary development of a Relational-God, nor God Himself. Rather, to an Expanding-Relational-God in Himself corresponds His mysteriously free will to create and to be in relation with a World of real newness.

What about RO (or TO), then? Does a Trinitarian God create a Trinitarian World, with which He enters in relation? Is the apophatic-relational-dynamic process of decomposition (kenosis: movement of mutual self-giving) and recomposition (perichoresis) also the ground of Fundamental Ontology (FO)? Does the “three-person-act-of-loving” have any analogy in the World’s fundamental reality? In his essay on relations, Ventimiglia correctly points out that what we can say about God must first be told about reality. A TM – where “divine substance” is the “event-of-love-between-persons” – is achievable if we first have a good RO, i.e. if we can observe various kinds of relationes subsistentes and perichoreses also in our World. If there is specularity between the Trinitarian-God and the Trinitarian-World, we need to understand how

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25 These hypotheses were developed by Boyd, Griffin, Ford and Bracken in: Joseph A. Bracken, Marjorie H. Suchocki (eds), *Trinity in Process* (London: Continuum, 1997). The last one is latently modalist, egalitarian (there is no order of the processions) and seems to imply Quaternity. For a critical assessment: Coffey, pp. 88–100.
26 Pugliese, pp. 117–18.
Relationalism is given in both. Coakley\(^{31}\) reminds us that relationality must be discussed carefully in order not to lose the apophatic character that is typical of Trinitarian speculation.

First of all, it is necessary to show that the concepts of “relations” and “individual substances” are not contradictory in themselves. In other words, we must show that there can be separate and interrelated substances. For this reason, it is crucial to investigate the ontological status of relations. However, this is not enough. It is commonly argued that ‘the notion of subsistent relation has no pure analogue in our ordinary human experience’\(^{32}\). This idea must be challenged. We know the Cause by its effects, and God by His creation. Hence, if the effect is a World of endless perichoretic relations – that is, a gunk-eventist World (cf. par. 3 and 4) – its Cause must be a perichoretic infinite subsistent relation, that is a Trinitarian relation (in a broad sense). According to Hemmerle’s intuitions,\(^{33}\) RO (or TO) tries to interpret “love” as the ultimate sense of being: the dynamic found at the lowest level of each entity is very similar to the personal gift of Trinitarian love. In light of the existing literature, however, we are at the level of a declaration of intent: a satisfactory RO has not yet been provided.\(^{34}\)

The following paragraphs are the summary of a wider work,\(^{35}\) a research program. The hypothesis is that if FO is apophatic – that is, if it has the same dialectical nature (relationality-substantiality) as the Trinity – we can accept that Trinity is also apophatic. The apophatic-relational explanation may sound odd, but it is the most honest one, because it does not hide the problems under the carpet. What emerges is a coherent form of Trinitarian Theism – since there is correspondence between the human (un)ability to know the two levels of reality (the World and God)\(^{36}\) – that is based on an inevitable relational-apophatic paradigm. The apophaticism that we see in the Trinity (and in ontology) ensures that Trinitarian Theism can neither be proven nor disproven.


\(^{32}\) White, p. 86.


\(^{34}\) Lewis Ayres, ‘(Mis)Adventures in Relational Ontology’, in *The Trinity and an Entangled World*, pp. 130–45.


\(^{36}\) We need to affirm an epistemic humility (Damiano Migliorini, ‘Lineamenti di cristeologia’, *TheoLogica* 1 (2017), online).
2. What Kind of Relational Ontology Can There Be?

RO does not simply imply some kind of relations at some level. In RO, relations are at the same ontological level as substances, equally primitive (co-primal) as the relationes subsistentes \((r.s.\))\(^{37}\). This is what differentiates RO from similar hypotheses (e.g., process philosophy): \(r.s.\) are both distinct subsistences \textit{and} relations. The abandon of Substance Ontology shifts the focus to a new, \textit{analogical} concept of substance:\(^{38}\) every entity is already in some kind of relation – or rather: it \textit{is always also} a relation – but the “new concept” cannot lose the categorical role of the substance. When we try to interpret the World as a compound of \(r.s.\), we cannot forget that even divine \(r.s.\) have the (paradoxical) function of simultaneously distinguishing and uniting.\(^{39}\) In the World, this function must take place in a specific way.

