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Metaphor and Divine Paternity: The Concept of God's Fatherhood in the Divinae institutiones of Lactantius (250-325 CE)

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Preface

This study is an exercise in historical theology and theolinguistics. The mention of historical theology entails that this investigation will dialogue with Christian authors of the past in order to illuminate modern theological issues. On the other hand, the allusion to theolinguistics (the study of how religious belief, thought and practice relates to language) indicates that this study will endeavor to discern what Christians mean when they employ terms like "Father" in theological discourse or corporate worship (i.e. liturgy). Should "Father" be viewed as a literal assignation for God? To what extent does this divine title signify the ontology or being of God? These questions will be addressed in the course of this study to show what bearing the doctrine of God the Father has on Christian belief and praxis. In particular, we are interested in what Lactantius means when he refers to God as Father. What implications thereby follow from his usage of this expression?

I would like to thank Ian Hazlett for patiently and skillfully guiding my research and writing for more than three years. His suggestions have been invaluable and his eye for detail prevented me from making numerous errors of fact or style. My dissertation examiners David Jasper and Sara Parvis provided many helpful suggestions. They helped me to make hidden implications more implicit or helped me to improve the structure of this work.

This study would not have been possible without source material from Antonie Wlosok, Latin texts by Jan Waszink or Internet sources produced by Tertullian.org. The Glasgow University Library and its staff provided assistance in terms of help with accounts for electronic journals and requests for requisite publications. The Caldwell County Public Library in Lenoir (NC) with its inter-library loan system also obtained Latin or Greek texts that made my research possible and more efficient. To them, I am eternally grateful.

I would briefly like to explain why Lactantius has been chosen as a test case for an ancient Latin writer, who thought of God as Father. While it seems that numerous early church writers conceived God as Father in a metaphorical sense, the Lactantian concept of divine paternity seems to hold promise for additional studies in view of his contention that God is

Father in a number of senses and primarily in terms of his status as Lord (*dominus*). Lactantius is accustomed to call God "Father and Lord" (*pater et dominus*). This vocabulary is used in the context of Roman notions such as *paterfamilias*, *pater patriae* and *pater* or *patria potestas*. Lactantius also stresses the eschatological character of God's paternity in the final book of his *Divine Institutes* (*Divinae institutiones*). While modern theology has articulated and expanded our knowledge of God's eschatological fatherhood, this study proposes that the Lactantian concept illuminates elements of God's future paternity that may be useful to those engaging in historical theology.

List of Abbreviations

ABD	*Anchor Bible Dictionary*
AJPh	*American Journal of Philology*
ANE	Ancient near East
ATR	*Anglican Theological Review*
BDAG	Bauer, Danker, Arndt, Gingrich Greek-English Lexicon
CCSL	*Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina*
CPh	*Classical Philology*
CQ	*Classical Quarterly*
CR	*The Classical Review*
CSEL	*Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*
DI	*Divine Institutes*
DSS	Dead Sea Scrolls
Epitome	*Epitome of the Divine Institutes*
HTR	*Harvard Theological Review*
HJ	*Heythrop Journal*
ITQ	*Irish Theological Quarterly*
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JECS	*Journal of Early Christian Studies*
JEH	*Journal of Ecclesiastical History*
JR	*Journal of Religion*
JRS	*Journal of Roman Studies*
JTS	*Journal of Theological Studies*
LCL	*Loeb Classical Library*

L-N	Louw & Nida's *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains*
LSJ	Liddell, Scott and Jones Greek-English Lexicon
MSS	Manuscripts
NT	New Testament
OED	*Oxford English Dictionary*
OLD	*Oxford Latin Dictionary*
OT	Old Testament
PG	*Patrologia Graeca*
PL	*Patrologia Latina*
RMeta	*Review of Metaphysics*
SC	*Sources Chrétiennes*
SCG	*Summa Contra Gentiles*
SP	*Studia Patristica*
ST	*Summa Theologica*
TDNT	*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (ed. Kittel)
TR	*Theologische Realenzyklopädie*
VC	*Vigiliae Christianae*
Vg	Latin Vulgate
VT	*Vetus Testamentum*
WUNT	*Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament*

Life of Lactantius *in Breve*

Lucius Caecilius Firmianus Lactantius[1] was born circa 250 CE in Proconsular Africa and possibly died at Trier in 325 CE.[2] Arnobius of Sicca evidently taught Lactantius the art of rhetoric while the latter resided in Africa, although historians from time to time dispute this point.[3] Lactantius also wrote a number of literary works, the first of which he entitled the *Banquet*, which is no longer extant.[4] He further composed a document in hexameter prose entitled *Journey from Africa to Nicomedia* and a pamphlet *De mortibus persecutorum*.[5] Finally, it appears that Lactantius authored his most memorable work *Divinae institutiones* circa 311 CE in order to confront verbal and physical aggressions directed against the Christian faith by Emperor Diocletian.[6] McGiffert considers *Divinae institutiones* "the most ambitious work published by a Latin Christian before the time of Augustine."[7] Lactantius markedly demonstrates his ability to make a persuasive case for the Christian faith in this apologetic treatise. Moreover, he exhibits uncharacteristic erudition in this notable work.

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[1] A number of MSS contain the *praenomen* Lucius and the *nomen* Caecilius (Caelius) for Lactantius (his Christian name). See Charles Thomas Cruttwell, *A Literary History of Early Christianity Including the Fathers and the Chief Heretical Writers of the Ante-Nicene Period*, 2 volumes (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1893), 2:642.

[2] Cruttwell (Ibid. 2:643) suggests that Lactantius was born in Africa. Antonie Wlosok prefers the date 250 CE for his birth date. See "Lactantius, L. Caelius Firmianus (ca. 250-325)," in *Theologische Realenzyklopädie* (*TR*), ed. Robert Horst Balz, et al., 36 volumes (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1976-2004), 20:370. However, A. C. McGiffert states that the details of Lactantius' death are unknown. See his text *A History of Christian Thought*, 2 volumes (New York and London: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1933), 2:44.

[3] See *Epistle* 70.5; *De viribus illustribus* 80; Lactantius, *Divine Institutes*, trans. Anthony Bowen and Peter Garnsey (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2003), 283, note 8.

[4] Johannes Quasten, *Patrology*, 4 volumes (Utrecht-Antwerp: Spectrum, 1950-1986), 2:392-393; Hans von Campenhausen, *The Fathers of the Church*, combined edition (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1998)*,* 2:62. Use of the numerals 1 or 2 in the footnotes before the page numbers will refer to the Greek or Latin fathers respectively in Campenhausen's combined edition.

[5] Barry Baldwin, "Lactantius," in *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, ed. Aleksandr Petrovich Kazhdan, 3 volumes (New York and Oxford: 1991), 2:1168.

[6] See H. A. Drake, *Constantine and the Bishops*: *The Politics of Intolerance* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 141-148; Charles A. Gieschen, *Angelomorphic Christology*: *Antecedents and Early Evidence* (London: Brill, 1998), 197.

[7] *History of Christian Thought*, 1:45.

Lactantius eventually departed from Africa at the behest of Diocletian (284-304 CE) to assume the position of *rhetor Latinus*[8] in Nicomedia.[9] However, he did not fare well as an instructor of rhetoric since rhetorical training apparently was not an esteemed commodity at that time; nor was it a lucrative profession at any time.[10] Therefore, Lactantius' pecuniary resources rapidly depleted. He subsequently undertook the task of writing theological documents in order to sustain himself materially and advocate the Christian religion.[11] Nevertheless, this accomplished student of Arnobius still maintained his position as professor of rhetoric until fateful events dictated otherwise.

In 303 CE, persecution directed against Christians by Diocletian forced the African apologist to relinquish his prestigious chair as *rhetor Latinus*.[12] Lactantius accordingly departed from Bithynia (modern-day Turkey) circa 305-306 CE and in time became the tutor of Constantine the Great's son, Caesar Crispus (*De vir illustribus* 80).[13] While tutoring Crispus, Lactantius persisted in the composition of apologetic treatises, thereby attempting to emulate Marcus Tullius Cicero (*Epistle* 58.10; 70.5).[14] Lactantius possibly never learned Greek for this reason: he presumably acquired his familiarity of Greek philosophy by reading Cicero or Seneca

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[8] *DI* 3.13.12; 5.2.2. George A. Kennedy notes that five of the major Latin writers taught rhetoric prior to becoming Christians. These *rhetores* were Tertullian, Cyprian, Arnobius, Lactantius and Augustine. See *A New History of Classical Rhetoric* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 264-265.

[9] Quasten, *Patrology*, 2:393; Campenhausen, *Fathers*, 2:62; Otto Bardenhewer, *Patrology*: *The Lives and Works of the Fathers of the Church*, trans. Thomas J. Shahan (Freiburg im Breisgau and Saint Louis: Herder, 1908), 203; Wlosok, "Lactantius," in *TR*, 20:370; John Anthony McGuckin, *The Westminster Handbook to Patristic Theology* (Louisville: The Westminster John Knox Press, 2004), 202; McGiffert, *History of Christian Thought*, 2:44; Timothy David Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981), 13.

[10] *De viribus illustribus* 80. See H. I. Marrou, trans. George Lamb, *A History of Education in Antiquity* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1956), 284.

[11] Quasten, *Patrology*, 2:393.

[12] Lactantius evidently witnessed the razing of Nicomedia's city church. See *Historia ecclesiastica* 8.2.1-4; *De mortibus persecutorum* 12; *DI* 5.2.2; Henry Chadwick, *The Church in Ancient Society*: *from Galilee to Gregory the Great* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 191; Hugo Koch, "Der 'Tempel Gottes' bei Laktantius," *Philologus* 76 (1920): 235-238. Lactantius recounts the steps that Diocletian took to remove "eloquence" from Nicomedia in *De mortibus persecutorum* 22. Compare Drake, *Constantine and the Bishops*, 117-118.

[13] See Quasten, *Patrology*, 2:393, Bardenhewer, *Patrology*, 203, Wlosok, "Lactantius," in *TR*, 20:371.

[14] There are fourteen extant MSS for writings of Lactantius dating from the fifteenth century (Quasten, *Patrology*, 2:394). Additionally, it is not unusual to see historians affixing the moniker "Christian Cicero" to Lactantius because of his rhetorical prowess. See Henry Wace and William C. Piercy et al., *A Dictionary of Early*

(two illustrious Stoics in antiquity).[15] Nevertheless, while the lacuna concerning Greek writings seems to manifest itself in the Lactantian corpus, Bowen and Garnsey believe that Lactantius actually had first-hand knowledge of Greek and even quoted texts written in the Hellenic language.[16] *Divinae institutiones* 1.6 evidently supports this view.[17]

In conclusion, successors of Lactantius did not consider him a profound thinker, especially respecting theological matters. It is possible that he denies either the existence or at least the distinct personality of God's Holy Spirit; he evidently identifies the Spirit of holiness (*spiritum sanctificationis*)[18] with the Father or the Son.[19] Immediate evidence of Lactantius' pneumatology, however, does not survive in written form. But in view of his "unorthodox" Christology and pneumatology, an oft-heard criticism is that "he was not a theologian" (*theologus non erat*).[20] Modern-day research nonetheless mitigates this negative evaluation.[21]

Christian Biography and Literature to the End of the Sixth Century A. D.: W*ith an Account of the Principal Sects and Heresies* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1999), 639; Bowen and Garnsey, *Divine Institutes*, xi.

[15] See Campenhausen, *Fathers of the Church*, 2:63-64; *DI* 2.8.23; 1.17.3. Compare T. B. de Graff, "Plato in Cicero," *Classical Philology* 35 (1940): 143-153.

[16] Bowen and Garnsey, *Divine Institutes*, 65, note 11.

[17] *Oracula Sibyllina* (Prologue). See Johannes Geffcken, *Die Oracula Sibyllina* (New York: Arno Press, 1979), 1-5.

[18] See Romans 1:4 (*Vg*) for the expression "Spirit of holiness" (*spiritum sanctificationis*).

[19] See Quasten, *Patrology*, 2:407; J. A. McGuckin, *Handbook*, 203; *Epistle* 84.7; *Comm in Gal ad 4.6* (Jerome).

[20] Wace and Piercy, *Dictionary of Christian Biography*, 639. See Pierre Champagne de Labriolle, *History and Literature of Christianity from Tertullian to Boethius* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1968), 207; Quasten, *Patrology*, 2:405-406.

[21] Bowen and Garnsey, *Divine Institutes*, 5; Lewis Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*: *An Approach to Fourth Century Trinitarian Theology* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 71.

Introduction

Metaphor and Divine Paternity: The Concept of God the Father in the *Divinae institutiones* of Lactantius (250-325 CE)

A. The Focal Point of Study

This study's focal point is the Lactantian concept of God the Father in the light of classical and contemporary metaphor theory. Accordingly, it has four primary goals: (1) This investigation will determine the possible conceptual or ecclesiastical antecedents that motivated Lactantius to apply the paternal metaphor "Father" to God; (2) it will explore what Lactantius and other Christian writers possibly mean by "Father"; (3) moreover, this study will scrutinize how Lactantius conceives the relationship between the Father and the Son; (4) it will probe the eschatological significance that "Father" possibly has for Lactantius.

The introductory portion of this study is structured as follows. First, it is necessary to provide an overview of Lactantian studies. In the overview, a marked contrast between common preoccupations of patristic scholars or historians and the focus of this work will be established. Second, the overview will supply an outline of Lactantius' conception of God the Father. In that portion of this investigation, the seeming heterodox Christology of Lactantius will be contextualized. Third, a synopsis of each chapter contained in this study will be furnished. In contrast to other works that have elected to research non-theological aspects of the early apologist's work, this study will scrutinize Lactantian thought pertaining to God the Father. Its chief aim is to ascertain whether Lactantius employs "Father" as a metaphor for God rather than as a proper name for an immutable and eternal distinction of the triune Godhead. Furthermore, this study proposes that by using the divine epithet "Father" as a metaphor, Lactantius apparently downplays the role of gender in his conceptualization of God. It is possible that Lactantius believes that gender is not an intrinsic property of God or a category of being whose primordial

exemplar is divine. Therefore, while it might not be possible to apodictically discern Lactantian intent regarding divine gender, this investigation will argue that at the very least Lactantius is not preoccupied with the reputed gender of God the Father when he employs this venerable concept.

B. An Overview of Lactantian Studies

Paul McGuckin remarks that literary or historical studies "inordinately outweigh the amount of theological research that Lactantius has been able to attract."[22] It appears that scholars generally are more interested in culling historical data rather than theological notions from the *oeuvre* of Lactantius.[23] One historian who approaches *Divinae institutiones* from a historical perspective is Elizabeth DePalma Digeser.[24] She corroborates McGuckin's observation by portraying Lactantius as a fervent defender of the Christian faith, who apparently had an instrumental role in shaping Roman governmental policy under the suzerainty of Constantine the Great (ca. 275-337 CE). While Digeser does not entirely neglect the Lactantian doctrine of God in her study, it perceptibly is not her investigation's chief focus. As opposed to God-talk, Digeser primarily concerns herself with historico-political motifs.[25]

Arne Søby Christensen,[26] on the other hand, probes the Lactantian treatise *De mortibus persecutorum* in order to assess significant epochal details relating to the Constantinian era. Christensen largely concentrates on the applied historiography or provenance of *De mortibus* as well as the literary influences that molded the document. Yet, in the manner of other studies regarding Lactantius, Christensen devotes limited attention to Lactantian theology or, more

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[22] Paul McGuckin, "The Christology of Lactantius," *SP* 17.2 (1982): 813-820.

[23] Timothy David Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981); idem, "Lactantius and Constantine," *JRS* 63 (1973): 29-46; Mary L. Carlson, "Pagan Examples of Fortitude in the Latin Christian Apologists," *CPh* 43 (1948): 93-104.

[24] Elizabeth DePalma Digeser, *The Making of a Christian Empire*: *Lactantius and Rome* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2000), 32-33. See the comparable study by E. A. Drake, *Constantine and the Bishops*. An exception to the general rule of not examining Lactantian theology is Antonie Wlosok, *Lactanz und die philosophische Gnosis*: *Untersuchungen zu Geschichte und Terminologie der gnostischen Erlösungsvorstellung* (Heidelberg: C. Winter, 1960), 232-246.

[25] Bowen and Garnsey (*Divine Institutes*, 3) consider possible Lactantian influence on Constantinian policy to be a matter of speculation.

[26] A.S. Christensen, *Lactantius the Historian*: *An Analysis of the De Mortibus Persecutorum* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 1980).

specifically, to the Lactantian concept of God the Father. In fact (as Widdicombe notes) patristic studies in general have paid scant attention to questions regarding God's fatherliness.[27] But this study will attempt to compensate for the scarcity of patrological studies related to divine fatherhood. Nevertheless, in contrast to Widdicombe's text (which studies the divine fatherhood doctrines of Origen and Athanasius), the salient focus of this analysis will be a Christian rhetorician from Africa and his working concept of God the Father.

This study will distinguish itself from Widdicombe's important work since it focuses on theologians in the West rather than the East. Moreover, this investigation corrects a tendency found in Widdicombe's study, namely, the proclivity for using the term "metaphor" in reference to God the Father without defining the operative term or explaining how one reaches the conclusion that Father is a metaphor without begging the question. It may very well be the case that early church writers use "Father" metaphorically. However, one needs to define what the terms "metaphor" and "Father" possibly mean, then explain the implications of both terms accompanied by an epistemic justification for the determination that "Father" is metaphorical over against being a literal or essential term of predication. Another problematic aspect of Widdicombe's text is his intentional decision to avoid examining the broader social or intellectual context of the Greco-Roman milieu in his study of divine paternity. This study's contention is that the socio-historical and intellectual context of the ancient Mediterranean world provides a utile matrix against which the Christian notion of divine paternity may be analyzed.

Before proceeding to an exploration of the Lactantian concept of God the Father and exploring what part metaphor possibly plays in his thought, we must note that one notable exception to the aforementioned studies has been the historical work undertaken by Antonie Wlosok. While she certainly has focused on the historical details or social context of Lactantius in her writings, Wlosok has not been remiss in theological matters when investigating Lactantian

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[27] See Peter Widdicombe, *The Fatherhood of God from Origen to Athanasius*, revised edition (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000, 1. He has written three other journal articles concerned with divine fatherhood: "Justin Martyr and the Fatherhood of God," *Laval Theologique et Philosophique* 54 (1998): 109-126; "Fatherhood and the Conception of God in Early Greek Christian Literature," *ATR* 82.3 (2000): 519-536; "The Fathers on the Father in the Gospel of John," *Semeia* 85 (1999): 105-126. It is evident that Widdicombe has been preoccupied with early Greek Christian writers as opposed to ancient Latin thinkers. Conversely, the present study chiefly discusses Latin church writers.

thought. In the appendix (*Anhang*) of *Laktanz und die philosophische Gnosis*, she documents the literary evidence for "*die Gottesprädikation pater et dominus bei Laktanz*."[28] One illuminating aspect of Wlosok's appendix is the proposal that numerous Lactantian passages suggest that there is a utilization of the *paterfamilias* concept. Lactantius evidently appeals to this ancient Roman social arrangement in order to elucidate his notion of the dominion and paternity of God (*Divinae institutiones* 1.6.4; 4.2.6; 6.24.4; *Epitome* 2.2; *De ira Dei* 19.6). The study by Wlosok is rare in terms of its thematic focus since it examines the topic of divine paternity in a patristic context. Most ecclesiastical studies have not followed Wlosok's lead.

As indicated above, most historians analyzing the Lactantian corpus exhibit a predilection for the non-theological aspects of his work. They usually concede the graceful eloquence of Lactantius[29] or his patent ability to rebuff ideological onslaughts mounted against the Christian faith; or scholars laud the natural facility of Lactantius to sway eminent political leaders in favor of the church.[30] But not every writer extols the virtues of Lactantius. Notably, Jerome (340-420 CE) and a number of contemporary scholars[31] have called into question his proficiency as a theologian or Christian thinker.[32] Some ecclesiastical historians alternately describe the African *rhetor* as shallow, naïve, or inept in the matter of articulating sound Christian doctrine.[33] For instance, Hagenbach states: "Unfortunately, the quality of his [theological] thought does not

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[28] See *Laktanz und die philosophische Gnosis*, 232-246.

[29] See Hans Lietzmann, *A History of the Early Church*. trans. Bertram Lee Woolf, 2 Volumes (Cleveland and New York: Meridian Books, 1961), 1:174; Bardenhewer, *Patrology*, 203-204; Marcia L. Colish. *Medieval Foundations of the Western Intellectual Tradition*: *400-1400* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1997), 14; Quasten, *Patrology*, 2:393-394; Paul McGuckin, "Christology of Lactantius," 813; Campenhausen, *Fathers of the Church*, 2:64; W. H. C. Frend, *The Rise of Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 451. Cf. Jerome's *Epistle* 70.5.

[30] Digeser, *Making of a Christian Empire*, 37-39.

[31] Jerome writes: Utinam tam nostra confirmare potuisset quam facile aliena destruxit (*Epistle* 58.10). See Bardenhewer, *Patrology*, 203.

[32] Colish refers to Lactantius' "rather sketchy grasp of Christian theology" (*Medieval Foundations*, 14). See Ermin Francis Micka, *The Problem of Divine Anger in Arnobius and Lactantius* (Washington, D. C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1943), 100; Labriolle, *History and Literature of Christianity*, 199. Basil Studer, *Trinity and Incarnation*: *the Faith of the Early Church*, trans. Andrew Louth (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1993), 191 calls Lactantius a "simpleminded theologian."

[33] See Bowen and Garnsey, *Divine Institutes*, 5. For what appears to be a balanced assessment of Lactantius, see Robert L. Wilken's *The Spirit of Early Christian Thought*: *Seeking the Face of God* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 297. He acknowledges the Lactantian lack of theological depth, but still points out that Lactantius had insights that eluded other ancient apologists.

correspond to the excellence of its expression."[34] Lactantian theology purportedly is "an isolated phenomenon" of ancient Christianity that "has always been regarded as heterodox."[35] Yet, Hagenbach's negative assessment of Lactantian thought may lack requisite subtlety or nuance and it is possibly at variance with the extant historical data available to modern students of ecclesiastical history. Consequently, there are likely three substantial reasons for critically assessing his evaluation of Lactantian theology.

Firstly, one already witnesses doctrinal phenomena in Latin theology that resembles the christology or paterology of Lactantius.[36] Hippolytus of Rome (c. 160-236 CE)[37] evidently thought of the Logos as "a created being to whom divinity had been arbitrarily and temporarily assigned."[38] Hippolytus in all likelihood does not affirm the eternal generation of the Son and even refers to him as a "creature," although speech relating to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit admittedly was somewhat fluid in his day.[39] Tertullian also believes that the Son is "derivative" or ontologically subordinate to the Father[40] but he is not alone in this regard since "Fourth-

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[34] K. R. Hagenbach, *A Text-Book of the History of Doctrines*, 2 volumes (New York: Sheldon and Company, 1861-1862) 1:244. While Jerome appears to downplay Lactantius' skill as a theologian, he states regarding Lactantian eloquence: Vir omnium suo tempore eloquentissimus, quasi quidam fluvius eloquentiae Tullianae. See Bardenhewer, *Patrology*, 203-204. Jerome (*Epistle* 84.7; *Comm in Gal ad* 4.6) also contends that Lactantius denied the personality of the Holy Spirit in a Lactantian work that is no longer extant entitled *Letters to Demetrianus*. Jerome thus believed that Lactantius was not well versed in the Scriptures (Quasten, *Patrology*, 2:407). But for an opposing interpretation of Jerome's words, see Bowen and Garnsey, *Divine Institutes*, 5.

[35] Hagenbach, *Text-book*, 1:244. Alois Grillmeier contends: "Methodius of Olympus, Lactantius and an unknown preacher on the 'three fruits of the spiritual life' would seem to be much nearer to the suspicion of Arian heresy." See *Christ in Christian Tradition* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1975 [1995]), 61; Joseph Barbel, *Christos Angelos, die Anschauung von Christus als Bote und Engel in der gelehrten und volkstümlichen Literatur des christichen Altertums. Zugleich ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Ursprungs und der Fortdauer des Arianismus* (Bonn: P. Hanstein, 1941), 181-195.

[36] Frend, *The Rise of Christianity*, 344-346. Reinhold Seeberg, *The History of Doctrines*, 2 volumes (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1977), 1:126, 169-171. R. P. C. Hanson writes that until 355 CE, "subordinationism might indeed, until the dénouement of the [Arian] controversy, have been described as accepted orthodoxy." See *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God*: *The Arian Controversy, 318-381* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), xix.

[37] The present author recognizes that Hippolytus did not write in Latin. However, it seems appropriate to mention him since Tertullian influenced his christology and Hippolytus was part of the church in Rome. Moreover, his christological thought exemplifies that of the apologists who did compose their works in Latin.

[38] Frend, *Rise of Christianity*, 345. *Refutatio* 10.33 probably corroborates this intuition.

[39] Charles Bigg and Thomas B. Strong, *Origins of Christianity* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1909), 392-394; Robert W. Jenson, *The Triune Identity*: *God According to the Gospel* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982), 82.

[40] See Frend, *Rise of Christianity*, 345; Gerald Lewis Bray, *The Doctrine of God* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 130-131. *Adversus Praxean* 9 refers to the Son as a "derivation" (*derivatio*) and "portion of the whole" (*totius et portio*) divine substance. The second part of the construction is probably a wholative or partitive genitive.

century inscriptions [from North Africa] if anything emphasize the subordination of Son to Father."[41] Indeed, few Christians living in North Africa took umbrage with the so-called Arian theology of Donatus (*De viris illustribus* 93).[42] Lactantian paterology or christology thus does not appear to have been an isolated phenomenon in Christian antiquity.[43]

Secondly, the pre-Nicene Christian tradition[44] *tout court* evidently did not supply an unambiguous answer to queries concerning the Son of God's ontological identity or his putative immanent relationship with God the Father (*De Principiis*, *Preface* 2).[45] Norbert Brox recounts that there was no universal definition for the tripersonal God dogma prior to 325 CE, "only rival [triadic] traditions and schemes."[46] Pelikan has even argued that it may not be advisable to think of the pro-Nicene Christians or "heterodox" Arians as diametrically opposed groups since both movements "worshiped" the Son of God in that Arians and pro-Nicenes mutually intoned hymnic praises to Christ while simultaneously lauding his presumed timeless generation from the Father.[47] Arius adjudged Christ as "fully God" despite the fact that he admittedly believed that the Father created the Son from nothing (*ex nihilo*).[48] However one interprets one of the most celebrated doctrinal controversies, it seems that the orthodox pro-Nicene party had not yet disambiguated or formalized its doctrine of Christ or God when Lactantius composed his

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See Edgar G. Foster, *Angelomorphic Christology and the Exegesis of Psalm 8:5 in Tertullian's Adversus Praxean*: *An Examination of Tertullian's Reluctance to Attribute Angelic Properties to the Son of God* (Lanham: University Press of America, 2006), 73-74.

[41] Frend, *Rise of Christianity*, 346.

[42] Ibid.

[43] Admittedly, a number of scholars argue that the subordination of Tertullian and other pre-Nicenes was economic (not immanent) subordinationism. But there is historical evidence that favors either side of the argument. See W. Marcus, *Der Subordinationismus: als historisches Phanomenon* (München: M. Hubner, 1963), 171; Sydney H. Mellone, *Leaders of Early Christian Thought* (London: Lindsey Press, 1954), 178.

[44] By "tradition," we mean "the handing down of Christian teaching during the course of the history of the church, but it also means that which was handed down." See Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition*: *A History of the Development of Doctrine*, 5 volumes (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971-1989), 1:7. The term encompasses orthodox teachings handed down in both the East and the West.

[45] See Gregory J. Riley, *The River of God*: *A New History of Christian Origins* (HarperCollins: New York, 2001), 81; Bowen and Garnsey, *Divine Institutes*, 5.

[46] Norbert Brox, *A History of the Early Church* (London: S. C. M., 1994), 154. See Hanson, *Search for the Christian Doctrine*, xviii.

[47] Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition*, 1:200.

[48] Theodoret, *Ecclesiastical History* 1.4.

apologetic treatises.[49] Therefore, it is problematic to affix the label "heretic" to him; the assignation of this descriptive term (in this case) appears to be anachronistic.

Wilken states that orthodox pre-Nicene Christians typically were inclined to believe that the Son is not "fully God."[50] These early followers of the risen Messiah possibly did not affirm that the Son of God instantiates every divine-constituting property exemplified by the Father.[51] The pre-Nicenes thereby seem to have conceived the Son's divinity as relative rather than absolute; they considered the Son's mode of being God to be (ontologically) dependent on the Father's deity. The pre-Nicenes generally maintained that Christ derives his divine-constituting properties from the Father.[52] Hence, Bulgakov is exceedingly critical of patristic christology. He contends that "cosmological subordinationism" pervades the writings of western theologians in the early church.[53] Therefore, the formative theology of Lactantius on balance is evidently not a solitary phenomenon.

A third reason for not accepting uncritically Hagenbach's evaluation of Lactantian theology concerns ecclesiastical formality. It appears that no conciliar body has ever determined Lactantius' doctrine of Christ or God to be heretical[54] nor is there good reason to believe that he was an Arian (as Hagenbach claims) although Lactantius may not have avoided subordinating Christ to the Father *per essentiam*.[55] Much depends on how one defines "Arianism." It is

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[49] R. A. Greer, "Cicero's Sketch and Lactantius's Plan," in *The Early Church in Its Context*: *Essays in Honor of Everett Ferguson*, ed. Everett Ferguson, et al. (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 1998), 155-174.

[50] Robert Wilken, *The Myth of Christian Beginnings* (London: SCM Press, 1979), 179; Bray, *Doctrine of God*, 130-131. For a contrasting but nuanced viewpoint, see Walter H. Wagner, *After the Apostles*: *Christianity in the Second Century* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), 112.

[51] The expression "divine constituting property" here denotes a characteristic or attribute that constitutes an entity as divine in the unmitigated sense that the entity is (with respect to its being) "God." An analogous expression that Alvin Plantinga employs for God is "great making property." See "A Contemporary Modal Version of the Ontological Argument," in *Philosophy of Religion*: *Selected Readings*, ed. William Hasker, et al. (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 150-163. The present study uses the verbs "exemplify" and "instantiate" interchangeably.

[52] See C. C. Richardson, *The Christianity of Ignatius of Antioch* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1935), 44-45; J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, revised edition (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1978), 125-126. Compare R. P. C. Hanson, *Search for the Christian Doctrine*, 3.

[53] *The Comforter* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 9-15.

[54] See Henricus Denzinger and Adolfus Schönmetzer, S.J., eds., *Enchiridion Symbolorum: Definitionum et Declarationum de Rebus Fidei et Morum*, 36th edition (Freiburg: Herder, 1965), 124.

[55] Hagenbach, *Text-book*, 1:244. See Vincenzo Loi, "Cristologia e soteriologia nella dottrina di Lattanzio," *Rivista di Storia e Letteratura religiosa* 4 (1968): 237-287.

conceptually possible that Lactantius circumvented Arianism (formally speaking) by cognitively formulating a supernatural generation for the Son of God that palpably differed from the christological origin postulated by Arius (250-336 CE): he certainly does not state that God created the Son *ex nihilo* (*Divinae institutiones* 4.8.6-10). Consequently, although Lactantius might be an ontological subordinationist respecting his Christology, he probably is not a formal Arian.[56]

While appraisals of Lactantian theology can be stringent in nature now and again, some historians note that Lactantius was attempting to illuminate the Christian understanding of God the Father and his Son before the church had defined (formulaically or precisely) the transcendent relationship purportedly obtaining between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.[57] At any rate, when judged against the standards of his own socio-historical or religious context, Lactantius may not appear to be inept or heretical since it becomes clear that he reflected on God within a particular early Christian matrix or distinctive ancient cultural milieu. It accordingly seems that Lactantius availed himself of theological, literary or conceptual materials that were accessible to him.[58] Hence, along the lines of other seminal Christian thinkers, one probably should evaluate Lactantius based on the resources that were at his disposal: Lactantius should be appraised with respect to the socio-religious environment wherein he lived, thought, and articulated theological concepts.

Having given an overview of Lactantian studies and scholarly assessments of him, this study will now outline Lactantius' employment of father imagery in speech concerning God. He seems to construe "Father" as a metaphor that delineates God's intimate affinity for his Son and the world. Therefore, it seems that Lactantius does not impute masculinity to God's inner life. The emphasis in the title "Father" is functional rather than ontological. The subsequent portion of this investigation will thus propose that early Christians (including Lactantius) generally

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[56] This investigation will explore the Lactantian doctrine of Christ and its relation to his teaching regarding God the Father in Chapter 6 of this study.

[57] Bowen and Garnsey, *Divine Institutes*, 5.

[58] Emil Schneweis notes that Lactantius adheres closely to the writers of the African Church respecting the content of his apologetics. See *Angels and Demons according to Lactantius* (Washington, D. C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1944), 14. This apologetic approach undoubtedly accounts for Lactantius' theological methods and expressions.

viewed the *paternitas* of God metaphorically; they thought of God as an emblematic Father without reading masculinity into the metaphor.

C. Lactantius and Divine Paternity

The term "Father" appears to be a `metafora.` (*metaphora*) or figure of speech[59] that Christians employ non-literally[60] for the purpose of making relational comparisons between two otherwise disparate concepts: God and human fathers.[61] The rhetorical trope "Father" is a theological expression that manifestly acknowledges God's numerous beneficences (*Apology* 2.6).[62] This figure of speech serves as a transferred application (*Übertragung*)[63] of the nominal term[64] that rational discourse agents commonly apply to males who biologically engender, legally adopt, or sociologically guide progeny in the sensible realm.[65] By means of this metaphor, early Latin Christian writers seem to have elucidated God's generative, compassionate, paedeutic or providential functionality in relation to his firstborn Son and the entire contingent universe.[66] Lactantius makes use of this particular trope in *Divinae institutiones*, *Epitome divinarum* and *De ira Dei*.[67]

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[59] The ambiguous signifier, *metaphora*, generally denoted a tropical figure of speech in antiquity. The Latins used it interchangeably with *translatio*. See George P. Klubertanz, S. J., *St. Thomas Aquinas on Analogy: A Textual Analysis and Systematic Synthesis* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1960), 145-147.

[60] The morphological forms "literal" or "literality" in this study refer to S (a given subject) having or exemplifying a certain property P (e.g. wisdom, beauty or being paternal).

[61] See James 1:17; *Oratio ad Graecos* 4; *Annals* 3.61; *Aeneid* 12.703; *Georgics* 1:328; *Meditations* 10.1.

[62] Galen O. Rowe demonstrates the eminent place that tropes had in ancient rhetoric. Rhetoricians employed tropes to obtain certain effects from their listeners. Moreover, while the Greeks used `tropo,j` to describe a turn of phrase, Latins pressed into service the nomenclature *modus elocutionis*. *Vide* "Style," in *Handbook of Classical Rhetoric in the Hellenistic Period: 330 B. C. – A. D. 400*, ed. Stanley E. Porter (Boston and Leiden: Brill, 2001), 124-129.

[63] *Übertragung* and its derivatives are synonymous with `metafora...` Tim Murphy discusses how Nietzsche employs *Übertragung*. See *Nietzsche, Metaphor, Religion* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2001), 22-23.

[64] The expression "nominal" here signifies a term that functions substantively.

[65] One can find these distinctions in Walter Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ* (New York: Crossroad, 1984), 134-135.

[66] See the entry for "father" in *ABD* 2:1054-1055. William Alston suggests that Father "wears its metaphorical provenance on its face" insofar as "an ideal picture of fathers" is utilized in this instance without the supposition of metaphor or its tropic focus being spelled out in detail. See "Literal Talk of God" in *This Is My Name Forever: The*

This study utilizes "metaphor" to delineate a figure of speech whereby a signifier or phrase designating one entity is applied comparatively (i.e. by suggestion) to another entity, through a process of linguistic transference. Another way of expressing the same idea is to say that "metaphor" refers to an as-if sentential construct that creates new meaning through the articulated enactment of an "unfamiliar identity synthesis" or cross-modal sorting. The signifier may also imply that one conceptual domain (A) maps onto another distinct conceptual domain (B). While there are alternate ways to define "metaphor," this investigation primarily is concerned with the classical definition of `metafora.` and words that semantically overlap with this term. Ultimately, how one defines "metaphor" will depend in large part on the "language game" that one is playing. Quintilian, for instance, explains the sense of *metaphora* in terse words: "*Metaphora brevior est similitudo*" (*Institutiones Oratoria* 8.6.8).[68] Modern theorists, however, are inclined to describe metaphoricity in conceptual terms. This study will not attempt to resolve these intractable problematics but will maintain that metaphor is both conceptual and linguistic: it is both a trope and a conceptual domain.

The present investigation assesses how Lactantius presumably uses "Father" to emblematically represent the God and Father of Jesus Christ (1 Peter 1:3 NRSV).[69] It further ascertains how the Lactantian concept of God as Father contributes to the Christian understanding of divine paternity as a whole. In particular, this study investigates how Lactantius (within *Divinae institutiones*) uses "Father" as a metaphor for God.[70] Based on the classical understanding of `metafora.`, a compound Greek word derived from `meta,` ("across") +

Trinity & Gender Language for God, ed. Alvin F. Kimel Jr. (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 154.

[67] Specific instances are *DI* 2.17.12; 4.4.11; 4.26.29; 7.3.19; *Epitome* 2; *De Ira Dei* 8.

[68] See Heinrich Lausberg, *Handbook of Literary Rhetoric*: *A Foundation for Literary Study* (Leiden, Boston and Köln: Brill, 1998), §558; Richard A. Lanham, *A Handlist of Rhetorical Terms*, second edition (London, Berkeley, and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1991), 100.

[69] Thomas A. Marsh maintains that when Father is applied to YHWH (Yahweh) in the Tanakh (the Christian Old Testament), it "is clearly a metaphor, an image employed to express some aspect or aspects of God's relationship with God's people. It is never here a name for God." See *The Triune God*: *A Biblical, Historical, and Theological Study* (Mystic, CN: Twenty-Third Publications, 1994), 29. The referring expression "Father" occurs approximately 20 times in the Tanakh.

[70] Bardenhewer, *Patrology*, 204. See Arthur L. Fisher, "Lactantius' Ideas Relating Christian Truth and Christian Society," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 43 (1982): 355-377. He observes that Lactantius espouses a paternalistic form of monotheism in which God is like a Father to childlike humans.

`ferein` ("to carry")[71], it seems that one can prudently submit that such figurative language used regarding God probably does not entail an "ontologization of gender" for Lactantius.[72] The divine title "Father" is a figure of speech (*manière de parler*) for the absolute source or parent of all.[73] It does not convey any significative information concerning God's immanent nature, but is part of human discourse about God as the deity unveils Godself in salvation history (*pro nobis* or *quoad nos*).[74] Additionally, the signifier "Father" (as conscripted in *Divinae institutiones* and *De ira Dei*) refers to the Being who generates his only-begotten Son by means of a preternatural act that testifies to God's absolute divine freedom or aseity.[75] One notable feature of Lactantian theology is the belief that God becomes a Father to the pre-existent Logos (*Divinae institutiones* 4.6.1). Lactantius posits two nativities for the Logos, who (according to the Christian tradition) became flesh.[76] He maintains that prior to the creation of the world, God generatively produced the Logos as a celestial spirit entity who later functioned as the exemplary or primordial image of God: "God, in the beginning, before He made the world, from the fountain of His own eternity, and from the divine and everlasting Spirit, begat for Himself a Son incorruptible, faithful, corresponding to His Father's excellence and majesty" (*Epitome* 42).[77] In addition to the supernatural event[78] that Lactantius calls "first nativity" (*prima nativitas*), he suggests that God

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[71] Stanford recounts that the first Greek writer to refer the term `metafora.` to a rhetorical trope is Isocrates (fifth-fourth century BCE) in *Evagoras* 190 D. See W. Bedell Stanford, *Greek Metaphor*: *Studies in Theory and Practice* (New York and London: Johnson, 1972), 3. *LSJ* also lists Isocrates, Aristotle, Epicurus, Plutarch and Demetrianus as examples of ancient writers who employ the term to describe a trope.