What do we mean, then, when we say that an object is its own relations? \textit{Power ontology} (in the form of \textit{dispositional monism}, that is a structuralism),\(^{40}\) \textit{ontic structural realism},\(^{41}\) and various process ontologies accentuate the relational character of fundamental entities.\(^{42}\) They all are \textit{pluralistic} in some way, because they do not deny the existence of separate objects\(^{43}\) (powers, structures or structural nodes, actual occasions, or events). They also seek to avoid falling into Bradley’s pitfalls, according to which the deep (internal) relationality of everything leads to the unreality of relations (where

\(^{37}\) In this sense, \textit{relationality} is a \textit{transcendental} (A. Aguilar quoted in Mauro Mantovani, ‘Persona e relazione, tra teologia e filosofia’, \textit{Path} 10 (2011) 5–18, p. 13).


\(^{40}\) Shungho Choi and Michael Fara, ‘Dispositions’, \textit{SEP} (2016), online.

\(^{41}\) Elaine Landry, Dean Rickles (eds), \textit{Structural Realism} (Dordrecht: Springer, 2012).


everything is relation, nothing is relation) and therefore to one of the many possible kinds of monism.\footnote{I agree with Alston (1952) that Whiteheadians fail to adequately preserve plurality from relatedness.}

Analyzing the merits and aporias of these ontologies is beyond our present scope. In general, the above-mentioned ontologies have problems defining the ontological status of relations, that is, of defining what a relation is and how it behaves\footnote{For example, ‘some process philosophers hold that the notion of dynamicity cannot be defined or even conceptualized’ (Johanna Seibt, ‘Aristotle’s “completeness test” as heuristics for an account of dynamicity’, in Dynamic Being, ed. by Vesselin Petrov and Adam Scarfe (Cambridge: CUP, 2015, pp. 2–27) p. 4.}. A satisfactory conceptualization of relations helps us solve the “objections” formulated by or derived from Bradley: the intra-individual regress (constitution) and infra-individual regress (composition and causation).\footnote{Guido Bonino, ‘Bradley’s Regress: Relations, Exemplification, Unity’, Axiomathes, 23 (2013), 189–200.}

The general problem faced by Bradley is how relations relate,\footnote{Using Chrudzimski’s distinction (‘Internal, External and Intra-Individual Realions’, Axiomathes, 15 (2005), 487–512).} and his arguments aim to establish that we cannot understand how it is possible for things to be related. The concept of external relation is contradictory – according to Bradley – because it generates a regress.\footnote{Pierfrancesco Basile, ‘Russell e il problema delle relazioni nella filosofia di Bradley’, Rivista di Filosofia, 90 (1999), 391–416.} And the situation does not improve if we replace all external relations with internal relations: in this case, the relata’s subsistence is diminished, because they are somewhat “dissolved” in the relation with their correlates. If there are no relata, however, the relation also disappears, and the term “internal relation” becomes little more than a linguistic construction.\footnote{According to Heil (‘Relations’, in The Routledge Companion to Metaphysics, pp. 310–21) “external relation” is a completely impenetrable concept.} We understand why Bradley insists that every relation, in order to be a relation, must be both internal and external, and that it is contradictory precisely for this reason.\footnote{Jonathan E. Lowe, ‘There are (probably) no relations’, in The Metaphysics of Relations, ed. by Anna Marmodoro, David Yates (Oxford: OUP, 2016), pp.100–12.} However, in a World
of internal relations, we cannot avoid some form of monism\(^{52}\) (e.g., Schaffer’s *priority monism*\(^{53}\)). To sum up: relations, *no matter how they are conceived*, lack the power to relate their terms. External relations do not relate; internal relations, on the contrary, are not relations (the *relata* disappear into a monistic night: they relate “too much”).

More specifically, by adapting Bradley’s arguments, we can identify two types of regress: (r1) *intra-individual regress*: corresponds to the difficulty of imagining the existence of a substance which coincides with its intrinsic properties, but can also acquire new properties; (r2) *infra-individual regress*: is generated when, once we accept the existence of individual substances of any nature, we try somehow to make them interact contingently with one another.