[72] Marianne M. Thompson borrows the expression "ontologization of gender" from Miroslav Volf. See *The Promise of the Father*: *Jesus and God in the New Testament* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2000), 181-182; M. Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace*: *A Theological Exploration of Identity*, *Otherness*, *and Reconciliation* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996), 173.

[73] See James 1:17; *Mandates* 1*; Similitudes* 9.12.2; 2 *Clement* 20.5; *De opificio Dei* 2; the entry `path,r` in *LSJ* and the entry for *pater* in Albert Blaise, *Dictionnaire Latin-Français Des Auteurs Chrétiens*: *Revu Specialement Pour le Vocabulaire Théologique* (Brepolis: de Strasbourg, 1954).

[74] See *Octavius* 18; *Adversus Hermogenes* 3.

[75] *DI* 4.6-8; *Epitome* 42.

[76] Seeberg, *History of Doctrines*, 1:170.

[77] Deus in principio, antequam mundum institueret, de aeternitatis suae fonte deque divino ac perenni spiritu suo filium sibi ipse progenuit incorruptum, fidelem, virtuti ac maiestati patriae respondentem (Latin text is *Epitome Divinarum Institutionum*, Eberhard Heck and Antonie Wlosok, 51). Harry Austryn Wolfson notes that Lactantius is the "last of the Fathers, whether Latin or Greek" to speak directly in favor of the bi-stage generation theory of the Logos. See *The Philosophy of the Church Fathers*, volume one (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1956), 197.

[78] The term "event" admittedly is problematic when one is referring to that which takes place in the divine

the Father also generated the Son as a human being during the first century CE. This unparalleled event constitutes the second nativity (*secunda nativitas*)[79] of the Logos:

> For He was twice born: first of God, in the spirit, before the origin of the world; afterwards in the flesh of man, in the reign of Augustus; and in connection with this fact is an illustrious and great mystery, in which is contained both the salvation of men and the religion of the Supreme God, and all truth (*Epitome* 43).[80]

Lactantius thus stresses carefully the historical character of the Son's "second generation," which results in the Son being motherless and fatherless *(amētor et apator)*; motherless with respect to his "first generation" but fatherless concerning his "second generation."[81] Lactantius believes that the second generation of Christ occurred during the reign of Augustus (27 BCE-14 CE).[82] At that time, the Son uniquely manifested salvation and true religion to all humanity.[83]

Based on what Lactantius writes in *Divinae institutiones*, *De ira Dei* and *Epitome Divinarum Institutionum*, one can surmise that he does not think that the Son's first generation is eternal (= timeless) or prior to the world's creation in a logical sense only. More specifically, Lactantius appears to believe that the Father is temporally prior to the Son (a thought possibly espoused by Justin Martyr) as the Son is temporally prior to the world. Yet, to call Lactantius an "Arian" appears somewhat retrocipatory (i.e. backward looking or regressive).[84] For it seems

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sphere. Marsh speaks of the Son's generation or the Spirit's procession from the Father as "eternal events within the Godhead itself" that somewhat account for the timeless emergence of two divine subsistencies (*Triune God*, 148-149). It appears that allowances must be made for analogical language here since Marsh (in harmony with the traditional Christian view of God) insists that God is timeless. Therefore, he contends that a divine "event" does not entail temporality. Richard Swinburne alternatively contends that "event" does imply temporality. See *The Christian God* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 72, 139. Swinburne argues that God is temporal or sempiternal. If language such as "event" is pressed, his view may be preferable as opposed to talk of timeless events occurring in the *ad intra* life of the Godhead. This study will work from the assumption that an event entails temporality.

[79] Tertullian uses the Latin *nativitas* to reference "birth" or to communicate the notion of "generation" (*Adversus Praxean* 11). Alexander Souter notes that the expression *nativitas secunda* can refer to "baptism," but Lactantius employs the terminology to reference the second generation of the Son. Moreover, he seems to have a predilection for the construction *secunda nativitas*. See *A Glossary of Later Latin to 600 A. D.* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1949), 262.

[80] Bis enim natus est: primum de deo in spiritu ante ortum mundi, postmodum in carne ex homine Augusto imperante. Cuius rei praeclarum et grande mysterium est, in quo salus hominum et religio summi dei et omnis veritas continetur (*Epitome*, Heck and Wlosok, 53-54).

[81] See *DI* 1.7.2, where Lactantius speaks of Apollo in similar terms. For the New Testament usage of this vocabulary, see Hebrews 7:3.

[82] The emperor is otherwise known as Octavian.

[83] *DI* 4.8.8.

[84] See Bowen and Garnsey, *Divine Institutes*, 232.

that he may avoid being an Arian in the same way that Tertullian does (*Aduersus Praxean* 5-7): Lactantius may posit an essential generation of the Son from the Father. Additionally, he possibly assumes that the Son emanates (temporally) from the very substance or essence of God without possessing every divine-constituting property that the Father exemplifies since Lactantius evidently affirms that God (the Father) existed alone in time before generating the Son:

> Since nothing existed at the time apart from himself, because the source of full and perfect good was in himself, as it always is, in order that good should spring from him like a stream and flow forth on and on, he produced a spirit like himself, which was to be endowed with all the virtues of God his father. How he did it when there was only himself I will try to explain in my fourth book.[85]

Lactantius possibly speaks of God making or producing his Son within time; prior to the Son's generation or creation, God (the Father) exists alone.[86] Lactantius apparently stands in an early Christian tradition that conceives of God emblematically becoming a Father.[87] The data from ancient Christian history therefore suggests that the designation "Father" (for Lactantius and other pre-Nicenes) might not specify an eternal, necessary, non-contingent or immutable distinction in the triune Godhead. The present discussion will thus demonstrate the integral role that Lactantius might play in understanding the early Latin Christian formulation of God's fatherhood or how the Father relates to the Son. For while post-Nicene writers in both the East and the West demonstrate a penchant for viewing God as inherently generative or inherently relational (*De Decretis* 22),[88] it looks as though writers preceding Lactantius commonly espouse a more dynamic or metaphorical view of God's paternity. Furthermore, although it would probably be injudicious to construe the Latin notion of God the Father in monolithic terms, it seems innocuous to submit that western writers prior to Nicea may have thought that God (in some sense) became a Father, whether God did so from eternity or in time; but the first sense of

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[85] *DI* 2.8.3.

[86] Ibid. 2.8.4.

[87] See *Adversus Hermogonem* 3.4; *Contra Noetum* 10; *Apology* 1.6; 1.12; 1.22 (Justin Martyr).

[88] Athanasius considers "Father" a term that is descriptive of God's essence. See Widdicombe, *Fatherhood of God*, 206; Wilken, *The Spirit of Early Christian Thought*, 105; Ayres, *Nicaea and its Legacy*, 142, 155.

becoming Father would appear contradictory within the confines of Platonic metaphysics or similar theoretical frameworks that define "eternity" in terms of timelessness.

D. Delineation of Methodology

The methodology employed in this investigation is straightforward. The present study is an exercise in historical theology and theolinguistics. Accordingly, it will examine ancient theological documents produced by Lactantius while liberally invoking textual, intertextual, cotextual and contextual features of discourse to apprehend his thought regarding divine paternity. Lactantius consistently grounds his model of divine paternity in scriptural or classical resources at his disposal. Consequently, one goal of this study will be to situate the apologist within a specific discourse universe. This investigation henceforth will reconstruct a plausible ancient thought-world and endeavor to place Lactantius within it. Situational relevance will play an important role in this particular exploration of Lactantian thought. Consequently, the following paragraphs will outline and distinguish five levels of context. For the sake of discussion, one may think of "context" in terms of that which frames a text or discourse.[89]

The term "context" is tantamount to situational relevance; it may denote "the total environment in which a text [or discourse] unfolds."[90] The Latin *contextus* from which "context" derives may refer to the act of "joining together" or interweaving.[91] Barry Sandywell analyzes this concept in terms of five levels: (1) internal contexts; (2) problematic contexts; (3) cotextuality; (4) intertextuality; (5) cultural contexts.[92] Of course, these respective taxonomies do not exhaust the manifold aspects of situational relevance. Nevertheless, as this study progresses,

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[89] See *Rethinking Context*: *Language as an Interactive Phenomenon*, Alessandro Duranti and Charles Goodwin, ed. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 3.

[90] M. L. K. Halliday and Ruqaiya Hassan, *Language*, *Context and Text*: *Aspects of Language in a Social-Semiotic Perspective* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 5.

[91] Duranti and Goodwin, *Rethinking Context*, 3.

[92] See *Presocratic Reflexivity*: *The Construction of Philosophical Discourse c. 600-450 BC* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), 30. Roland Daniel Zimany notes that context encompasses one's cultural and national environment or socio-economic status in *Vehicle for God*: *The Metaphorical Theology of Eberhard Jüngel* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1994), 122.

familiarity with these distinct levels will prove to be indispensable. It is therefore necessary to discriminate between these five situational categories.

(1) Sandywell associates internal contexts with grammatical, semantic or stylistic textual structures, which necessarily encompass analogical or metaphorical speech-acts in theoretical or practical settings. Internal contexts pertain to the mechanics of language or discourse. They make it possible for communicative discourse to obtain by providing a systemic framework for language.[93] (2) The terminology "problematic contexts" describes the situation wherein one relates a given text to questions that the text either addresses or ignores.[94] For example, inquiries that were relevant during the Pre-Socratic period and that are reflected in texts or fragments from that era later became extraneous in the third century (BCE) discourse universe of Athens. Distinctive problematics obtain in particular milieus: cultural exigencies formally determine the material content of abstract problematics. Lactantius therefore concerns himself with specific theological issues or questions. His life situation (*Sitz-im-Leben*) apparently informs the questions that one finds treated or disregarded in *Divinae institutiones*.[95] (3) Cotextuality[96] signifies the literary surroundings (e.g. terms, sentences, paragraphs, chapters and sections) of a text or discourse; the cotext putatively allows a reader to reconstruct (as opposed to deconstruct) a text.[97] Furthermore, it permits discourse to cohere. The cotext or literary context may also determine or clarify the meaning of concepts employed in discourse. (4) Intertextuality may denote the act of referencing texts that possibly relate to discourse units being analyzed or composed. One may classify intertextual effects as "internal" or "external" types, which means that texts pertaining to a given unit of discourse may be written by one author (internal) or

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[93] Sandywell, *Presocratic Reflexivity*, 30; Richard Swinburne, *Revelation*: *From Metaphor to Analogy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 64-65.

[94] Sandywell, *Presocratic Reflexivity*, 30.

[95] Sergius N. Bulgakov illustrates how context shapes the problematics of theological discourse in *The Comforter*, trans. Boris Jakim (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 5-7.

[96] Ernst R. Wendland, "A Tale of Two Debtors: On the Interaction of Text, Cotext, and Context in a New Testament Dramatic Narrative (Luke 7:36-50)" in *Linguistics and New Testament Interpretation*: *Essays on Discourse Analysis*, ed. David A. Black, et al. (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1992), 116.

[97] See Samuel B. Southwell, *Kenneth Burke and Martin Heidegger*: *With a Note against Deconstructionism* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1987), 87-105; Vincent Brümmer, *Speaking of a Personal God*: *An Essay in Philosophical Theology* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 15.

composed by multiple authors (external).[98] Hence, with respect to the subject matter of this investigation, *Epitome Divinarum* and *De ira Dei* are internal effects that intertextually relate to *Divinae institutiones* since Lactantius is the presumed author of all three treatises. On the other hand, works composed by Arnobius or Tertullian are external intertextual effects in relation to the Lactantian treatises. Intertextuality (as defined in this paragraph) will play a vital part in this study. (5) Cultural contexts encompass the socio-religious or political conditions attending a text. They include "the wider, extra-discursive social, institutional, and communicative settings of speech and writing."[99] Therefore, religious or political institutions that obtain at the time that a text is written partly form its cultural context. Scholars have contended that it is not possible to understand ancient texts without being privy to the cultural background that informs them. It then becomes necessary to place Lactantius within a determinate cultural milieu.

In view of this investigation's general thesis, it also seems fitting to employ the tools of ancient and contemporary metaphor theory, systematic theology, classical studies and speech-act theory. Four primary tasks of this study are (a) to define the term "metaphor," (b) ascertain a diagnostic criterion for metaphoricity, (c) situate Lactantius within a specific discourse universe, and (d) illuminate his thought concerning divine paternity. Utilizing ancient and contemporary notions of metaphoricity consequently will be requisite methods for this study. Furthermore, the categories of systematic theology will provide structure to this analysis of Lactantian thought. Additionally, since this investigation endeavors to grasp what Christians intend (phenomenologically) by the term "Father," certain vocabulary that one normally associates with continental thought and linguistics will be indispensable for this study.

The next section outlines the chapters of this study. It provides a rationale for devoting extensive time and space in this work to metaphor theory and the establishment of a rudimentary diagnostic criterion for metaphoricity. Since a primary contention of this tome is that Lactantius

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[98] See Wendland, *Linguistics and NT Interpretation*, 116-117; Daniel Boyarin, *Intertextuality and the Reading of Midrash* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1990), 14. The latter argues that no text is the result of a freely acting "self-identical subject." Boyarin contends that every text is "dialogical" insofar as it doubles back on itself: he argues that each text contains an internal dialogue. The position taken in this study is more akin to Wendland's literary approach in the sense that he clearly seems to affirm the existence of an author while simultaneously insisting that there is no text without intertextuality.

[99] Sandywell, *Presocratic Reflexivity*, 30.

employs metaphorical speech to delineate God's paternity, defining "metaphor" is an essential task for this work. Additionally, it is imperative to ascertain a diagnostic criterion for metaphoricity, that is, a conceptual tool whereby one can determine when a writer or speaker is possibly employing metaphorical speech. Since it is outside the scope of this investigation to set forth an all-encompassing diagnostic criterion for metaphoricity, this study primarily will concentrate on what the term "metaphor" communicated to ancient Greek and Roman citizens and how one can make that determination from a theoretical perspective.

E. Outline of Chapters

Chapter 1 of this investigation initially proffers a stipulative or provisional working definition for the term "metaphor." It conscripts speech-act theory and appeals to Hannah Arendt's analysis of classical metaphorology. The chapter examines the classical definition of "metaphor," then it proffers a diagnostic criterion for recognizing metaphors by using speech-act theory, which emphasizes the role of context in discourse. It is imperative to define "metaphor" and how one goes about recognizing it since very few, if any, patristic studies have performed this undertaking. This aspect of the study will constitute an advance in the knowledge of metaphor theory and its relation to early Christian discourse.

Chapter 2 examines the role that metaphors play in the religious life of the Christian community. In particular, it discusses the Augustinian and Thomistic views of metaphor. The chapter also explores arguments that favor revising the Christian understanding of God as Father, but it presents reasons for preserving paternal metaphors in Christian theolinguistics. Finally, the chapter analyzes how Donald Bloesch employs metaphor theory, and how he distinguishes between symbol, metaphor and analogy. The chapter concludes that metaphor adequately delineates the reality of God, even paternal imagery does not exhaust the Father's reality.

Chapter 3 will outline the Greco-Roman and Judaic influences that possibly shaped Lactantian thought concerning God the Father. It will explore how Stoicism and other antecedent schools of philosophical thought affected Lactantius' understanding of the Christian deity. While

it is clear that Lactantius did not assimilate Greco-Roman thought uncritically, he nevertheless relied upon a number of non-Christian sources from his cultural milieu to rebuff contemporary pagan opponents. This chapter will thus argue that the apologist utilized contemporary metaphorical concepts regarding God's fatherhood. As this study has hitherto indicated, the thought of Lactantius did not develop in a vacuum: Stoicism and Platonism undoubtedly exercised considerable influence on his concept of divine paternity.

Chapter 4 will analyze early Christian views of God the Father. It will provide the evidentiary ground for the contention that Lactantius represents a particular Christian school of thought by reviewing what pre-Nicene Latin writers expressed concerning the (metaphorical) generative correlation between God and His Son as well as how God *qua* Father relates to the created order. The chapter will explore documents composed by Novatian, Minucius Felix, Tertullian of Carthage, Arnobius of Sicca, Cyprian of Carthage, and Hippolytus of Rome while making paterology the salient focus of discussion. The chapter will submit that early Christians have a predilection for viewing God as Father in a metaphorical sense.

Chapter 5 probes the anonymous "God and Father of all" concept. It provides historical evidence that illuminates the *locus classicus* of Lactantius' apophaticism (i.e. a type of negative speech that says what God is not). Additionally, this chapter demonstrates the tenability of a possible nexus between the Lactantian notion of divine paternity and similar concepts that one encounters in Neoplatonism, Middle Platonism, Hermes Trismegistus, and Cicero. It argues that certain notions in Lactantius appear to have an Egyptian provenance by means of Lactantius' use of the *Corpus Hermeticum*. Other possible sources of Lactantian Christology include the Deuterocanonicals and the Tanakh.

Chapter 6 is one of the most important aspects of this study since it explores the vital function that Christology plays in understanding Lactantius' conception of God the Father. This chapter submits that the apologist's view of God's paternity is a dynamic one. That is, while Lactantius affirms God's impassibility to a certain extent, it is evident that his thought functions dialectically vis-à-vis the divine inability to be conditioned, affected or moved by external factors. Lactantius (in continuity with his Latin predecessors) thinks that God becomes a Father

when he generates the Son by means of divine breath. Father (for Lactantius) consequently is a term that does not necessarily designate the immanental essence of God or an eternal distinction in the tripersonal Godhead. Gregory Nazianzus also notes that "Father" is a relation (not a term denoting substance) in *Oration* 29:16. He formulates God's paternity in terms of relationality.

Chapter 7 delineates the nexus that Lactantius envisions between God's fatherhood and divine judgment, between everlasting life and aionian punishment, between divine paternity and eschatology. Lactantius often describes the Father as "indulgent" or lenient in the *Divinae institutiones*. Nevertheless, he argues that God *qua* Father is not only compassionate or indulgent, but he is also severe in that God eternally or everlastingly purposes to exact retribution for wrongs committed in the here and now. However, God grants everlasting beatitude to those who demonstrate gratefulness for the beneficence of divine providence. Nonetheless, besides analyzing God's indulgence and severity, the final chapter will review the issue of provenance for the Lactantian eschatological conception of God the Father by drawing upon the rich and diverse apocalyptic sources that possibly influenced these notions.

Chapter 1

Defining and Recognizing Metaphoric Speech

The lexical meaning of "metaphor" differs from one metaphorologist to another metaphorologist. As Thévenaz suggests, experience indicates that it is often easier to describe (rather than define) some types of phenomena.[100] This observation seems particularly applicable to the denotation or extension for "metaphor."[101] As with art, it seems nearly impossible to define "metaphor" adequately, much less definitively.[102] The term seems to resist all attempts at semantic reductionism. But while most lexemes (minimal lexical units) or signifiers (meaningful linguistic units or patterns) are polysemous in nature,[103] it appears that competing approaches, conflicting ideologies or variant interests are chiefly responsible for the polysemous character of the referring expression "metaphor."[104] Linguists, neuroscientists, philosophers and theologians, *inter alios*, manifestly possess diverse agendas when scrutinizing the alleged properties of

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[100] Pierre Thévenaz, *What is Phenomenology*? ed. James M. Edie (Chicago: Quadrangle, 1962), 29-30.

[101] See *The Ubiquity of Metaphor*: *Metaphor in Language and Thought*, ed. René Dirven and Wolf Paprotté (Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 1985), vii; Werner Abraham, *A Linguistic Approach to Metaphor* (Lisse/Netherlands: Peter De Ridder Press, 1975), 6.

[102] See Donald B. Calne for a discussion of the problems associated with defining art in *Within Reason*: *Rationality and Human Behavior* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1999), 203. John Locke thinks that the human employment of general terms for phenomena such as gold and other similar objects only pertains to the nominal essence of an entity, not its real essence. He defines "the nominal essence of gold" as "that complex idea the word gold stands for, let it be, for instance, a body yellow, of a certain weight, malleable, fusible, and fixed. But the real essence is the constitution of the insensible parts of that body, on which those qualities and all the other properties of gold depend" (*An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* 6.2). For discussions about open definitions and Locke's concept of "nominal essence," see Colin Gunton, *Act and Being*: *Towards a Theology of the Divine Attributes* (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 2003), 95; Nicholas Wolterstorff, *John Locke and the Ethics of Belief* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 34-36; J. L. Mackie, *Problems from Locke* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), 85-100.

[103] Paul Ricoeur writes: "Most of our words are polysemic; they have more than one meaning." See *Interpretation Theory*: *Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning* (Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 1976), 17. Stephen Ullmann also maintains that polysemy fundamentally characterizes human speech in *Semantics*: *An Introduction to the Science of Meaning* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1962), 159.

[104] Peter W. Macky, *The Centrality of Metaphors to Biblical Thought*: *A Method for Interpreting the Bible* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1990), 42. Referring expression means a word (or words) that signifies "an individual entity or multiple entities in order to say something about the individual entity or multiple entities." See Swinburne, *Revelation*, 10.

metaphor. Therefore, it is not astonishing to observe theorists with varied worldviews (*Weltanschauungen*) disparately characterizing metaphorical speech.[105]

This chapter will not seek to classify metaphor definitively or exhaustively. Rather, its purpose is to set forth a working denotation for the operative term as well as a rudimentary diagnostic criterion that one can employ to identify metaphorical uses of speech.[106] The most important task for this chapter is determining the predominant classical denotation of `metafora.`. Nevertheless, it is also vital to examine contemporary metaphor theories that illuminate the ancient ones. In this portion of the current study, a working definition for "metaphor" will be posited by means of reviewing what Lynne Cameron calls "a theory level of [metaphoric] analysis."[107]

A. The Definition of "Metaphor"

Before discussing the manner whereby Lactantius implements the metaphor "Father" when speaking about God, it is essential to render precisely the term "metaphor" (as understood by classical and modern thinkers) and then ascertain an elementary diagnostic criterion for recognizing metaphorical speech. Hence, this chapter will explore two questions: (1) What is a metaphor? (2) How can one determine whether a particular construct is metaphorical?

Contemporary metaphor theorists have fashioned terminology that attempts to clarify explanatory discourse as it pertains to tropic utterances. For example, I. A. Richards introduced the terminology "tenor" and "vehicle" in 1936, but he did not precisely define these categorical terms.[108] While Richards did not set forth his proposed tenor-vehicle categories in a precise

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[105] Colin Gunton notes that in 1964, one author could allude to a book that contained 125 definitions of "metaphor." For Gunton, Aristotle's definition in *Poetica* seems to describe only one facet of metaphor. See *The Actuality of Atonement* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 27-28.

[106] See *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Paul Edwards, 8 volumes (New York: Macmillan, 1967), 1:39.

[107] *Researching and Applying Metaphor*, ed. Lynne Cameron and Graham Low (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 6.

[108] *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* (New York and London: Oxford University Press, 1936), 100-102. See Paul Del Brassey, *Metaphor and the Incomparable God in Isaiah 40-55*: *A Thesis* (North Richland Hills, TX: BIBAL Press, 2001), 3; J. J. A. Mooij, *A Study of Metaphor*: *On the Nature of Metaphorical Expressions*, *with Special Reference to Their Reference* (Amsterdam and New York: North-Holland Pub Co., 1976), 76-79.

manner, however, one tentatively can argue that by "tenor," he meant the "principal subject" (the entity to which a speaker is referring) in a metaphorical structure.[109] On the other hand, Richards' term "vehicle" evidently refers to the "subsidiary subject" (the concept that further describes the tenor); it is that concept to which one compares the principal subject.[110] Hence, in the proposition "God is the Father of Jesus Christ,"[111] the concept "God" is the tenor (principal subject being referenced), while the predicate term "Father of Jesus Christ" functions as the vehicle (subsidiary subject or concept to which God is being compared) that elucidates the tenor.[112] Richards ultimately maintains that linguistic sense results from the "co-presence" of the tenor and vehicle: both the principal and subsidiary subject bring about metaphoric significance through conceptual interaction.[113] He thereby insists that the tenor and vehicle create new meaning, and this approach to metaphor theory has proved to be indispensable for cognitive linguists,[114] although the tenor-vehicle approach is limited in scope since it is not readily applicable to all tropic constructions.[115]

Another technical expression in metaphor theory is "point of similarity" or common domain factor which refers to the intended focus of a metaphorical concept.[116] William Alston contends that when speakers use terms metaphorically, they mean to exploit certain resemblances that putatively obtain between two concepts or terms occurring in a metaphorical

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[109] Richards defines tenor as "the underlying idea or principal subject which the vehicle or figure means" (*Philosophy of Rhetoric*, 97). See *Metaphor and God-Talk*, ed. Lieven Boeve and Kurt Feyaerts (Bern, Berlin and New York: Peter Lang, 1999), 8; Sarah J. Dille, *Mixing Metaphors*: *God as Mother and Father in Deutero-Isaiah* (London and New York: T & T Clark International, 2004), 5 for similar definitions of "tenor."

[110] Ullmann, *Semantics*, 213.

[111] The term "proposition" here simply denotes an assertion (following Nicholas Wolterstorff) or a judgment. William P. Alston, on the other hand, associates the concept "proposition" with the content of what is believed or asserted. See *A Realist Conception of Truth* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1997), 15-22. Swinburne defines "proposition" (in this context) as an "element of claim in what is said" by a token sentence that may be synonymous with another token sentence (*Revelation*, 9). Token sentences are particular instances of sentential types (e.g. "The King is dead" and "Rex mortuus est" are tokens that express the same proposition).

[112] Philip Wheelwright defines tenor as a word's "semantic content" or lexical meaning and vehicle as "a semantic carrier." See *The Burning Fountain*: *A Study in the Language of Symbolism* (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1982), 7. Of course, Richards' concern is linguistic rather than theological.

[113] *Philosophy of Rhetoric*, 96-97.

[114] Cameron and Low, *Researching and Applying*, 13.

[115] Eva Feder Kittay, *Metaphor*: *Its Cognitive Force and Linguistic Structure*, Clarendon Library of Logic and Philosophy (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 16-17.

[116] Murphy, *Nietzsche*, 38.

speech act.[117] The specific resemblance that a speaker or writer makes the focus in a given construct is what one might call the "common domain factor." For instance, when Jesus of Nazareth refers to Herod Antipas as a "fox" (ei;pate th/| avlw,peki), he evidently has specific qualities of the animal in mind, not every unique property (characteristic or attribute) of a fox (Luke 13:32).[118] To be precise, the metaphor "fox" (avlw,phx) that describes Herod is likely based on properties that humans commonly attribute to foxes, whether such attributions are fitting or malapropos. In any event, the particular commonplaces or attributed properties of a fox that Jesus is stressing in Luke's Gospel constitute the so-called point of similarity or common domain factor.

The dominical Sermon on the Mount further illustrates how the point of similarity differs from the tenor or vehicle in metaphor theory. While recounting that renowned public discourse, the apostle Matthew relates that Jesus utilized a metaphor wherein he depicted Christian disciples as "the salt of the earth" (Matthew 5:13).[119] In that particular Matthean account, the disciples referenced by the pronominal "you" (u`meij) function as the tenor; the vehicle is "salt" (to. a[laj) and the point of similarity (i.e. common domain factor) apparently is the preservative quality of salt or its inherent potential to accentuate the taste of food. As opposed to tenor-vehicle terminology, Richard Young employs the language "topic-image." While conceding that other interpretations of the "salt" metaphor are possible, Young prefers to emphasize the seasoning or preservative aspects of the Matthean trope. [120] Just as salt may

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[117] *Divine Nature and Human Language*: *Essays in Philosophical Theology* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989), 22-23.

[118] Luke uses avlw,phx here metaphorically to suggest that Herod is a crafty person (*BDAG* 49). Compare *Pythian Odes* 2.77.

[119] The Greek text of Matthew 5:13 reads: u`mei/j evste to. a[laj th/j gh/j. See Kurt Aland, et al., *The Greek New Testament*: *former editions edited by Kurt Aland, Matthew Black, Carlo M. Martini, Bruce M. Metzger and Allen Wikgren*: *fourth revised edition edited by Barbara Aland, Kurt Aland, Johannes Karavidopoulos, Carlo M. Martini and Bruce Metzger in cooperation with the Institute for New Testament Textual Research, Münster/Westphalia*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1998. This Greek New Testament will subsequently be abbreviated by its common designation UBS4.

[120] Richard A. Young, *Intermediate New Testament Greek*: *A Linguistic and Exegetical Approach* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1994), 236-237. Similar emphases are found in *TDNT* 1:228. Cf. Leviticus 2:13; Numbers 18:19; 2 Chronicles 13:5; Mark 9:50. For an alternative understanding of the metaphor in Matthew 5:13, see Hans D. Betz, *Sermon on the Mount* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 158. He interprets the metaphor as an implicit exhortation to become involved (socially) in the world, based on the genitival th/j gh/j. However, this

function as a preservative or augment the palatability of food (Job 6:6; Colossians 4:6), so the disciples of Jesus preserve human lives by means of the Gospel: they utter expressions of graciousness to bring about salvation vis-à-vis their listeners.[121] Regardless of its speaker intended meaning,[122] however, the imagery used in Matthew 5:13 illustrates three distinctions (tenor, vehicle and point of similarity) that metaphor theorists commonly implement when undertaking research of elocutionary tropes or conceptual metaphors.[123]

Altogether there are five approaches to metaphor that this study will consider: (1) cognitive semantic theory; (2) so-called substitution theory; (3) comparison theory; (4) interactionism, and (5) speech act theory. First, this investigation will discuss cognitive semantic theory, before reviewing the comparison and substitution theories of metaphor. Subsequently it will clarify the details of interactionism prior to analyzing the conceptual relationship between speech act thought and metaphor as such. The cognitive linguists Lakoff and Johnson are most often associated with cognitive semantic theory. Their theoretical model will therefore constitute the focus of section B.

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interpretation places unnecessary weight on the genitival construction that it possibly cannot bear.

[121] The metaphor concerning salt was a common one and apparently did not need much explication for Jesus' original hearers. See Plutarch, *Quaestiones Convivales* 685A; Anna Wierzbicka, *What Did Jesus Mean*?: E*xplaining the Sermon on the Mount and the Parables in Simple and Universal Human Concepts* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 126-127; Petr Pokorný, *Colossians*: *A Commentary* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1991), 187; Ralph Earle, *Word Meanings in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1974-1984), 362; Eduard Lohse, *Colossians and Philemon*: *A Commentary on the Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971). See the entries a[laj and avrtu,w in *BDAG*.

[122] Jerrold J. Katz distinguishes between sentence meaning and "contextual meaning" (utterance meaning). The latter refers to what a speaker intends when uttering a sentence. Utterance or contextual meaning is illocutionary insofar as it is performative or indicative of an accomplishment or act by means of a verbal articulation. See *Propositional Structure and Illocutionary Force*: *A Study of the Contribution of Sentence Meaning to Speech Acts* (New York: Crowell, 1977), 14-15. For a helpful introduction to semantics in general and sentence or speaker meaning, in particular, consult John I. Saeed, *Semantics*, second edition (Malden: Blackwell, 2003), 18.

[123] Rhetoricians traditionally have understood metaphors in terms of tropes or figures of speech. But cognitive linguists tend to construe metaphors as conceptual domains tied to bodily experience. This study assumes that

B. Cognitive Semantic Theory

Besides availing themselves of distinctions such as tenor, vehicle and point of similarity (= common domain factor), cognitive linguists prefer to think of metaphor as the noetic phenomenon that entails understanding one conceptual domain in terms of another conceptual domain.[124] With respect to the metaphoric utterance, "She blew up at me," cognitive semantic theory contends that the CONTAINMENT image-schema[125] is mapped onto anger.[126] One thus envisages anger as liquid stored in a container, along with its various logical entailments.[127] The source domain CONTAINMENT maps onto the target domain ANGER[128] Similarly, the source domain "father" evidently maps onto "God" (target domain) in the metaphorical structure "God is the Father of Israel."

As suggested above, cognitive linguists differentiate between target and source domains. The target domain is the aforementioned "tenor" (principal conceptual subject) of Richards. Conversely, the source domain is what earlier was identified as the "vehicle" (subsidiary conceptual subject).[129] Stated in terms of variables, the target domain of a metaphoric construct is A whereas the source domain is B. Hence, in the conceptual metaphoric utterance "Love is a journey" the abstract signifier "love" functions as the target domain (A); "journey," on the other

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metaphors are both tropes and conceptual domains. Hence, the nomenclature "tropes" and "conceptual domains" in reference to metaphors will be used throughout this investigation.

[124] Zoltán Kövecses, *Metaphor*: *A Practical Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 4; Cameron and Low, *Researching and Applying*, 8-10; Antonio Barcelona, "Clarifying and Applying Metaphor and Metonymy" in *Metaphor and Metonymy in Comparison and Contrast*, ed. René Dirven and Ralf Pörings (Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 2002), 211.

[125] The general convention in cognitive semantic theory is to spell terms that are used for image-schemas with all uppercase letters.

[126] Schema (sch/ma) as used in cognitive semantic theory generally denotes a perennial mental pattern that makes it possible for divergent human experiences to be structured in ordered ways. Additionally, image-schemata can be used as source domains in metaphorical constructs to inform target domains. See Mark Johnson, *The Body in the Mind*: *The Bodily Basis of Meaning*, *Imagination*, *and Reason* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987); *From Perception to Meaning: Image Schemas in Cognitive Linguistics*, ed. Beate Hampe (Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 2005), 1-2; F. Ungerer and H. – J. Schmid, *An Introduction to Cognitive Linguistics* (London and New York: Longman, 1996), 108.

[127] Raymond W. Gibbs Jr., "The Fight over Metaphor in Thought and Language" in *Figurative Language and Thought*, ed. Albert N. Katz (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 114.

[128] Ibid.

[129] Murphy, *Nietzsche*, 37.

hand, represents the concrete source domain (B).[130] It is apt that "love" functions as the target, rather than the source domain since the metaphorical locution "Love is a journey" predicates something concrete about love (an abstract quality).

A metaphor (according to cognitive semantic theory) generally asserts that conceptual domain A is conceptual domain B (e.g. "The Lord is my Shepherd").[131] One domain maps onto another.[132] The expression "mapping" (in this context) refers to systematic correspondences that obtain between the source and target domain.[133] The vocabulary "mapping" stems from mathematics, where it describes the arithmetical correspondence of abstract sets: numerical sets map onto other analogous sets. In the case of metaphors or conceptual domains, however, when one utters the words "God is the Father of Jesus Christ" the respective conceptual domains "God" and "Father" systematically correspond with or map onto one another. The one speaking evidently understands God in terms of the domain "Father."[134] Therefore, metaphor does not merely result from the locutionary act of turning a word or phrase to make comparisons or substitute names; metaphors are structured concepts that influence how percipient subjects experience (amorphous) sensory data.[135] The cognitive semantic model thus distinguishes rhetorical metaphors from experientially structured domains that are cognitive in nature.[136] Lakoff and Johnson[137] argue that metaphors organize perceptions, thoughts and actions; domains

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[130] The target domain is usually more abstract in nature than the source domain. Another example of this phenomenon is "Time (A) is money (B)." By its very nature, time is abstract; money (on the other hand) is concrete.

[131] Kövecses, *Metaphor*, 4.

[132] Murphy, *Nietzsche*, 37; Stephen C. Levinson, *Pragmatics* (Cambridge, UK and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 159.

[133] Kövecses, *Metaphor*, 6-8.

[134] Theorists utilizing the cognitive semantic model tend to regard metaphoric senses as unidirectional, arguing that conceptual transferences only extend from source to target domain (Boeve, *God-talk*, 9). Schopenhauer's metaphoric speech-act "A geometrical proof is a mousetrap" certainly appears to be unidirectional or asymmetric. There seems to be asymmetry in this case since a geometrical proof may be comparable to a mousetrap, but a mousetrap is not analogous to a geometrical proof. Hence, the metaphoric extension "mousetrap" strictly applies to the target, not the source domain. The sense (in this case) is unidirectional. See Nelly Stienstra, *YHWH is the Husband of His People*: *Analysis of a Biblical Metaphor with Special Reference to Translation* (Kampen, the Netherlands: Pharos, 1993), 22; Kövesecs, *Metaphor*, 6.

[135] Dirven and Paprotté, *Ubiquity of Metaphor*, ix.

[136] George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 117.

[137] Ibid. 4.

cohesively structure human experience.[138] Consequently, perceiving subjects are reputedly incapable of forming abstract notions without the cognitive input of metaphors: "Primarily on the basis of linguistic evidence, we have found that most of our ordinary conceptual system is metaphorical in nature."[139] Vanhoozer (following Ricoeur) depicts metaphors as "indispensable cognitive instruments" that enable rational creatures to identify resemblances between entities that otherwise would be imperceptible.[140] The employment of cognitive semantic theory thereby illustrates the tension that exists between conceptual and linguistic approaches to metaphor.[141] Metaphors (according to this model) are viewed as ways of thinking rather than speech stratagems.

Cognitive linguists insist that conceptual domains are aesthetically consistent wholes.[142] Metaphors are supposedly rooted in bodily experience or human imagination.[143] Concepts such as happiness, well-being or life consequently are depicted as being "up" while death, despondency or evil are portrayed as being "down."[144] Lakoff and Johnson accordingly use the terminology "experiential gestalts" to describe metaphors since these conceptual wholes typify structures or patterns associated with persistent forms of human culture, bodily experience or discursivity.[145] Conceptual domains allegedly make it possible for multiple human experiences to cohere respecting natural dimensions such as parts, stages or causes.[146] Moreover, these domains evidently are "culturally coded" (one's culture informs particular domains) and stored

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[138] "The primary function of metaphor is to provide a partial understanding of one kind of experience in terms of another kind of experience" (Ibid. 154).

[139] Ibid. 4. See Murphy, *Nietzsche*, 38-39; Andrew Goatly, *The Language of Metaphors* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), 1. Richards maintains that metaphor "is the omnipresent principle of language," which empirical observation verifies (*Philosophy of Rhetoric*, 92).

[140] Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning in This Text?*: *The Bible, the Reader, and the Morality of Literary Knowledge* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998), 129.

[141] Goatly, *The Language of Metaphors*, 42.

[142] Robyn Carston, *Thoughts and Utterances*: *The Pragmatics of Explicit Communication* (Malden and Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), 355; Kövecses, *Metaphor*, 4.

[143] Antonio Damasio, *Looking for Spinoza*: *Joy, Sorrow, and the Feeling Brain* (Orlando: Harcourt, 2003), 204.

[144] Ibid.

[145] Murphy, *Religion*, 38; Johnson, *The Body in the Mind*, 31.

[146] See Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, 78, 117. Examples of universal human experiences are subsisting in a body or experiencing the force of gravity (Dille, *Mixing Metaphors*, 17).

in long-term memory (LTM).[147] Metaphors thereby acquire a conceptual character, as opposed to a rhetorical one. Kövecses fittingly categorizes two related domains of experience assuming the form "A is B" as conceptual metaphors.[148] Damasio additionally insists that metaphors formed by our cognitive faculties "describe events and qualities in the world."[149] Conceptual domains help us to make sense of bodily experience.