(r1) is solved fairly effectively by the ontology of powers (*non-mereologic hylomorphism*)\(^{54}\) – or in any case by Aristotelian ontology, which sees the substance as a way of being.\(^{55}\) According to other thinkers, it can also be solved by re-conceptualizing *individuation* or *instantiation* (Armstrong), *non-relational tie or nexus* (Bergmann, Strawson), *compresence* (Maurin), *state of affairs* (Parker, Olson), *haecceitas*,\(^{56}\) *intensive properties* (Paul), *exemplification* (Moreland), *gluons* (Priest), *U-operator* (Vallicella, Meinertsen), or *relata-specific relation* (Wieland and Betti), to mention just a few examples\(^{57}\). The very core of the dispute, here, is *whether* we should accept a primitive in our ontology and, if so, *which one*.\(^{58}\)

Discussions on “relational” and “constituent” ontologies (cf. Damonte, in this book) address precisely this point. It seems that all pluralistic ontologies must admit the existence of relations, but relegate them to obscure ontological functions (they are called in


\(^{55}\) Kosman, 2013.


different ways, based on the reference ontology)\textsuperscript{59}. The conclusion of Inwagen\textsuperscript{60} seems the most plausible one: no ontology can be entirely non-relational. But, if this dispute – which mainly involves intra-individual regress – partially shows the impossibility of deciding between relational and constituent ontologies,\textsuperscript{61} we can expect a similar result for infra-individual regress.

(r2) remains indeed a sensitive point among scholars. Even if we can support – not without hesitations – the idea of a \textit{Compositional Pluralism},\textsuperscript{62} no ontology can explain how relations contingently relate separate objects (= how the causes cause), despite the numerous attempts to do so.\textsuperscript{63} We can therefore conclude that Bradley’s problem – at least in the case of (r2) – remains unsolved and that many of the proposed solutions simply do not grasp the depth of the problem itself.\textsuperscript{64} In order to make “relations” intelligible, it is necessary to \textit{develop a new system of ontological categories}.\textsuperscript{65} But this seems somewhat arduous, and the attempt to investigate the ontological status of relations remains to this day a great battlefield\textsuperscript{66} where it is still difficult to tell winners from losers. According to Heil’s list\textsuperscript{67} of positions, we can probably be \textit{reductionist} about many “classic” relations (such as “taller\_than” or “instantiation”). However, in the case of irreducible relations (such as “causation”), the concept of relation remains aporetic, regressive.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{60} Peter van Inwagen, ‘Relational vs. Constituent Ontologies’, \textit{Philosophical Perspectives}, 25 (2011), 389–405.
\item \textsuperscript{61} Dale Jacquette, ‘Qualities, Relations, and Property Exemplification’, \textit{Axiomathes}, 23 (2013), 381–99.
\item \textsuperscript{62} i.e., the existence of \textit{wholes} (Koons and Pickavance, p. 127).
\item \textsuperscript{64} Fraser MacBride, ‘Relations’, \textit{SEP} (2016), online.
\item \textsuperscript{65} Sebastian Biceño and Stephen Mumford, ‘Relations all the way down?’, in \textit{The Metaphysics of Relations}, pp. 198–217.
\item \textsuperscript{66} Marmodoro, \textit{The Metaphysics of Relations}.
\item \textsuperscript{67} Heil, ‘Relations’.
\end{itemize}
Can we conclude – exactly as Lowe\textsuperscript{68} did – that there are (probably) no relations? The situation seems quite puzzling: in pluralist ontologies, relations are real only in the sense that objects and their properties are real. Relations are reduced to the properties (or powers, mutual dispositions) of their subjects, or at least they become an obscure primitive. On the contrary, in monist or relationist ontologies, relations are not relations. However, we need a concept of real relations to give an account of our reality (contingency and existence of individuals) and to articulate a discourse about the Trinity.

The lesson we learned in order to build the RO required by TM can be summed up in two conclusions: (1) There must exist at last one real relation. This relation cannot be reduced (we must be realist non-reductionists) and it must have its own ontological status. If Bradley is correct, however, it must be conceptually new. (2) Real relations must be equally primitive with the substances, i.e. they must not dissolve the substantial principle. Can an ontology take all this into account?