Yet, Lakoff and Johnson's experientialist thought has its critics, some of whom have produced formidable challenges in response to this paradigm. One trenchant criticism of experientialism as an account of metaphoricity is its *prima facie* conflict with Piagetian thought. In particular, the basic theoretical claims postulated by experientialists supposedly are at variance with certain findings of developmental psychology.[150] For instance, Lakoff and Johnson emphasize the image-schema of CONTAINMENT: they argue that metaphoric thinking is biological or rooted in experience.[151] Conceptual structures such as "Gas prices are up" or "Local unemployment rates are down" thus supposedly derive from the early somatic experiences of rational-biological entities.[152] On the other hand, Rakova contends that a child's grasp of CONTAINMENT imagery (e.g. "more is up, less is down") does not appear until the later stages of human development.[153] Additionally, "object permanence" (the ability to understand that objects continue to exist when they are no longer within one's field of vision or perceptible to the senses)[154] takes sufficient time (approximately two years) to develop. The ability to represent oneself as an agent (a subject or doer) as well as the mastery of external reference points (i.e. spatial dimensions such as up-down, left-right) also does not develop until

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[147] Charles G. Morris defines long-term memory (LTM) as the "Portion of memory that is more or less permanent corresponding to everything we 'know.'" See his text *Understanding Psychology* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1993), 211. Murphy (*Nietzsche*, 39), Cameron and Low (*Researching and Applying*, 18) explain the relationship between LTM and metaphor. Metaphor is supposedly coded or preserved in LTM.

[148] *Metaphor*, 4.

[149] Damasio, *Looking for Spinoza*, 204.

[150] Marina Rakova, *The Extent of the Literal*: *Metaphor, Polysemy and the Theories of Concepts* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, and Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 25.

[151] Albert N. Katz, "Figurative Language and Figurative Thought," in *Figurative Language and Thought*, ed. idem (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 32-33.

[152] Ibid.

[153] *The Extent of the Literal*, 25.

[154] Carol K. Sigelman and Elizabeth A. Rider, *Life-Span Human Development*, fourth edition (Australia and Canada: Thomson/Wadsworth, 2003), 169.

age three or later.[155] The research stemming from developmental psychology consequently seems to militate against the basic theoretical claims of experientialism. Conversely, other evidence suggests that although the ability to grasp CONTAINMENT imagery may be a posterior occurrence in human development, it seems that the subsequent formation of this cognitive imagery is possibly rooted in prior sensory experience.[156]

Regardless of the alleged problematics associated with Lakoff and Johnson's cognitive semantic thought, it appears that rational agents do contemplate noetic objects (including God) by means of metaphoric indirection.[157] But McFague posits the stronger thesis that it is impossible to perceive empirical phenomena or cogitate Kantian "noumena" (*Dinge-an-sich*) apart from metaphoric intercession.[158] Whether the object of intentionality (consciousness) is God, beauty, a rock or tree, rational creatures supposedly make judgments or cognize indirectly by incessantly pressing metaphorical thought into service. Like Nietzsche, McFague exhibits a proclivity for collapsing the standard metaphysical distinction that obtains between metaphor and referential objects.[159] Her theoretical paradigm apparently dictates that all God-talk must be symbolic or non-literal.[160] McFague evidently thinks that God does not objectively exemplify the properties that Christians usually attribute to deity (i.e. God is not actually paternal nor is God ontologically personal).[161] Nevertheless, her "neo-Kantian agnosticism" does not characterize all

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[155] Rakova, *The Extent of the Literal*, 25.

[156] See Lawrence E. Marks, et al., *Perceiving Similarity and Comprehending Metaphor* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 72-74.

[157] Sallie McFague, *Metaphorical Theology*: *Models of God in Religious Language* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982), 16.

[158] Ibid. Immanuel Kant argues that noumena are thinkable, but not knowable. He states that God, freedom and the immortal soul constitute noumena, which legislative or free agents cannot know as things in themselves. See *Critique of Pure Reason* (*Kritik der reinen Vernunft*), trans. J. M. D. Meiklejohn (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 1990), 416-418.

[159] For Nietzsche, see Hannah Arendt, *The Life of the Mind*, one-volume edition (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1981). The one-volume edition of Arendt's work contains two parts with one part titled *Thinking* and the other part entitled *Judging*. In subsequent notes, this study will reference her book by pointing out whether a citation is taken from the *Thinking* or *Judging* part of the one-volume text.

[160] John W. Cooper, *Our Father in Heaven*: *Christian Faith and Inclusive Language for God* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998), 175-176.

[161] For helpful discussions on properties, see Paul Copan and William Lane Craig, *Creation out of Nothing* (Leicester and Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 168; Saul A. Kripke, *Naming and Necessity* (Harvard University Press, 1980); D. M. Armstrong, *Universals and Scientific Realism*, 2 volumes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978).

theorists who espouse a conceptual (as opposed to a linguistic) metaphorology.[162] Despite the prevailing attraction of the cognitive approach to metaphor, however, the principal ancient metaphor theories are the comparison and substitution models.[163] Comparison theory initially will be discussed below; this study will then explore substitution theory.

C. Comparison Theory

Those who advocate comparison theory generally claim that metaphors "help us to make sense of things with which we are initially unfamiliar by making comparisons."[164] Thinking metaphorically (according to this theory) means perceiving similarities between two otherwise divergent objects, events or structures (e.g. "Man is a puppet.").[165] Moreover, comparison theory assumes that metaphorical constructions of the form "S is P" condense the locutionary forms "S is like P." It suggests that metaphorical constructs tend to make implicit comparisons.[166] Comparison theory further suggests that metaphors provide an innovative portrayal of reality by combining "a dialectic of the familiar and the strange."[167] It implies that metaphors are both tools of discovery and lingual stratagems that presage interpretations of human experience in more adequate terms. Additionally, metaphors are iconoclastic in that they now and again

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[162] The "heavily projectionist" tenor of McFague's metaphor theory has been analyzed by Colin Gunton, "Proteus and Procrustes: A Study in the Dialectic of Language in Disagreement with Sallie McFague," in *Speaking the Christian God*, ed. Alvin F. Kimel Jr. (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans, 1992), 65ff. While Gunton contends that McFague's methodology entails agnosticism, John W. Cooper prefers to maintain that McFague is not wholly agnostic since she does somewhat affirm God. See *Our Father in Heaven*: *Christian Faith and Inclusive Language for God* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998), 175.

[163] See Levinson, *Pragmatics*, 151-152.

[164] John Sanders, *The God Who Risks*: *A Theology of Providence* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1998), 15.

[165] See McFague, *Metaphorical Theology*, 15; Robert Sokolowski, *Introduction to Phenomenology* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 171; Ruth C. Duck, *Gender and the Name of God: The Trinitarian Baptismal Formula* (New York: Pilgrim Press, 1991), 14; Mogen Stiller Kjärgaard, *Metaphor and Parable: A Systematic Analysis of the Specific Structure and Cognitive Function of the Synoptic Similes and Parables Qua Metaphors*, Acta Theologica Danica, volume 20 (Leiden: Brill, 1986), 44-45.

[166] Ibid.

[167] Kasper, *God of Jesus Christ*, 93. Sokolowski argues: "Metaphor rearranges the potentials of our sensibility and provokes a new way of perceiving." See his text *Husserlian* Meditations: *How Words Present Things*. Northwestern University Studies in Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1974), 227. The verb "perceive" here means "any unarticulated intuition at all," not just intentional activities such as seeing or touching.

eradicate inadequate construals of lived existence.[168] For instance, tropes occasionally militate against prevailing social institutions,[169] their ongoing maintenance and meaning-constituting plausibility structures (i.e. foundations that legitimate socially constructed worlds).[170] Combes fittingly deems metaphors "dangerous things."[171] They are capable of altering the existing status quo; moreover, communicative agents evidently preserve or slay one another depending on metaphors that comprise social discourse.[172] It also seems that metaphors have the ability to shape one's belief or disbelief in God. Fretheim thus argues that "metaphors matter" when one is formulating a theological system.[173]

In addition to having a sociogenic function (i.e. metaphors have the ability to constitute or influence societal institutions), tropes appear capable of disclosing that which is ineffable, abstract, supersensible or transcendent.[174] The process of phenomenological unconcealing generally transpires by means of a speaker or discourse agent interchanging familiar and strange concepts, nominals or genera in order to make comparisons.[175] This function ultimately plays an integral role in theology or the formulation of speculative thought. For instance, the Gospel of John identifies Christ as "the lamb of God" (John 1:29). The imagery that the author employs conveys profound religious truths that are best understood within the cultural milieu of the Gospel. The "lamb" metaphor probably evokes images of ritual or sin-atoning practices carried out in ancient Israel (Exodus 12:1-13; 29:39-41; Leviticus 3:7; 4:32, 35; 5:6-7; 9:3; 12:6-8;

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[168] Kasper, *God of Jesus Christ*, 93.

[169] Listen to Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "*Letter from a Birmingham Jail*" (Columbia, MD: American Audio Prose Library, 1990) for an example of this phenomenon.

[170] Sanders, *God Who Risks*, 11-12. Authors such as Maureen A. Tilley, *The Bible in Christian North Africa: The Donatist World* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997), 5-7; Peter L. Berger, *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1967), 45-47, Lewis R. Gordon, *Her Majesty's Other Children*: *Sketches of Racism from a Neocolonial Age* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 1997), 38-39 and Richard C. Lewontin, *Biology as Ideology*: *The Doctrine of DNA* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1991), 7 discuss social construction and the legitimating role of plausibility structures.

[171] I. A. H. Combes, *The Metaphor of Slavery in the Writings of the Early Church*: *From the New Testament to the Beginning of the Fifth Century* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 11.

[172] See Kenneth S. Hicks, "Metaphors We Kill By: The Legacy of U. S. Antiterrorist Rhetoric," *The Political Chronicle* (1991): 21-29.

[173] Terence Fretheim, *The Suffering of God: An Old Testament Perspective*, Overtures to Biblical Theology, 14 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 1.

[174] Ibid. 5-12.

[175] Kittay, *Metaphor*, 4.

Isaiah 53:7; John 19:14, 31-37; 1 Corinthians 5:7; Apocalypse 5:6); the Gospel of John does not just utilize "lamb" imagery based on natural properties indigenous to sheep.[176] But one also witnesses the revelatory nature of tropic speech in substitution theories of metaphor. The most celebrated substitution theory is the formulation wrought by Aristotle that section D outlines.

D. Substitution Theory

Substitution theory allegedly originated with Aristotle (384-322 BCE), who was the first western thinker to scrutinize metaphors.[177] One can find his remarks concerning metaphors in *De Rhetorica* 3.1405, *Poetica* 21.1457b and *Topica* 157a. His theory is probably one of the foremost metaphorologies in existence. But how does Aristotle define the signifier "metaphor"? Furthermore, does his concept of "metaphor" (`metafora.`) or "transference" (`evpifora`) possibly influence the Lactantian notion of divine paternity?

Wheelwright points out that the Greek `evpifora` derives from Aristotle, who indicates that metaphor is the "transference" of a name to another *denotatum*.[178] The etymological formation of the word consists of the preposition `epi.` ("over on to") + `fora,` ("movement"). This compound term thereby illustrates the conceptual motion of "transference" that metaphoric speech-acts entail. However, Wheelwright distinguishes epiphoric from diaphoric metaphors. Diaphors move through actual or imagined particulars of experiences, opening new vistas by means of juxtapositions such as "the apparition of these faces in the crowd; Petals on a wet, black bough."[179] These types of metaphors proceed "mediately and through combination of

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[176] Francis J. Moloney, *The Gospel of John*, Sacra Pagina (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1998), 58-59; Gerald L. Borchert, *John 1-11*, The New American Commentary, volume 25A (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1996), 135-136; David E. Aune, *Revelation 1-5*, Word Biblical Commentary, volume 52A (Dallas: Word Books, 1997), 367-373, Edwyn Clement Hoskyns, *The Fourth Gospel*, ed. F. N. Davey (London: Faber and Faber, 1947), 176.

[177] Brassey, *Metaphor*, 2. Implicit discussions regarding the subject of metaphors evidently date back to the fifth century BCE, where one finds the nature of metaphoricity being explored in writings by the Presocratics and Stoics. Plato also contributed to the ancient debate on metaphors. See Janet M. Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), 1.

[178] Philip Ellis Wheelwright, *Metaphor & Reality* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1962), 72-73.

[179] Ibid. 78-80.

discrete terms."[180] Conversely, epiphors transfer a name from a concrete object to a more abstract one.[181] Two examples of epiphoric tropes are "God the Father" or "the milk of the Word."[182]

Aristotle thinks that metaphors involve renaming things: "Metaphor consists in giving the thing a name that belongs to something else."[183] His putative substitution theory implies that metaphor entails the transferring of a noun or name (o;noma,) from one entity to another or from one discourse field to another discourse field, as in the proposition "YHWH is my shepherd" (Psalm 23:1).[184] According to the common reading of Aristotle's remarks on metaphor, substitution occurs in a metaphor when a communicative agent employs an ostensibly less precise (but stylistic) term in place of a less stylistic (but precise) term.[185] Hence, in the case of "YHWH is my shepherd," the predicate term functions as an alien referring expression for a non-tropic signifier that precisely conveys the pragmatic intention of the metaphor "shepherd."[186]

Poetica 21.1457b delineates the fourfold manner in which transferred naming may occur. Specifically, metaphors reassign nouns from genus to species ("There lies my ship"),[187] species

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[180] Paul Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*: *Multidisciplinary Studies of the Creation of Meaning in Language*, trans. Robert Czerny (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978), 250.

[181] Wheelwright, *Metaphor and Reality*, 72-73.

[182] Ibid.

[183] *Poetica* 21.1457b 7-8: metafora. De, evstin ovno,mastoj avllotriou evpifora. h; avpo. Tou/ ge,nouj evpi. ei=doj h; avpo. Tou/ ei;douj evpi. to.` ge,noj h; avpo. Tou/ ei;douj evpi.` ei=doj h; kata. to. avna,logon. See *Aristotle's Ars Poetica*, ed. R. Kassel (Oxford: Clarendon Press. 1966).

Vanhoozer describes the Aristotelian notion of metaphor in these terms: "On this standard account, metaphor is a deviant naming, a swerve from literal meaning. In metaphor a name is transferred from its proper place and assigned to a context where it does not belong" (*Is There a Meaning,* 128). Similarly, Richard Nate defines metaphor as "a metasememe" (*Figuren der semantischen Deviation*) that is characterized by a substitution involving similarities. See "Metaphor" in *Encyclopedia of Rhetoric*, ed. Thomas O. Sloane (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 493. Cf. Samuel R. Levin, *The Semantics of Metaphor* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977), 85-86. Henceforth, this study will use metaphor and metasememe interchangeably.

[184] See Lanham, *Handlist of Rhetorical Terms*, 100.

[185] Gerlinde Baumann, *Love and Violence*: *Marriage as Metaphor for the Relationship between YHWH and Israel in the Prophetic Books*, trans. Linda M. Maloney (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2000), 28.

[186] Brassey, *Metaphor*, 3.

[187] James E. Griffiss, *Naming the Mystery: How Our Words Shape Prayer and Belief* (Cambridge, MA: Cowley Publications, 1990), 120.

to genus ("King David has slain ten thousand men"), species to species ("Cleft the water with the vessel of unyielding bronze") or analogically ("the evening of a man's life").[188] Aristotle devotes the most attention to the last kind of nominal transference, which he identifies as `kata. to. avna,logon`. Since this type of naming apparently entails the substitution of nouns, it is evident that the ancient Stagirite conceives of metaphoricity primarily as a word-level, not a sentential or macrostructural (super-sentential) phenomenon.[189] Precision requires that one actually say that Aristotle ultimately views metaphoricity as encompassing the interchanging of objects, terms, names, concepts, signifiers, discourse fields, words or genera for the purpose of renaming objects, terms, names, discourse fields, genera, words, signifiers, and concepts. Nevertheless, his emphasis on word-level phenomena may remain.[190]

Another significant aspect of Aristotelian metaphor theory is the concept of relational proportionality. To appreciate this facet of Aristotle's thinking, it is necessary to begin with the famous observation that the coining of metaphors is a mark of genius.[191] Aristotle writes: "The greatest thing by far is to be a master of metaphor" (*Poetica* 22.1459a).[192] He concomitantly insists that metaphors incomparably provide clarity or winsomeness to literary discourse: they distinguish the accomplished rhetorician from one who is pedestrian respecting style (*Rhetorica* 3.1405a).[193] However, an effective metaphor must correspond (relationally) to that which a speaker or writer applies it. In Aristotelian terms, metaphors must be "proportionate"[194] or befit the respective entities that stand in an analogical relationship to one another.[195] For instance, if

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[188] See *Poetica* 21.1457b; Brassey, *Metaphor*, 2.

[189] Soskice, *Metaphor*, 5. Cicero also places emphasis on metaphor as a word-level phenomenon (*De oratore* 3.38). However, Stanford (*Greek Metaphor,* 7-8) demonstrates that *Rhetorica* 1413a seems to undermine the word-level view posited elsewhere in Aristotle. See *De oratore*, trans. E. W. Sutton and H. Rackham, 2 volumes (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1942).

[190] Ricoeur, *Rule of Metaphor*, 16-17.

[191] V. S. Ramachandran makes a similar argument from a neuroscientific standpoint in *Phantoms in the Brain*: *Probing the Mysteries of the Human Mind* (New York: Quill, 1999), 197-198.

[192] `polu. De. me,giston to. metaforiko.n ei=nai` (LCL).

[193] Metaphors "impart a special charm and grandeur to style" (`au-tai ga.r ma,lista kai. h`donhn sumba,llontai toi/j lo,gioj kai. me,geqoj`). See *On Style* 77-78 quoted in Marsh H. McCall, *Ancient Rhetorical Theories of Simile and Comparison*, LCL (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969), 141-142.

[194] *Rhetorica* 1405b.

[195] Stanford, *Greek Metaphor*, 11.

the metaphorical proposition, "Juliet is the sun"[196] conforms to Aristotle's notion of relational proportionality, then the term "sun" corresponds to the term "Juliet."[197] Similarly, regarding the metaphoric sentential locution, "Righteousness is the scepter of Christ," Aristotle would probably state that the referring-expression "righteousness" corresponds relationally to the referring-expression "scepter," if the construct is proportionate. That is, righteousness is to Christ as a scepter is to an earthly king.

Hannah Arendt endeavors to clarify the Aristotelian concept of proportionality by explaining that metaphors posit a similarity of relation (*ad esse*) between two normally contrasting entities or concepts (e.g. a "scepter" and "righteousness").[198] She argues that the symmetry of metaphorical relations is comparable to a four-term analogy with the form $B:A = D:C$.[199] Therefore, the correspondence of relations pertaining to "Juliet is the sun" lies in the fact that Juliet is to Romeo as the sun is to the solar system. The proportionality thus consists in the stated relations (Juliet:Romeo = the sun:solar system); it does not obtain, *per se*, with respect to the individual objects, names or events that possibly function as meaning-bearing constituents of sentential utterances akin to "Juliet is the sun."[200] Aristotle thus defines a "proportional" metaphor as one that is "always capable of reciprocal transference, and to either of its co-ordinate terms" (*Rhetorica* 3.1407a).

In harmony with Aristotle's definition of a proportional metaphor, Arendt contends that an implied reversibility subsists in Aristotle's metaphorical formula such that $C:D = A:B$.[201] However, the adumbrated invertibility subsisting in the Aristotelian equation for metaphoric

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[196] This locution derives from Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* I.II.3. Most contemporary metaphorologists view this proposition as a metaphor. Roger M. White, however, thinks that this sentential locution regarding Juliet is one element of a metaphor that is dependent on the macrostructural context in which it appears. He argues that the metaphor (in this case) is not exhausted by the subject-predicate construction "Juliet is the sun." See *The Structure of Metaphor: The Way the Language of Metaphor Works*, Philosophical theory (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 321-322.

[197] Cicero argues for his own type of proportionality in *De oratore* 3.162-168. Compare *Poetica* 21.1457b.

[198] Arendt, *Thinking*, 103.

[199] Ibid. But see Roger White (*Structure of Metaphor*, 153), who notes that in mathematics, the common utilization of analogy normally follows the schema $A:B = C:D$. Aristotle's exact words in *Poetica* 21.1457b are: "Analogy or proportion is when the second term is to the first as the fourth to the third. We may then use the fourth for the second, or the second for the fourth." This explains Arendt's schema $B:A = D:C$. Cf. Mooij, *A Study of Metaphor*, 64-65.

[200] Arendt, *Thinking*, 103.

[201] *Poetica* 21.1457b.

relations possibly stems from the nature of sensible images that the philosopher presses into service, namely, emblematic figures such as the cup of Dionysius or the shield of Ares, which are (poetically speaking) visible phenomena.[202] Therefore, it appears that one cannot mentally invert every possible metaphorical construct such that all tropic propositions will exemplify the attribute of proportional symmetry. Metasememes (i.e. metaphors) generally depend on empirical data to make intelligible objects lucid to those existing in the phenomenal realm. For example, with respect to the judgment, "God is a rock," a sensible object which one is able to cognize (a rock) is utilized to disclose something previously unknown regarding a supersensible object (God).[203] One may thus viably ascertain something about God's nature by contemplating the objective properties of a rock: "All our thinking moves from the world to God, and can never move in the opposite direction."[204] But could thought about God ever disclose to rational creatures the ontological nature of a rock? If the phenomenal realm is somewhat analogous to God's essential being, then creation evidently reveals something immanent about the divine. Viewed from this perspective, the conceptual movement from world to God (i.e. from finite effects to the infinite cause) rather than from God to world certainly seems to be tenable (Romans 1:20; Hebrews 3:4). The implied reversibility formula regarding metaphors accordingly does not seem applicable in this case.[205] The relations spoken of in the utterance "God is a rock" are asymmetrical (not convertible); the inherent nature of the relations (God: rock) evidently accounts for their asymmetry. [206]

In view of the observations made concerning implied reversibility, it seems that we can suggest that the principle of unidirectionality (i.e. extensions in metaphoric contructs are one-directional) probably applies to the proposition, "God is the Father of Jesus Christ" because of

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[202] *Rhetorica* 1407a.

[203] Brian Hebblethwaite, *Philosophical Theology and Christian Doctrine*, Exploring the Philosophy of Religion, 3 (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005), 59-60.

[204] Piet Schoonenberg quoted in Catharine Mowry Lacugna, *God for Us: The Trinity and Christian Life* (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1991), 218.

[205] Arendt, *Judging*, 165.

[206] George A. Miller argues that it is "surely false" (at the level of the linguistic expression of similarities) to maintain that just because A is similar to B, B must always be similar to A. This is especially the case where "the linguistic expression of similarities" are under consideration. See "Images and Models, Similes and Metaphors" in *Metaphor and Thought*, ed. Andrew Ortony (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 214-215.

the germane relations mentioned in the utterance. Yet, whether the principle is applicable to this declarative sentence or not, Arendt ostensibly construes Aristotle's theory of metaphor sympathetically when she indicates that his focus is posited relations, not abstract or concrete objects as such.[207] Her suggestion that metaphors disclose supersensible objects properly belonging to the intelligible realm is also worthy of further reflection, especially in view of the fact that this study is concerned with possible transcendent objects of the intellect. The next paragraph thus discusses metaphor in relation to the noetic realm of being.

Arendt insists that speculative thought only reveals itself by means of metaphors.[208] Metaphoric speech bridges the gulf that allegedly demarcates noetic processes from the realm of sensible objects.[209] Without metasememes to rhetorically maneuver phenomena, there would be "no bridge whereby to cross from the minor truth of the seen to the major truth of the unseen" or vice versa.[210] Arendt therefore contends that metaphors revert the contemplative intellect back towards the sensible realm so that the contemplative intellect can disclose its hitherto wholly noetic activities to rational datives of manifestation (i.e. centers of awareness) existing in the phenomenal realm of appearances.[211] Based on her reading of Aristotle and Kant, Arendt prefers to associate "metaphor" with "the transition from one existential state, that of thinking, to another, that of being an appearance among appearances."[212] She postulates that abstract *relata* forming metasememic constructs allow thought concealed to become thought revealed. That is to say, rational agents apparently make the existential transition from the notional to the empirical

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[207] Examples of *abstracta* are numbers, sets, propositions or properties that bear no causal relationship to concrete entities or to other *abstracta*. Concrete objects (on the other hand) stand in a causal relation to other entities. God, angels, rocks and chairs (in this restricted sense) are *concreta*. They stand in a cause-effect relationship to cosmic entities. However, abstract objects are causally inefficacious (Copan and Craig, *Creation out of Nothing*, 168-170).

[208] Arendt, *Thinking*, 103.

[209] Cristina Cacciari, "Why Do We Speak Metaphorically: Reflections on the Functions of Metaphor in Discourse and Reasoning" in *Figurative Language and Thought*, 121-122.

[210] Ernest Fenollosa quoted in Arendt, *Thinking*, 106. See Ullmann, *Semantics*, 215-216. He categorizes metaphors into four groups, one of which is metaphors that "translate abstract experiences into concrete terms." The other groups are anthropomorphic metaphors ("the two lungs of the church"), animal metaphors ("All men are dogs") and synaesthetic metaphors ("He has such a warm voice").

[211] Arendt, *Thinking*, 106.

[212] Ibid.

level of existence by positing metaphors that stand in analogical relation to one another.[213] Arendt's reading of Aristotle's substitution theory through a Kantian-Heideggerian template probably explains the uniqueness of her construal. This particular approach to substitution theory provides a logical basis for the view that metaphor is the *sine qua non* of theolinguistics. Without rational creatures deploying metaphors that are relationally proportionate to one another, it would probably be factually impossible to bridge the chasm that evidently subsists between the seen (= creatures) and the unseen (= God), the sensible and the intelligible.

The paragraphs above imply that substitution theory, while having a limited scope, does have some relevance for theolinguistics. In order for concepts regarding God to be communicated, it seems that rational creatures have no recourse but to employ metaphorical imagery in their discourse regarding God. However, one weakness of substitution theory is its emphasis on word-level phenomena since it appears to claim that metaphors are substitutes for more precise, but less ornate terms. Yet, metaphors do not only decorate sentential locutions; they inform, elucidate or bridge otherwise complicated notions.[214] But a modified substitution theory has been influential since Aristotle. Additionally, Max Black has developed the interaction theory of metaphor that will be discussed in section E which represents an advance in our thought concerning metaphors.

E. Interactionism

Black formulated his interactive metaphorology during the mid-1950s, whereby he suggested that metaphors create new meanings between tenor and vehicle by means of interacting concepts.[215] Black insisted that resemblances associated with the tenor and vehicle do not exist prior to tenor-vehicle interaction; notional similarity is a result of the interplay that occurs

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[213] Ibid. 103.

[214] Another limitation of substitution thought is its apparent insistence that metaphors are deviant names for ontic entities; a view that has been questioned by contemporary theorists (Zimany, *Vehicle for God*, 53).

[215] See Max Black, "More about Metaphor," in *Metaphor and Thought*, 37; Kittay, *Metaphor*, 13.

between two conceptual subjects.[216] Black modified the work of Richards by defining the tenor as the "primary subject" in contrast to the term "principal subject."[217] On the other hand, he conceived "vehicle" in terms of the "secondary subject" as opposed to Richards' "subsidiary subject."[218] Black later maintained that metaphors systematize one's view of the primary subject in relation to the secondary subject: the latter functions as a conceptual lens for the former.[219] The two subjects (primary and secondary) are not denotational objects but connotational notions; they are intensional in nature rather than extensional.[220] Black contends that metaphor as such thus involves contemplating a primary notional subject through a secondary notional subject and discovering possible incongruities or similarities by means of these hitherto disparate concepts (e.g. "Man is a wolf"). Consequently, one recognizes a metaphorical construct by observing the contradiction that arises between two conceptual subjects ("man" and "wolf") interacting with one another.[221] Not only do the individual concepts in Black's model interact or create new meaning, however, they both emphasize and suppress certain ideas. For instance, when a speaker utters the locution "Man is a wolf," the supposed ferocity of wolves is made prominent, whereas the altruism commonly manifested among wolves is suppressed.[222]

Another salient characteristic of Black's metaphorology is his theory of associated commonplaces (e;ndo,xa).[223] Black insists that metaphors such as "Man is a wolf" create

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[216] See Dille, *Mixing Metaphors*, 6-7; Max Black, *Models and Metaphors*: *Studies in Language and Philosophy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1962), 25-47.

[217] Kjärgaard, *Metaphor and Parable*, 84-86.

[218] Dille, *Mixing Metaphors*, 6; Black, *Models and Metaphors*, 37.

[219] Stienstra, *YHWH is the Husband*, 24; Mooij, *A Study of Metaphor*, 79; Mary Gerhart and Allan Russell, *Metaphoric Process*: *The Creation of Scientific and Religious Understanding* (Texas Christian University Press, Fort Worth, 1984) 104.

[220] Kjärgaard (*Metaphor and Parable*, 86-87) clarifies Black's strategy by explaining that he believes metaphors of the form "A is B" assume the linguistic-grammatical structure "Subject-Predicate," but the logical-grammatical structure "Subject1-Subject2- (Predicate2)." Therefore, from a logical-grammatical standpoint, one is able to reconstruct the metaphor "Man is a wolf" thus: (1) primary subject, (2) secondary subject, (3) secondary predicate which alludes to a system of "associated commonplaces" or e;ndo,xa. Black holds that the secondary predicate represents systemic e;ndo,xa implied by the secondary subject.

[221] van Nappen in Boeve, *God-talk*, 97.

[222] Stienstra, *YHWH is the Husband*, 23.

[223] Max Black, *Models and Metaphors*, 41-42; Stienstra, *YHWH is the Husband*, 22; Kittay, *Metaphor*, 31, Mooij, *A Study of Metaphor*, 79.

meaning by virtue of the qualities appended to a wolf (the secondary subject).[224] The associated commonplaces that the metaphor evokes do not have to be factual, only readily evoked in a particular culture.[225] Therefore, Dille maintains that one needs to possess knowledge of cultural presuppositions that obtained in the ancient near East respecting childbirth or parenting to understand specific OT metaphors.[226] Preapprehensions that communicative agents hold in common facilitate recognition of that which is metaphorical.[227] Consequently, hearing the word "father" in a determinate setting generally evokes particular experiences or associations, whether these commonplaces are positive or negative, representative or non-representative of a given actual state of affairs.[228] Moreover, the noetic association of commonplaces is evidently bi-directional.[229] The proposition "Man is a wolf" not only calls to mind culturally perceived attributes of a wolf; it also evokes properties commonly imputed to the generic subject "man."[230] Black's associated commonplaces fundamentally amount to Aristotelian e;ndo,xa or "current opinions shared by members of a certain speech-community." [231]

Black also distinguishes between the focus and the frame of a metaphor.[232] The focus refers to the term in a metaphorical utterance that a speaker or writer employs non-literally.[233] Frame applies to a sentential construction (that assumes the form "A is B") that creates a nexus between the primary and secondary subject.[234] Moreover, the frame effectively constitutes the focal term's context.[235] An example of how "focus" and "frame" interact is "The human mind is

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[224] Duck, *Gender and the Name of God*, 15.

[225] Dille, *Mixing Metaphors*, 24.

[226] Ibid.

[227] Duck, *Gender and the Name of God*, 15; Black, *Models and Metaphors*, 40.

[228] Thompson contends that associations evoked by a term like "father" is based on particular experiences, not some idealized or universal concept of paternity. See *Promise of the Father*, 18-19.

[229] Max Black, *Models and Metaphors*, 40-44.

[230] Swinburne (*Revelation*, 47) is somewhat critical of Black's model for the reason that it evidently applies to subject-predicate sentential constructions only and does not fully spell out how context accounts for the focus of particular metaphorical constructs. Furthermore, not all metaphors assume the syntactical form "S is P."

[231] See Kittay, *Metaphor*, 32. Aristotle uses the lexeme e;ndoxoj to oppose what is necessarily true over against that which communities or individuals generally accept as factual. Cf. the entry for e;ndoxoj in LSJ.

[232] Gregory W. Dawes, *The Body in Question*: *Metaphor and Meaning in the Interpretation of Ephesians 5:21-33*, Biblical Interpretation Series, volume 30 (Leiden and Boston: 1998), 28-29.

[233] Ibid. See Max Black, "More about Metaphor," in *Metaphor and Thought*, 28.

[234] See Gerhart and Russell, *Metaphoric Process*, 104; Dawes, *Body in Question*, 29.

[235] Ricoeur, *Rule of Metaphor*, 87.

a lethal weapon." The noun phrase "lethal weapon" is the focus while "the human mind" (in this context) constitutes the frame.[236] The amalgamation of focus and frame is what comprises a metaphor for Black.[237]

Being aware of the commonplaces associated with metaphors assists one in discerning which speech acts of a communicative agent are direct or indirect, which ones are metaphorical and which are literal. Yet, Black issues a caveat with regard to metaphoric constructs. He ultimately thinks that an indefeasible diagnostic criterion for metaphoricity does not—probably cannot—exist: "Every criterion for a metaphor's presence, however plausible, is defeasible in special circumstances."[238] Nevertheless, Black seems to believe that associated commonplaces function as suitable criteria for determining latent metaphoricity in sentential locutions. While an indefeasible criterion for determining the presence of metaphoricity evidently does not exist, employing the concept of associated commonplaces may provide an effective but fallible tool for ascertaining metaphorical speech acts.

The present discussion reveals that master tropes (i.e. metaphors) can be defined in various ways.[239] Soskice, for instance, prefers to portray metaphor as "that figure of speech whereby we speak about one thing in terms which are seen to be suggestive of another."[240] Hence, she emphasizes the lingual nature of metaphor, characterizing it as a "figure of speech" that involves discoursing about one entity in ways suggestive of another entity (e.g. "YHWH is my shepherd"). Arendt, on the other hand, thinks that metasememes make veiled cogitation accessible to the phenomenal realm, so that thought is capable of functioning as an appearance in the midst of sensory phenomena. Nonetheless, the definition most critical for this study is that which Aristotle ascribes to *metaphora*: "a transferring to one word or name the sense of another."[241] Similarly, Cicero conceives the word "metaphor" in terms of *verbi translatio* (a

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[236] Using Max Black's schema, one could formulate the metaphoric construction thus: SSP.

[237] Ricoeur, *Rule of Metaphor*, 87.

[238] Max Black, "More about Metaphor," in *Metaphor and Thought*, 36.

[239] David A. Black, *Linguistics for Students of New Testament Greek: A Survey of Basic Concepts and Applications* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995), 135.

[240] Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language*, 15.

[241] See the entry for `metafora.` in *LSJ*.

linguistic sign that undergoes change respecting sense or reference).[242] One can understand this point by analyzing his instructions concerning literary devices, vocabulary, style and syntax. The directives contained in *De oratore* actually elucidate classical metaphor theory by illuminating the manner in which some ancient rhetoricians construed *metaphora*. Moreover, Cicero facilitates apprehension of the theoretical concepts possibly utilized by Lactantius as the latter endeavored to systematize his thoughts about God the Father.

F. Metaphor in Cicero and Lactantius

In *De oratore* 3.152-155, Cicero exhorts orators to embellish otherwise unadorned vocabulary by pressing into service archaic words, neologisms and metaphors. He recounts that it was the inherent poverty or deficiency of language, which originally caused agents of discourse to employ metaphors with a certain degree of liberality (*quem necessitas genuit inopia coacta et angustiis*).[243] However, skilled orators ulteriorly began to wield metaphors "for the sake of entertainment" or pleasure (*sic verbi translatio institua est inopiae causa*, *frequentata delectationis*).[244] Employing metaphors thus became a form of rhetorical ornamentation in the classical tradition which had the explicit goal of training rhetoricians to speak extemporaneously.[245]

Not only have those who specialize in the art of oratory used metaphors for literary effect, but Cicero also states that rustics customarily have availed themselves of tropic figures.[246] He accordingly indicates that metaphor is a fundamental aspect of human experience; all rational

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[242] *De oratore* 3.155. Quintilian (*Institutio oratoria* 8.25) also speaks of metaphors in the following way: "We borrow figures and metaphors from the most decadent poets, and regard it as a real sign of genius that it should require a genius to understand our meaning" (A corruptissimo quoque poetarum figures seu translations mutuamur, tum demum ingeniosi scilicet, si ad intelligendos nos opus sit ingenio). See *The Institutio Oratoria of Quintilian*, trans. Harold Edgeworth Butler, 4 volumes (London: W. Heinemann, 1921), 3:190-191. Cf. Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language*, 6-7.

[243] Kittay, *Metaphor*, 1; Stanford, *Greek Metaphor*, 35.

[244] *De oratore* 3.155.

[245] See Appendix A in this study.

[246] Cicero recounts: Nam . . . etiam rustici dicunt (*De oratore* 3.155).

creatures employ tropes to communicate ideas with clarity or distinctness.[247] Metaphors (by means of transferred significations) evidently accomplish what "proper terminology" (*verbo proprio*) cannot.[248] Metaphoric figures of speech assert relational similarities between two otherwise disparately structured notions such as "wolf" and "man."[249] Cicero aptly states that one may consider metaphoric speech "a sort of [linguistic] borrowing" (*hae translations quasi mutations sunt*).[250] By virtue of rhetorical devices, communicative agents are able to speak in an unequivocal manner. Consequently, metaphors have the effect of disambiguating common or "proper" speech.[251]

It is clear that Cicero is faithfully preserving the antecedent thought of Aristotle, namely, "It is from metaphor that we can best get hold of something fresh."[252] He fittingly exhorts those trained in the art of declamatory speech to avail themselves of metasememes frequently (*ut translatis utamur frequenter*).[253] But while the classical account of metaphoricity emphasizes the substitution of one term for another term or concept, it would probably be less than accurate to characterize the theories of Aristotle or Cicero as substitution metaphorologies.[254] Aristotle seems to imply that rational agents cannot think without the use of metaphors.[255] Cicero also maintains that metaphors—in addition to ornamenting human speech or transferring conceptual terms, names or genera—serve to illuminate human concepts expressed in discourse.[256] It

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[247] Stanford, *Greek Metaphor*, 36.

[248] Metaphors sometimes function as tools of communication. See Thomas G. Sticht, "Educational Uses of Metaphor," in *Metaphor and Thought*, 475-485.

[249] *De oratore* 3.155-156.

[250] Ibid.

[251] George Caird argues that when metaphor is understood in a proper light, it "is a lens through which we see things we would otherwise miss." See *The Language and Imagery of the Bible* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1980), xxiv. Lakoff and Johnson also contend that metaphor is useful for partially comprehending that which is incapable of being comprehended exhaustively, namely, transrational phenomena such as human feelings or aesthetic experiences. Metaphor is imaginative rationality (*Metaphors We Live By*, 193).

[252] *Poetica* 22.1459a5-8. See McCall, *Ancient Rhetorical Theories*, 50.

[253] *De oratore* 3.201.

[254] Contra Feyaerts and Boeve, *God-talk*, 7. See Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning*, 128-129; Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language*, 10-14.

[255] Averil Cameron notes that "an essentially cognitive view of metaphor as the substitution in discourse of one idea for another to produce new understanding" occurs in Aristotle. See *Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire*: *The Development of Christian Discourse*, Sather Classical Lectures, volume 55 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 9.

[256] *De oratore* 3.152-155.

appears that even persons who are untutored in the science of public discourse use metasememes to communicate notions that matter-of-fact terminology is simply unable to convey. Therefore, both the urbane and the rustic utilize metaphors to make difficult concepts intelligible to other phatic agents.[257]

Lactantius undoubtedly possessed an intimate knowledge of Ciceronian metaphorology.[258] His formal training in rhetoric and copious quotes alluding to Cicero indicate that Cicero is Lactantius' "principal dialogue partner"; his works evidently provided Lactantius with rhetorical tools to defend the Christian faith.[259] It is therefore with good reason that Renaissance humanists speak of Lactantius as the Christian Cicero.[260] Even more significantly, it appears that one tentatively can propose that Lactantius ostensibly uses "Father" as a structural metaphor within an apologetico-rhetorical context.[261] Nevertheless, how does this paternal trope function as a trope in Christian discourse? What elements of the term allow one to describe it as "structural"?

The referring expression "Father" is possibly structural in that it cohesively organizes an aspect of bodily human experience into a conceptual domain, which by definition is a *Gestalt*.[262] The divine title also is structural for the reason that it constitutes a foundational Christian symbol.[263] Hence, Roland Frye implies that the theological import conveyed by "Father" could

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[257] Ibid. 3.155.

[258] Lactantius demonstrates an awareness of metaphor as a rhetorical tool: "In the two second areas of north and south there is a metaphor of life and death [*figura vitae ac mortis*], because life depends on warmth but cold is the context of death" (*DI* 2.9.10). Cf. Ibid. 4.17.15. The Latin *figura* may denote: "type, example, allegory; allegorical meaning" (Souter, *Glossary of Later Latin*, 147). The term may also refer to a figure of speech or trope (*Institutio oratoria* 8.25). See Richard A. Muller, *Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological Terms*: *Drawn Principally from Protestant Scholastic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1985), 118.

[259] See Frances Young, "Christianity," in *The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Political Thought*, ed. Christopher Rowe and Malcolm Schofield (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 655; Digeser*, Making*, 57.

[260] See R. M. Ogilvie, *The Library of Lactantius* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), 69; Carolinne White, *Early Christian Poets* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), 27.

[261] See Peter Garnsey, *Ideas of Slavery from Aristotle to Augustine* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 223; Wlosok, *Laktanz und die philosophische Gnosis*, 232-233.

[262] Kövecses, *Metaphor*, 33-34.

[263] Father and Son are structural metaphors (Frye, "Language for God and Feminist Language," in *Speaking the Christian God*, 42). They are also foundational symbols, word pictures or images that ground Christian belief.

become vacuous, if Christians decide to repudiate this structural metasememe.[264] The paternal designation adumbrates God's beneficences or how he providentially relates to his worshipers: "Fatherhood is strictly a symbol or metaphor for God's relationship to his people."[265] Specific remarks in *Divinae institutiones* indicate that Lactantius views "Father" as a structural metaphor in that it is a foundational Christian symbol. This position will be demonstrated fully in subsequent chapters of this study. However, before outlining the Lactantian view of God the Father, this work will undertake an examination of context and its role vis-à-vis metaphor. The present chapter has already discussed four prominent metaphorologies. It will now review and elucidate speech-act theory in the capacity of a contemporary metaphorology; in particular, the speech-act theories espoused by Searle and Austin will be explored.

Apprehending the intricacies of speech-act thought is crucial since this study will use the theory to proffer a diagnostic criterion for metaphoricity. In addition, speech-act theory will be employed to clarify the function of "context" as it relates to phatic agents. Traditionally, metaphor theorists have taken two distinct approaches to formulating diagnostic criteria for metaphor recognition. These well-defined methods respectively have been (a) the pragmatic and (b) the semantic approaches to language. However, Kittay indicates that the two purportedly divergent methods are actually complementary relations because it seems hard to formulate diagnostic criteria for metaphoricity without appealing to both semantic (the meaning of linguistic signs in the abstract) and pragmatic (the meaning of linguistic signs in context of discourse) factors.[266] The expression "pragmatics" has reference to non-linguistic factors that elucidate the implied meaning of a locutionary construct.[267] Speech act theory tends to emphasize pragmaticity over against semanticity; it stresses the context of discourse or utterance.[268] Speech act theory underscores pragmatic aspects of discourse by emphasizing the salience of context in metaphor recognition. Therefore, while investigating the performative

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[264] Ibid.

[265] Hammerton-Kelly quoted in *Speaking the Christian God*, 88.

[266] Kittay, *Metaphor*, 10-11.

[267] Accessible introductions to this subject include George Yule, *Pragmatics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 3-4; Stephen C. Levinson, *Pragmatics* (Oxford and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

[268] Strictly speaking, speech act theory is "a hybrid" since it is partly semantic and partly pragmatic (Katz, *Propositional Structure*, 33).

nature of speech, this study will analyze the role that "context" plays in the cognitive act of recognizing a metaphor. Initially, however, the following section (G) will disambiguate the lexical import of "context" as this terminology is employed in the present investigation.

G. Context and the Detection of Metaphorical Employment

Albert Katz identifies a number of "heuristic cues" that signal the presence of metaphoricity in discourse: (1) predicative violations of category membership;[269] (2) unusual thematic usages of verbs; (3) discourse contexts.[270] This section will be preoccupied with the role that discourse contexts play in the act of recognizing metaphoric speech. Other studies on metaphor theory also accentuate the saliency of context in connection with metaphor recognition.[271] One relatively informative analysis of context-dependency and metaphor is Josef Stern's *Metaphor in Context*.[272] Stern's work lucidly accounts for the role that context plays in the cognitive detection of metaphorical tropes. The next two paragraphs consequently discuss his theory of the relationship between metaphor and context.

Stern posits a semantic account of metaphors. His study proposes that there is a point of similarity between metaphors, demonstratives and indexical terms (e.g. "I," "he," "she," "here," "there" and "this"). Indexicals deictically reference specific linguistic objects in varied speech contexts; it appears that both indexicals and metaphors are context-dependent.[273] Stern thus

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[269] Examples include "My car is a lemon" or "YHWH is a husband."

[270] Albert N. Katz, et al. *Figurative Language and Thought* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 22.

[271] See Kittay, *Metaphor*, 101-104.

[272] *Metaphor in Context* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2000), 10-11.

[273] Deictic expressions usually "point" by means of lingual forms. Some philosophers talk about indexicals in terms of true demonstratives ("he," "she," "his," "her," and "that") and pure indexicals ("I," "today," "tomorrow," "actual," "present," "here," and "now"). See the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (http://www.seop.leeds.ac.uk/entries/indexicals/); Yule, *Pragmatics*, 9; William F. Hanks, "The Indexical Ground of Deictic Reference" in *Rethinking Context*, ed. Alessandro Duranti and Charles Goodwin (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 43. Hanks illustrates the characteristic features of deictic expressions (i.e. indexicals) by appealing to examples such as "here" or "over there." Moreover, since the referent (that toward which an indexical points) of a deictic form can change with the context (as is the case with "I" and "over there"), he points

implicitly acknowledges that there also seems to be a pragmatic element involved in metaphorical constructs.[274] Two such pragmatic features of discourse are the *Sitz-im-Leben* (vital life situation) and the "koinonoetic context" (a shared social situation) of phatic agents.[275] Knowledge of how language functions in its real-life setting over against a background of shared assumptions or beliefs (koinonoetic context) is therefore crucial for the detection of metaphoricity; semantic and pragmatic competences are both integral aspects of formulating a diagnostic criterion for metaphoricity.[276]

Stern rigorously develops his theoretical account of metaphor and context-dependency by juxtaposing deictic expressions and metaphors.[277] He subsequently alludes to the significance of being familiar with the mechanics of a particular lexis and its multi-tiered discourse features: "Metaphors do not function in isolation. They exist in both a rhetorical context and a cultural context."[278] Consequently, it would seem to follow that the detection or recognition of metaphorical locutions requires intimate knowledge of a specific koinonoetic environment or vital life situation; metaphors (if they are semantic) are not only semantic.[279] Precisely speaking, being conversant with determinate social, cognitive, political, rhetorical, intellectual or religious contexts (*inter alia*) should enable a communicative agent to discern whether a speaker or author belonging to a given phatic community is employing metaphorical speech. It is consequently essential to acquire a deeper understanding of the term "context" with respect to the act of metaphor recognition. One tool that seems to elucidate the role of context in metaphor

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out that indexicals are also termed "shifters." For a similar account of indexicals and a reference to "shifters," see Ricoeur, *Interpretation Theory*, 13.

[274] Stern, *Metaphor in Context*, 113-116; Antonio Calcagno, "Metaphor in Context" (Book Review) *RMeta* 55.1 (2001): 162-164.

[275] Young, *Intermediate New Testament Greek*, 264.

[276] Ibid. Swinburne, *Revelation*, 43.

[277] *Metaphor in Context*, 13-14.

[278] Ibid.

[279] See Wayne C. Booth, Metaphor as Rhetoric," in *On Metaphor*, ed. Sheldon Sacks (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 51-53; Sokolowski, *Husserlian Meditations*, 229. Contexts help signal metaphors (Kövecses, *Metaphor*, 6). Swinburne also insists that "metaphorical senses" are created by contexts (*Revelation*, 157). For example, the Nicene Creed's expression "light from light" (fw/j evk fwto,j) is metaphorical; the Son of God is not the type of light that is composed of waves and particles (Ibid). Geir Hellemo further demonstrates how the post-Nicenes continually attempted to elucidate the metaphor "light from light." See *Adventus Domini*: *Eschatological Thought in 4th-Century Apses and Catecheses* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1988), 35-37.

recognition is the form of speech-act theory formulated by John Searle. Searle makes distinctions between institutional facts, brute facts and constitutive rules. His distinctions seem to illuminate the term "context." The following paragraphs will fittingly examine the speech act concepts posited by Searle.

Institutional facts differ from brute facts in that the former are ontologically subjective, but sociologically objective; the latter, conversely, are not dependent on individual or corporate (= collective or shared) intentionality for their existence.[280] They appear to be ontologically objective: "Brute facts require no human institutions for their existence."[281] Searle defines facts (brute or institutional) as "conditions in the world that satisfy the truth conditions expressed by statements."[282] He construes "facts" as truth makers. Accordingly, the atomic weight of hydrogen is a brute fact that objectively satisfies certain truth conditions related to the proposition "The atomic weight of hydrogen is 1" while "These loaves on the table are showbread" constitutes an assertion that is institutionally factual.[283] More specifically, the utterance regarding showbread is only a genuine datum, Searle would probably insist, if and only if a determinate social group has invested certain loaves of bread on a particular table with a designated status-function "showbread."[284] Correspondingly, the rules associated with games like cricket, football, basketball, and golf apparently are the result of corporate intentionality: discourse communities valorize these games by means of "we-intentions." Vanhoozer thus

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[280] Searle, *The Construction of Social Reality* (New York: Free Press, 1995), 27. Searle derives the language of "brute facts" from Elizabeth Anscombe. His delineation of such facts are evidently limited to physical mind-independent truth makers.

[281] Ibid. 2. Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning*, 250; Steven Pinker, *The Blank Slate*: *The Modern Denial of Human Nature* (New York: Viking, 2002), 65.

[282] Searle, *Construction of Social Reality*, 211.

[283] The present author is not suggesting that the proposition concerning showbread is only an institutional fact. But, at the very least, the claim regarding showbread is an institutional fact. If Judaism (along with its arrangements for worship or atonement) had never existed, then "showbread" (as it is currently known) would never have existed. Showbread (i.e. the bread of presence) is alluded to in Exodus 25:30; 40:22-23; Leviticus 24:5; 1 Samuel 21:5-6; Hebrews 9:1-5. For its significance in the ancient tabernacle or temple life, see Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 23-27*: *A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, The Anchor Bible (New York and London: Doubleday, 2000), 3B:2091-2101; Martin Noth, *Leviticus*: *A Commentary* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1965), 176-178.

[284] See Searle, *Construction of Social Reality*, 2; idem, "Reality and Social Construction," *Anthropological Theory* 6.1 (2006): 81-88.

contends that sports games are products of human valorization.[285] Their respective status-functions depend on the representational system of a given speech community and its collective intentionality. As such, they are institutional facts; institutional facts are a particular subset of social facts.[286]

Searle defines "constitutive rules" in terms of procedures that allow determinate activities to obtain in society. Constitutive regulations both undergird and make it possible for institutional facts to subsist. The primary function of constitutive rules is to ensure "X counts as Y in context C."[287] Of course, Searle qualifies the conditions under which X counts as Y in C; he believes that one factor determining the status-function of X is corporate intentionality or we-intentions.[288] Hence, employing Searle's reasoning, immersion or sprinkling could not count as baptism nor could the wearing of rings count as an outward sign of marriage nor could a kiss count as a greeting (or departure symbol) without constitutive rules (Ruth 1:9; Psalm 2:12; 1 Corinthians 16:20; 1 Thessalonians 5:26).[289] Alternatively, a kiss could not count as an act of betrayal unless constitutive rules undergirded institutional facts (Matthew 26:48-50). If rules (against a background of shared assumptions) did not make it possible for X to count as Y in C, the aforementioned acts would not bear their respective significations.

Searle makes another distinction between "rules" and "conventions." Conventions are arbitrary social norms, whereas rules do not "permit of substitutability of coextensive

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[285] See Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning*, 244-245.

[286] For a sustained critique of Searle's notion of institutional facts, see Alex Viskovatoff's "Searle, Rationality, and Social Reality," in *John Searle's Ideas about Social Reality: Extensions, Criticisms, and Reconstructions*, ed. David R. Koepsell and Laurence S. Moss (Malden and Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), 7-44. Viskovatoff argues that the collective acceptance of institutions by rational agents is not required in order for institutional facts to exist.

[287] Timothy Ward, *Word and Supplement: Speech Acts, Biblical Texts, and the Sufficiency of Scripture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 79.

[288] Searle, *Construction of Social Reality*, 28, 44; idem, "Reality and Social Construction," 86-87.

[289] The "holy kiss" referred to by the apostle Paul may have been a liturgical act indicative of received forgiveness or a willingness to share in the Lord's evening meal. See Cleon L. Rogers Jr., Cleon L. Rogers III, and Fritz Rienecker, *The New Linguistic and Exegetical Key to the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Pub. House, 1998), 391. In any event, the "holy kiss" probably symbolized love, fellowship and gratitude (Ibid). Cf. Athenagoras, *Plea for the Christians* 32.3. The point most germane for this study is that a social institution (the Christian *ecclesia* in this case) evidently determined that a kiss (X) would count as a "liturgical act" or as a sign of love, gratitude and thankfulness (Y) in context C. One could not arbitrarily substitute this symbol without altering the particular meaning of the act.

expressions *salva veritate.*"[290] Discourse communities cannot by fiat interchange constitutive rules (one with another) and expect to retain the identical truth conditions of determinate norms since "X counts as Y in C" is not a capricious social convention, but a meaning-bearing institutional datum that functions in a specific manner for groups that valorize X, thereby making it count as Y in C. For example, language (*la langue*) is a group phenomenon that functions according to the intentionally defined rules of a determinate collective.[291] Phatic communities establish whether "X counts as Y in context C" respecting speech (*la parole*). Locutions such as "I now pronounce you man and wife" "I will be there tomorrow" or "God is our rock" count as Y in C for the reason that certain social institutions have invested particular sentential constructs with fixed significances or values.[292] Moreover, even written morphemes would probably be non-signifying marks on an inscriptional surface if it were not for constitutive rules that allow particular denotations to supervene on minimal units of meaning (= morphemes).[293] Familiarity with the mechanics of such constitutive procedures plays an indispensable role in ascertaining the communicative aim of distinct speech acts, even those indirect locutionary enactments that deploy metaphorical speech. Discourse agents therefore cannot arbitrarily alter constitutive rules without affecting how X counts as Y in C.

The foregoing exploration indicates that "context" (as this study utilizes it) denotes the relevant circumstances, situations, factors or presuppositions that one must consider in order to discern when a phatic agent is employing metaphorical locutions.[294] Contexts may be historical, linguistic, canonical, social, political, legal, intellectual, cultural or religious.[295] Additionally,

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[290] Searle, *Construction of Social Reality*, 28.

[291] The Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure demonstrated that there is a fundamental difference between *la langue* and *la parole*. *La langue* refers to an abstract system comprised of signs or codes. It denotes language, which is a means of facilitating communication. Conversely, *la parole* refers to the articulation or conscription of a semiotic arrangement such as language in order to produce a message or communicative messages. Consult Saussure's *Course in General Linguistics* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1959), 66; D. A. Black, *Linguistics*, 5; Ricoeur, *Interpretation Theory*, 2-3; Ullmann, *Semantics*, 19.

[292] Saeed, *Semantics*, 221.

[293] See *Aduersus nationes* 1.59.

[294] Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning*, 250; Giuseppe Stellardi, *Heidegger and Derrida on Philosophy and Metaphor: Imperfect Thought* (Amherst: Humanity Books, 2000), 52-53. See the definition for "context" proffered by C. K. Ogden and I. A. Richards, et al. in *The Meaning of Meaning* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1923), 58-59.

[295] See Stern, *Metaphor in Context*, 22. Brassey (*Metaphor*, 6-9) argues that metaphors have to be interpreted in

discourse agents evidently share contexts: they are inherently "koinonoetic."[296] If one does not partake of a given vital context or have intimate familiarity with the constitutive rules of a discourse community, it seems that one will have difficulty ascertaining the presence of tropes uttered by a speaker. Since phatic groups fundamentally determine which linguistic practices constitute verbal acts of metaphoricity, a communicative agent belonging to a phatic group usually can detect easily the occurrence of non-complex metaphors in shared phatic situations.[297] Being familiar with the common presuppositional pool in which an utterance is situated thus appears to constitute one strategy for determining whether a given articulation is metaphorical or not. Yet, how does this recognition process work in practice? What specific methods does a communicative agent need to utilize in order to determine whether a sentential locution (X) is counting as a metaphor (Y) in context C?

Vanhoozer addresses these queries with the assistance of speech act theory, a form of research that philosophers of language began undertaking in the twentieth century.[298] Speech act theory is more concerned with the human enactment[299] of language and less preoccupied with lexical semantics (= word meanings).[300] Individual speech-acts may be locutionary, perlocutionary, illocutionary, interlocutionary (i.e. a speech-act that one addresses to an interlocutor)[301] and direct or indirect.[302] This study will concern itself with perlocutionary, illocutionary and indirect speech-acts in particular. Specifically, the following section will review Vanhoozer's analysis of illocutionary, perlocutionary and indirect speech-acts and define these respective terms.

H. Speech Act Theory

their broader "literary and cultural context." Not only does "cotext" illuminate metaphorical utterances, but the socio-political or religious contexts also facilitates metaphor recognition.

[296] Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning*, 250-251; Stern, *Metaphor in Context*, 117-118. Another expression that illuminates the denotation of "context" is common presuppositional pool.

[297] See Young, *Intermediate NT Greek*, 265.

[298] But see White, *Structure of Metaphor*, 186-187, who is highly critical of speech-act theory.

[299] Definition of "human enactment": to represent in action (i.e. to act out X or Y).

[300] Young, *Intermediate NT Greek*, 265.

[301] See Ricoeur, *Interpretation Theory*, 14-16.

[302] George Yule, *The Study of Language*: *An Introduction* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1985),

John L. Austin began undertaking a form of research known as speech act theory approximately fifty years ago. The publication in which he introduced nomenclature such as illocution or perlocution was *How to Do Things with Words*.[303] For Austin, there is a class of utterances that either have illocutionary force (i.e. accomplish something in the act of saying) or bring about perlocutionary effects.[304] Austin makes a distinction between "illocutions" (classified as performatives) and locutions that lack illocutionary force. He refers to the latter as "constatives," although his study argues that the putative distinction between "constatives" and "illocutions" is misleading.[305] Austin maintains that all sayings have illocutionary force, which means that they are inherently "performative." However, in what sense are locutions or utterances performative?

Austin contends that when a phatic agent utters a sentential locution, an action is performed.[306] He posits five categories of performatives that illustrate the concept of speech enacting propositional content in designated situations: (1) Verdictives (the act of giving a finding or verdict); (2) Exercitives (the act of exercising a power or right); (3) Commissives (the act of committing oneself to an action verbally); (4) Behabitives (the act of expressing attitudes about social behavior); (5) Expositives (the act of fitting locutions into discourse). These five taxonomies supposedly account for the manner in which agents do things with words. Nevertheless, speech act theory has developed gradually since its inception. It now seems that Austin's theory contains lacunae that fail to account for a number of performative utterances;

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[303] *How to Do Things with Words* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962); *How to Do Things with Words*, ed. J. O. Urmson and M. Sbisà, second edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975). References in this study will be from the second edition of Austin's text.

[304] Ricoeur, *Rule of Metaphor*, 73. Austin posits a trichotomy comprised of sentential acts (articulating a sentence or sentence surrogate), illocutionary acts (uttering sentences that bear a particular content) and perlocutionary acts (the locutionary act of producing an effect through a sentence or sentence surrogate). See William P. Alston, *Illocutionary Acts and Sentence Meaning* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000), 2.

[305] John Searle, *Expression and Meaning*: *Studies in the Theory of Speech Acts* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 17-18.

[306] Austin, *How to Do Things*, 85-91, 150. Austin refines his definition of "issuing an utterance" by distinguishing between a phonetic, phatic and rhetic act (92-93). He characterizes a phonetic act as the production of specified utterances or sounds, which he designates "phones." One performs a phatic act (according to Austin) when utilizing certain words that conform to a "certain grammar" with a "certain intonation" (92). Lastly, a rhetic act entails uttering a pheme (a product of the phatic act) with a specified sense and reference (Ibid).

even he was aware of its inadequacies.[307] Hence, one evidently must turn to Searle for a fuller treatment of speech act theory. He not only differentiates an illocution from a perlocution, but also distinguishes direct from indirect speech acts, with metaphors being identified as the latter. Searle's classification of illocutionary utterances somewhat diverges from Austin's taxonomies. Nevertheless, his project appears to be an extension of his mentor's speech act model.

Searle's theory distinguishes an utterance's illocutionary force (F) from its propositional content (p).[308] He introduces the symbol F(p) to indicate the distinction between the two concepts. Illocutionary force results from the illocutionary purpose of an utterance and the background assumptions that inform it.[309] The locutions "I suggest that you do as I say" and "I insist that you do as I say" have the same illocutionary purpose but bear different forces. They also have the same content supplied by both that-clauses in each proposition.[310] But each locution counts differently in context, C.

This study has already alluded to the distinction between direct and indirect speech acts. Searle defines an indirect speech act (the category to which metaphor belongs) as a lingual performance whereby a phatic agent intends "S is R" when uttering, "S is P."[311] He accordingly argues that a sufficient metaphorology should explain how a speaker arrives at "S is R" (utterance meaning) from "S is P" (sentence meaning).[312] Nevertheless, some philosophers have questioned whether Searle himself actually demonstrates how a communicative agent effectively moves from "S is P" to "S is R" by means of an indirect performative. For example, Swinburne contends that a metaphorical utterance does not set forth one proposition ("S is P") while intending that something else ("S is R") is the case. Rather, he urges that a speaker "uses a

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[307] Searle, *Expression and Meaning*, 8-9.

[308] Ibid. 1.

[309] Ibid. Compare John Searle, *Speech Acts*: *An Essay in the Philosophy of Language* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 30-31.

[310] Besides distinguishing between illocutionary force and propositional content, however, Searle taxonomizes speech-acts as follows: Assertive (the speaker expresses or commits to the belief that *p*); Directive (speech-acts that try to bring about an action from the hearer); Commissive (an illocutionary act that commits the speaker to "some future course of action"); Expressive (an illocutionary act that expresses the psychological state associated with the propositional content of a performative) and Declarations (speech-acts that bring about a fit between propositional content and reality). See *Expression and Meaning*, 12-20.

[311] In this example, S = the subject part of the expression, P = the predicate expression of the locution and "S is R" refers to the utterance meaning of the speaker (Ibid. 83-84).

sentence which independent of context would mean one thing" but in a determinate situation means "something else."[313] If Swinburne is correct, then the truth-conditions of a complex metaphor and simile are identical. Neither trope says, "S is P"[314] while meaning "S is R." We simply need a context in order to understand a communicative agent's embodied intention "S is P." Hence, it is probable that the Shakespearean indirect speech act, "Life is a tale told by an idiot; full of sound and fury, signifying nothing" has the same truth-condition (i.e. expresses the same truth) as "Life is like a tale told by an idiot; full of sound and fury, signifying nothing."[315] For it is clearly problematic to assert that the truth condition alluded to above differs from metaphor to corresponding simile. Accordingly, in the final analysis, Swinburne's account of indirect speech acts that privileges the role of context in association with metaphoric recognition may be preferable to Searle's theory of indirect sentential locutions. Swinburne may better account for the phenomenon of metaphor or more adequately explain the illocutionary force of the speech act "S is P" within a particular context.[316] However, it is not necessary for this study to determine which theory (Searle's or Swinburne's) is more adequate. The chief aim of this section is to elucidate Searle and Vanhoozer's manner of conceptualizing indirect speech acts, which include metaphors and similes.

Building on the research of Austin and Searle, Vanhoozer proposes that human utterances are intrinsically performative; communicative agents embody intentions when they articulate meaningful speech to co-phatic agents, whether such acts entail promising,[317] greeting,

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[312] Ibid. 84-85.

[313] Swinburne, *Revelation*, 48.

[314] In the case of similes, "S is like P."

[315] Swinburne, *Revelation*, 48.

[316] John Taylor believes that Searle's account of metaphor, as grammatical deviance simply is not feasible (Dirven and Pörings, *Metaphor and Metonymy*, 334-335). Appealing to cognitive semantic theory, he reasons that metaphor is too pervasive in everyday speech to be a deviant form of locution. Second, metaphor is such an integral part of human experience that conceptualization of ideas seems impossible without it. Hence, according to experientialism, cognitive domains map onto other cognitive domains (Ibid), which implies that the thought of grammatical deviance is not an issue in cognitive theory: metaphor is an inherent structure of cognition.

[317] For discussions regarding the inherent conditional nature of promising, see Clyde Pax, *The Approach to God in the Thought of Gabriel Marcel*, 54-56; Stephen Toulmin, *The Uses of Argument* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003 [1958]), 44-46. Vanhoozer discuses the illocutionary force associated with making a promise (*Is There a Meaning*, 210). His analysis indicates that the act of making a promise morally obligates one phatic agent to another. In saying, "I hereby promise," a communicative agent becomes obligated to keep promises made in the act of speaking to an interlocutor. One can find a comparable argument in Ricoeur, *Interpretation Theory*, 14.

commanding,[318] exhorting, prognosticating, requesting or metaphoring.[319] Speech acts are illocutionary by nature: they constitute ways of doing things with words (i.e. enacting intention X or Y verbally). Language thus becomes "a means by which one human person acts in relation to other people."[320] Saying "I do" constitutes an illocutionary speech act; so does "Please take out the trash, dear." Illocution is the agentive performance of discourse or speech.

While discourse agents commonly enact performatives (Fp) by means of sentential locutions, perlocutionary speech acts, on the other hand, are the effects that a discourse agent enacts through the medium of discourse.[321] A phatic agent brings about certain effects within an interlocutor when utilizing speech that persuades, frightens, motivates, entices, encourages, inspires or disheartens a hearer.[322] Moreover, the perlocutionary effects of agentive enunciations may be positive, innocuous or adverse.[323] Regardless of the effect, however, that which a phatic agent brings about through any given speech act is considered perlocutionary. Therefore, if S requests that R close the door, the effect brought about through the illocutionary appeal (i.e. propositional force + content) qualifies as being perlocutionary. Receiving an object that one has requested may also count as a perlocutionary effect, which is to say that there is possibly causal appositeness between S uttering a locution (X) that counts as Y in C and S being granted a certain request.[324] Whether there actually is a causal link between the requesting and closing of the door, these examples clarify how speech act theorists conceive perlocutionary effects.

This investigation has already suggested that speakers and hearers jointly constitute shared phatic or discourse communities. Furthermore, phatic agents evidently perform with linguistic

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[318] Austin, *How to Do Things*, 108-109.

[319] Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning*, 209. Wolterstorff (unlike other speech act theorists) argues that one can perform an illocutionary act without saying or writing anything. For instance, he maintains that it is possible to state "something" with smoke signals or sequential light-flashes. Furthermore, a communicative agent may designate someone else to speak in his or her behalf. These various forms of semiotic enactments indicate that God may also do things with words by using some natural language or alternative form of *semeia* (*Divine Discourse*, 13).

[320] Ward, *Word and Supplement,* 13.

[321] V. Philips Long, "The Art of Biblical History," in *Foundations of Contemporary Interpretation*, ed. Moisés Silva, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 380.

[322] Ricoeur, *Interpretation Theory*, 18.

[323] Young, *Intermediate NT Greek*, 265; William P. Alston, *Philosophy of Language*, Prentice-Hall Foundations of Philosophy Series (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1964), 35.

[324] Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Divine Discourse*: *Philosophical Reflections on the Claim That God Speaks* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 33, 137.

signs by enacting a systemic lexis (*la langue*) for the purpose of doing X or Y through the meaningful deployment of abstract codes.[325] Vanhoozer accordingly states: "All forms of meaning are forms of doing."[326] To intend X is to do X; alternatively, to intend Y is to perform Y.[327] The findings of speech act theory presumably merit the reasonable assumption that phatic communities are responsible for valorizing particular speech acts or determining how X counts as Y in C.[328] The foregoing principle ostensibly encompasses rules for metaphorical utterances since spoken or written metasememes are perforce communicative acts: one who verbalizes or writes a metasememic construct (M) apparently does something (indirectly) with the articulated construct.[329] One supposedly intends P or Q when uttering M. It consequently appears that metaphoric recognition operates according to established institutional rules which subsist in a determinate societal context.[330] Yet, metaphors undoubtedly are not purely reducible to literal or non-metaphoric discourse; they often communicate information that "proper speech" cannot express.

Having submitted a denotation for the classical notion of metaphor, "a transferring to one word or name the sense of another" (Aristotle), this study will now summarize the findings of the present chapter. It will submit a tentative diagnostic criterion for metaphoricity based on the five metaphorical theories discussed above, then review how one undertakes the task of defining a metaphor. However, the emphasis will be on how classical thinkers understand the concept "metaphor." Discerning the semantics of the term will contribute to the elucidation of subsequent chapters that focus on the metaphor "Father" in *Divinae institutiones*.

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[325] The definition of "lexis" here is: the total stock of meaningful and grammatical signs in a language system.

[326] Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning*, 230-232.

[327] The word " intend" (in this context) refers to the act of directing one's consciousness toward an object. I.e. the object of love is one's beloved, whereas the object of fear might be a mugger or a ferocious bear. Franz Brentano and Edmund Husserl popularized the concept of "object directedness." Contemporary phenomenologists consequently are inclined to believe that consciousness is always consciousness of X or Y. Consciousness entails or is identical with intentionality. See Lewis R. Gordon, *Existentia Africana*, 73; Iris Murdoch, *Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals* (New York: Allen Lane, Penguin Press, 1993), 158.

[328] The account given in this study goes beyond Searle's definition of language since he does not mean to include full-blown "natural" languages (e.g. Latin, German, French or English) nor does he seem to rely on Saussure's distinction between *la langue* and *la parole*. Nevertheless, Searle does state that language (understood as a representational system) is an institution. See *Construction of Social Reality*, 60-61.

[329] See Jerrold M. Sadock, "Figurative Speech and Linguistics," in *Metaphor and Thought*, 42.

[330] Dille, *Mixing Metaphors*, 4.

Findings

1. A Diagnostic Criterion for Metaphoricity

As speech act theory implies, an intimate acquaintance with the constitutive rules of particular discourse groups allows communicative agents to determine both necessary and sufficient conditions for metaphoricity. Lynne Cameron states that two such conditions signaling the presence of metaphor are conceptual domain incongruity and the potential transfer of meaning.[331] Domain incongruity markedly occurs between the tenor-vehicle (i.e. conceptual domains A and B) of a metasememic construct. However, Cameron notes that any material incoherence transpiring by means of tenor-vehicle interaction has the potential to be resolved, if a locution truly is metaphorical.[332] Otherwise, a necessary condition for metaphoricity does not obtain. On the other hand, a communicative agent who is acquainted with the constitutive rules of an embodied collective normally will be capable of detecting the potential transfer of meaning in an uttered or written sentential construct. The agent can discern readily whether articulated performatives are metaphorical; whether they function as direct or indirect speech acts.

Cameron's proposed necessary and sufficient conditions for metaphoricity suggest that communicative agents often discriminate between metaphors and non-figurative speech acts by construing the terms in a given linguistic structure as tropic, non-matter-of-fact usages (e.g. "All the world is a stage") when they perceive a certain element of domain incongruity associated with a specific enunciative act. The example above from Shakespeare comparing the world to a stage

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[331] Cameron and Low, *Researching and Applying*, 118.

demonstrates the manner in which domain incongruity or the potential transfer of lexemic value possibly emerges.[333] English speakers usually do not have any major problem ascertaining that this speech act is metaphorical; for there is a definite "unfamiliar identity synthesis"[334] asserted in the sentence; the elocutionary pairing of "world" and "stage" is putatively incongruent because a synthesis occurs between two heterogeneous conceptual domains or sememes (= linguistic units). Similarly, when a discourse agent hears the words, "God is the Father of Israel," or "God is the Father of all," it seems that he or she usually cannot avoid grasping the inaptness that obtains between the concepts "God" and "father." After all, God does not engender children biologically nor does the Father have a non-figurative wife or lover with whom he generates literal progeny (*Divinae institutiones* 4.13).[335] Yet, humanly speaking, "father" (in standard discourse) primarily signifies a biological male parent.[336] Domain incongruity consequently obtains in this case, but it is resolvable; necessary or sufficient conditions for metaphoricity appear to exist in association with this specific trope or domain.

One evidently can detect metaphoricity by becoming familiar with the communicative rules of a specific discourse group. Subsequently, when one identifies domain incongruity or a potential transfer of lexical meaning in a particular discourse context, then one may recognize a distinct locution as an indirect speech act. Detecting metaphorical speech, however, requires a degree of fluency with an abstract language and knowledge of its situational relevance (i.e. a speaker must possess both semantic and pragmatic competence). It appears that an adequate diagnostic criterion for metaphoricity hinges on these two factors. Additionally, the recognition of metaphoricity involves being *au fait* with the embodied intention of a speaker or community

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[332] Ibid.

[333] Cameron and Low, *Researching and Applying*, 118.

[334] Sokolowski, *Husserlian Meditations*, 227-228.

[335] Macky, *Centrality of Metaphors*, 78. Sandra M. Schneiders considers it "literally absurd to say that God is our father." See *Women and the Word*: *The Gender of God in the New Testament and the Spirituality of Women*, 1986 Madeleva Lecture in Spirituality (New York/Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1986, 25-27). She aptly notes that God (according to the Christian tradition) does not engender his figurative children by means of sexual intercourse with females. It might be added that God does not possess a human body, male genitalia or male hormones either. In any event, Schneiders concludes that Father is a metaphor for God that preserves the dialectical tension between "is" (the affirmation) and "is not" (the negative qualifier).

of speakers. What is a speaker or writer endeavoring to do with a given performative? What do the pragmatic (speaker intended meaning) factors of a given utterance suggest? For instance, the proposition "Stephen fell asleep" could refer to literal somnolence. However, a consideration of the speaker or writer's embodied intention might indicate that literal slumber is not being referenced in the case of Stephen (Acts 7:60). The literary context (i.e. cotext) of the proposition "Stephen fell asleep" might indicate that "sleep" is a metaphor for death (John 11:11-14; Acts 13:36; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-15).[337] Moreover, fluency with the presuppositional pool of ancient Greek communicative agents and other related texts (i.e. intertextuality) could assist modern interpreters of ancient speech acts to sympathetically construe locutions that might seem vague at first. Hence, the example from Acts possibly illustrates how context determinately functions in the recognition of metaphoric speech.

2. A Classical Definition for Metaphor

There are a number of ways that one can define "metaphor." Cognitive semantic theory suggests that metaphors are conceptual domains, which account for bodily experience, while substitution theory proposes that metaphors are (deviant) tropes or figures of speech. Speech act thought also construes metaphors in terms of propositional locutions, whereas interactionism uses tenor-vehicle language to frame metaphors as associated concepts influencing one another. While it may not be possible to define the term adequately or definitively, what is germane for this study is the classical definition of "metaphor" which Lactantius would have known from reading Cicero (*De oratore* 3.152-155). It seems that Lactantius' working definition of metaphor is "a

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[336] OED (5:758) notes that the English term "father" primarily refers to "one by whom a child is or has been begotten, a male parent" or the nearest male ancestor. When one employs the term "father" to speak of one who originates or calls X or Y into being, one is using "father" in a figurative manner (Ibid. 5:759).

[337] See the entries for κοιμα,ω in *LSJ*, *BDAG* and *L-N*. Conversely, Aaron cites an expression from Aristophanes' play *The Frogs* ("For what is death but an eternal sleep") to illustrate the opaque nature of utterances that seem difficult to categorize as literal or metaphorical. He suggests that there is no good reason to interpret Aristophanes' sentential locution metaphorically, nor will any sustained argument demonstrate the locution to be tropic rather than literal. In this case, Aaron reasons, the diagnostic criterion for metaphoricity does not fail, but actually works if one shares the "speaker's strategy, belief system and cultural context." See *Biblical Ambiguities*: *Metaphor*, *Semantics*, *and Divine Imagery* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 120-121.

linguistic sort of borrowing" or transference. He probably thought that metaphor involves applying a term employed of one object or discourse field to an otherwise disparate object or discourse field. Interactionism suggests that metaphors create new meaning by the relation of two concepts ("God" and "sun"). Aristotle makes a similar observation by insisting: "it is from metaphor that we best get hold of something fresh" (*Poetica* 22.1459a5-8). Therefore, when Lactantius evidently applies the metaphor "Father" to God, he seems to be using it as a "conceptual lens" through which one can view the maximally excellent being; in this way, he is bringing about "something fresh." Moreover, it appears that metaphors are as-if constructs for Lactantius: they seemingly attribute properties to particular entities without necessarily making any metaphysical pronouncements about things-in-themselves. It is this study's contention that Lactantius uses an illustrious metaphor to predicate that God is comparable to an earthly father. He evidently is not wielding "Father" as a literal description of God's immanent being. This conclusion is merited in the light of how Lactantius describes God as Father. The following chapters of this study will elaborate this point in more detail.

In conclusion, a number of distinct factors lead Christians to believe that God is not literally a father. That is, God does not have the determining or determinate properties that a biological male has. In particular, it seems that God the Father does not possess a sexed body (Numbers 23:19; Hosea 11:9). But gender-specificity may be rooted in a corpus that is determined biologically.[338] Having suggested a diagnostic criterion for metaphoricity, this study will now build on the results from the previous analysis respecting the Christian notion of divine paternity. It will seek to answer the questions: What do Christians generally mean when they use "Father" for God? Is there an implied ontology of gender in the divine appellation "Father"? In

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[338] Volf thinks that there is no gender specificity in God; God is genderless (*Exclusion and Embrace*, 172-176). See Joshua Hoffman and Gary S. Rosenkrantz, *The Divine Attributes* (Oxford and Malden: Blackwell, 2002), 2 for similar reasoning on this subject. However, in a private conversation, Dr. Philip Blosser of Lenoir-Rhyne College has argued that there is no gender specificity in God because God is not a species. Granted, the etymology for "specific" is the Latin *specificus* or *species* but a synchronic view of language takes precedence over a diachronic account of language. In time, the English word "specific" came to denote "a distinguishing quality or attribute." Hence, when Volf argues that there is no gender specificity in God, he seems to mean that God is genderless in that God has no distinguishing quality or characteristic that one can refer to as "gender." Nothing in God is distinctly masculine or feminine. Therefore, while it may be the case that the category "species" is not applicable to God, this conceivable fact evidently has little to do with Volf's comments regarding gender specificity and the divine. His

the midst of that analysis, the next chapter will probe the latent connotations of paternal imagery for Christians.