Before moving in this direction, let us briefly consider the theological side of the question: the ontological challenge issued by quantum physics – the structuralist interpretations – have inspired various theological works, some of which are specifically about the Trinity,\textsuperscript{69} while others aim to define an Entangled God.\textsuperscript{70} In both these works, we find the convergence between a Trinitarian-Relational God and relationist ontologies. However, a few problems remain: (1) We do not have a definitive model in physics; (2) A unique philosophical interpretation (aporia-free) of quantum physics has not yet been formulated; (3) absolute relationalism seems to imply a form of Existence Monism or Priority Monism\textsuperscript{71} where real relations disappear (internal relations disappear as relations).

Relationalism is not a good perspective: in order to describe the Trinity, we need to maintain pluralism (and avoid monism and processism). We do not need ontological relationalism as Vestigium Trinitatis, since in God the substantial element is not eliminated. The specificity of Trinitarian relationalism (apophatic-perichoretic) must be taken into account also when we “search” for it in the World.

\textsuperscript{68} Lowe, 2016.
\textsuperscript{69} Polkinghorne, The Trinity and an Entangled World; Gloria Schaab, Trinity in Relation (Winona: Anselm, 2012).
\textsuperscript{71} Jonathan Schaffer, ‘Monism’, SEP (2016), online.
3. Toward an Event-Infinitive Ontology: Some Key Points

In a recent contribution, I tried to develop the kind RO that may serve our purpose: by applying the concepts of gunk-junk to process theory – understood as eventist ontology – we may be able to create an original form of relationalism, an “Event-Infinitive Ontology” (EIO) that can somehow overcome some of the issues listed above. It is not possible to elaborate here on the arguments that led to the formulation of this EIO. We shall therefore limit ourselves to describing its key points:

(1) EIO considers the gunk hypothesis as a good candidate for a Fundamental Ontology (FO). This means that an extended atom (or an extended simple) is an abstraction: EIO holds that there is isomorphism between the nature of objects and the nature of space-time. It follows that if each extended object is conceptually divisible, the only possible atom is the unextended point. However, this kind of (non-extended) atom cannot generate extended objects.

(2) Pointy (atomist) and gunky Worlds both involve a certain amount of counter-intuitiveness. Following Kant’s second antinomy, it is impossible to decide whether the World is composed of simples (atomism), or each part is complex (gunk); both options are rationally defensible. The atom is unthinkable: we have no image of it (when we “imagine” the atom, we begin to divide it in a gunky way); gunk, however, is also unthinkable, because an endless decomposition would lead us to a bare “continuum”, where everything is infinitely dense; to avoid this, the notion of gunk is based on an hypothesis that has many affinities with atomism, namely the particulate hypothesis: every reality has parts. But what are these parts? If they are infinitely decomposed, they are infinitely small, and therefore “almost” atoms. The fundamental “particles” can not be extended (because they would not be completely divided) and can not be un-extended (because reality could not emerge from them); the fundamental entity, therefore, is “approximately without extension”. Gunk implies infinite divisibility and infinite composition of “parts” which are asymptotically atomic.

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72 Is an ontological interpretation of perichoresis different from Gunton’s relationality (The One, The Three and the Many, pp. 163–179).
73 Schaffer, ‘Monism’.
particles, though they never become atoms; nor can the gunk be “atom-full”, because the infinite divisibility implies an absolute density (continuity), which is asymptotically a continuity.

(3) In a gunky World, ground is dialectical, a process of decomposition and recomposition. Our access to fundamental reality is “delayed”: we start from the fact that we are here as “objects”, and we move from here to “before here” (FO). The “before” can elude us, but this does not imply that it does not exist: it only implies that we cannot describe it “from here”. Following Schaffer’s position,\(^75\) if we eliminate every basic level, each object acquires ontological dignity, and we can consider the existing objects of our World as really existent. I myself might be an infinitesimal object, since “above me” there is an infinitely huge World; hence, conversely, I exist with an infinity of infinitely small objects “inside me”. We do not know how, where and when the grounding chain finishes, or at which level of it we are positioned. Nor does it make sense to ask such questions.

(4) If there are no levels in a gunky World, extended substances are what they seem to be (apparently). If the levels are relative, an extended entity might be part of something else (junk hypothesis).\(^76\) By exaggerating this relativization (a kind of junk effect), we might say that the universe is so small that it is (perhaps) unextended.