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remarks evidently are based on the synchronic aspects of the term "specific," not its diachronic facets.

Chapter 2

Metaphors and Symbols in Christian Discourse

Metaphor stands at the center of Christian lexis. Many ascriptions to God uttered by followers of Jesus Christ illustrate how metaphor informs Christian discourse. Whether disciples of Jesus address God as the Rock (Deuteronomy 32:4), Friend (James 2:23) or Shepherd (Psalm 23:1), metaphor seems to play a prominent role in religious speech or language.[339] Consequently, the main purpose of this chapter will be to apprehend what Christians imply when they evoke God as Father. First, the centrality of metaphor within the Christian tradition must be demonstrated. While the writings of Augustine of Hippo or Thomas Aquinas exhibit the integral nature of metaphoric speech in Christianity, the use of metaphors is not limited to these prominent medieval thinkers. Averil Cameron has thoroughly analyzed how metaphoricity and rhetoric function in ecclesiastical life as a whole. Metaphor, she reasons, is "at the heart of Christian language."[340] The results of Cameron's sustained attention to the interplay between rhetoric and early Christian discourse palpably accord with the literary evidence amassed in a number of modern studies that have discerned tropic motifs suffusing the Gospels,[341] Pauline and Petrine epistles,[342] Apocalypse of John,[343] Jude's epistle[344] and the writings that pre-Nicenes composed.[345] There is good reason to believe that the literary use of metaphor functioned as an

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[339] Schneiders, *Women and the Word*, 26; Brassey, *Metaphor*, 1; McFague, *Metaphorical Theology*, 42; Caird, *The Language and Imagery of the Bible*, 18.

[340] *Rhetoric of Empire*, 58.

[341] Celia M. Deutsch, *Lady Wisdom, Jesus and the Sages*: *Metaphor and Social Context in Matthew's Gospel* (Valley Forge, P. A.: Trinity Press International, 1996).

[342] Terrance Callan, "The Style of the Second Letter of Peter," *Biblica* 84 (2003): 202-224; David John Williams, *Paul's Metaphors*: *Their Context and Character* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2003); Trevor J. Burke, *Family Matters*: *A Socio-Historical Study of Kinship Metaphors in 1 Thessalonians* (London and New York: T & T Clark International, 2003).

[343] Eva Maria Räpple, *The Metaphor of the City in the Apocalypse of John*, Studies in Biblical Literature, volume 4 (New York: Peter Lang, 2004).

[344] Terrence Callan, "Use of the Letter of Jude by the Second Letter of Peter," *Biblica* 85 (2004): 42-64.

[345] I. A. H. Combes, *Metaphor of Slavery in the Writings of the Early Church*: *From the New Testament to the Beginning of the Fifth Century* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998).

essential component of early Christian lexis; it actually constituted a frontispiece for ancient and medieval Christian discourse.

Augustine (354-430 CE) liberally utilizes metaphorical terminology. The North African bishop overtly professes that tropes are indigenous to Christian language. He demonstrates the indispensable nature of metasememic terminology for the Christian church by auspiciously citing the Hebrew prophets as examples of those who obscured divine truths under the guise of figurative speech: "I see, then, that I must say something about the eloquence of the prophets also, where many things are concealed under a metaphorical style, which the more completely they seem buried under figures of speech, give the greater pleasure when brought to light" (*Dicendum ergo mihi aliquid esse video et de eloquentia Prophetarum*, *ubi per tropologiam multa obteguntur. Quae quanto magis translatis verbis videntur operiri, tanto magis cum fuerint aperta dulcescunt*).[346] Even if one assumes that the sacred prophets of antiquity employed metaphor as Augustine indicates, namely, to hide divine truths, one still might be inclined to ascertain the prophetic rationale for exploiting metaphor in order to shroud divine truth. *De doctrina Christiana* outlines three primary reasons that account for the prophetic deployment of metaphor:

(1) Augustine contends that the Hebrew prophets intentionally obfuscated divine verities by means of figurative language in order that the intellects of the godly might be stimulated, and the mental faculties of the irreverent might be converted to godliness or excluded from perceiving the divine oracles (*sive ut ad pietatem convertantur sive ut a mysteriis secludantur*, *animos impiorum utili ac salubri obscuritate dixerunt*).[347] God demarcates the impious from the pious by using tropes to mollify or harden the demeanor of the impious. Augustine deems the overall effect of this literary technique "a useful and wholesome obscurity" (*utili ac salubri obscuritate*).[348] This effect is "useful and wholesome" because it markedly exposes secret intentions of the human heart to the omnipotent Judge of all (Hebrews 4:13): it provides a sound basis for divine judgment.

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[346] *De doctrina Christiana* 4.7.15; PL 34. Compare *DI* 1.11.24, 30.
[347] *De doctrina Christiana* 4.8.22; PL 34.
[348] Ibid.

(2) Bible writers express themselves metaphorically so that God might thereby allow his people to share in the celestial glory vouchsafed to consecrated prophets of old. While the dignity of Christians apparently does not rival that of the ancient Hebrew seers, Augustine writes that it nonetheless approximates the God-given honor bestowed on those inspired spokespersons.[349] The inclusion of metaphor in Scripture is what makes it possible for the congregation of God to partake of the Hebrew prophets' divinely bestowed grandeur. A similar notion appears in Peter's first epistle to Christians living in Asia Minor (1 Peter 1:10-12), wherein the apostle suggests that the Tanakh (proleptically) was written for Christians.[350] There are distinct hermeneutical senses or levels of textual meaning contained in the Tanakh; its passages thereby bear especial significance for Christians.

(3) Augustine insists that metaphor is one literary mechanism that rational creatures employ to communicate theistic notions. The tripersonal Godhead putatively transcends the power of ordinary dialogue: "The super-eminence of the Godhead surpasses the power of customary speech" (*De Trinitate* 7.4.7).[351] Therefore, Christians must utilize metaphors in theological discourse. But Augustine believes that there are three fundamental ways to articulate (intelligible) concepts about God. The threefold distinction that he proffers is substantial, relative and metaphorical predication.[352] In section A of this chapter, the three Augustinian categories will be amplified. That section will also introduce and elucidate two Thomist categories of predication for the divine.

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[349] Ibid.

[350] Paul J. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, Hermeneia Series (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 111-112. Compare 1 Corinthians 9:8-10.

[351] See Frye, "Language for God and Feminist Language," 33.

[352] Augustine, *On the Trinity*, Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy, ed. Gareth B. Matthews (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002), xxxiii.

A. Augustinian and Thomistic Predication of the Divine

Aristotle makes an ontological distinction between substances and accidents.[353] Significantly, Augustine develops his predicational view of divinity within a Platonic or Aristotelian metaphysical framework. For example, the bishop thinks *substantia* is virtually equivalent to the Latin *essentia* or Greek ouvsi,a (*De Trinitate* 5.2.3).[354] God is uniquely "substance" (*essentia*) in that divinity does not exemplify any contingent or non-essential properties (= accidents).[355] Almighty God just is his own wisdom, goodness, power, love or mercy (i.e. the "simplicity of God").[356] Divine simplicity means that God is neither composite nor mereologically constituted: there is no potentiality in God since deity does not possess any parts.[357] Being non-composite, God is not an entity or being constituted of form and matter; he is pure form.[358]

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[353] *Metaphysica* 7-9. See Joseph Owens, *The Doctrine of Being in the Aristotelian Metaphysics* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1951), 266-267; Werner Marx, *The Meaning of Aristotle's "Ontology"* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1954).

[354] Bray (*The Doctrine of God*, 167) explains that Augustine preferred to use *essentia* rather than *substantia* to convey the thought behind the Greek ouvsi,a because it avoids certain difficulties associated with u`po,stasij, the Greek equivalent of *substantia*. Cf. *De Trinitate* 5.

[355] Hoffman and Rosenkrantz (*Divine Attributes*, 191) define the philosophical term "accident" as a contingent property (P) of an entity or thing. E.g. Socrates' wisdom is a necessary property of Socrates, but his baldness is accidental or contingent; Socrates would still be Socrates, even if he were not bald. However, he would not be Socrates without his wisdom or risibility. Regarding accidental properties, Augustine writes: "Therefore there is nothing accidental in God, because there is nothing changeable or that may be lost" (*De Trinitate* 5.4.5). See Isaac Watts' concerning accidental modes of being in *Logic*: *The Right Use of Reason in the Inquiry After Truth with a Variety of Rules to Guard Against Error in the Affairs of Religion and Human Life*, *as well as in the Sciences* (Morgan, P. A.: Soli Deo Gloria, 1996 [1724]), 18-19.

[356] Emil Brunner, *Dogmatics I*: *The Christian Doctrine of God*, trans. Olive Wyon (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1949), 1:293. See Christopher Hughes, *On a Complex Theory of a Simple God*: *An Investigation in Aquinas' Philosophical Theology* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1989), 3-5; Alvin Plantinga, *Does God Have a Nature?* The Aquinas Lecture, 1980 (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1980); Bray, *The Doctrine of God*, 94-96; Jay Wesley Richards, *The Untamed God*: A *Philosophical Exploration of Divine Perfection*, *Immutability and Simplicity* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2003); David B. Burrell, *Knowing the Unknowable God*: *Ibn-Sina*, *Maimonides*, *Aquinas* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1986), 26-27 for explications of divine simplicity. For a sustained philosophical analysis of God's ontological uncompoundedness, consult Hoffman and Rosenkrantz, *Divine Attributes*, 59-68.

[357] Thomas Aquinas contends: "it is clear there can be no accident in God" (ST I.3.6). Moreover he insists that there is no potentiality in God (Ibid). See Frank G. Kirkpatrick, *Together Bound: God, History, and the Religious Community* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 35-36; Brian Davies, *The Thought of Thomas Aquinas* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 51.

[358] Ibid.

Of course, the teaching of God's simplicity (*simplicitas Dei*) does not fail to encounter its own logical problematics.[359] Copan and Craig argue that it "seems patently false" to make the assertion that God does not exemplify properties that are objectively distinct from one another.[360] The property of being good apparently is objectively distinct from the property of being omniscient, just as the property of being omnipotent is not metaphysically identical to the abstract property of being omnibenevolent. Moreover, Stead maintains that it is problematic to assert that God's action toward the world is "simple and uniform."[361] For divine simplicity does not seem to explain adequately how God loves numerous creatures or governs the multitudinous events occurring in the world; nor does it putatively account for the notion of a God, who personally acts in the world of his creation.[362] Those who advocate this doctrine, however, contend that the supposed problematics associated with God's simplicity emanate from dissimilar ontological emphases between the medieval and contemporary periods, not from the concept of divine simplicity itself.[363] The medieval thinkers stress constituent ontology (i.e. entities are what they are as such),[364] whereas contemporary thinkers tend to emphasize relational ontology (i.e. entities have essences, properties or sets of properties).[365] Whether the complexities of the doctrine are real or a result of disjunctive emphases, it seems that one certainly encounters the simplicity of God doctrine in Augustine (*Confessions* 4.16.28).[366] He believes that God is his justice, wisdom, love or power.

While Augustine infers that God is his own "substance" (*essentia*), he nonetheless maintains: "yet all that is said [of God] is not said according to substance [i.e. essence]."[367] He therefore makes a distinction between the way that God exists in Godself and the way that

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[359] See Nicholas Wolterstorff, "Divine Simplicity" in *Philosophical Perspectives 5*, *Philosophy of Religion 1991*, ed. James E. Tomberlin (Atascadero, C. A.: Ridgeview, 1991), 531-552; Hughes, *Complex Theory*, 3-5.

[360] *Creation out of Nothing*, 177-178.

[361] Christopher Stead, *Philosophy in Christian Antiquity* (Cambridge, UK and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 131.

[362] Ibid.

[363] See Wolterstorff, "Divine Simplicity," 531-552; Alfred J. Freddoso, "The 'Openness' of God: A Reply to William Hasker," *Christian Scholar's Review* 28 (1998): 124-133.

[364] Wolterstorff, "Divine Simplicity," 541.

[365] Ibid. See Barry Smith, "On Substances, Accidents and Universals: In Defense of a Constituent Ontology," *Philosophical Papers* 26 (1997): 105-127.

[366] Ayres, *Nicaea and its Legacy*, 367.

rational creatures discourse about God. On the other hand, Augustine fundamentally holds that one cannot predicate accidents (contingent properties) of God since the Judeo-Christian ultimate reality discloses the self-designation ο`ω;ν ("the being") or *ego sum qui sum* ("I am who I am") in the thornbush appearance to Moses, thereby demonstrating that he does not exemplify accidental or non-essential properties (Exodus 3:14).[368] Aquinas will later contend that God is "pure and perfect act" (*actus purus et perfectos*) with no potentiality whatsoever.[369] But if one cannot speak of God with respect to accidents (*per accidens*) or if substantial predication fails to exhaust the linguistic possibilities of human discourse concerning deity, what theolinguistic options remain? To resolve this anticipated difficulty, Augustine submits a second form of predication.

In addition to substantial predication, Augustine indicates that rational creatures may utilize relative predication to speak about God.[370] This type of discourse is salient when believing souls[371] invoke the divine one as "Father" or "Son."[372] Augustine reasons that "Father" and "Son" are relative, not substantial terms (*De Trinitate* 5.5.6).[373] He believes that the Christian invocation of God the Father does not involve employing the predicate term "Father" with respect to deity's substance (*essentia*). Rather, being designated "Father" logically entails a reciprocal concept "Son."[374] Augustine thus maintains that God is Father in that God always generates (*semper natus*) the Son; God is the Son insofar as God (= the second distinction of the

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[367] *De Trinitate* 5.5.6: Nec tamen omne quod dicitur secundum substantiam dicitur.

[368] Ibid. 5.2.3: "And who is there that is, more than He who said to His servant Moses, 'I am that I am;' and, 'Thus shall thou say unto the children of Israel, He who is hath sent me unto you?' But other things that are called essences or substances admit of accidents, whereby a change, whether great or small, is produced in them. But there can be no accident of this kind in respect to God; and therefore He who is God is the only unchangeable substance or essence, to whom certainly being itself, whence comes the name of essence, most especially and most truly belongs."

[369] See *ST* I.3.2 (*Responsio*).

[370] Ayres, *Nicaea and its Legacy*, 376.

[371] Merold Westphal uses this expression in *God, Guilt, and Death*: *An Existential Phenomenology of Religion*, Studies in Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 16-17.

[372] Mary T. Clark, "De Trinitate," in *The Cambridge Companion to Augustine*, ed. Eleonore Stump and Norman Kretzmann (Cambridge, UK and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 95.

[373] See Matthews, *On the Trinity*, xxxiii.

[374] Bernhard Lohse, *A Short History of Christian Doctrine* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978), 68-69.

triune Godhead) is generated eternally or continuously by the Father (*Ep*. 238.4).[375] Augustine consequently insists that "Father" and "Son" are relative predicates that signify God the Father is Father in relation to God the Son and God the Son is Son in relation to God the Father (*De Trinitate* 7.4.9). He avers that referring to God as Father or Son is an example of relative predication.

Two Augustinian distinctions that this study has reviewed so far are substantial and relative predication. It is important to understand that relations in God (for Augustine) are not accidents or contingent properties that God just happens to exemplify or that might not have been exemplified *in divinis*. For Augustine, God is always Father, Son and Holy Spirit: paternity, filiation or spiration are not divine accidents but eternal relations identical with the three persons. In addition to relative predication, however, the third distinction that Augustine makes in terms of linguistic expressions for the divine is metaphorical predication.[376] The next paragraph will discuss this type of predication as it occurs in Augustine.

When Scripture attributes position, condition, place or time to deity, Augustine argues that these spatio-temporal imputations are "not said to be in God properly, but metaphorically and through similitudes" (*De Trinitate* 5.8.9).[377] For instance, the OT describes YHWH residing above the cherubim (Exodus 25:22; Leviticus 16:2; Numbers 7:89; Psalm 18:10) or it reports that God journeyed with the nation of Israel both day and night. The psalmist further attributes place to YHWH by referring to God's eminent abode, specifically, heaven itself (Psalm 11:4). King Solomon also predicates place of Israel's God (1 Kings 8:43, 49). Moreover, in the oriental work of Job, one reads that the "years" (*shaneh*) of YHWH surpass counting (Job 36:26).[378] Such attributions of place, position, time or condition respecting the divine one supposedly are

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[375] Edmund J. Fortman, *The Triune God*: *A Historical Study of the Doctrine of the Trinity* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock Pub, 1999), 144; Studer, *Trinity and Incarnation*, 183; Clark, "De Trinitate," 95.

[376] Ayres' helpful study on the Trinity states that Augustine only proposes two ways of discoursing about God: relative and substantial predication (*Nicaea and its Legacy*, 376-377). However, Augustine's approach to the problem of God-talk is actually threefold since he posits metaphorical predication as another way of doing theolinguistics.

[377] See PL 42: non proprie sed translate ac per similitudines dicuntur in Deo; Hosea 12:11.

[378] See John E. Hartley, *The Book of Job*, New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1988), 479. He indicates that the language of Job 36:26 suggests that God does not suffer the normal limitations associated with "years" since God is eternal.

examples of metaphorical predication since (according to Augustine) God metaphysically transcends both time and space.[379] He further maintains that since God is his own immutable essence, then biblical passages that speak of the divine one undergoing some type of spatio-temporal or relational alteration must be examples of metaphorical locutions.[380] Metaphoric predication therefore plays an important role in Augustine's system. It supposedly accounts for biblical passages that ascribe change to God.

While Augustinian thought formatively shaped western Christianity, the vicissitudinal accidents of history eventually necessitated that his system of predication undergo conceptual development. One writer who modified Augustinian predication of the divine, thereby contributing a fuller account of deific predication (while adhering faithfully to the notion of divine simplicity) was Thomas Aquinas.[381] His remarks concerning metaphorical over against proper predication as well as the distinction he wields between *res significata* and *modus significandi* now merit consideration.[382] The following paragraphs will explain these distinctions and show the role they play in Aquinas' system of predication.

Aquinas (1225-1274 CE) explains the nexus between God's self-disclosure and metaphorical enunciations of Scripture in the following way: "Now it is natural to man to attain to intellectual truths through sensible objects, because all our knowledge originates from sense. Hence in Holy Writ, spiritual truths are fittingly taught under the likeness of material things."[383] Aquinas believes that metaphoric speech arises in the sensible sphere. His claim is that there is nothing in the intellect that was not first in the senses.[384] Moreover, he suggests that metaphors (which creatures utilize to delineate God) emanate from creation itself, which stands in an

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[379] See *De Trinitate* 5.8.9.

[380] Ibid.

[381] Surveys include Etienne Gilson, *The Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas. With A Catalog of St. Thomas's Works* (New York: Random House, 1956); Norman Kretzmann and Eleonore Stump, *The Cambridge Companion to Aquinas* (Cambridge, UK and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Josef Pieper, *Guide to Thomas Aquinas* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1991).

[382] Gregory P. Rocca adequately traces the diachronic provenance or historical development of *res significata* and *modus significandi*. See "The Distinction between '*Res Significata*' and '*Modus Significandi*' in Aquinas' Theological Epistemology," *Thomist* 55.2 (1991): 173-197.

[382] *ST* Ia.1.9, *Responsio.* See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (New York: Benziger Brothers, 1947).

[384] See Davies, *Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, 43-44.

analogous relationship of being (*analogia entis*) to the transcendent and incomprehensible God.[385]

While Aquinas believes that metaphors have their appropriate place in Christian discourse (*ST* Ia.1.9, *Responsio*), however, he does not view tropic speech as the solitary vehicle that believers press into service for the purpose of invoking or referencing God.[386] Rather, Aquinas chooses to predicate titles such as "Father" of God properly, not metaphorically (*ST* I.33.2).[387] The basis for his non-figurative employment of the designation "Father" is somewhat twofold. First, Aquinas insists that "Father" is a proper name distinguishing the first person of the Trinity from the other two persons. He professes that the name applied to the putative first person of the triune Godhead hypostatically and eternally distinguishes the Father from the Son or the Holy Spirit.[388] Second, the decision to treat "Father" as proper speech lies in the distinction that Aquinas makes between "the thing signified" (*res significata*) by a particular word and the human "manner of signifying" (*modus significandi*).[389]

The Dominican theologian initially predicates fatherhood of God with respect to the entity signified by means of the concept "father" before he imputes paternity to rational creaturely essences. One can supposedly grasp (to a certain degree) what is meant by the assignation "father" when one applies the term to God. Thomas consequently reasons that in the narrow sense of the concept "father," there is only one referent to whom the notion properly applies: "And call no [man] your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven" (Mt 23:9 KJV).[390] Human procreators are authentic fathers (*patrēs*) only to the extent

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[385] *ST* I.13.3, *Responsio*.

[386] Davies, *Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, 67.

[386] See Gregory P. Rocca, *Speaking the Incomprehensible God*: *Thomas Aquinas on the Interplay of Positive and Negative Theology* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2004), 309-313.

[388] Id autem per quod distinguitur persona Patris ab omnibus aliis est paternitas. Unde proprium nomen personae Patris est hoc nomen Pater, quod significat paternitatem (*ST* I.33.2). Nevertheless, Aquinas knows that Father is a "relational term," not a name in the sense that YHWH or He Who Is (*qui est*) are *nomina* (I.13.11). See Cooper, *Our Father*, 120.

[389] *ST* Ia.13.3. Davies notes that this distinction can be traced back to the scholarly activity of twelfth century grammarians (*Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, 65).

[390] *ST* I.33.2-4.

that they share analogically in God's veritable fatherliness.[391] Aquinas bases this position on his reading of Ephesians 3:14-15: "I bend my knee to the Father of my Lord Jesus Christ from whom all paternity in heaven and on earth is named" (*flecto genua mea ad Patrem Domini mei Jesu Christi, ex quo omnis paternitas in caelo et in terra nominatur*).[392] Nevertheless, he insists that rational creatures fittingly attribute paternity to biological fathers (respecting the *modus significandi*) before imputing fatherhood to God.[393] While Aquinas observes that "Father" is a proper name for deity, not a figure of speech that rational creatures utilize in the preeminent science of God-talk, he still acknowledges the crucial role that metaphors play in imparting divine verities.[394]

Having briefly traced the use of metaphors in ancient and medieval church thought, this study will now turn its attention toward the reality-depicting function of metaphors in modern Christianity. We have seen how Augustine limits metaphoric speech to spatio-temporal attributions of God, whereas Aquinas considers any term metaphorical that describes or names God in creaturely terms. Aquinas thinks that metaphors are based on creaturely experience with the sensible realm. Moreover, he views "Father" as a proper term, while making use of the distinction between the thing signified (*res significata*) and the human mode of signifying (*modus significandi*) to unfold his concept of God. The contention of Aquinas is that "father" (as a reference to the *res significata*) chiefly applies to God as opposed to human fathers. However, while he thinks that metaphors express divine truths, Aquinas does not believe that "Father" is a metaphor since the term is allegedly a proper name that marks the first distinction of the triune Godhead or sets the divine relation of paternity apart from filiation or spiration.

Nonetheless, two questions remain: (1) Are metaphors capable of portraying reality? (2) In what sense are metaphors possibly reality depicting? These two issues will be examined in section B of this chapter. First, that section will explore how the contemporary *ecclesia* might

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[391] See Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, 3 volumes (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991-1998), 1:344; Franklin I. Gamwell, "Speaking of God after Aquinas," *JR* 81.2 (2001): 185-210.

[392] *ST* I.33.3, *Responsio* 4.

[393] Ad quartum dicendum quod nomen generationis et paternitatis, sicut et alia nomina quae proprie dicuntur in divines, per prius dicuntur de Deo quam de creatures quantum ad rem significatam, licet non quantum ad modum significandi (Ibid).

[394] Ibid. I.33.3.

wield paternal terminology for God. Then it will define the vocabulary "reality depicting" and discuss its significance for theolinguistics.

B. Reality Depicting Paternal Metaphors and the Contemporary Ecclesia

Metaphors deployed in Holy Writ and corporate worship express spiritual truths by means of reality depicting terminology.[395] Biblical nomenclature is evidently "reality depicting" in that it mediates ultimate states of affairs by means of literary similitudes (Hosea 12:11). Additionally, it appears that scriptural imagery delineates reality insofar as it postulates a veridical context of being between God and the world.[396] Tropes or conceptual domains such as King or Father assume personal agency; personal agency in turn furnishes a logical basis for affirming God's legitimate rapport (= a relationship founded on mutual understanding and trust) with the rational created order.[397] It seems that God authentically interacts with rational creatures as "Father" (Matthew 6:9) "King" (1 Timothy 1:17) or "Friend" (James 2:23). Whether his relation to the created order is real or mixed (according to the language of Thomism),[398] each of the foregoing divine appellations appear to be metaphorical "as-if" (*als ob*) structures[399] that mediately portray God's affinity for and sovereignty over rational finite entities subsisting in both the material and spiritual realm of being, namely, angels and humans.

In view of its scriptural and Patristic use, "Father" patently does not seem to be an anomalous metaphor for the Judeo-Christian tradition.[400] This trope is evidently a foundational

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[395] Fretheim, *The Suffering of God*, 5-12.

[396] Sanders, *God Who Risks*, 16.

[397] Ibid. Caird discusses the role of low and high correspondence in metaphorical tropes (e.g. Aaron's beard dripping with oil and family unity versus God being called a Father). See Psalm 133:1-3. Low correspondence restricts how far that one can press a metaphor. On the other hand, God as Father is the Source of life, cares for His people as does a parent, has affection for his people (Hosea 11:3-4), exercises authority and metes out discipline. This metaphor thus emphasizes familial unity (Ephesians 3:14) and the mutual love that obtains between God and Christians. See *Biblical Imagery*, 153-154. There is a very high correspondence between God and human fathers in Caird's estimation.

[398] Piet Schoonenberg, *The Christ: A Study of the God-Man Relationship in the Whole of Creation and in Jesus Christ* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1971), 83-86, note 16.

[399] See Bernhard Debatin, *Die Rationalität der Metapher: eine sprachphilosophische und kommunikationstheoretische Untersuchung* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1995), 124-126.

[400] Macky, *Centrality of Metaphors*, 43, 77. See *DI* 4.28.

Christian metaphor that readily evokes mental images of a biological, juridical or sociological male figure, who either procreates or rears children.[401] Therefore, "Father" now and again may bring about negative perlocutionary effects in those who encounter the designation.[402] Nevertheless, is this a suitable reason to dispense with paternal God-talk in Christian discourse? Granted, inauspicious connotations occasionally do attend paternity; the reasons for these associations are manifold. Therefore, the question of whether paternal abuse serves as justification for repudiating the use of paternal divine speech will be addressed now.

The paramount reason that some Christians have a negative view of paternity (divine or human) is the bodily or mental abuse often related to human fatherhood. In this regard, there are admittedly exhortations in Second Temple Judaic texts that *prima facie* support the maltreatment of children. Such texts appear to disclose the ambivalent relationship that ancient fathers possibly had with their progeny. For instance, the directives for child rearing in the Torah, especially with its remarks on youthful mischief or the need for parental discipline (Genesis 8:21; Proverbs 13:24; 22:15; 23:13-14) apparently were used as rationalizations for uncompassionate nurturing of children in ancient Israel during the Second Temple period.[403] The writer of Sirach thus encourages fathers to chastise sons frequently lest they become obdurate: "Bend him to the yoke when he is young, thrash his sides while he is still small, Lest he become stubborn, disobey you, and leave you disconsolate" (Sirach 30:12 NAB). God supposedly counsels parents to discipline their children "with considerable severity, and even, if they do not submit to the threats which are uttered to them by word of mouth, to beat them, and inflict punishment on them, and to imprison them," even chastising them "to the extent of putting them to death," which the Mosaic code permitted in egregious circumstances (*De Specialibus Legibus* 2.232).[404]

Of course, ancient Jewish parents could not just decide to execute a child independently of the judicial system functioning in Israel at that time (Deuteronomy 21:18-21).[405] For the Law

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[401] Duck, *Gender and the Name of God*, 5.

[402] Macky, *Centrality of Metaphors*, 78; Fretheim, *The Suffering of God*, 11-12.

[403] Pokorný, *Colossians*, 181.

[404] Ibid.

[405] Gerhard von Rad, *Deuteronomy: A Commentary*, trans. Dorothea Barton (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1966), 138. The German edition is *Das fünfte Buch Mose: Deuteronomium*, Das Alte Testament Deutsch 8 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1964).

of Moses stipulated that rebellious sons who drank or ate to excess could only be executed pursuant to a forensic decision from members of the Jewish *gerousia*.[406] Yet, it seems that neither Philo nor the Tanakh advocate wanton child abuse; nor do Second Temple texts necessarily justify purposive decisions made by parents to lethally expose unwanted or obstinate children.[407] Hence, this study proposes that the Torah (the Mosaic law code) did not inevitably cause Israelite fathers to mistreat their offspring. In addition to passages encouraging discipline, the Tanakh apparently implores fathers to display compassion and mercy to children; the NT contains similar injunctions (Deuteronomy 1:30-31; Psalm 103:8-14; Ephesians 6:4; Titus 2:1-5). Nevertheless, based on the apostle Paul's moral exhortation to the Colossians, one might sense that some Christian fathers possibly were not fulfilling their obligatory household duties (*Haustafeln*) in the first century (Colossians 3:21). The apostolic directives further indicate that it seems prudent to distinguish explicit regulations contained in the Tanakh from the manner in which some ancient fathers tended to construe divine imperatives. Not only did Jewish fathers occasionally mete out harsh punishment to their children, however, but Stoic fathers also generally "raised children to absolute obedience" which tended to involve stringent treatment of youthful family members.[408] Yet, Stoic philosophers did not consciously adhere to the Tanakh; they purportedly obeyed the universal or immutable Logos (i.e. reason). But Epictetus indicates that Stoic fathers occasionally treated their children severely: "Is a man a father? The precept is to take care of him, to yield to him in all things, to submit when he is reproachful, when he inflicts blows."[409]

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[406] Compare Exodus 3:16; 21:17; Leviticus 20:9; Acts 5:21. See Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 17-22*: *A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, The Anchor Bible (New York and London: Doubleday, 2000), 1745-1747 for pertinent details concerning the expression "judicial execution" (*môt yûmāt*). Consult the LSJ entry `gerousia,` for instances of this term in classical, Jewish and Christian literature.

[407] Both Philo (*De Specialibus Legibus* 3.110) and Josephus (*Contra Apionem* 2.202) expressly refer to the Jewish prohibition against lethally exposing children. See Eduard Lohse, *Colossians and Philemon*, trans. William R. Poehlmann and Robert J. Karris, Hermeneia Series (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971), 159; idem, *Die Briefe an die kolosser und an Philemon* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1968). Exposure (*expositio*) was a practice familiar to ancient Greeks and Romans. See Aristotle's *Politica* 1335bl.7.16.15. Odd Magne Bakke also details the early Jewish-Christian attitude towards exposure in his text *When Children Became People*: *The Birth of Childhood in Early Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005), 110-114.

[408] Pokorný, *Colossians*, 181.

[409] *Enchiridion* 30.

It is not the purpose of this study to censure or exculpate ancient disciplinary methods. The data from Philo, Sirach and Stoic literature merely indicate that certain male parents in the ancient world used sacred or philosophical texts to justify the maltreatment of children. Even when consecrated documents do not explicitly advocate severe punishment, one finds that some fathers still interpreted certain divine injunctions as an authorization to mistreat children. But such abuse was not limited to those heeding sacred or philosophical texts. Garnsey and Humfress note that "physical chastisement of the child" was a quotidian occurrence in the North Africa of Augustine's time.[410] The uncompassionate nature of Roman discipline was a well-known social phenomenon in the first century CE as well.[411] Cases of severe chastisement in antiquity and modernity probably explain why "father" is a pejorative term for many contemporary men and women.[412] Although some males have oppressively subjugated women and children (Ecclesiastes 8:9), however, several fathers have exercised any concrete or perceived household authority they might possess with fitting love and solicitude (*Ethica Nicomachea* 8.10.4-11.3).[413] These numerous instances of non-abusive paternal dominion imply that one probably should not associate fatherhood with abuse or hegemonic domination *tout court*.[414] For while phatic agents constituting distinct speech communities often manifest a predilection for creating a nexus between mothers and nurture or between fathers and domination or abuse, social scientists have observed stark forms of communal phenomena wherein mothers also abuse their children or domestic partners.

While one can only point to a relatively small number of mothers who routinely commit violent acts against their own children or domestic partners, this datum still lends axiomatic

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[410] Peter Garnsey and Caroline Humfress, *The Evolution of the Late Antique World* (Cambridge: Orchard Academic, 2001), 186.

[411] See John E. Stambaugh and David L. Balch, *The New Testament in Its Social Environment* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1986), 124; Bakke, *When Children Became People*, 40. Roman law gave the power of life or death over offspring to the *paterfamilias*. Nonetheless, there is little historical evidence to suggest that fathers used this power apart from cases of exposure. See Thomas Wiedemann, *Adults and Children in the Roman Empire* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1989), 28.

[412] Griffiss, *Naming the Mystery*, 79-81.

[413] See Michael Joseph Brown, *The Lord's Prayer through North African Eyes*: *A Window into Early Christianity* (London and New York: T & T Clark International, 2004), 4-5; Burke, *Family Matters*, 62-67.

[414] Compare Pliny's *Epistula* 5.16.

weight to Ramshaw's poignant observation, "Not all mothers are nurturing."[415] The social phenomenon, battered husband syndrome, is less pervasive than battered wife or child syndrome; nonetheless, studies have shown that this form of domestic violence still qualifies as a grave societal datum.[416] Additionally, when mothers assault domestic partners or their own children, it serves as an *aide mémoire* that one probably should "guard against rhapsodic praise of the mother."[417] The fundamental nature of maternity evidently is more nuanced than various forms of socially constructed discourse might lead one to believe.[418] In view of the fact that mothers and fathers are both capable of abusing family members, patriarchal domination more than likely should not necessarily preclude Christians from utilizing paternal terminology for God. The notable maxim "Abuse does not take away use" (*abusus non tollit usum*) seems appropriate in this case.[419]

The continued employment of paternal discourse in Christian discourse perpetuates the common historical way of referencing God. Historically, Christians have not shown a tendency to repudiate "Father" on the basis of traumatic childhood experiences or familial disfunctionality alone.[420] They have affirmed that deity stands in the place of abusive fathers or mothers (Psalm 27:10). Therefore, this investigation submits that regarding the issue of paternal divine speech, one may need to differentiate the speaker intended meaning of a morpheme from its sentential meaning, its generalized or specialized conversational implicature[421] from its communal-based

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[415] Gail Ramshaw, *God Beyond Gender*: *Feminist Christian God-Language* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 106. Compare the apostolic words in 1 Thessalonians 2:7-8.

[416] See *Child Abuse Review* 6.2 (1997): 107-117; *Brown University Child and Adolescent Behavior Letter* 18.7 (2002): 5-7; Paul Hollander, *Discontents*: *Postmodern and Postcommunist* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2002), 153-154; Todd A. Migliaccio, "Abused Husbands: A Narrative Analysis," *Journal of Family Issues* 23.1 (2002): 26-52.

[417] Ramshaw, *God Beyond Gender*, 106.

[418] Ibid.

[419] Ben Witherington III and Laura M. Ice, *The Shadow of the Almighty*: *Father, Son, and Spirit in Biblical Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), x-xi. The formula "*Usus enim, non abusus, legatus est*" appears in Cicero (*Topica* III.17). See Marcus Tullius Cicero, *De inventione. De optimo genere oratorum. Topica*: *With an English translation by H.M. Hubbell* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960), 392.

[420] See Fretheim*, Suffering of God*, 11-12. Father imagery generally has been rejected in our time (Kasper, *God of Jesus Christ*, 133-134). On the other hand, Duck explores how paternity has been associated with abuse in modern times (*Gender and the Name of God*, 46-47).

[421] See D. A. Black, *Linguistics*, 131. For a technical discussion of generalized conversational implicatures, see H. P. Grice, "Logic and Conversation," in *The Philosophy of Language*, ed. Aloysius Martinich (New York: Oxford

lexical value.[422] Metaphors (similar to referring-expressions in general) are typically polyvalent: they assume distinct lexical senses in various contexts. The morpheme "Father" also seems to have distinct implicatures that rely on the context of utterance. Consequently, instead of eschewing the use of paternal speech for God, Donald G. Bloesch maintains that Christians have substantial reasons for affirming God as Father. Nevertheless, he is convinced that metaphors are inherently limited in ways that analogical terms are not. Bloesch discusses specific vulnerabilities that purportedly attend metaphoric speech in his text *The Battle for the Trinity*. This study will now review and subsequently critique his use of metaphor theory.

C. Metaphors, Symbols and Analogies in Bloesch

Keylock indicates that Bloesch's theory of metaphor is noteworthy when she describes him as the "most brilliant, creative evangelical writing in systematic theology."[423] Colyer also maintains that Bloesch "is undoubtedly one of North America's foremost evangelical theologians."[424] Additionally, he is an outspoken or prominent advocate of gender ontologization in the divine. That is to say, Bloesch considers gender an intrinsic property of God's being, although he does

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University Press, 1985), 149-160. He indicates that generalized "conversational implicature" should be understood as the following of certain maxims while mentally intending X or Y (variables representative of intentional objects). In all, there are four primary Gricean maxims that comprise the cooperative principle of conversation. These are quality (state the truth), quantity (sufficient informativity), relation (be relevant) and manner (be clear and economical when uttering speech). See Levin, *Semantics of Metaphor*, 11-12; Aaron, *Biblical Ambiguities*, 86-87; Ray Jackendoff, *Semantics and Cognition*, Current Studies in Linguistics Series, 8 (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1983), 155-156; Saeed, *Semantics*, 204-208.

    For a succinct, but insightful explanation of the ways in which conversational implicature differs from conventional implicature, see William G. Lycan, *Philosophy of Language*: *A Contemporary Introduction* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), 190-192. Conventional implicatures are immediately comprehended by phatic agents and they usually employ tendentious connectives such as "but" rather than "and" (e.g. "David is an athlete, but he is intelligent" or "Jill is beautiful *and* smart"). Moreover, they are not cancellable vis-à-vis meaning as conversational implicatures are. Jackendoff notes that the construction, "May I ask you to pass the salt," is an example of conversational implicature. Taken literally, it violates the Gricean maxim of relevance. But those who hear this question tend to construe it as a request. Therefore, the question is subsumed under the rubric of pragmatics.

[422] See D. A. Black, *Linguistics*, 130-131.

[423] Lesley R. Keylock, quoted in James Emery White, *What is Truth*? A *Comparative Study* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1994), 140.

[424] Elmer M. Colyer, "A Theology of Word and Spirit: Donald Bloesch's Theological Method," *Journal for Christian Theological Research* 1:1 (1996): par. 1-88.

not think that God is male: "While the biblical witness is clear that the living God transcends sexuality, that he is neither male nor female, it is equally clear that he encompasses masculinity and femininity within himself."[425] Since the questions motivating this study revolve around the ontology of divine gender, Bloesch's treatment of metaphors deserves circumspect reflection. Hence, this portion of the study initially will examine Bloesch's articulation of symbols and metaphors; then it will subsequently discuss the analogical form of God-talk that Bloesch espouses in his writings. Following an analysis of his general use of metaphor theory, a critical assessment of Bloesch's working concepts will be in order. Christians alternatively have viewed "Father" as literal (i.e. the term attributes a particular essence or a set of properties or a property to God),[426] symbolic (the concept stands for something divinely structural), metaphorical (the term is not predicated of God in a matter-of-fact sense) or analogical (the term predicates that God is both like and unlike human fathers) in nature.[427] A rather sophisticated examination of symbols, metaphors and analogies appears in Bloesch. This portion of the study will analyze his view of metaphors first, and then examine Bloesch's stance concerning analogies.

Bloesch argues that metaphors originate "in cultural experience and only imperfectly" describe the transcendent reality they signify.[428] He submits that this metaphoric inadequacy stems from the fact that metaphors are wholly locutionary or cognitive products of factical or historical existence. Since metaphors are historically conditioned derivatives of creaturely speech and thought, which by nature is finite, these particular tropes inadequately signify the divine.[429] Concurring with Bloesch in this regard, Marsh claims: "All our [theological] expressions are metaphors drawn from our own experience to express what God means to us."[430] The

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[425] *The Battle for the Trinity*: *The Debate over Inclusive God-Language* (Ann Arbor: Servant, 1985), 32-33. Gregory Nazianzus insists that God is neither male nor female; the Christian tradition has generally concurred with his assessment of the divine one (*Oration* 31.6-7). Christians have even tended to affirm the ontological genderlessness of deity (Cooper, *Our Father*, 275-276).

[426] Sallie McFague thinks, "Although many Christians use 'God' and 'father' interchangeably as if 'father' were a literal description of God," the proposition "God is Father" is "both true and untrue." Even when the proposition is "true," it is nevertheless "different from conventional views of patriarchal fatherhood" (*Metaphorical Theology*, 21).

[427] Cooper, *Our Father*, 170-175.

[428] *Battle for the Trinity*, 36.

[429] Ibid. See *ST* I.13.2-3. In that portion of the illustrious medieval text, Aquinas argues that words such as "good" or "living" predicate what God is substantially, but they "fail to represent adequately what he is."

[430] Marsh, *Triune God*, 189. He too believes that metaphors for the divine are inadequate, vulnerable and limited.

pronominals "our" and "us" mentioned in relation to experience imply that Marsh believes that human subjectivity could be the primordial emanative locus of theological metaphors. However, not only does he seemingly affirm that all theological metasememes originally emanate from human experience or phenomenal states (i.e. subjectivity), Marsh contends that all metasememic predications respecting the divine one equivocally[431] name God; for such predications ineluctably share in creaturely finitude.[432] In view of metaphor's alleged historical, social or subjective origination, Bloesch proposes that one should not conclude that there is a necessary semantic correlation between a theological metasememe and its transcendent referent. Instead of interpreting Father as a metaphor, he argues that this divine referring-expression is a "symbol" which corresponds ontologically to its supreme designated object (in some indispensable manner).[433] Nevertheless, what does Bloesch mean by symbol? How does he delineate the nature of symbols in his taxonomy of predications?

Bloesch's position is reminiscent of that view adopted in Tillichian thought: "Symbols, although they are not the same as that which they symbolize, participate in its meaning and power."[434] He appears to think that symbols ontologically participate in their referents. Moreover, Bloesch defines the lexeme "symbol" in terms of "any kind of imagistic language whose meaning cannot be directly comprehended by theoretical reason."[435] Being "imagistic" or pictorial, symbolic expressions inadequately portray their ontological signifieds (the concepts to which they linguistically refer). On the other hand, unlike metaphors, theological symbols

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However, unlike Bloesch, Marsh seems to think that all theological expressions are metaphorical.

[431] Equivocity in its theological usage means that a term's sense when applied to creatures in no way relates to the sense a term has when applied to God. This analysis of equivocity has its roots in Aristotle before subsequently appearing in Aquinas.

[432] This is one reason that Aquinas objects to construing all God-talk as metaphorical (*ST* I.13.3, *Responsio* 1).

[433] However, Cooper argues that while all language may be metaphorical in a sense, propositions such as "The Lord is King" should be read in the same way, as the proposition "David is King." In other words, metaphorical speech does not convert divine appellatives into "sheer imagery" (Cooper, *Our Father*, 121). Cooper also insists that "Father" (strictly speaking) is not a metaphor.

[434] Paul Tillich, "Religious Language as Symbolic," in Hasker, *Philosophy of Religion*, 358. William J. Hill notes that Tillich attributes "participational powers" to symbols. The symbol (according to Tillich) participates in the sense or import of what it reveals. See Hill's text *Knowing the Unknown God* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1971), 50.

[435] *Battle for the Trinity*, 20.

participate dynamically in the transcendent reality that they signify.[436] Ultimately, Bloesch labors under the Barthian-Kantian paradigm that adjudges metaphorical knowledge ersatz since it is not conceptual knowledge (*Erkenntniss*). The belief that metaphors do not impart conceptual knowledge appears in Kant's *Critique of Judgment* (*Kritik der Urteilskraft*) §59; he argues that metaphor or the aesthetic does not involve algorithmic activity nor does it generate knowledge through determinate concepts or reason.[437] Metaphor supposedly is imagistic or devoid of conceptual content.

In contrast to metaphors, however, Bloesch maintains that analogies[438] do express "conceptual content."[439] The result of his analysis is that propositions such as "God is our Rock" are considered metaphorical, but the assertion "God is the Father of Jesus Christ" is supposed to be analogical in that the latter expresses knowledge through determinate concepts. There purportedly is an "underlying congruity" that obtains between two distinct kinds of entities (God and human fathers) in the case of the speech act regarding "God" and "Jesus Christ."[440] Nevertheless, Bloesch claims that "Father" is a hierarchical, organic symbol, which does not perforce imply that the Christian deity is male.[441] He contends that divine fatherhood also embraces divine motherhood; there is a sense in which God is both masculine and feminine toward creation.[442] Hence, although Bloesch maintains that God transcends biotic sexuality with its inherent creaturely limitations, he nonetheless argues that gender obtains within the Christian deity more eminently than it does in creatures.[443] But why does Bloesch postulate gender (rather than sexuality) in God? Why ontologize divine gender but eschew divine maleness?

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[436] Bloesch curiously relegates both metaphor and analogy to the same generic category "symbol."

[437] See Mark Johnson, *Philosophical Perspectives on Metaphor* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1981), 14.

[438] Analogous speech is neither univocal nor equivocal. Rather it focuses on likenesses and dissimilarities between humans and God. Bloesch maintains that the expression "God the Father" is analogical in that it allows both an "underlying similarity" as well as a "real difference" to obtain between God and creatures (*Battle for the Trinity*, 21). Aquinas, however, thinks that the dissimilitude obtaining between God and creatures is greater than any resemblance that may subsist. On the Thomist account, conceptual knowledge of God thus seems impossible.

[439] Ibid.

[440] Ibid.

[441] Ibid. 36. See Gerald O'Collins, *The Tripersonal God*: *Understanding and Interpreting the Trinity* (New York: Paulist Press, 1999), 12.

[442] *Battle for the Trinity*, 32-37.

[443] Ibid. 53-54.

God is putatively the ground or source of both masculine and feminine gender categories.[444] While the boundless Christian deity[445] transcends gender and sexuality, it is believed that God ontologically encompasses masculinity and femininity for the reason that deity does not *utterly* surpass the limits of gender; otherwise, it apparently would not be possible for rational beings to narrate "the eternal purpose of God"[446] by means of literal or analogical speech since the maximally excellent being would then be wholly other in an unqualified sense.[447] Nevertheless, divinity presumably is both masculine and feminine in that God is active or omnipotent (on one hand) but receptive or lovingly submissive (on the other hand).[448] Grasping the two posited ontological movements of masculinity and femininity in God requires an apprehension of Bloesch's trinitarian model. However, in the context of this study, a thorough exploration of his pneumatology (doctrine of the Holy Spirit) is neither requisite nor possible. The following paragraph of this study thus concerns itself with Bloesch's treatment of Father and Son intra-trinitarian relations while chiefly excluding the Spirit's relation to the Father and the Son.

Barth's neoorthodox analysis of the triune God formatively shapes Bloesch's understanding of the divine triunity. For instance, the latter professes that there is both an "above and a below" in God or "a superior and a junior and subordinate."[449] The persons of the Trinity are considered coequal respecting the divine essence but the Son and the Holy Spirit are subordinate to the Father per function: the Son voluntarily yields to the Father in loving obedience.[450] Furthermore, the Holy Spirit conforms to the will of the Father and the Son in another "feminine" movement of the triune Godhead. But neither "movement" suggests that God the Father is strictly masculine while the second or third persons of the triune God are exclusively feminine. Therefore, although Bloesch maintains that the Son as Wisdom *qua*

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[444] Donald G. Bloesch, *Is the Bible Sexist?*: *Beyond Feminism and Patriarchalism* (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1982), 66.

[445] *De Fide Orthodoxa* 1.4.

[446] See Ephesians 3:11.

[447] Bloesch, *Is the Bible Sexist*, 66.

[448] Ibid.

[449] Ibid.

[450] Ibid. 69.

Wisdom is feminine, the Son as such is patently masculine.[451] Depending on which divine movement that the Son of God voluntarily initiates, he exhibits a masculine or feminine aspect. In this manner, the Son and the Holy Spirit purportedly embrace both masculinity and femininity without either divine person intrinsically partaking of maleness or femaleness.

From a historical perspective, it appears that most Christians have chosen not to ontologize divine gender. Ecclesiastical speech imagistically portrays God in masculine and feminine terms: the Christian religion has consistently maintained that God supersedes gender *per essentiam*.[452] More precisely, Christianity has affirmed God's "suprasexuality" in theory,[453] even if it has not always affirmed it in practice.[454] For instance, Tertullian (*Aduersus Praxean* 7) declares that God the Father generates the Son "from the womb of His own heart," (*de patris utero*)[455] implying that there is a sense in which God is both Father and Mother to the Son.[456] Furthermore, sacred writers profess that God is simultaneously "Father" and "Mother" (metaphorically speaking) since the Father not only brings forth a multitude of human sons and daughters (in a paternal manner),[457] but also feeds them with milk from overflowing maternal

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[451] Ibid. 69-70.

[452] See *Monologium* 42; Leonardo Boff, *Trinity and Society*, trans. Paul Burns (Kent: Burns and Oates, 1988), 170; John W. Cooper. *Our Father in Heaven*: *Christian Faith and Inclusive Language for God* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998); Gerald O'Collins, *Tripersonal God*, 12-13; Marianne Meye Thompson. *The Promise of the Father*: *Jesus and God in the New Testament* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2000); *Speaking the Christian God*: *The Holy Trinity and the Challenge of Feminism*, ed. Alvin F. Kimel Jr. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 20; Hans Kung, *On Being a Christian* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1976), 311.

[453] See Borchert, *John 1-11*.

[454] David S. Cunningham, *These Three Are One*: *The Practice of Trinitarian Theology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998). Duck writes: "However, although God is not male in sex, in worship Christians again and again attribute masculine gender to the divine" (*Gender and the Name of God*, 32). See *Oration* 28.13.

[455] Lynne C. Boughton insists that *uterus* or *uterum* should not be translated "womb." See "More than Metaphors: Masculine-Gendered Names and the Knowability of God," *Thomist* 58.2 (1994): 283-316. However, see Leo F. Stelten, *Dictionary of Ecclesiastical Latin: With an Appendix of Latin Expressions Defined and Clarified* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1995), 280.

[456] The Eleventh Council of Toledo (675 CE) also states: "We must believe that the Son is begotten or born not from nothing or from any other substance, but from the womb of the Father, that is from his substance." Notice that "the womb of the Father" is viewed as appositional with his substance. See Marsh, *Triune God*, 186-187. Boff believes that when the Council of Toledo speaks of the Son being "begotten or born" (*genitus vel natus*), it intends to ascribe maternal characteristics to the Father: "The Father is here given maternal attributes. We need both the figures of earthly father and mother to express the riches of divine fatherhood" (*Trinity and Society*, 170). Ambrose (340-397 CE) writes: "Even so, the Father's womb is the spiritual womb of an inner sanctuary, from which the Son has proceeded just as from a generative womb." (*The Patrarches*, 11:51). Cf. *De fide* 4.89.

[457] See Isaiah 43:6; 2 Corinthians 6:18; *Stromata* 4.21.

breasts.[458] Such forms of discourse evidently reflect Christianity's acknowledgment that God, even if "he" is inherently generative or relational,[459] is neither masculine nor feminine *quoad se*. The Christian deity transcends gender with respect to the divine essence; the categories of divine masculinity or femininity are meaningful only in relation to creatures.

Accentuating the testimony of Christian believers, who apparently have conceived God in genderless terms, Julian of Norwich (ca. 1342-1416 CE) offers the following poetic ascription that serves to demonstrate how ecclesial writers have imaginatively envisioned deity: "As truly as God is our Father, so truly is God our Mother."[460] Moreover, Anselm of Canterbury (ca. 1033-1109 CE) employs feminine speech for God, probably depicting the maximally excellent being as both "Father" and "Mother" in an emblematic sense. He pleads to Christ with a speech act that is framed (syntactically) as a metasememe: "But you, Jesus, good lord, are you not also a mother? Are you not that mother who, like a hen, collects her chickens under her wings? Truly, master, you are a mother" (*Prayer 10 to Saint Paul*).[461] Ware conversely quotes a hymn composed by Synesius of Cyrene (ca. 373-414 CE),[462] wherein the orthodox philosopher-bishop[463] and notable student of Hypatia refers to God as "Father, source of the Son."[464] Ware then inquires why Synesius refers to God as Father and Son rather than using the expressions

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[458] *Paedagogus* 1.41.3; 1.43.3-4; 1.46.1. See Denise Kimber Buell. *Making Christians*: *Clement of Alexandria and the Rhetoric of Legitimacy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 160-169, 177-179.

[459] Peter Widdicombe contends that both Origen and Athanasius posit a God who is eternally and inherently generative or relational (*Fatherhood of God*, 1-5).

[460] *Showings*, trans. Edmund Colledge, OSA and James Walsh, S.J. (New York: Paulist Press, 1978), 295.

[461] Quoted in Caroline Walker Bynum, *Jesus As Mother*: *Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 115. See *The Prayers and Meditations of St. Anselm*, trans. Benedicta Ward, Penguin Classics (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973), 153.

[462] *Hymn* III.5. See *The Essays and Hymns of Synesius of Cyrene,* 2 volumes, trans. A. Fitzgerald (London: Oxford University Press, 1930).

[463] Samuel Vollenweider relates that Synesius was bishop of Ptolemais in 410 CE ("*Synesios von Kyrene, der adlige neuplatonische Philosph und Hymnendichter, der um 410 Bischof von Ptolemais wurde*"). See *Neuplatonische und christliche Theologie bei Synesios von Kyrene*, Forschungen zur Kirchen und Dogmengeschichte (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1985), 13.

[464] Drake criticizes the view that suggests Synesius was not a Christian. He reasons that Synesius' contemporaries evidently thought of him as a believer since they appointed him bishop of Ptolemais in Egypt. See *Constantine and the Bishops*, 405; Alan Cameron, Jacqueline Long and Lee Sherry, *Barbarians and Politics at the Court of Arcadius*, The Transformation of the Classical Heritage, 19 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 19-28. For a lucid but apparently contrasting account of the philosopher, see von Campenhausen, *Fathers of the Church*, 1:126-139.

"Mother" and "Daughter."[465] But the ancient bishop does address God with the words: "You are Father, You are Mother, You are male and You are female."[466] Like Julian of Norwich, he adverts to God as Father and Mother—even adding that deity is simultaneously male and female.[467]

Regardless of how one construes such hymnic ascriptions, the arresting refrain of Synesius is only one instance of how God routinely transcends masculinity and femininity in the conceptual life of nearly all believers (past and present).[468] However, Bloesch is not necessarily incorrect regarding his belief that there are masculine and feminine movements in the Godhead just because of the *consensus omnium*. Christian history nonetheless does provide an evaluative context by means of which contemporary theologians may assess relevant questions pertaining to divine gender. The historical testimony of the Christian church also seems to comport with Walter Brueggemann's observations on Scripture and divine gender: "Biblical faith is quite uninterested in questions of God's sexuality, masculine or feminine, or even in God's asexuality but is singularly and passionately concerned with God's covenanting and the implication of covenanting for human history."[469] Ancient Bible writers were probably not overly concerned with God's ontological gender. This same principle evidently applies in the case of Lactantius and his predecessors.

In contradistinction to the testimony of ecclesiastical history, Bloesch thinks that the term "Father" communicates something ontological about God. Since "Father" apparently functions as a divine symbol for Bloesch, rather than a metaphor, it is not wholly surprising to discover him indicating that this appellation stems from special revelation as opposed to finite noetic structures conditioned by the vicissitudinal accidents of history. He reasons that "Father" is neither historically conditioned nor socially constructed but that it preeminently originates from

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[465] Kallistos Ware, *The Orthodox Way* (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1979), 33.

[466] *Hymn* II.64B65 (11); Migne, *PG* 66.1593.

[467] Virginia R. Mollenkott, *The Divine Feminine*: *The Biblical Imagery of God as Female* (New York: Crossroad Pub. Co, 1983), 9.

[468] Thompson, *Promise of the Father*, 19; Cooper, *Our Father*, 182.

[469] "Israel's Social Criticism and Yahweh's Sexuality," *JAAR Supplement* 45.3 (1977): 739-772. See Thompson, *Promise of the Father*, 180.

God's self-disclosure in the person of Jesus Christ.[470] Bloesch thus views the paternal epithet as the regnant symbol for divinity, noting that "Father" is "closer to being literal" since its signification is fundamentally transparent.[471] Despite the privileged status of fatherhood as a symbol for God, however, Bloesch insists that divine paternity actively confronts established creaturely understandings of paternity. God's fatherliness challenges so-called "patriarchal structures" by conterminously bringing it about that hegemonic institutions render an account to God (Matthew 23:9).[472] Even scholars who might object to particular elements of Bloesch's methodology seem to concur with this general thesis.[473] But there remain aspects of his paradigm that demand critical analysis. Section D therefore undertakes a critique of two arguments posited by Bloesch.

D. Critique of Bloesch's Use of Metaphorology

Bloesch's metaphorology raises a multitude of questions that directly impinge on the subject of ontological gender in the divine. Nevertheless, there are only two issues that this section will address in reviewing his implementation of metaphor theory: (1) Are all theological metaphors cultural or subjective constructs? (2) Does masculine speech for God necessarily entail that the intrinsic nature of divine gender is being delineated?

The Christian tradition as a whole has affirmed that worshipers of God know the deity as Father through general and special revelation (`avpoka,luyij`).[474] The term "revelation" may signify "God's partial communication to created beings of knowledge he possesses, including his intimate self-knowledge."[475] Thomas observes that `avpoka,luyij` may literally denote "an

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[470] Bloesch, *Battle*, 21.
[471] Ibid. 34-35.
[472] Ibid.
[473] Thompson, *Promise of the Father*, 183; Witherington, *Shadow of the Almighty*, 42-43.
[474] J. A. McGuckin, *Handbook*, 295-297.
[475] Kazhdan, "Revelation" in *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, 3:1785.

uncovering" or "a laying bare."[476] Moreover, the Greek word implies that "revelation" is a means by which God discloses previously hidden truth.[477] Revelation primarily entails the disclosure or manifestation of God himself.[478] General revelation refers to God's act of self-disclosure in creation (Genesis 1:26-28; Psalm 19:1; Romans 1:20; Hebrews 3:4); special revelation designates God's act of self-disclosure in Scripture (2 Timothy 3:16-17) or salvation history (*Heilsgeschichte*).[479] Salvation history encompasses God's providential guidance of Israel and the Christian church. Moreover, it alludes to the Father's disclosure, which occurs through the person or soteriological work of Jesus Christ (John 1:18; 14:9; 2 Corinthians 5:19; 1 John 5:20).[480] Creatures encounter the God who is Father through Scripture, creation and the salvific work of the enfleshed Logos.[481] The primordial locus of revelation tends to raise misgivings respecting claims that metaphoric speech inadequately references the divine.[482]

Justin Martyr maintains that Christians know God as Father, based on his beneficences or creative effects (*Apology* 2.6). He intimates that titles such as Father are not historical constructs (i.e. fictive realities). Rather, rational creatures know God as "Father" by means of general or special revelation.[483] While Justin does state that Father is not a divine "name" (`o;noma,`) but a form of address (`pro,srhsij`), he still believes that this term (which Christians utilize to address God) is neither arbitrary nor referentially vacuous. Justin thereby implies that the conceptual signifier "Father" possesses meaningful content: it points to a transcendent reality that supplies good things in abundance (*Stromata* 1.24), and chastises the Christian community while loyally adhering to it (*Clement* 1.56). Rational creatures cannot name God "Father" unless

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[476] Robert L. Thomas, *Revelation 1-7*: *An Exegetical Commentary* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1992), 50. Thomas derives this lexical sense from George Abbott-Smith, *A Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1937), 50.

[477] Ibid.

[478] Thomas C. Oden, *Systematic Theology*, 3 volumes (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1987), 1:18.

[479] See Philo's *De Posteritate Caini* 167.

[480] Cooper, *Our Father*, 139-141. Ignatius of Antioch is evidently the first writer to formulate special revelation in terms of divine self-disclosure: "there is one God who manifested Himself through Jesus Christ His Son, who is His Word that proceeded from silence, who in all things was well-pleasing unto Him that sent Him" (*Magnesians* 8:2). See Wolfhart Pannenberg, et al. *Revelation As History* (New York: Macmillan, 1968), 8.

[481] Borchert employs the terminology "enfleshed" in *John 1-11*, 119.

[482] White, *What is Truth*, 100-109.

[483] Leslie W. Barnard, *Justin Martyr*: *His Life and Thought* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1967), 79-80.

God first reveals himself as Father.[484] The Christian transcendent object of reverence discloses multiple "forms of address" in creation, Scripture and salvation history. Justin consequently appears to insist that humans derive the names, which they employ to address God, from *a posteriori* reasoning (i.e. by making inferences from the divine effects to the uncreated *primum movens*). In essence, he maintains that spatio-temporal bound rational creatures assign a specific functional designation to God based on his interpersonal unveiling to humanity.[485] Justin would probably concur with Herman Bavinck who considers divine names neither arbitrary nor "mere inventions" of human intellects.[486] In fact, *Apology* 2.6 professes that the mortal naming of God is grounded in natural revelation. But if humans affix designations to God based on divine intersubjective unveiling, could theological speech or language (in the form of metaphor) be as vulnerable or historically conditioned as Bloesch or Marsh claim? While God evidently mediates supernatural revelation through finite noetic structures, which by nature are irremediably fallible, the Christian tradition nonetheless affirms that the Father discloses himself in the transcendent act of revelation.[487] Hence, although theological metaphors certainly do not recount the entire "theo-drama" (*Theodramatik*)[488] in its comprehensive fullness—they may even suppress particular aspects of God's nature—in order to qualify as revelation, the metaphors that Christians invoke to describe God must be reality depicting (in some sense) for the people of God.

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[484] Cooper, *Our Father*, 139.

[485] See Bloesch, *Battle for the Trinity*, 25. He notes that God names himself "by showing us who he is." Compare Exodus 3:14. Cooper adds that "rightly naming God is an activity in which humans truly recognize who God has identified himself to be in the various modes of special and general revelation" (*Our Father*, 160). Assigning the deity a *nomen* or *nomina* means that we "acknowledge" the names that God has given himself in revelation (Ibid). Justin's thoughts are not at variance with these observations.

[486] Cooper, *Our Father*, 160; Bavinck, *The Doctrine of God*, trans. William Hendriksen (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1951), 84.

[487] See *Magnesians* 8.2; *Dialogue with Trypho* 62.4; *Exhortation to the Greeks* 4 (Tatian); *De Anima* 18 (Tertullian).

[488] Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Theo-Drama*: *Theological Dramatic Theory*, Volume I, *Prolegomena*, trans. Graham Harrison (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1988), 15. Balthasar uses the metaphor of the stage to describe "the event of God becoming man and his action on the world's behalf" in salvation history (Ibid. 112).

Gerald O'Collins and Daniel Kendall argue that theological metaphors "refer to and describe reality."[489] Concurring with Soskice, they reason that metasememes speak about one thing in terms that appear suggestive of another thing.[490] For example, God does not instantiate the literal mind-independent properties of a crag, but the ancient Hebrew prophets articulate speech regarding YHWH in ways that appear suggestive of a rock. Likewise, YHWH is called "a sun and shield" in Psalm 84:11(12).[491] Yet, he apparently does not exemplify the matter-of-fact predicates that structurally constitute the Sun or a shield.[492] In these instances, the Bible writers presumably are employing tropes to speak about one entity (God) in terms suggestive of other entities (rock, Sun or shield). Metaphor seemingly permits the writers of Scripture to describe the supreme reality adequately, though indirectly. Far from being linguistically insufficient or vulnerable, theological metaphors seem to accomplish what "proper terminology" (*De oratore* 3.152-155) cannot achieve; they convey truths that non-tropic expressions attributing matter-of-fact properties to a particular subject are incapable of communicating.

If metaphors do convey divine verities adequately (in some respect), to what extent are they "reality depicting"? Does a metasememe's reality portraying function necessitate that tropic assertions communicate data about the metaphysical properties of a given entity? Analyzing the very phenomenon of metaphoricity or determinate tropic constructs may lead one to believe that metaphors are assertions comparing God to sensible entities; they are not metaphysical pronouncements regarding the nature of structural entities (including God). This study actually

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[489] *The Bible for Theology*: *Ten Principles for the Theological Use of Scripture* (New York: Paulist Press, 1997), 83.

[490] Ibid.

[491] Joseph Bryant Rotherham, *Rotherham's Emphasized Bible* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1994).

[492] Aaron, however, espouses the view that "historical intervention" is what the writer of Psalm 84:11(12) intends. He maintains that the psalmist (by stating that "God is shield" or "God is sun") predicates that YHWH literally is sun or shield. While Aaron denies that "God is sun/shield" asserts an ontological identity between YHWH and sun/shield, he nonetheless holds that ontological identity is not the only genuine alternative to metaphorical signification. See *Biblical Ambiguities*, 57-59. Other scholars, conversely, view the language comprising this psalm as metaphorical. See Schneiders, *Women and the Word*, 26; Marvin E. Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, Word Biblical Commentary, volume 20 (Dallas: Word Books, 1990), 361. Tate notes that although "sun" evidently is not utilized metasememically for YHWH elsewhere, the term is a rather "common royal epithet" found in ANE texts. Cf. Isaiah 60:19; Revelation 21:23; 22:5 for Biblical texts that use sun imagery for God.

contends that metasememes (i.e. metaphors) exemplify an as-if character.[493] They evidently do not predicate metaphysical or literal properties of a conceptual subject, but only affirm (tropically or conceptually) that "S is P." Accordingly, even though the appellation "Father" may be reality depicting, it does not necessarily delineate intrinsic properties of God the Father.[494] Paternal metaphors for God may speak to the deity's relationship with his people or the manner in which the divine one functions vis-à-vis the Son of God and creation as a whole.[495] However, imagery couched in masculine terminology does not (perforce) disclose anything concerning God's immanence. Tropes depicting a paternal deity are ostensibly as-if forms of speech that affirm unfamiliar identity syntheses (i.e. father/God); conversely, they are not metaphysical pronouncements.[496] When Scripture refers to God as a Shepherd, King, Warrior, Lord or Father, it is apparently employing metaphorical speech to predicate X or Y of God in a figurative manner.[497] Therefore, one probably cannot rely on metaphorical locutions in Scripture to discern whether masculinity or femininity are immanent divine categories of being.[498] Yet, metaphors about God express divine truth on the tropic level.

Finally, scholars have constructed a number of arguments against predicating masculinity of God. First, perhaps gender should be inextricably associated with a sexed body (= a corpus

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[493] See Debatin, *Die Rationalität der Metapher*, 124-126; John R. Searle, *Mind*: *An Introduction* (New York and London: Oxford University Press), 20.

[494] As an illustration of metaphorical speech applied to divinities, Aristotle writes: "Hence Ganymede is said 'to pour the wine to Zeus,' though the gods do not drink wine. This last might however be metaphorical" (*Poetica* 25.1461b). Aristotle is reasoning that nectar: gods = wine: men. See the notes in Kassel, *Ars Poetica*, 108. A similar claim is being made in this study with respect to "Father" as a divine appellation. When ascribing paternity to God, it seems that Scripture and a number of pre-Nicenes do not mean to say that God is inherently masculine. Rather, the Bible refers to God as "Father," even though the infinite God evidently transcends gender categories (Bloesch, *Is the Bible Sexist*, 80). See Fretheim, *The Suffering of God*, 8-9. He argues that metaphors communicate truths about God, but they also remind us of discontinuities that obtain between God and creatures. For instance, metaphors may apply temporal categories to God. However, deity is not subject to temporal vicissitudes or the ravages of time, even if God is temporal.

[495] *Clement* 1.19.

[496] See Caird, *Language and Imagery*, 152-155.

[497] See Tremper Longman III and Daniel G. Reid, *God Is a Warrior* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan: 1995), 15-17.

[498] Ware argues that "there is in God no such thing as sexuality" (*Orthodox Way*, 33-34). An infinite God by definition (i.e. analytically) cannot be male, female or presumably masculine or feminine since a limitless God transcends these categories of being. Yet, Ware maintains that "Father" is a divinely given symbol. However, why should Christians continue employing masculine symbols if they might not delineate what God is immanently? Ware's answer is that God has revealed and vouchsafed the symbol "Father" to Christians; moreover, he argues that the epithet is rooted in being itself.

informed by genitalia, hormones or chromosomes). Moreover, gender is possibly a creaturely phenomenon that God has vouchsafed to animals and humans for the purpose of generative procreation (*Divinae institutiones* 4.8.3).[499] Nevertheless, let one suppose that God could be a superlative Father, who is masculine respecting the divine essence. If this counterfactual situation were actualized, then it would seem doubtful that knowledge of God's masculinity would be humanly cognoscible apart from divine revelation. However, the Father apparently has not revealed to humankind the putative immanental nature of deific gender. Nor does it appear that one legitimately can infer ontological masculinity from the revelatory designation "Father." This paternal figure of speech possibly communicates how God (the Father) relates to entities other than God. Since there is an empirical nexus between gender and a sexed body in the phenomenal realm, gender (= sexuality) unassociated with maleness or femaleness would appear to constitute noumena (in the Kantian sense) for spatio-temporal bound percipient subjects, especially if God has not unveiled such metaphysical data by means of revelation.

Hilary of Poitiers enjoins that a Christian is obligated to "gauge God's assertions concerning Himself by the scale of His own glorious self-revelation."[500] Therefore, even if God were ontologically masculine without being male, this datum would evidently surpass human experience or remain unknowable for those existing in the sensible world of appearances unless God disclosed such divine masculinity to rational datives of manifestation.[501] Whether one appeals to Kantian epistemology to resolve the issue of divine immanent gender or to some other theory of knowledge, the fact remains that admonitions concerning projectionist theology appear in both the ancient Cappadocians and Miroslav Volf.[502] The former argue that the path of

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[499] Peter van Inwagen prefers to speak of "sexual dimorphism" (in this context) which should not be confused with "gender." He argues that since God does not occupy space, then he evidently cannot have a "physical structure" or material corpus. But in order to be male or female (sexually dimorphic), one must possess a physical structure. Van Inwagen thus reasons that God does not "have a sex." It is reasonable to assume that God does not have gender either since God apparently does not possess a physical structure. See Inwagen's *The Problem of Evil*: *The Gifford Lectures Delivered in the University of St. Andrews in 2003* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2006), 21.

[500] *De Trinitate* 1.18.

[501] See Cooper, *Our Father*, 184-187.

[502] Gregory Nazianzus writes: "Father is not a name of substance or of activity, but of relationship, and of how the Father is related to the Son, or the Son to the Father" (*Orationes* 29.16). He maintains that the relational Father-Son language applied to the first two persons of the Trinity must be construed as to preclude importing human images of masculinity or femininity into the Godhead (Ibid. 31.7, 31). See Thomas F. Torrance, *The Christian*

circumspection dictates that the importation of sensible images into the supersensible Godhead ought to be avoided,[503] whereas the latter contends that gender is rooted in a sexed body; something God evidently does not possess (Numbers 23:19).[504] This investigation proposes that either God is genderless or that we cannot know whether God the Father is masculine (*quoad se*) based on what rational creatures presently know from general or special revelation. For neither form of unveiling ostensibly discloses whether God is essentially masculine or feminine:

> There can be no comparison between God and earthly things, yet the weakness of our understanding forces us to seek for illustrations from a lower sphere to explain our meaning about loftier themes. The course of daily life shows how our experience in ordinary matters enables us to form conclusions on unfamiliar subjects. We must therefore regard any comparison as helpful to man rather than as descriptive of God, since it suggests, rather than exhausts, the sense we seek.[505]

Gender *in divinis* does not appear to be a salient preoccupation of the early church writers. They seem to conceive God's paternity in non-literal terms. Masculine and feminine terms for the divine are a result of linguistic accidence or impoverished human speech (*Aduersus nationes* 1.59). Early church writers are not inclined to believe that these terms are reflective of what God is by essence (*per essentiam*).

Findings

It is clear that there is an ongoing debate regarding the nature of metaphor and God's paternity. Questions remain concerning the manner in which Christians should linguistically communicate their perceptions of the divine. Nevertheless, the evidence extracted from discourse used in Scripture and the pre-Nicenes suggest that the appellation "Father" is a metaphor that asserts an unfamiliar identity synthesis between human males and God. In Aristotelian terms, metaphors

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Doctrine of God: *One Being*, *Three Persons* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1996), 158; Marsh, *Triune God*, 122.

[503] In agreement with the Cappadocians, Athanasius professes: "Accordingly, as in saying 'offspring,' we have no human thoughts, and, though we know God to be a Father, we entertain no material ideas concerning Him, but while we listen to these illustrations and terms, we think suitably of God, for He is not as man, so in like manner, when we hear of 'coessential,' we ought to transcend all sense, and, according to the Proverb, 'understand by the understanding what is set before us' " (*De Synodis* 42). See Origen's *Peri Archon* 1.2.4.

[504] Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace*, 174-175.

[505] Hilary of Poitiers, *De Trinitate* 1.19.

are names transferred from one entity to another: they are forms of linguistic borrowing. Cicero espoused this view and Lactantius undoubtedly affirmed it as well (*De oratore* 3.152-155). Debatin, on the other hand, chooses to stress the as-if character (*als ob Charakter*) of metaphors. His approach may be preferable to those taken by either Aristotle or Cicero. God seems to be like a Father but God does not exemplify the literal properties of one.

Conversely, Bloesch argues that God is not a male but is inherently masculine. Since he believes that metaphors inadequately delineate the maximally excellent being, Bloesch maintains that "Father" is not a metaphor; rather, the term is a symbol that is closer to being a literal description of God's nature than concepts like "Rock" or "Shield." What evidently gives particular force to this notion is the religious belief that Jesus of Nazareth employed the appellation "Father" in his earthly ministry while openly proclaiming that he was God's Son. God's fatherhood was evidently revealed in Christ, the Son. Without denying this premise set forth by Bloesch or the NT, this study contends that "Father" is not a name for God; it is a metaphorical way to address or invoke God. A possible weakness in Bloesch's position appears to be a failure to recognize that metaphors describing God are rooted in divine revelation. He reasons that they are cultural or social constructs. But Hilary Poitiers and Justin Martyr both seem to adequately account for the origination of tropes when they suggest that theological metaphors are rooted in human reflection on God's creation or general revelation. This approach has the advantage of acknowledging the social or cultural aspects of metaphors without reducing metaphor to a socio-cultural construct.

Finally, this chapter has demonstrated that discourse communities apparently establish lingual significance or meaning to facilitate intersubjective relations among phatic agents. In the case of metaphoric language for the Christian God, believers probably ascertain or disclose the sense that theological metaphors bear: "The assembly of believers, the community of discourse, clarifies what the self-contradictory language [of metaphor] means and how such meaning functions."[506] The interpretive community belonging to Christ enables metaphoric speech to become meaningful for theological dialogue in the sense that prominent aspects of sacred texts

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[506] Ramshaw, *God beyond Gender*, 94.

that use symbols for God are wielded to formulate coherent doctrines about the Father as he discloses himself to rational creatures.[507] In order to grasp the sense of divine paternal imagery, one must acquire semantic or pragmatic competence of ecclesiastical and biblical language. An intimate familiarity with the social or intellectual context of ancient church treatises facilitates a phatic agent's capacity to detect the presence of metaphoricity in theological speech.

Excursus A: Non-Metaphorical Speech and God

Paul Brassey claims that the contents of the ostensible literary redaction "Deutero-Isaiah" imply that any affirmative locution pertaining to God is essentially metaphorical: "Human language must fail in direct description of the deity; it is inadequate to the task."[508] Therefore, he maintains that all divine referring-expressions in Deutero-Isaiah are metasememic or non-literal.[509] Brassey also indicates that one cannot refer to God univocally; all theological discourse putatively is a delineation of both what "is" and what "is not" the case metaphysically or in terms of mind-independent properties. Metaphor supposedly preserves the dynamic tension between what "is" and what "is not" the case within the realm of divine being.

Alternatively, Gunton, Swinburne and Alston have suggested that not every theological locution or enunciative act is metaphorical.[510] John Cooper further distinguishes between metaphor as a literary figure of speech (i.e. trope) and all language being "metaphorical" by virtue of the inherent finitude characterizing rational creatures and their individual speech acts.[511] For instance, while divine titles may subsist within the matrix of inadequate human *langue* or *parole*, appellations designating God are not necessarily metaphorical in the sense that they are tropes (e.g. evgw. eivmi, o` w;n evidently is not a figurative turn of phrase).

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[507] Räpple, *Metaphor of the City*, 108.

[508] Brassey, *Metaphor*, 49.

[509] Ibid.

[510] Macky, *Centrality of Metaphors*, 190ff. See Alston, "Literal Talk of God: Its Possibility and Function" in *This Is My Name Forever*, 136. For a discussion of univocity, consult Swinburne, *Revelation*, 152-154. One can find opposing viewpoints regarding theolinguistics in Dille, *Mixing Metaphors*, 18. She appears to concur with Brassey and Soskice regarding the utilization of theological metaphors.

[511] Cooper, *Our Father*, 67.

Moreover, Aquinas maintains that one may predicate certain expressions of God (viz. "Father") properly.[512] Context and intent of signification apparently determine whether divine names are metaphorical or proper markers of identification.[513]

Duns Scotus (1266-1308 CE) also believes that speaking of God non-metaphorically is a linguistic possibility. While apophatic or negative theology has secured a venerable place in the Christian tradition,[514] Scotus nonetheless argues that denials concerning the nature of God are only intelligible "in terms of some affirmation."[515] He contends that if rational creatures deny that God is X, Y or Z, "it is because we wish to do away with something inconsistent with what we have already affirmed."[516] The negative way (*via negativa*) presupposes the positive way (*via positiva*) in Scotus' thought: one cannot deny that which one has not affirmed previously. He accordingly contends: "a purely negative knowledge is no knowledge at all."[517] This observation noticeably evokes his univocity of being theory—Scotus' contention that univocal predication with reference to God is feasible, when employed within certain strict parameters.

Univocity of being (*ens*) pertains to what creatures can know or say about God by means of reason (i.e. natural theology) or logical argumentation.[518] Scotus believes "that concept [is] univocal which possesses sufficient unity in itself, so that to affirm and deny it of one and the same thing would be a contradiction."[519] He thus suggests that due to its sufficient unity *in se*, a univocal concept may function as the middle term (a term that occurs in the major and minor

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Gustavo Zonana, *God-talk*, 52.