(5) A very controversial question is whether two extended substances can “touch” (be in contact). It is an ancient problem: if the boundaries between substances can touch, parts of these substances (the boundaries) overlap, and hence the substances can overlap.\(^77\) EIO claims that the problem of contact has never been adequately solved: any solution that implies a causal transmission through contact between extended separated substances must be excluded or re-thought.

(6) EIO assumes that there are infinitesimal particles and a Principle of Aggregation (PoA). As strange as it may sound, every ontology needs a principle that does this job. However, we do not know much about PoA: it could be a point among an infinity of points. The “particulateism” (the focus on particles) proposed by EIO maintains that

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\(^76\) That is, “[W]e can use the possibility of both gunk and junk as arguments against both Atomism and Monism” (Koons, p. 142). Junk is plausible because, even if God cannot be encompassed, He is even so “infinite”, not-closed, excess.

every infinitesimal is infinitely dense and constantly aggregated, so that the particulated reality becomes a continuous reality (asymptotically). Then, space is never empty: it is full of infinite incremental infinities (an endless series of events).

(7) Assuming the *everything-in-everything principle*, infinitesimal particles, rather than being *bare particulars*, are *well-dressed particulars*: they have the property of being-all-properties. An infinity of infinitely dense infinitesimals corresponds to a property that condenses every possible properties in a point. This plurality of mereologically infinite infinitesimals, in the appropriate circumstance, is arranged to form cognitively salient but relative configurations (adapting Varzi’s expression). However, we do not (and never will) know how infinitesimals are organized.

(8) EIO uses the neologism *infinitying* to describe gunky-infinitesimals, because gunk’s parts have an approximate “particulate” nature but they *appear to be* a process of decomposition (expressed by the *-ing* form: they are like a verb). The term *infinitying*, of course, is paradoxical. As Inwagen emphasized, however, we cannot say much about *simples*: we feel an *ontological vertigo* when we find that *simples* have to do with a spatial point, and we have little to say about how they meet/clash. In EIO, *simples* are both *infinitying* and gunky: they go far beyond the atomistic conceptualization of *simples*.

(9) According to EIO, the existence of events and objects is equally primitive. This marks a distance between *pure events* (or *process metaphysics*) and EIO. In EIO, *infinityings* are not only aggregating-events themselves, but also an aggregation of other *infinityings*: there is no precedence of events over objects, nor the elimination of the substantial element. Using the classical classification of events, an aggregated-fundamental-event of *infinityings* is non-physical, homogeneous, culminating, not countable, static and dynamic.

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79 Infinityings are *neutral*, neither physical nor mental.
82 The notion of event would require a long discussion, impossible to develop here.
83 *The Event Universe*, p.16.
begins and ends, although it is as such the cause of space-time, and is susceptible to change. It is qualitatively different from the divine (Trinitarian) events, but shares their apophatic nature.

(10) The PoA of infinityings is primitive: its action is exercised through the infinityings (in an infinitely dense World of infinityings, each entity is an infinitying). The PoA is metaphysical, i.e. it is not a law that we can discover through sciences. Scientific laws derive from PoA: they describe causation, which is ontologically based on the passage of infinityings.

4. Is a Gunky-Power-Eventist Ontology Possible?

What insights have we gained from EIO?

(a) Infinityings are relations because they are the infinity of relations between the infinitely divided; they are the substantial principle and the relational principle. EIO re-defines the concept of substance, rather than dismissing it altogether. If every entity is gunky, there is no instant in which it exists: every gunk’s part is always passing between its parts; but parts (and objects) still exist. In this sense, a substance is the activity of being what it is (by PoA): an enduring passage of all its parts in all the others. The aggregation is a continuous event, a process that is never fully accomplished: objects (both micro and macro) are a continuous process of infinitesimal change. But they are and are-not process: if the instant is relativized, there is not one object in an instant and another in the next; the object is in the instant and already-partially-in the next one, because there is an infinitying between it and the other.

(b) There is at least one real relation: it allows the analogical passage from the World to God (Trinitarian). This relation is the PoA (and maybe PoA is the Love-Law), from which every other causal relation emerges: causation is a processual “transfer” of infinityings, and is an external and internal real concrete relation. The relation that should bring two infinityings together is itself an infinitying. This oscillation is due to the intrinsic nature of gunk, which is particulate and continuous. EIO lends itself to be the basis for a gunky power ontology. The infinityings are the activity of being all properties, whereas objects are the activity of being those objects, that is, the dominant property emerging from the PoA.

85 Marmodoro, 2015.
(c) EIO is a paradoxical ontological structure: it claims that reality is continuous and made of parts. Fundamental reality is an infinitely dense ocean of epistemic contradictions, but the impossibility to decide between ontological options is the basic feature of ontology (ontology is “possible” in the sense that many ontologies are possible). Gunk-Junk is a chimera, but it may be the best chimera we have. In order to express fundamental reality (just like when we attempt to describe divine nature), we need oxymoronic terms that can maintain the antinomies and, at the same time, “name” them. In EIO, however, rational investigation has a role: even if we need at some point to climb over the wall of our rationality, this does not mean that we do not need the ladder, and that we do not have to climb the entire ladder before jumping. The similarity with Trinitarian theology is clear: we believe various reasonable statements about the Trinity (the “ladder”), but these statements cannot be integrated into a unitary image (the “jump”); the same is true for FO. However, when we clarify how mysterious is an object – to avoid errors – we have already said a lot.

5. Event-Infinitive Metaphysics: God-event and Apophaticism

What about reality as a whole, including God? Let us try again to lay down a few points toward an Event-Infinitive Metaphysics (EIM):

(a) The way in which the event is conceived in EIO can become, by analogy, the donation-event of Three in One in EIM. EIO relativizes the difference between Three and One: the infinityings are merged while remaining distinct.

(b) The analogy is not between finite and infinite, but between infinity and infinity; World’s infinity (gunk) is different from God’s infinity (simplicity), but the two reciprocally refer to each other. The mystery that we find in the way infinityings aggregate (and exist) is the same mystery that we find in the “Three” Infinityings or divine persons: through their mutual interpenetration, they give rise to a single infinity without losing themselves. The activity of Divine Being, therefore, is not only Thought-Thinking-Itself, but also Giving-Itself-Receiving-Itself (aggregation in the distinction: trinitarian kenotic love) of Three

86 Kilby, 2005.
87 Emery, 2007, p. 28.
Infinityings. The sum of infinities is perhaps the best analogy we have for the Trinity\(^8^9\) (the sum of three infinities is an infinity).

(c) EIM may be a form of panentheism. The infinityings are similar to a “contracted-deity” but, if God is those entities, He is above all of them. The bottom of reality can only be God Himself, although in a contracted form, but God is non aliud: He coincides with reality and exceeds it. In EIM, there is an upper infinite limit (God) corresponding to a lower infinite limit (God), because God is the raw “material” of everything\(^9^0\). If we cannot say much about FO, this is due to a trivial reason: the fundamental entity is God, and God is everything in everything and overcomes everything. God has created the World within Himself, using Himself as the “matter” of creation (the aporias of the “pointy” powers is due to the fact that “point” is a mystical concept, just like divine substance). In EIO the fundamental reality is temporal and eternal, spatial and unextended, substance and relation.

The World is God who (voluntarily) contracts Himself: God does not create out of Himself, but due to a self-condensation of one “part” of Himself. Pantheism, therefore, is avoided: God is everything in everything, but in a contracted form. Creation is not exactly the body of God, but could more appropriately be described as a tattoo on His skin. EIM is a form of panentheism, for sure, but we have good reason to suspect that this term is too vague\(^9^1\) and that every theism is ultimately panentheistic in some way.

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\(^8^9\) The Trinity, however, is “composed” of three metaphysical infinites (MI), which seems implausible (the MI is one, by definition). However, the MI is beyond our understanding and we do not know if it has any characteristic “other” than the mathematical or the metaphysical infinite (MI could encompass both). “Three” (numeric language) is an analogical term when referring to God: ‘While numbered realities seem to appear when we speak of Father, Son, and Spirit, God cannot be comprehended by number’ (Lewis Ayres, ‘Augustine on the triune life of God’, in The Cambridge Companion to Augustine (Cambridge: CUP, 2014, pp. 60–78), p. 69). “Infinite” marks the limit of logic (Ernst Cassirer, Substance and Function (New York: Dover, 1953), p. 62). We avoid saying, unlike Bracken does, that divine persons are both finite and infinite (cf. Pugliese, p.137).