[513] The term "context" here means "a cognitive construct formulated by a speaker." See Ungerer and Schmid, *An Introduction to Cognitive Linguistics*, 46-47.

[514] See Pelikan, *Christian Tradition*, 2:32, 258.

[515] Gunton, *Act and Being*, 68; Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, 1:344.

[516] Quoted in Gunton, *Act and Being*, 68.

[517] See Bernardino M. Bonansea, *Man and His Approach to God in John Duns Scotus* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1983), 100; Ware, *Orthodox Way*, 14-15.

[518] See Frederick C. Copleston, *Medieval Philosophy* (New York and Evanston: Harper & Row, 1961), 111-112; Peter King, "Duns Scotus on Metaphysics" in *The Cambridge Companion to Duns Scotus*, ed. Thomas Williams (Cambridge, UK and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 15-68; Mary Beth Ingham and Mechtild Dreyer, *The Philosophical Vision of John Duns Scotus: An Introduction* (Washington, D. C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2004), 23. Scotus thinks that univocity only applies to natural or general concepts of God: Univocatio enim non est nisi in generalibus rationibus. See William A. Frank and Allan Bernard Wolter, *Duns Scotus, Metaphysician*, Purdue University Press Series in the History of Philosophy (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 1995), 116. King notes that univocity in Scotus generally applies to Aristotle's ten categorical genera ("Duns Scotus on Metaphysics," 20-21).

premise of a syllogism but not in its conclusion) since it analytically obviates equivocation whereby a term has variant senses when applied to divergent referents.[520] For example, Scotus insists that rational creatures may predicate the concept "being"[521] of necessary and contingent beings, of both God and creatures since "being" (*ens*) is univocal in that it does not allow for equivocation in a logical syllogism: "being" has the same denotation regardless of its assigned referent.[522] In view of its univocity, the concept of being also functions as a disjunctive predicate, distinguishing A from B or C from D (*vel cetera*). Its signification ultimately depends on the content of utilized predicates, not on the subject of the proposition in which it occurs.[523]

When Scotus refers to "being," he probably means "being qua being" (the proper object of the intellect), which is an abstraction logically prior to the ten genera of Aristotelian categories.[524] However, if the term "being" (which rational creatures can neither affirm nor deny of one and the same entity) does not have "sufficient unity in itself" when rational creatures predicate it of God or creaturely essences, then it evidently has no lexical meaning at all for communicative agents vis-à-vis God.[525] Sanders accordingly submits that if univocal predication relating to the divine is linguistically impossible, then "we will be back in the cave of agnosticism."[526] If univocal language or speech were theolinguistically impossible, then natural theology would remain unfeasible since knowledge of the divine perfections (= wisdom, intellect and will) would not be accessible to the unilluminated mind of a created rational existent.[527] Yet, a God about whom one cannot think or articulate X or Y significatively using natural means (=

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[519] Gunton, *Act and Being*, 69.

[520] Sufficit etiam pro medio syllogistico, ut extrema unita in medio sic uno sine fallacia aequivocationis concludantur inter se uniri (Frank and Wolter, *Duns Scotus*, 109). See Bonansea, *Approach to God*, 102.

[521] The term "being" (*ens*) in this context refers to an undetermined abstraction that is the *de facto* proper object of the intellect. See Frank and Wolter, *Duns Scotus*, 121; Etienne Gilson, *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages* (New York: Random House, 1955), 455.

[522] But note the qualifications that Peter King makes regarding Scotus' univocity of being theory in "Duns Scotus on Metaphysics," 5-6.

[523] Anthony John Patrick Kenny, *A Brief History of Western Philosophy* (Malden: Blackwell Pub, 1998), 153-154.

[524] Steven E. Ozment, *The Age of Reform (1250-1550)*: *An Intellectual and Religious History of Late Medieval and Reformation Europe* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980), 56; Owens, *Doctrine of Being*, 41.

[525] Copleston, *Medieval Philosophy*, 110-111.

[526] *God Who Risks*, 25.

[527] Bonansea, *Approach to God*, 102.

reason) soon becomes irrelevant. Thus, while Scotus postulates a theory of analogy in relation to God-talk, he also maintains that the concept of analogy presupposes univocity: univocal language grounds natural theology and the analogous terms that it employs.[528] Nevertheless, there are yet two further reasons why Scotus espouses univocal speech regarding God.

(1) If the term "good" does not have a (full or partial) univocal denotation (= extension) when rational agents reference both God and creatures, it appears somewhat unintelligible to predicate "good" of either God or the created order.[529] For one cannot employ a given term in deductive arguments nor can a speaker employ predicates like "good" or "being" as middle terms in syllogisms without equivocation being the result unless the predicates "good" or "being" are univocal. Scotus argues that to avoid equivocation, a term must possess sufficient unity in itself; it must not be susceptible to equivocation. Moreover, another objection to employing a term that is not (at least) partially univocal is that a sound basis for positing similarity between God and creatures is thereby lacking. While there is a sense in which God is other than his creation, scripture indicates that rational creatures in some way emulate God (Genesis 1:26-27). They are consequently similar to deity in certain ways. Yet, in order for two entities (A and B) to be similar, they must have certain properties in common. If A and B are similar, then it would appear that particular terms could be predicated of A and B univocally. Otherwise, the reputed similarity obtaining between A and B would seem questionable.[530]

(2) Scotus thinks that if rational creatures are incapable of knowing what God is, they are incapable of knowing that God is. For it seems that one cannot know that a being exists unless one has some determinate notion of what the particular being under consideration is with respect to its quiddity.[531] One cannot know that a cat is, unless he or she has some determinate concept of what a cat quidditatively is. Therefore, according to Scotus, natural knowledge of God is not limited to analogy or remotion (*via remotionis*). Hence, he thinks that it is possible to speak univocally with reference to the creator of all things in restricted contexts and with specific constraints. Based on the theory of univocity, one might contend that the ability to identify a cat

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[528] Copleston, *Medieval Philosophy*, 112.
[529] Gunton, *Act and Being*, 70.
[530] Alston, "Literal Talk of God," 155.

(supposing that one employs Scotus' reasoning) does not merely rest on prior experience with cats or analogical predication alone. Rather, one can identify cats on the basis of intensional properties that allow us to apply the extension "cat" to a domesticated feline mammal, which instantiates distinct properties that make it possible for the mammal to be subsumed under a particular ontological rubric. Similarly, the Subtle Doctor submits that discourse about God rests on metaphysical assumptions concerning "being." Univocal speech is possible because of ontological perfections that obtain in both creatures and God. These perfections (wisdom, intellect and will) are logically prior to predicable genera. They are consequently applicable to finite beings and the infinite being.

Theologians who espouse analogical God-talk in opposition to univocal speech may object to Scotus' line of reasoning since predicates such as "wise" "loving" or "person" purportedly do not refer to God in the same manner that they refer to creatures. As Swinburne insists, however, one may predicate the verb "cause" of a supernova explosion or predicate it of a communicative agent whose speech acts bring about feelings of undue exasperation in those hearing the agent.[532] The signification of the predicate term "cause" in both cases is identical; only the referents or application of the predicate differ. However, a lack of referential correspondence (*Bedeutung*) does not seem to entail a disparity of predicative sense (*Sinn*).[533] For instance, the predication of the concept "wise" apparently is isomorphic, whether the referent of the concept is Socrates or God. Divine wisdom may be qualitatively greater than Socratic wisdom; yet, "wise" evidently bears the identical sense in both instances because it conceptually refers to the same abstract quality.[534] As a result, univocal speech pertaining to God appears to be linguistically possible: discourse about God is not restricted to metaphorical or analogical discourse or predication.[535]

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[531] Bonansea, *Approach to God*, 100.

[532] Swinburne, *Revelation*, 151.

[533] *Sinn* and *Bedeutung* are not being used in a strictly Fregean manner above. Rather, in this study, the words respectively denote the lexemic value of a term and that concrete or abstract entity to which a term conceptually refers. Kjärgaard discusses Frege's usage of the vocabulary *Sinn und Bedeutung* in *Metaphor and Parable*, 47.

[534] Swinburne, *Revelation*, 151.

[535] Alston, "Literal Talk of God," 154-156.

Chapter 3

Greco-Roman and Judaic Influences on Paternal Metaphors in the Divine Institutes

A. Greco-Roman Notions of Divine Paternity

In Attic Greek, the noun phrase "my Father" (ὁ πατήρ μου) has a colloquial tone in contrast to the more formal way of referencing one's father (ὁ ἐμὸς πατήρ).[536] *Abba* (an Aramaic word for "father") apparently functioned as a term of endearment in ancient Judaism.[537] Nevertheless, while "father" may refer to a biological or figurative originator (Romans 4, 11, 12-16), cultures universally have employed the morpheme to signify numerous facets of divine paternity.[538] The father customarily protects, generates and nourishes life.[539] He symbolizes not only familial power and authority, but also the ultimate source of copious and good supplies for his children (James 1:17). Moreover, ancient writers depict male parents intersubjectively

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[536] Donald J. Mastronarde, *Introduction to Attic Greek* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 167.

[537] Joachim Jeremias believes that Jesus' use of *Abba* is unprecedented in ancient Judaism. See Jeremias, *New Testament Theology*: *The Proclamation of Jesus* (New York: Scribner's, 1971), 67; idem, *The Prayers of Jesus* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967). The body of literature on this subject is immense with scholars arguing for or against Jeremias' position. Works that present both sides of the issue are Ben Witherington III and Laura M. Ice, *The Shadow of the Almighty* (Grand Rapids and Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2002), 19-35; Marianne Meye Thompson, *The Promise of the Father*: *Jesus and God in the New Testament* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2000), 21-34; Ruth C. Duck, *Gender and the Name of God*: *The Trinitarian Baptismal Formula* (New York: The Pilgrim Press, 1991). Compare Geza Vermes, *Jesus in His Jewish Context* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 2003), 37-39; idem, *The Religion of Jesus the Jew* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 152-183; James Barr, "Abba Isn't Daddy," *JTS* 39 (1988): 28-47.

[538] Witherington III and Ice, *Shadow of the Almighty*, 4-5; Walter Kasper, *Jesus the Christ* (London: Burns & Oates, 1976), 79-80. *Ethica Nicomachea* 8.10.4 (1160b1) states: "This is why Homer styles Zeus 'father,' for the ideal of kingship is paternal government" (καὶ Ὅμηρος τὸν Δία πατέρα προσαγορεύει: πατρικὴ γὰρ ἀρχὴ βούλεται ἡ βασιλεία εἶναι). See *The Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. H. Rackham (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press and William Heinemann, 1968); Loren T. Stuckenbruck, *Angel Veneration and Christology*: *A Study in Early Judaism and in the Christology of the Apocalypse of John*, WUNT, 70 (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1995), 65.

[539] Compare *Corpus Hermeticum* 2.17: "God's other name is 'father' because he is capable of making all things. Making is characteristic of a father." See *Hermetica: The Greek Corpus Hermeticum and the Latin Asclepius in a New English Translation, with Notes and Introduction*, trans. Brian P. Copenhaver (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

exercising justice toward their families and respective communities (Job 31:11-22).[540] It is no wonder that "The idea of the Godhead as Father of the world and of human beings is extremely old."[541]

One antiquitous source for divine father invocations is early Greco-Roman literature. The ancient Greeks now and again utilize "Father" (path,r) tropically: "Now to discover the Maker and Father of this Universe were a task indeed; and having discovered Him, to declare Him unto all men were a thing impossible" (*Timaeus* 28C).[542] The term here applies in a metaphorical sense to the Platonic Demiurge.[543] Plato also has the fashioner of the cosmos declare: "Gods of gods, those works whereof I am framer and father are indissoluble save by my will" (*Timaeus* 41a-b).[544] Reflecting on this passage, Plutarch (45-125 CE) observes that Plato appears to posit a divine being who functions as both maker and father of all things.[545] In his estimation, *Timaeus* 28 identifies God as "maker" since deity produced the cosmos; Plato's Demiurge is "Father" in that the Creator putatively has imparted rationality to the human soul.[546] Plutarch explicitly distinguishes the soul from the intellect.[547] He insists that the intellect "is better and more divine than soul."[548] Nevertheless, Plutarch reasons that the Father-Maker of all things brings it about that human reason subsists through the conjoining of intellect (nou/j) and soul (yuch,). On the other hand, he indicates that the rational "soul" is still inferior to pure mind or intellect.[549]

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[540] Kasper, *God of Jesus Christ*, 133.

[541] Ibid. 137.

[542] The English translation (ET) is taken from *Timaeus; Critias; Cleitophon; Menexenus; Epistles*, LCL, 234, trans. Robert G. Bury (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989). The Greek reads: to.n me.n ou=n poihth.n kai pater,a tou/ de tou/ panto. e`urei/n te e;rgon kai. eu`ro,nta eivj pa,ntaj avdu,naton le,gein. Compare *Platonis Respublica* 506E.

[543] See entry for path,r in LSJ.

[544] The ET is by Robert G. Bury. The Greek text reads: qeoi. Qew/n w n evgw. Dhmiourgo.j path,r te e;rgwn [a[diV evmou geno,mena] a;luta evmou/ ge mh. evqe,lontoj. See *Phaedrus* 257b.

[545] See Deirdre Carabine, *The Unknown God. Negative Theology in the Platonic Tradition: Plato to Eriugena* (Louvain: Peeters Press, 1995), 55.

[546] Ibid.

[547] John M. Dillon, *The Middle Platonists, 80 B.C. to A.D. 220* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), 211-212.

[548] Ibid.

[549] Ibid.

Even if Plutarch's affinity for Stoic-informed immanentism formatively shapes his exegesis of Plato's remarks on the universal Father-Maker, it is noteworthy that he construes the "Father" of this seminal Platonic text in analogical terms (*Table Talk* 8.3, 718A).[550] Furthermore, while Plutarch's account of the famed creation narrative and mediatorial Demiurge discussed in *Timaeus* evidently is somewhat novel,[551] the figurative uses of "Father" by Plato certainly do not astonish students of Homeric poetry.[552] For in his epic works, Homer frequently refers to Zeus as "the Father of gods and men" (path,r avndrw/n te qew/n te) or "the Father of men and gods."[553] Other Greek rhapsodists similarly depict Zeus as the primal source (*Urgottheit*) of all divine beings.[554] For instance, one encounters the Hesiodic epithets "Father of gods and men,"[555] or "Father of men and gods"[556] in *Theogony*: Hesiod conceptually develops an entire line of descent for the gods in his famed work. Moreover, when Pindar recounts that Zeus generates a mature divine Athena from his head,[557] he implicitly reveals that the Olympian engenders the goddess in a metaphorical sense.[558] This figurative expression concerning birth from the head of

[550] Robert M. Grant, *Gods and the One God*, Library of Early Christianity, 1 (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1986), 78.

[551] Carabine, *Unknown God*, 55-56.

[552] Brown, *The Lord's Prayer*, 8; M. L. West, *The East Face of Helicon*: *West Asiatic Elements in Greek Poetry and Myth* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 108-109; Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion*, trans. John Raffan (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985), 129. See *Homeri Opera*, ed. David B. Monro et Thomas W. Allen, 2 volumes (Oxonii: Typographeo Clarendoniano, 1969).

[553] See *Iliad* 1.503, 534, 578; 2.371; 3.276, 350; 4.68; 5.421; 7.179; 8.49, 245; 15.12, 47; 16.458; 20.56; 24.100. Cf. the entry for path,r in Richard John Cunliffe, *A Lexicon of the Homeric Dialect* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963). Widdicombe writes that Homer refers to Zeus as "Father" over 100 times. See "Fatherhood and the Conception of God," 519-536. For historical accounts of gods giving birth to or engendering humans, see West, *The East Face of Helicon*, 433. Justin refers to "Sons of Zeus" in *Apology* 1.21.

[554] See Bulgakov's assessment of the *Urgottheit* concept in *The Comforter*, 359-361. *Prometheus Bound* by Aeschylus also employs the divine father motif in a number of poetic lines (4, 40, 947, 969, 1018).

[555] *Theogony* 40, 54, 69, 396, 456. See Hesiod, *Theogony*, *Works and Days*, trans. M.L. West (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1988).

[556] Ibid. 541, 580, 642, 836, 929ff.

[557] See *Olympian Odes* 7.36-40; R. E. Witt, *Albinus and the History of Middle Platonism* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1937), 72.

[558] Of course, describing Zeus as Father is not really limited to the Greek poets. Ovid, recounting the story of Jupiter (the Greek Zeus) and Europa, refers to the paternal deity of Mount Olympus as "father and ruler of the gods" who assumed the form of a bull and "shambled over the tender grass" (*Metamorphoses* 2.846-3.2). Moreover, in ancient Mesopotamian thought, the moon god Sin (Nanna or Nannar) is called "begetter of gods and men" or "begetter of everything." See Jean Bottéro, *Religion in Ancient Mesopotamia*, trans. Teresa Lavender Fagan (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 33.

a god abounds with deep mythical symbolism;[559] it lends further credence to the belief that divine paternity has an extended and celebrated history.[560]

Pindar (522-443 BCE) also deploys the epithet "Father" as a divine expression. One finds him applying this imagery to Zeus in *Olympian Odes* 1.55-56: "But, alas! He could not brook his great prosperity, and, owing to his surfeit of good things, he gat himself an overpowering curse, which the Father hung over him in the semblance of a monstrous stone, which he is ever eager to thrust away from his head, thus wandering from the ways of joy."[561] Pindar does not depict Father Zeus as merciful or compassionate here; rather, he portrays "the Father of gods and men" (path,r avndrw/n te qew/n te) as an austere disciplinarian, who is grave in temperament when he metes out judgment to Tantalus.[562] Pindar further speaks of "Father time" as "the Father of all," who is unable to reverse human deeds committed in the past.[563] One can readily find other instances where he speaks of a divinity as "Father."[564] Pindar's *Odes* thereby illustrate the conceptual matrix in which Lactantius and other Christian thinkers forged their conceptions of divine paternity.[565] However, Greek literature does not restrict paternal speech to the poets. One additionally encounters the ascription of fatherliness to divinities in Greek philosophic writings.

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[559] C. Kerényi outlines the mythic tradition of Athena springing forth from the head of Zeus in his work *The Gods of the Greeks* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 2004 [1951]), 118-122.

[560] For the formula Zeu path,r, see *Iliad* 7.179; *Oedipus Tyrannus* 202. Note also, how Socrates unfolds the emblematic significance of the name Athena in *Cratylus* 407.

[561] Avlla. ga.r katape,myai me,gan o;lbon ouvk evduna,sqh ko,rw| d.V e[len a;tan u`pe,roplon a[noi` path.r
u`perkre,mase kartero.n auvtw/| li,qon. See *The Odes of Pindar*: *Including the Principal Fragments*, LCL, trans. Sir John Edwin Sandys (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1961).

[562] Tatian wields this point in *Oratio ad Graecos* 21: "According to you, Zeus is envious, and hides the dream from men, wishing their destruction." Of course, Plato does not fail to ascertain less than flattering depictions of Zeus in the poems of Hesiod or Homer. But he tries to discriminate between the gods as portrayed by the poets and the gods in their immanence. See *Platonis Respublica* 378c-379e; *Laws* 636, 638.

[563] *Olympian Odes* 2.15-17: oud´ an cro,noj o` pa,ntwn path.r du,naito qe,men e;rgwn te,loj. Compare *Ethica Nicomachea* 6.2, where Aristotle points out that not even God can undo the past.

[564] See *Olympian Odes* 2.25-27; 2.75-76; 6.81; 7.85-89; 10.45; 13.25-26; 14.12; *Nemean Odes* 5.10, 33; 8.35; 9.31; 9.53; 10.29; 10.55, 10.75; *Isthmian Odes* 6.42; 8.23.

[565] For other instances of Greek poets and philosophers invoking God as "Father," see Brown, *Lord's Prayer*, 8-9.

For instance, the Middle Platonists use the metaphor "Father" as a reference to deities.[566] Particular examples from various thinkers are presented below.

Numenius of Apamea (fl. 150 CE) was the foremost Platonist-Pythagorean of the second century.[567] He possibly shaped Justin Martyr's religious ideas and was influential in both Neoplatonic and Christian groups (*Epistle* 70.4).[568] One can outline his belief in a divine triad thus. For Numenius, the Primal Intellect (Being-in-itself) engenders a deity known as the Demiurge or "Creator" (poihth,j).[569] Numenius additionally believes that the Demiurge is identical with a third divine entity, which secedes from the Demiurge to constitute a third deity that Numenius designates "creation" (poi,hma).[570] Unlike Plutarch, however, Numenius interprets the "Creator and Maker" of *Timaeus* 28C as two distinct transcendent entities rather than as a single being. He believes that the primordial deity (as Father) is also the non-mereological Prime Mover.[571] The only activity undertaken by this entity is self-contemplation, which (according to Numenius' account) requires no external action or movement at all. The Father markedly differs from the Demiurge that actively produces the sensible cosmos: "The First God is free from all labor, inasmuch as he is King; while the Creator [Demiurge] rules in that he passes through the heaven" (5.27a.8).[572] Numenius thinks that the Primal Intellect neither creates, nor acts nor moves.[573] Yet, this divine being remains the Good or One of Middle/Neo-Platonic thought. These details are substantiated by other material contents of Numenius'

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[566] The Middle Platonist period spans from ca. 130 BCE (beginning with Antiochus of Ascalon) through 270 CE (ending with Plotinus). For the possible relationship between Lactantius and Middle Platonism, see Michel Perrin, *L'ouvrage du Dieu créateur*, 2 volumes (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1974).

[567] Grant, *Gods and the One God*, 153.

[568] M. J. Edwards, "On the Platonic Schooling of Justin Martyr," *JTS* n.s. 42 (1991): 17-34.

[569] Dillon, *The Middle Platonists*, 363-366.

[570] Ibid. 368.

[571] F. E. Peters supplies helpful background information on the nexus between divine nou/j and fatherhood. See *Greek Philosophical Terms: A Historical Lexicon* (New York: New York University Press, 1967), 132ff.

[572] to.n me.n prwton qeo,n argon einai ergwn xumpantwn kai. basilea,to.n dhmiourgon de. Qeo,n hgemonein diV ouranou ionta. See the Greek text in *The Neoplatonic Writings of Numenius*, trans. Kenneth Sylvan Guthrie (Lawrence: Selene Books, 1987).

[573] Dillon, *Middle Platonists*, 368.

fragments: "Numenius, who teaches three Gods, calls the First Father: the Second Creator, and the Third Creature; for, according to his opinion, the world is the Third God"(6.36a).[574]

Numenius "asserts a double Creating Divinity, the one Father, but the other Creator" (6.36c).[575] He writes: "The First God, who exists in himself, is simple; for as he absolutely deals with none but himself, he is in no way divisible; however, the Second and Third God are One. When however this (unity) is brought together with Matter, which is Doubleness, the (One Divinity) indeed unites it, but is by Matter split, inasmuch as Matter is full of desires, and in a flowing condition" (5.26.3).[576] One can detect manifest adumbrations of the Trinity doctrine in these declarations. The relevant portion of the text, however, is his doctrine of a paternal deity. Even if Lactantius was not personally familiar with the fragments of Numenius—he certainly was acquainted with the tenets of Middle Platonism, through which second century theorists were inclined to filter such ideas.

Albinus of Smyrna (fl. ca. 151-152 CE) is another prominent Middle Platonist who utilizes paternal notions of deity.[577] Following Aristotle (*Metaphysica* 12), he affirms that God is pure thought contemplating pure thought.[578] The primal deity (= the Father) exclusively reflects on himself as the transcendent object of deliberation (*Didaskalikos* 10).[579] As the final cause (*causa finalis*) of all existent things, the Father is the Unmoved Mover or principal deity

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[574] noumh,nioj me.n ga.r treij anumnhsaj qeouj pate,ra me.n kalei to.n prwton, poihton de. to.n deute,ron poihma de. to.n tri,ton.

[575] kaqaper enqauta ditton, fhsi, to. dhmiourgikon, to. me.n path.r, to. de. poihthj.

[576] The Greek of Numenius' text reads:
o` qeoj o` me.n prwtoj en e`autw wn estin aplouj, dia to. e`autw suggignomenoj diolou mh pote einai diaretoj; o` qeoj mentoi o` deuteroj kai. tritoj estin e`ij; sumferomenoj de. th| u`lh| duadi oush| e`noi me.n authn, scizetai de. u`p authj, epiqumhtikon hqoj exoushj kai. reoushj.

[577] R. E. Witt, *Albinus and the History of Middle Platonism* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1937).

[578] Dillon, *Middle Platonists*, 283. Plotinus (*Ennead* 5.1.9) also understood Aristotle's First Mover in terms of self-thinking mind, but criticized this view on the basis that mind must think of something apart from itself. See John M. Rist, "The One of Plotinus and the God of Aristotle," *RMeta* 27.1 (1973): 75-87.

[579] *The Platonic Doctrines of Albinus*, trans. Jeremiah Reedy (Grand Rapids: Phanes Press, 1991), 39.

superseding the cosmic Demiurge.[580] Furthermore, this contemplative divine intellect is ineffable (a;rrhtoj).[581] However, to a certain extent, Albinus thinks that "all things" participate in the primal Father by making intellect (nou/j) "the object of thought and of desire."[582] But what does the divine appellation "Father" mean for Albinus?

Albinus argues that God (*qua* primal intellect) is Father in that "he is the cause of all things and orders the heavenly Mind or the Soul of the World in accordance with himself and with his thoughts; for by his own will he has filled all things with himself, rousing up the Soul of the World and turning it towards himself, as being the cause of its Mind" (*Didaskalikos* 10).[583] He conjoins divine fatherhood with the concepts of pancausality and cosmic order. As Father, the First God causes, arranges and fills all things with himself.[584] Hence, rather than emphasizing the primal deity's masculinity, "Father" (in Albinus) places stress on God's generative or causal functionality in relation to all things: "There is also God, the Father and Cause of all things."[585] By now, the metaphorical significance of "Father" should be thematic. Nevertheless, this study must now review the divine fatherhood concept of Maximus.

Maximus of Tyre (fl. 152 CE) explicitly professes his belief that there is one "God, Father and Creator of all that exist" (qeo.j o` twn ontwn path,r kai dhmiourgoj) who is ineffable and incomprehensible.[586] Despite this deity's incomprehensibility, he is nonetheless considered responsible for perpetuating different races of humankind.[587] The very human invocation of God as Father evidently connotes affection and paternal care.[588] One God

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[580] Witt, *Albinus and the History of Middle Platonism*, 129.

[581] Dillon, *Middle Platonists*, 283-284.

[582] Witt, *Albinus and the History of Middle Platonism*, 130.

[583] Quoted in Dillon, *Middle Platonists*, 283-284.

[584] More precisely, primal nou/j orders the universe mediately through the Second Mind or Intellect. See Reale, *History of Ancient Philosophy*, 221-222. Reale's translator evidently prefers to render nou/j as "mind" which should not pose any serious hardships for students of classical Greek. Nevertheless, Peters hones the definition of this term somewhat, adding that it can also denote "intelligence or intellect." See *Greek Philosophical Terms*, 132-139.

[585] Reedy, *The Platonic Doctrines*, 37.

[586] *Oration* 2.10. See Grant, *Gods and the One God*, 48, 82.

[587] *Oration* 35.1.

[588] Ibid. 35.1-2.

and Father governs the cosmos as he engenders gods and men.[589] Maximus claims that all nations share a consensus on this point: "there is one God who is father and king of all, and with him many other gods, his children, who share in his sovereign power."[590] Moreover, he insists that the Father of all is anonymous.[591]

Plotinus (205-270 CE) was born in Upper Egypt (Deltaic Lycopolis). He presumably received his philosophical instruction from Ammonius Saccas[592] in Alexandria and was a contemporary of Origen (ca. 186-255 CE). Anthony Kenny describes Plotinus as the last great non-Christian philosopher and the founder of Neo-Platonism.[593] He composed writings that Porphyry (his disciple) organized in nine groups called *Enneads*. Plotinus employs the term "Father" in these writings as a metaphor for God: he prefers to use the paternal epithet to describe the One.[594] The One is ultimate reality (*ens realissimum*) for Plotinus; it is an offshoot of the Platonic Good.

Plotinus argues that intellect generatively emanates from the One.[595] He associates the One with Zeus, "the [mythical] father of gods and men," whereas he identifies intellect as the offspring of the Good.[596] Furthermore, the One is "Father" for Plotinus in that it engenders the human soul: "The Fatherland to us is There [sic] whence we have come, and There [sic] is The Father" (*Ennead* 1.6.8).[597] In actuality, the One is the Father of all things: "What can it be that has brought the souls to forget the father, God, and, though members of the Divine and entirely

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[589] Ibid. 11.12; 41.2.

[590] Ibid. 11.5.

[591] See Maximus of Tyre, *Dissertationes*, Bibliotheca Scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana, ed. Michael B. Trapp (Stutgardiae: B.G. Teubner, 1994), 23; idem, *The Philosophical Orations*, trans. Michael B. Trapp (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 324-325; Robert M. Grant, *The Early Christian Doctrine of God* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1966), 5.

[592] Henry Chadwick, *The Church in Ancient Society: From Galilee to Gregory the Great*, Oxford History of the Christian Church (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 173. Joseph W. Trigg, *Origen* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), 12.

[593] *Brief History*, 96.

[594] Carabine, *Unknown God*, 106.

[595] Ibid. *Ennead* 5.1.2.

[596] See *Platonis Respublica* 506 d-e.

[597] See Plotinus, *The Six Enneads*, trans. Stephen MacKenna and B.S. Page (Chicago and London: William Benton, 1952), 25; idem, *Plotinus*, LCL, trans. A. H. Armstrong, 7 volumes (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988); *Plotini opera recognovit Adolphus Kirchhoff* (Lipsiae: Bibliotheca Teubneriana, 1856); Carabine, *Unknown God*, 106.

of that world, to ignore at once themselves and It?" Intellect [nou/j] also "may be thought of as a father watching over the development of his child born imperfect in comparison with himself" (5.1.1-3).[598] Plotinus thereby concludes: "In two ways, then, the Intellectual-Principle [nou/j] enhances the divine quality of the soul, as father and as immanent presence."[599] In a manner consistent with third century Christian notions regarding the Godhead, Plotinus presupposes a triad of hypostases, namely, the One, Intellect and the Soul.[600] Ultimately, the provenance of this concept appears to be Egypt, wherein a number of hypostatic triads prevailed before and during the time of Plotinus.[601] Stead nonetheless believes that such triadic conceptions of the divine had little to no influence on the ontological dogma of the Trinity.[602]

In addition to Platonic sources for divine Father imagery, one also finds the metaphor employed in Stoic literature. Lucius Annaeus Cornutus (a Stoic theorist of allegory) recounts that Zeus is father of gods and men since the natural world brings forth all beings as fathers engender children.[603] He wields the formula "Zeus the Father of gods and men" (o` Zeuj path.r le,getai qew/n kai. avnqrw,pwn) to describe the Olympian father's relationship to his figurative children.[604] However, Cornutus interprets this expression about Zeus in analogical terms.[605] He consequently believes that the Olympian father generates men and gods just as earthly fathers generate their children (w`j oi. patere,j gennw/si ta. te,kna).[606] But the emphasis concerning paternity in Cornutus is not on masculinity or literal acts of begettal through coitus. Divine paternity is given a tropic cast.

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[598] See Ibid. 104; William Ralph Inge, *The Philosophy of Plotinus*: *The Gifford Lectures at Saint Andrews*, *1917-1918*, 2 volumes (London, New York and Toronto: Longmans, Green and Co., 1941).

[599] See *Ennead* 5.2.1 for Plotinus' allusion to metafora..

[600] Chadwick, *Church in Ancient Society*, 175.

[601] See Paul Johnson, *The Civilization of Ancient Egypt* (New York: HarperCollins, 1999), 127, 176-177; John Gwyn Griffiths, *Triads and Trinity* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1996); Siegfried Morenz, *Egyptian Religion* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), 255-257.

[602] *Philosophy in Christian Antiquity*, 155.

[603] Grant, *Gods and the One God*, 78.

[604] *Epidrome* 9. This study uses the Greek text found in Allen Wikgren, et al. *Hellenistic Greek Texts* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1947), 148-152.

[605] Grant, *Gods and the One God*, 78.

[606] *Epidrome* 9.

Epictetus (ca. 55-135 CE) was a Stoic philosopher based in Nicopolis of Epidurus.[607] He was likely born in Hierapolis (modern-day Turkey) but moved to Nicopolis when Domitian (81-96 CE) exiled all philosophers from first century Italy during his emperorship.[608] His works include the *Enchiridion* and *Discourses* (composed by Arrian); additionally, there are extant fragments written by diverse authors who expound on his ethical teachings.[609] While Epictetus tries to discern how rational beings may attain well-being (euvdaimoni,a), which is an ethical concern, one also encounters theological elements in his works.[610] Furthermore, it is significant that Long considers Epictetus to be "one of the most memorable and influential figures of Graeco-Roman antiquity."[611] The following paragraph therefore considers the doctrine of divine fatherhood in Epictetus.

Brunner describes the god of Epictetus as a "kindly Father," whom is portrayed as meriting thanksgiving and praise.[612] Nevertheless, Brunner qualifies his observation by noting that the god of Epictetus is not ecstatic: this deity does not communicate or disclose himself to those who constitute fragments of the divine.[613] Epictetus conscripts pantheism (in this case, the notion that cosmic particulars are discrete fragments of God) to stress the paternal nature of the divine. Since he is convinced that God is all and all is God, Epictetus insists that the cosmos mechanically obeys the inexorable principle known as reason (lo,goj). This active metaphysical principle has the effect of binding humans to God so that rational beings on earth are stirred to acclaim God as their Father (*Discourses* 1.6.40). The effect of being a son of God is freedom from fear, grief or terror.[614] Since God is the Father of gods and men, one should take

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[607] *A Selection from the Discourses of Epictetus with the Encheiridion*, trans. George Long (BiblioBazaar, 2007), 10.

[608] A. A. Long, *Epictetus*: *A Stoic and Socratic Guide to Life* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002), 10. Further details concerning the banishment of all philosophers from Italy during the reign of Domitian are outlined in Alfred John Church and William Jackson Brodribb, *Pliny's Letters* (Edinburgh and London: W. Blackwood and Sons, 1872), 26-29.

[609] See *The Discourses as Reported by Arrian, the Manual, and Fragments*, trans. William Abbott Oldfather (London: W. Heinemann, 1926).

[610] Long, *Epictetus*, 162.

[611] Ibid. 8.

[612] Brunner, *Dogmatics*, 1:200.

[613] Ibid.

[614] Epictetus, *Discourses* 1.9.6. See Rudolf Bultmann, *Primitive Christianity in its Contemporary Setting*, trans. Reverend R. H. Fuller (Cleveland and New York: Median Books, 1956), 139; Long, *Epictetus*, 168-169.

pride in human dignity or in that which rational creatures have in common with God, namely, the soul and the intellect. Yet, most rational agents do not exult in their divine inheritance; they do not revel in the fact that they are exalted fragments of God: "But if Caesar (the emperor) should adopt you, no one could endure your arrogance; and if you know that you are the son of Zeus, will you not be elated?" (*Discourses* 1.3.1; 3.24.3)[615] Nevertheless, despite the *prima facie* appearance of a personal deity in Stoicism, Stoic theology is essentially pantheistic.[616] The "Father" of Stoicism differs qualitatively from the Judeo-Christian "Father." Hence, while Greek philosophers thus indirectly contribute to the thought world of Lactantius, the primary source of his fatherhood doctrine is the Tanakh and the NT. There are at least four ways in which early Judaism conceives God as Father. The following section reviews these conceptions of divine paternity through the conceptual lens of the Tanakh and Second Temple Judaism. These uses probably function as the foremost antecedents to Lactantian paterology along with the form of Latin theology that preceded Lactantius.

B. Ancient Judaic Views of God the Father

The Hebrew prophets do not refer to God as "Father" (*ab*) with any frequency in the canonical writings of ancient Judaism.[617] The divine title occurs approximately twenty times in the Tanakh (OT).[618] But these relatively uncommon occurrences still permit one to ascertain that ancient Judaism viewed God as a Father in four primary ways.[619]

(1) God is Father to the nation of Israel since YHWH brings it about that the children of Israel exist as a nation (Exodus 4:22-23; Deuteronomy 8:5; 32:6; Psalm 103:13; Isaiah 63:16;

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[615] See *Discourses* 1.14; 2.8.

[616] Henry Sidgwick, *Outlines of the History of Ethics* (Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett, 1902), 77-80; Micka, *Problem of Divine Anger*, 8. Kelly applies the vocabulary "pantheistic materialism" to Stoicism (*Doctrines*, 11).

[617] See Fortman, *Triune God*, 4; Witherington III and Ice, *Shadow of the Almighty*, 5; Wilken, *Spirit of Early Christian Thought*, 106.

[618] O'Collins, *Tripersonal God*, 14; Cooper, *Our Father*, 106.

[619] The Hebrew writers of the Tanakh evidently do not speak of divine paternity in the sense of a triune relation. Fortman writes: "More recent scholars find no evidence in the [Tanakh] that any sacred writer believed in or suspected the existence of a divine paternity and filiation within the Godhead itself" (*Triune God*, 4).

64:8; Jeremiah 31:9; Malachi 1:6; 2:10).[620] In contrast to immortal "fathers" of Greek mythology, when Israel refers to YHWH as its one Father, "the idea in the background is not the biological one of procreation, but the theological one of election."[621] The Judaic view of a paternal divinity additionally stands in marked contrast to the god of Stoic pantheism.[622] Unlike the deity of Stoicism, the Tanakh portrays YHWH as a personal Father for the sons of Israel. He guides the comparatively scant nation through the Middle Eastern wilderness, administering remedial discipline that is rooted in love (Deuteronomy 1:31; Proverbs 3:12; Malachi 3:17). In accordance with the testimony contained in the Tanakh, the Israelite divinity is not simply a universal or immutable force mechanistically governing the cosmos; nor is YHWH an impersonal fire that systematically organizes all things.[623] Rather, the God of Judaism carries Israel in his everlasting arms, leading the nation through the Sinai desert with figurative cords of love (Deuteronomy 33:2; Hosea 11:4).[624]

Kasper states that ancient Israel believed God has "the attitude of a father."[625] Marsh similarly affirms that the usage of "Father" as a divine appellation in the Tanakh "is clearly a metaphor, an image employed to express some aspect or aspects of God's relationship with God's people."[626] Moreover, Jeremiah the prophet indicates that God's paternity with respect to Israel is symbolic or metaphorical, when he speaks of YHWH "becoming" a Father to Israel

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[620] Andrew Hill notes that Malachi and Jeremiah use "Father" (*ab*) as a metaphor for God's relationship to his people, Israel. See *Malachi*: *A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, The Anchor Bible (New York and London: Doubleday, 1998), 224.

[621] Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 79. Scholars consistently appear to understand God's fatherhood as one of election rather than procreation. For instance, John W. Cooper maintains regarding Deuteronomy 32:6: "The fatherhood of God is connected here with the election and salvation of his people" (*Our Father*, 106). See Thompson, *Promise of the Father*, 45; Paul Mankowski, "The Gender of Israel's God," in *This Is My Name Forever*, 40-41. O'Collins also contends that there are no biological connotations associated with the OT divine term Father (*Tripersonal God*, 14). Conversely, John Pairman Brown (on scant evidence) avers that YHWH begets sons in the same carnal manner that Zeus does. See "From Divine Kingship to Dispersal of Power in the Mediterranean City-State," *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 105.1 (1993): 62-86.