\(^9^0\) ‘God so permeates all things as to be not a quality of the world, but the very creative substance of the world’ (Augustine, Letter 187). Cf. Edward Wierenga, ‘Omnipresence’, SEP (2017), online.

In summary, the correspondences between EIO and EIM that underlie the foundation of Trinitarian Theism could be formalized as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EIM</th>
<th>EIO</th>
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<td>God’s essence is a supra-essential dynamic reality in which substance and relations coincide; He coincides with Love (ontological principle), that is, with the event of the perichoretic unity of three Persons that are distinct by their relations but co-existent, because they are eternally generated in the one kenotic divine substance (kenotic principle).</td>
<td>Fundamental reality is a dynamic substance: is the infinityings, the infinitely dense perichoretic relations between infinite gunky events of decomposition and aggregations (by PoA), particulate and distinct powers, but present in one another, generated by contraction of the divine relational substance.</td>
</tr>
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Analogy plays an important role: the intra-trinitarian event is neither like the worldly event nor like the infinitesimal reality event. EIO and EIM are true when they respect the specificity of the analogical speech, the similarity in the dissimilarity: there is an analogical correspondence between the infinite divine substance, the interpenetration of (at least) Three Infinityings (lovers), and the infinite density of the World in which the infinityings interpenetrate. The Trinitarian figure is the event/process of decomposition and recomposition (both eternal, accomplished) of the Three-in-the-One (perichoresis), and the bedrock of the World is something similar to this Trinitarian event. The Divine Substance (event-of-love-between-persons) is analogous to the fundamental perichoretic r.s. of the World, i.e. to fully substantial and fully relational entities. The prerequisites for intra-trinitarian relations, therefore, are the deeper “giving” relations, that is, the infinitesimal ones. The equal primitivity between substances and relations differentiates EIO from process philosophy precisely because EIO does not try to eliminate the substance: substance and relation are the two ontological (indispensable) categories through which we can approximately describe fundamental “entities”. If, according to Bracken, the notions of perichoresis and r.s. apply to everything,92 then gunk is the best notion in order to discover Trinitarian perichoresis in FO.

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92 Pugliese, pp. 139–40. Whitehead’s concept of internal relatedness must be avoided because it leads to monism.
EIO and EIM are apophatic: the essence of the entities remains unknowable to human beings (negative ontology). The concept of infinitying is a kind of hyperphatic (maybe dipolar) definition because it simultaneously affirms two apparently contradictory truths; this happens because we do not have words to express a hybrid reality such as “divine nature” or “fundamental entities”. Our way of talking about God (via triplex, apophaticism, hyperphaticism) reflects our way of “talking” about FO. Can we, however, develop a metaphysics based on a negative ontology? Not only we can, but perhaps we must.

The dialectic between apophatic and cataphatic speech concerns our knowledge in general: every level of knowledge is apophatic to a degree, which increases at the top (God) and at the bottom (FO: God again). Hence, EIO is a useful instrument to express Christian truths, if integrated with a hyperphatic (philo)theology. The convergence between RO and TM must be sought in the apophatic-hyperphatic “moment”. “Event” is a proper name for God and for World’s fundamental reality, though we can define neither the nature of this event, nor how it is organized.

In conclusion, it is difficult to establish if EIM can solve the problems of theism listed at the beginning of this paper. Maybe it can, by grasping the vertigo of the Infinity: the metaphysically infinite God is the infinity of infinite infinities (in a point)... This progression of words makes us aware that we have no words for infinity, but only a juxtaposition of truths; being aware of what we can “say” of Infinity, we cannot exclude

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the existence of multiplicity, real relations, dynamism, newness in God (incremental knowledge of the free future). This “confident silence” is the only possible way to “say”, in silence, that there is (perfect) freedom and newness in God, and that libertarian human freedom is therefore possible\textsuperscript{98} in an infinite-gunky World that freely draws a \textit{tattoo} on God’s skin. God’s relation with the World is similar to the intra-trinitarian one:\textsuperscript{99} it is an apophasis that does not rule out newness.

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\textsuperscript{98} Also in PT «freedom is mysterious to us» (Pugliese, p. 113), but ‘finite entities introduce genuine novelty and change into the divine life’ (p. 145).