[622] See Acts 17:28.

[623] In Stoic physics, spirit (`pneu/ma`) is "something fiery and ethereal," but material (Schneweis, *Angels and Demons*, 38). Gerald Bray explains how ancient Christians interpreted the Biblical language referring to God as a consuming fire in *Doctrine of God*, 37-38. See Novatian, *De Trinitate* 7.4-5.

[624] Kelly, *Doctrines*, 17-19. Contra Kelly, however, Michael Frede believes that the Stoic and Aristotelian gods are personal. See "Monotheism and Pagan Philosophy" in *Pagan Monotheism in Late Antiquity*, ed. Polymnia Athanassiadi and Michael Frede (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), 48-49. Compare *Metaphysica* 1072b24-30.

[625] Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 80.

(Jeremiah 31:9 NRSV).[627] Therefore, it seems that the paternal title for deity is a well-established metaphor in ancient Judaism: the expression appears to form part of an avowed unfamiliar identity synthesis (i.e. a metasememe) that communicates the notion of God electing or providentially guiding Israel, the historical seed of Abraham (2 Chronicles 20:7; Isaiah 41:8). Consequently, although the communal address "our Father" is "relatively late," (according to Vermes) the metaphor of God as Father (*ab*) to the Israelite nation appears to have been a prominent leitmotif in the sacred documents of early Judaism (Prayer for Intercession 3:5-8).[628]

Marianne Meye Thompson has proposed yet other ways in which ancient Israel viewed God as Father. She contends that YHWH is the Father of Israel in that he functions as the (tropic) familial head of the nation.[629] That is to say, God is the progenitor of Israel, bequeathing life and an inheritance to his metaphorical progeny since he is the figurative patriarch of the clan. Moreover, YHWH evidently has deep affection for those he deems offspring. Therefore, as Father, the Jewish God provides for, disciplines or lovingly corrects his children (Deuteronomy 7:6-8; 8:3).

Thompson also thinks that YHWH exercises the *patria postestas* over the children of Israel. They in turn should obey and reverence YHWH as Father (Malachi 1:6).[630] She thus indicates that the Tanakh concept of God the Father is a particular as opposed to a universal concept: YHWH is Father to Israel, not to all humans (Psalm 147:19, 20). Thompson seems to argue that one can only apprehend the notion of God as "Father" in ancient Judaism by becoming intimately familiar with the ancient near eastern culture in which this notion was forged. If this is how one should construe her study, then one could say that Thompson's observations lend

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[626] Marsh, *Triune God*, 29.

[627] See Wilhelm Gesenius and E. Kautzsch, *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*, trans. A. E. Cowley (Mineola, NY: Dover, 2006), §44 which explains the "flexion" of the qal perfect (used in Jeremiah 31:9) and the different ways that it can be translated.

[628] See Tobit 13:4; *Antiquities*. 5.93. Cf. Vermes, *Religion of Jesus the Jew*, 175-176; Marianne Meye Thompson, *The God of the Gospel of John* (Cambridge, UK and Grand Rapids: 2001), 64. However, James M. Scott points to 1 Chronicles 29:10 as an early instance of the "our Father formula." See *2 Corinthians* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1998), 31.

[629] Thompson, *Promise of the Father*, 18.

[630] Ibid. 18, 48. See Tg. Isaiah 63.16; 64:8. Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, 1:260-261.

support to contentions set forth by those espousing a pragmatic approach to metaphoric recognition—the context of utterance shapes one's understanding of the text.

(2) YHWH is Father to the King of Israel. (2 Samuel 7:12-14; Psalm 2:6-7).[631] The nomenclature "sons of God" was familiar in the ancient Near East, particularly in Egypt.[632] YHWH's designation of Israelite kings as "sons" is thus not wholly surprising.[633] God begets the King in that he installs him upon the divine throne as the God-given leader of Israel or Judah (1 Chronicles 28:5; 29:23).[634] The title "Father" ensures God's people that the promise found in Psalm 2:7 is binding or immutable respecting Israel's human ruler: the Davidic pledge inevitably will come to fruition (Isaiah 55:1-5).[635] Even in its apparent Messianic sense, "Son" (Psalm 2:7) only has reference to the Davidic king's function; it does not convey the thought of a divine generation but rather "an investiture with royal dignity."[636]

Artur Weiser observes that the Psalms repudiate the notion of God literally procreating a royal human son (Psalm 89:26). He argues that the Psalmist's words preclude YHWH from corporeally generating the Israelite monarch in view of the adverbial "today" and the familiar adoption formula "you are my son."[637] The King becomes God's scion through the process of enthronement: he is God's vice-regent or emblematic royal offspring (Psalm 2:6).[638] Accordingly, the language contained in the second psalm turns out to be metaphorical.[639] While the foremost Davidic sovereign whom God adopts as Son is evidently the Messiah (1 QSa 2:11-

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[631] Paul Mankowski, "The Gender of Israel's God," 44-45; Thompson, *God of the Gospel of John*, 64.

[632] *ABD* 6:128-129. Witherington notes that some ancients considered Amun Re of Egypt Father of the gods (*Shadow of the Almighty*, 5). For other ancient near eastern parallels of divine paternity, see Mitchell Dahood (S.J.), *Psalms 1-50*, The Anchor Bible (Garden City: Doubleday and Company, 1966), 11-12; Jean Bottéro, *Religion in Ancient Mesopotamia*, 32-33.

[633] O'Collins, *Tripersonal God*, 14.

[634] Ibid. 15. See Vermes, *Jesus in His Jewish Context*, 29.

[635] A. A. Anderson, *2 Samuel*, Word Biblical Commentary, volume 11 (Dallas: Word Books, 1989), 122.

[636] Brunner, *Dogmatics*, 1:210.

[637] Artur Weiser, *The Psalms: A Commentary*, The Old Testament Library (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2000), 113. Based on similar extra-biblical references, Gottlob Schrenk believes that the formula in Psalm 2:7 is one of adoption, not generation (*TDNT* 5:968). Compare Scott, *2 Corinthians*, 55.

[638] George Wesley Buchanan, *Biblical and Theological Insights from Ancient and Modern Civil Law* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1992), 14.

[639] Anderson, *2 Samuel*, 122; Pierre Grelot, *The Language of Symbolism: Biblical Theology, Semantics, and Exegesis* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 2006), 43.

12; 4QFlor 1:10 = 4Q174; 4Q246), Psalm 2:7 does not appear to corroborate the eternal generation doctrine; nor does it give support to the idea of God literally siring children.[640]

(3) Second Temple literature depicts YHWH as a Father for individual pious Jews: "While the exact nuance of the term 'Father' remains hazy, there can be no doubt that even on the individual level the relationship between God and the Israelites was seen from a family point of view."[641] A noteworthy development began to transpire respecting the Wisdom literature of the Second Temple period. It appears that individual devout worshipers of YHWH began to address God openly as Father (Wisdom 14:3).[642] Vermes even contends that adherents of Second Temple Judaism came to view their status of being God's figurative children predominantly as a matter of merit, not hereditary privilege.[643] He quotes Jubilees 1:24-25 in support of this position: "I will be their Father and they shall be my sons, and they shall be called the sons of the living God." Vermes' thesis may commend itself in some ways; yet, it may be difficult to sustain his proposal in light of pre-intertestamental texts that seem to identify pious Israelites as children of God by virtue of merit (Psalm 103:13; Hosea 1:10-11). In any event, both proto and deuterocanonical works point to individual godly Jews being adjudged children of YHWH.[644] The writer of Sirach addresses YHWH as Lord, Father and Master of his life (Sirach 23:1, 4) and exclaims: "O Lord, you are my father, you are my champion and my savior; do not abandon me in time of trouble, in the midst of storms and dangers" (Sirach 51:10 NAB).[645] Another intertestamental author invokes God as "Father," forthrightly utilizing the conventionalized expression of intimacy "O Father" (3 Maccabees 6:3, 8). The salient point is that individual

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[640] Wolfhart Pannenberg also maintains that the second psalm does not posit a physical or carnal birth for the King of Israel. His "birth" is not analogous to sons born from the Egyptian deity Re. See *The Apostles' Creed in the Light of Today's Questions*, trans. Margaret Kohl (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1972), 63.

[641] Vermes, *Religion of Jesus the Jew*, 173.

[642] Grelot appeals to Wisdom 2:13-18 to uphold the position that "by the Greek period, every righteous person came to be considered an adopted child of God" (*Language of Symbolism*, 43). He notes that the pious benediction "our Father, our King" (*'abinu malkenu*) was a characteristic formula employed during the Hellenistic period. Cf. Gerald Friedlander, *The Jewish Sources of the Sermon on the Mount* (Whitefish: Kessinger Publishing, 2005), 133.

[643] *Jesus in His Jewish Context*, 35.

[644] Thomas Walter Manson, *The Teaching of Jesus*: *Studies of Its Form and Content* (Cambridge: University Press, 1963), 91-92.

[645] The formula "my Father and my God" (*abi we'lohay*) appears in the DSS from Qumran (4Q372 1.16). See Scott, *2 Corinthians*, 31; Eileen M. Schuller, "The Psalm of 4Q372 1 within the Context of Second Temple Prayer," *CBQ* 54 (1992): 67-79.

ancient Israelites viewed God as their Father; they appealed to him by conscripting paternal speech in non-corporate prayers.[646] Furthermore, it is significant that Sirach qualifies "Father" by the appositional expressions "champion" and "savior." These nuancing terms illustrate the sense in which ancient writers are inclined to think that God is the Father of particular Israelites.[647]

(4) Although the canonical Hebrew-Aramaic Scriptures do not explicitly categorize YHWH as the Father of the holy angels, they do imply that YHWH is the Father of all the sacred spirits by means of a rhetorical phenomenon known as "metaphorical entailment."[648] The OT (Tanakh) writers apply the terminology "sons" to the holy angels who apparently comprise God's heavenly regiment. For instance, one finds the expression "sons of God" (*bene ha elohim*) probably used with reference to angels in Genesis 6:2; Job 1:6; 2:1-6; 38:4-7; Psalm 89:6.[649] The term "son" entails the correlative relation "father." If the angels are (metaphorical) sons, then it seems to follow logically that they have a (metaphorical) father since these terms appear to imply opposed relations. Therefore, one can say that YHWH is Father to his angelic sons through a process of metaphorical entailment. The one concept "sons" implies the corresponding notion "father." Scripture further indicates that angels are creations of God, not literally begotten divine progeny.[650] Accordingly, it seems fitting to consider YHWH a tropic Father to the holy angels in the context of ancient Judaic thought.

(5) Finally, the Tanakh and Apocrypha portray God as a maternal figure to Israel. These works apparently depict YHWH in this manner by using both similes and metaphors (Numbers 11:12; Sirach 4:10; Isaiah 42:13-14; 49:15; 66:13).[651] For instance, Cooper thinks that

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[646] This paragraph is much indebted to Witherington's *Shadow of the Almighty*, 13-14. Moreover, see Vermes (*Religion of Jesus*, 176) for Pseudepigraphal, Philonic, and DSS quotes concerning God's *paternitas*.

[647] Compare 3 Maccabees 5:7; 7:6.

[648] See Josef Stern, "Metaphor as Demonstrative," *The Journal of Philosophy* 82.12 (1985): 677-710; George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, "Conceptual Metaphor in Everyday Language," *The Journal of Philosophy* 77.8 (1980): 453-486.

[649] The intertestamental literature of Judaism also refers to the angels as "sons." See Jubilees 2:2; 5:1; 1 Enoch 7:2. But see Ronald S. Hendel, "Of Demigods and the Deluge: Toward an Interpretation of Genesis 6:1-4," *JBL* 106.1 (1987): 13-26. He argues that the "sons of God" are lesser deities in the assembly of YHWH.

[650] Wolfson, *Philosophy of the Church Fathers*, 1:289.

[651] The holy writings of Judaism evidently translate God's fatherliness into the "language of womanliness and motherhood" at times (Kasper, *God of Jesus Christ*, 140).

Deuteronomy 32:18 contains an "explicit maternal metaphor for God" in relation to Israel.[652] There may even be mixed metaphors in this biblical passage since the writer possibly speaks of YHWH both fathering and giving birth to the nation of Israel: "You neglected the Rock who begot (*yalad*) you, And forgot the God who gave you birth (*chûwl*)" (NASB).[653] Despite various issues pertaining to the translation of Deuteronomy 32:18, it seems that the text employs a mixed metaphor, albeit one that does not assume the syntactical form A is B (i.e. "God is the Mother of Israel").[654]

Paul Brassey recently has also insisted that certain passages in the ostensible Deutero-Isaiah metaphorically predicate divine maternity or even allow for "a more fluid depiction of YHWH in terms of gender."[655] He appeals to Isaiah 45:9-11, 46:3-4, and 49:14-15, texts which (for the most part) seem to press metaphors into service rather than similes in order that the prophet may depict God's alleged maternity.[656] Isaiah 45:9-11 (NASB) evidently predicates motherliness of YHWH by means of a metasememic trope in the context of describing the God of Israel as a potter. Grelot additionally thinks that Isaiah 49:14-15 ascribes "maternal sentiments" to God: he concludes that "the God of Israel embraces in his person both paternal authority and maternal compassion."[657] Yet, if the Isaian passages do portray divine maternity in figurative terms, Volf's observation concerning the non-ontologization of gender in God seems to appertain here.[658] That is, while the Hebrew prophets undoubtedly appear to have affirmed YHWH's "maternal" nature by means of emblematic speech, one does not have to think of the Israelite deity as inherently masculine or feminine since God presumably does not have a sexed or fleshly corpus in which sexuality or gender are rooted (Numbers 23:19; Hosea 11:9). Additionally, one should undoubtedly read these Isaian passages in their proper rhetorical contexts. By realizing the contextual focus of these prophetic images, it is possible to discern that

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[652] Cooper, *Our Father*, 71.

[653] Ibid.

[654] Michael P. Knowles, " 'The Rock, His Work is Perfect': Unusual Imagery for God in Deuteronomy XXXII," *VT* 39.3 (1989): 307-322.

[655] Brassey, *Metaphor*, 178-180.

[656] Ibid.

[657] Grelot, *The Language of Symbolism*, 44.

[658] See *Exclusion and Embrace*, 171-173.

the portrayal of God's reputed motherhood in Isaiah serves as "a narrowly rhetorical and deliberately paradoxical conceit."[659] That is a way of saying that God is a "mother" in unexpected ways (Isaiah 66:10-16).

One usage for "Father" that is noticeably absent in the Tanakh is the concept of God as the Father of all. While certain verses from the Tanakh may seem to imply or teach that God is a universal father, on closer inspection, such intimations apparently dissipate. Malachi 2:10 is one exemplar text in which a Hebrew prophet evidently identifies YHWH as Father to Israel.[660] Malachi's allusion to the ancestral "covenant" (*berith*) as well as the literary context of the verse (Malachi 1:6-8; 2:11-12) implies that "Father" is limited to the God of Israel in this scriptural passage. The prophet seemingly does not affirm God's universal paternity; the point of Malachi 2:10 appears to be that "Israel's corporate identity or personality is rooted in Yahweh alone."[661] The writers of the Tanakh do not appear to make God's universal paternity explicit.[662]

The Tanakh probably influenced the Lactantian concept of God the Father. However, his notion of divine paternity supersedes what one encounters in the Tanakh. Lactantius believes that God is the Father of all rational agents[663] and of the Son.[664] And he noticeably de-emphasizes gender where the divine is concerned or views God as one who is analogous to a Father. On the other hand, there is a sense in which Lactantius thinks that deity is humanity's authentic Father— even if God is not inherently or ontologically masculine. God is the entity that has granted existence to all rational agents. Moreover, God has blessed humans with a meaningful purpose in life. Not only did ancient Judaism's paterology affect the Lactantian concept of divine fatherhood, however, but the apologist was also familiar with concepts of divine paternity that obtained in the ancient Greco-Roman milieu. His major literary work bears discernable marks of the socio-religious matrix in which it was composed. But one does not have to infer at what points Lactantius is alluding to pagan notions of divine paternity as opposed to the Tanakh: Lactantius

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[659] Mankowski, "The Gender of Israel's God," in *This Is My Name Forever*, 59-61.

[660] See *The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version Containing the Old and New Testaments* (Iowa Falls: World Bible Publishers, 1989).

[661] Hill, *Malachi*, 224.

[662] See Richard A. Taylor and E. Ray Clendenen, *Haggai, Malachi*, New American Commentary, vol. 21A (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2004), 322-323.

[663] *DI* 2.12.15.

[664] Ibid. 4.6.1-3.

demonstrates repeatedly that he is employing non-Christian treatises or notions for apologetic purposes by liberally quoting classical writers of antiquity.[665] The next section of this study will explore such passages and demonstrate how they contribute to an understanding of Lactantian thought concerning God the Father.

C.   Greco-Roman Paternal Imagery in the Divine Institutes

Lactantius appeals to non-Christian writers of the Greco-Roman milieu to support his Christian beliefs. *Divinae institutiones* often alludes to such writers in the context of providing a vigorous defense for the Christian faith. This section consequently will document the passages wherein Lactantius refers to ancient writers, who speak of God in paternal terms. Their use of the "Father" metaphor for God is instructive. These writers illuminate the Lactantian use of "Father" since they function as possible conceptual antecedents for the Christian apologist.

Cleanthes of Assos (331-232 BCE) was both a philosopher and bard, who supervised the Stoa Poikile (a philosophical school in antiquity) from 262 BC onwards, after Zeno (its original founder) died.[666] He introduced a theological motif to Stoicism by articulating the cosmology of his predecessor with passionate, but contemplative, religiosity.[667] Cleanthes encapsulates his reverence for the universal Father in *Hymn to Zeus*: "the First Cause of Nature, who rules all things with Law, Hail!"[668] This work was so influential that intellectuals of antiquity felt a deep need to see that it was carefully preserved. Nevertheless, although Cleanthes was an innovative thinker, contemporaries deemed him an obtuse learner, who lacked the mental adroitness required for adjudicating intricate logical problems.[669] His successor whose name was Chrysippus thus preceded Cleanthes in terms of intellectual prominence. Diogenes Laertius accordingly viewed the former as the second originator of Stoicism.[670]

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[665] Ibid. 1.2.3-5.

[666] See Frederick Charles Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, 9 volumes (New York: Image, 1993-1994), 1:385.

[667] Marcia L. Colish, *The Stoic Tradition from Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages*, 2 volumes (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1985),1:10; Stead, *Philosophy in Christian Antiquity*, 44.

[668] Quoted in Manson, *Teaching of Jesus*, 91.

[669] See Everett Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 355. Cicero accuses Cleanthes of being theologically inconsistent and capricious (*De natura deorum* 1.14).

[670] Sidgwick, *Outlines of the History of Ethics*, 72.

Anaximenes of Miletus (fl. c. 546-525 BCE) was a Presocratic thinker renowned for postulating air as the primordial cosmic substrate: "He held that the first principle is air, and that this is the unlimited."[671] Anaximenes was also a noted physiologist (= natural philosopher) and monist, who in concert with Cleanthes reasoned that air is the chief deity (*Divinae institutiones* 1.5.19).[672] He evidently used the term "God" (qeo.j) to signify the divine status of air.[673] Hence, when referring to Cleanthes' and Anaximenes' respective theories of air, Lactantius recounts that: "to this opinion our poet [Virgil] has assented: 'Then almighty father Aether descends in fertile showers into the bosom of his joyous wife, mingling his greatness in her great body and nourishing all her children.'"[674] The Roman poet depicts air as almighty, regal and fecund. But while Virgil conceptually acquiesces with Cleanthes and Anaximenes concerning the omnipotent father Aether, Cicero offers trenchant criticisms against the Presocratic natural philosopher (Anaximenes) in his work *De natura Deorum*[675] (a treatise that Lactantius employs in the service of Christian apologetics).[676] Cicero alludes to the untenability of a philosophical belief which holds that God has been generated as air—thus the Father experienced a beginning—and lacks shape or form. But the writings of Cleanthes, Anaximenes and Cicero (*De natura Deorum* 1.12) all reveal the prevalence of divine fatherhood notions in ancient Greco-Roman thought. Moreover, they disclose the Lactantian awareness of such concepts since he interacts with the concepts of these philosophers in *Divinae institutiones*.

Lactantius demonstrates his familiarity with contemporary divine paternal figures in *Divinae institutiones* 1.11.40-41. He builds a sustained case that substantially relies on etymology to unfold (what he perceives to be) the actual provenance of Rome's patron deity, Jupiter.[677] The

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[671] Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 2.3; Aristotle, *Metaphysica* 984a 5. See Bowen and Garnsey, *Divine Institutes*, 67; Philip Ellis Wheelwright, *The Presocratics* (New York: Macmillan, 1966), 61; W. K. C. Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy*, volume 1 (Cambridge: University Press, 1962), 1:115-116.

[672] Ibid.

[673] Erwin Ramsdell Goodenough, *The Theology of Justin Martyr: An Investigation into the Conceptions of Early Christian Literature and Its Hellenistic and Judaistic Influences* (Amsterdam: Philo Press, 1968), 2.

[674] *DI* 1.5.19. See Virgil's *Georgics* 2.325-327. In the same work, the poet calls Bacchus, the "Father of the winepress." He elsewhere speaks of "the Father of the gods" (*Aeneid* 1.50). Virgil also uses expressions such as "the Father of the flood" (1.142ff); "the Father of the human race" (1.223 & 1.254) and "Father Tiber" (8.71)."

[675] *De natura Deorum* 1.10. See *De natura Deorum; Academica*, trans. H. Rackham (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961), 29.

[676] *DI* 1.11.40, 48; 4.28.3-5.

[677] Ibid. 1.5.6.

term "Jupiter" allegedly denotes "a version of a helping father."[678] The historical origin of this name causes Lactantius to reason that "Jupiter" is not an appropriate designation for a god since the Roman divinity's proper name signifies a helper; yet, Lactantius reckons that the act of helping someone is an ostensively human endeavor.[679] Furthermore, he contends that socio-rational beings generally do not employ the participle "helping" to describe a father engendering or rearing children.[680] Lactantius accordingly infers: "The word ['helper'] is too trivial to express the importance of a father's generosity."[681] His argument is patently Ciceronian with respect to its form and content; one encounters a similar line of reasoning in *De natura Deorum* 2.25. However, what effect is this diachronic argument supposed to have on the divine status of Rome's paternal god?

Utilizing *a fortiori* reasoning, Lactantius contends that if "helper" does not suitably delineate the human act of procreation, then to an even greater degree, it does not adequately portray God's (figurative) act of reproduction vis-à-vis humanity or the Son. He believes that God is "the true father, through whom we exist and whose possession we all are, he makes us, inspirits us, illuminates us; he gives life, health and all manner of food" (*Divinae institutiones* 1.11.42).[682] Hence, the epithet "helper" does not befit the true God and Father of all. The divine activities of the maximally excellent being cannot adequately be depicted in terms of "helping." Such descriptive language does not do justice to the true Father of all rational beings. Appealing to euhemerism, Lactantius thus relates the manner in which Jupiter was transformed from a mere anthropic ruler to being acclaimed the omnipotent Father of Mount Olympus.[683] He further appeals to the diachronic signification of "Jupiter" in order to prove the impropriety of characterizing a supernatural being that possesses this proper name as the Most High God or Father. However, the Tanakh manifestly identifies YHWH as Helper (1 Samuel 7:12; 1 Chronicles 5:20; 12:18; 15:26;

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[678] Ibid. 1.5ff. Cicero attests to this etymology: "But Jupiter himself—the name means 'the helping father,' whom with a change of inflection we style Jove, from *iuvare* 'to help' " (*De natura Deorum* 2.25; ET, Rackham, 185).

[679] *DI* 1.11.40.

[680] Ibid. 1.11.41.

[681] Ibid.

[682] Compare *Metamorphoses* 1. The poet there calls Jupiter "Father of the gods." Ovid thus portrays Jupiter as a creator deity who contemplates bringing forth a new race of humans to try his creative skill again.

[683] The term "euhemerism" derives its name from the Greek mythographer Euhemerus (fl. 316 BCE). Cicero discusses the basics of his theoretical approach to myths in *De natura Deorum* 1.42.

Psalm 10:14; 30:10; 54:4; Isaiah 41:10, 13; 50:7, 9). In particular, the God of Israel is portrayed as succoring his elect nation, chiefly when enemies prevail against her. It is possible that Lactantius was not acquainted with the multiple passages that refer to YHWH as a "helper." Then again, neither is the NT without reference to God as "helper" (*adiutor*).[684] This oversight may represent a lacuna in Lactantius' scriptural knowledge.[685]

Although his first objection to Jupiter's supposed paternity is evidently less than adequate, Lactantius insists that there is yet another factor that precludes Jupiter from being the genuine Father of all. His second argument is probably more convincing than his first line of disputation. The argument goes as follows: Jupiter allegedly was a paternal deity, whom devotees solemnly invoked as the "Best and Greatest" (*optimus maximus*).[686] But the Jupiter of classical mythology did not merit that title nor was he the one true God and Father who produced the cosmos and all therein. Lactantius relates that one notorious act of "virtual parricide" (*pene parricida*) is Jupiter's purported seizure of his regal and divine father's throne. This violent action results in the former illegitimately grasping the majestic divine seat of authority from the latter.[687] What Lactantius believes is an insolent nearly parricidal act leads to (he presumes) "the beginning of trouble for the human race."[688] Therefore, the root of human conflict is associated with the failure to venerate a divine father. Jupiter cannot be the authentic Father of all since he introduced disorder to the human race through an unspeakable act of violence directed toward his father.

Lactantius insists that peaceful conditions cannot obtain when rational creatures spurn the omnipotent deity's fatherhood (*Divinae institutiones* 5.6.11-13). He subsequently maintains that the way to unite humanity or eradicate universal chaos is through deferential awe being shown to the Father and God of all. In view of Jupiter's apparently impious actions, however, neither the title "Best and Greatest" (*optimus maximus*) nor the designation "Father" (*pater*) befit him since Jupiter not only commits "virtual parricide" against his royal parent, but he also comports himself

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[684] Hebrews 13:5-6.

[685] As a possible solution to this difficulty, see Paul McGuckin, "The Non-Cyprianic Scripture Texts in Lactantius' *Divine Institutes*," *VC* 36 (1982): 145-163.

[686] *DI* 1.10.10.

[687] *Theogony* 155-210. Lewis R. Gordon (*Existentia Africana*, 173) explains the mythological emasculation of Uranus in psychoanalytic terms.

[688] *DI* 1.10.10. Uranus was not a model father. However, Lactantius reasons that his less than stellar behavior does not mollify Jupiter's violent act against his regal (albeit depraved) father.

in the manner of a disingenuous philanderer intent on having coitus with both males and females (including the wives of other men)—some of whom Jupiter impregnates.[689] Lactantius thereby attempts to unmask the professed divinity of this god: he endeavors to divest Rome's fatherly divine patron of the honorific appellation "Best and Greatest" by meticulously recounting the god's sordid affairs and notable but finite theogonic development.[690] Lactantius concludes with an appeal to the theory of euhemerism in order to expose thoroughly Jupiter's non-divine status. He employs this theory to argue that Jupiter was once a man, whom some Romans mistakenly deified.[691] But Lactantius is convinced that Jupiter does not merit the soubriquet "Father." He contends that the designation belongs exclusively to the holy God and Creator of the universe (the one whom Christians worship in view of the fact that gods like Jupiter have besmirched the title of "Father").[692]

In addition to relying on the non-Christian poets and Greco-Roman myths to buttress his case for God's legitimate paternity, Lactantius invokes the poet Lucretius (99-55 BCE) as an authority in matters divine. The latter seems to explain clearly in what sense God is the Father of all humanity: "So too, if we have all been given the breath of life by one and the same God, we must all be brothers in spirit rather in the flesh."[693] Lactantius thus professes that the bond between all rational existents is spiritual (not merely physical); rational creatures are brothers and sisters in accordance with the animating spirit or soul that God has bequeathed to them. Although he evidently affirms an atomistic metaphysic and opposes formal religion, Lucretius apparently concurs with the Christian teaching that all humans emanate from one primal divine source (Acts 17:26-30). He maintains that all humans stem from one "celestial seed" (*denique caelesti sumus omnes semine oriundi*); all thus have "an identical father" (*omnibus ille idem pater est*) in common (*De rerum natura* 2.991-92).[694] Lactantius reasons that this familial proximity should function as

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[689] Ibid. 1.10.11-14.
[690] Ibid. 1.11.1-17. Appealing to the *consensus omnium* (reflecting Stoic influence), Arnobius of Sicca reasons that "the omnipotent God" who is truly our Father never experienced birth (*Adversus nationes* 1.34). Arnobius' observation implies that Jupiter's birth would disqualify him from being invoked legitimately as "Father."
[691] *DI* 1.11.33-39.
[692] Ibid. 1.11.52.
[693] *DI* 6.10.
[694] Compare *De rerum natura* 3.13; 5.408; 6.406. See Titus Lucretius Carus, *T. Lvcreti Cari De rervm natvra, libri sex*, ed. William Ellery Leonard and Stanley Barney Smith (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1942).

an intrinsic check and balance against crime, savagery or atrocities that rational creatures might perpetrate against one another.[695] A universal or common origin may also imply that rational creatures are naturally social beings, teleologically designed to assist one another in order to glorify God the Father.[696] Failure to acknowledge one's cosmopolitan bond with other children of God, who share the one animating spirit of the divine results in utter chaos or trouble.[697] One again witnesses evidence that "Father" as a metaphor for deity appears in both pagan and Christian writings. It seems that these divine paternal stories that pervaded the Greco-Roman milieu significantly influenced Lactantian thought.[698]

Bacchus was another paternal deity of Rome.[699] Roman mythology states that he was a prominent deity and the god of wine (*Bacchae* 1-167). Additionally, Bacchus was delegated the role of foremost speaker when the gods of Olympus engaged in senatorial debate; and Lactantius relates that Bacchus is the only divinity (apart from Jupiter) to experience a military victory in India.[700] Lactantius seeks to deconstruct the story of Bacchus, however, once again reducing a putative god to a mere mortal. His theological attack contra the godhood of Bacchus is two-pronged. Lactantius first characterizes those who uncritically accept the accounts concerning Bacchus as blind, senseless or obtuse: they are akin to brute beasts since they think that "people born of the coition of male and female could have had any element of superiority and divine excellence."[701] Lactantius invokes the Sibylline Oracles which enunciate the reputed axiomatic truth: "A man's thighs and a womb cannot create a god."[702] If what he argues is logically sound and valid, then he plausibly has demythologized Bacchus.[703] The apologist makes the case that Bacchus is possibly mortal since his nativity was contingent upon the pairing of a divine male with

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[695] *DI* 6.10.8.

[696] Ibid. 6.10.9-10; *Epitome* 34. Compare Aristotle's *Politica* 1.1253a and his use of *zoon politikon* there. He thinks that social predilections stem from biological factors. See Charles Norris Cochrane, *Christianity and Classical Culture*: *A Study of Thought and Action from Augustus to Augustine* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1957), 212; Fisher, "Lactantius' Ideas Relating Christian Truth and Christian Society," 367.

[697] *DI* 6.10.22-27.

[698] Lactantius alludes to Lucretius when providing further evidence that Jupiter is not *optimus maximus* (*DI* 3.17).

[699] The Roman Bacchus = the Greek Dionysos.

[700] *DI* 1.10.8 speaks of Bacchus in lofty terms. For details about his reputed victory in India, see Kerényi, *Gods of the Greeks*, 268-269.

[701] *DI* 1.8.3.

[702] Ibid. See Fr. *Oracula Sibyllina* 3.1-2 (Geffcken, 230-232).

[703] DI 1.8.4.

a female.[704] He believes that a human commingled with a deity evidently cannot bring it about that another god exists; Lactantius concludes that Bacchus is therefore not the authentic Father of all. Nevertheless, the allusion to Bacchus does suggest that Greco-Roman thought shaped the Lactantian concept of God the Father. The numerous references to ancient thinkers and the holy writings of Judaism and Christianity in his works seem to reveal the potential derivation of his theological notions regarding divine fatherhood. In conclusion, there are three primary points made salient in this chapter; these main ideas are now presented.

Findings

(1) The divine fatherhood concept has an extended history. Classical writers employ `path,r` metaphorically to describe the God and maker of all or the transcendent entity that figuratively engenders rational souls or other animate and inanimate entities (*Timaeus* 28c; 41a-b). However, there does not seem to be an ontologization of gender where this trope is concerned. Adherents of Judaism or Christianity utilizing "Father" simply desire to assert an unfamiliar identity synthesis without making metaphysical pronouncements. Writers of the Tanakh probably believe that "Father" is a metaphor.

(2) Ancient Israel thought of God as Father in four distinct ways. YHWH was a father to the nation as a whole, father to the Israelite king, to pious individuals in the nation and to the angels in that YHWH created the holy spirits surrounding his throne (Job 38:4-7; Psalm 104:4). Nevertheless, writers of the Hebrew-Aramaic scriptures (Tanakh) also deploy feminine imagery to adumbrate certain divine functions in relation to the created order (Isaiah 49:15). But none of these metaphoric expressions appear to say anything about God as the Father exists in Godself. They are verbal expressions of God as the Father subsists "for us" or "in relation to us." Feminine imagery evidently is used in similes or within rhetorical contexts to create a paradoxical utterance for the sake of persuasion. Ancient writers of the Tanakh apparently believed that the infinite God completely transcends gender categories. Since God is not a man (Numbers 23:19; Hosea 11:9), they apparently reckon that he not masculine either. Speaking of God as "Father" is a metaphor

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[704] Ibid.

that communicates the intimacy that obtains between God and those who are in a covenant relationship with deity.

(3) Finally, Lactantius demonstrates that he possesses intimate knowledge of Greco-Roman myths that refer to divine fathers. However, the apologist endeavors to prove that there is only one God and Father of all things. He argues that Jupiter cannot be the one authentic Father based on what the classical accounts reveal about his behavior and origin. The one God and Father who created all things transcends impure human desire and this God is entitled to be called "Best and Greatest." Lactantius consequently insists: "May not therefore the true and common Father of all justly find fault with that saying of Terence: First, learn in what life consists; then, if you shall be dissatisfied with life, have recourse to death."[705] Lactantius believes that the "true and common Father" is the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ whom he generated by means of a first and second nativity.

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[705] Ibid. 3.19.

Chapter 4

Early Latin Christian Notions of Divine Paternity

The purpose of this chapter is to document the antecedent concepts of pre-Nicene divine fatherhood that predated Lactantian paterology (the doctrine of God the Father).[706] This chapter will demonstrate what Latin writers taught concerning the Son's generation from the Father and the relationship that seems to obtain between the Son and the Father. This chapter's primary goal is to determine whether the Latin predecessors of Lactantius consider "Father" a metaphor for God (= the putative first person of the triune Godhead). At the outset, it seems that the early Latin writers chiefly thought of the Father as God: Christ only appears to be deity in a subordinate or derivative sense for most early theologians.[707] Moreover, those Christian authors before Lactantius evidently utilize "Father" metaphorically (for the most part) in their writings. Hence, this study initially will examine Tertullian, with whom Latin theology probably began.[708] The paternal metaphor for God distinctly appears in his literary works. Additionally, this chapter will scrutinize evidence for the metaphoric use of "Father" in Cyprian, Novatian, Arnobius and Minucius Felix.

A. Tertullian (160-230 CE)

Bishop Irenaeus of Lyons (ca. 177 CE) had urged restraint and circumspection regarding speculation about the inner life of the Godhead. Applying the prophetic words "In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: who shall declare his generation?" (Isaiah 53:8 LXX) to the Son's

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[706] Paterology is the technical term that systematic theologians employ for the doctrine of God the Father. The expression appears in Floyd H. Barackman, *Practical Christian Theology*: *Examining the Great Doctrines of the Faith* (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell, 1984), 129; Aidan Nichols, *No Bloodless Myth*: *A Guide Through Balthasar's Dramatics* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2000), 31.

[707] John A. McGuckin, *Handbook*, 338-341; Leonard Hodgson, *The Doctrine of the Trinity*, The Croall Lectures, 1942-1943 (London: Nisbet and Co, 1943), 100; Richardson, *Ignatius of Antioch*, 44-45. See *De ira Dei* 11.

[708] Henry Hart Milman, *History of Latin Christianity Including That of the Popes to the Pontificate of Nicolas V*, 8 volumes (London: J. Murray, 1857), 1:56-59.

first generation, he resolutely maintained that it probably is not judicious to speculate on the intricate details of the Son's primordial generation from the Father.[709] Irenaeus thus adamantly shied away "from penetrating the inner core of the divine mystery" as opposed to his spiritual adversaries (the Gnostics) who continually preoccupied themselves with the so-called hidden God behind God.[710]

On the other hand, Tertullian of Carthage exhibited an ardent desire to know God in his immanence (*quoad se*), and not just how God subsists in relation to creatures *(quoad nos)*.[711] The Latin apologist from North Africa attempts to investigate the divine life in itself, eventually coining technical terms which post-Nicenes subsequently would employ to delineate the eternal triadic distinctions in the Godhead. H. O. J. Brown recounts that "Irenaeus contributed breadth to the nascent theology of the church; Tertullian, precision."[712] Tertullian bequeathed terminological exactness to the religious nomenclature of the Latin church in manifold ways, but particularly with respect to the Son's putative eternal generation from the Father. He also vouchsafed clarity of expression to the "nascent theology" of the ancient Christian community in that Tertullian profoundly reflected on the divine consciousness and its nexus with the entity identified as Wisdom (*sophia*) in the sapiential book of Proverbs.[713]

Tertullian endeavored to ascertain how the Son relates to the Father within the divine economy and outwith.[714] He concluded that there was a time when "God" was all alone; yet, the Supreme Being was not alone since eternal reason was adjacent to God before the cosmos came into existence.[715] Nevertheless, there is a sense in which one could state that God (the Father) once existed alone since God (the Father) was "the only person" to obtain before the generation of the

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[709]*Adversus Haereses*. 2.28.2, 6; 4.20.5.

[710] Studer, *Trinity and Incarnation*, 70. See Marsh, *Triune God*, 75; Bengt Hägglund, *History of Theology* (Saint Louis and London: Concordia Publishing, 1968), 50-51.

[711] Studer reasons that Tertullian affirms an eternal *oikonomia ad intra* that is logically prior to the *oikonomia ad extra*. But Tertullian does not seem to locate the *oikonomia dei* in God *pace* Studer (*Trinity and Incarnation*, 70). He actually conceives of the *oikonomia* as God *pro nobis* in contrast to God *in se* (*Adversus Praxean* 2.1; 31.2).

[712] H. O. J. Brown, *Heresies*: *Heresy and Orthodoxy in the History of the Church* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1988), 78.

[713] See Proverbs 8:22-31. Wisdom motifs appear elsewhere in Sirach 24-6-11; Wisdom 7:25-26; 10:15-18. Cf. René Braun, *Deus Christianorum*: *Recherches Sur Le Vocabulaire Doctrinal De Tertullien* (Paris: Presses Universitaires De France, 1962), 291-293.

[714] O'Collins, *Tripersonal God*, 107-109. See *Adversus Praxean* 5-6.

[715] *Adversus Praxean* 5.15: Ceterum ne tunc quidem solus.

Son.[716] Tertullian consequently implies that the Son was not a distinct hypostasis (in the sense of being fully personal)[717] prior to the created order because God had not yet begotten him as Son: "There was, however, a time when neither sin existed with him [God the Father], nor the Son" (*fuit autem tempus*, *cum et delictum et filius non fuit*).[718] Precisely speaking, Tertullian urges that the Logos-Sophia was not God's Son before the omnipotent Father dispatched his own *ratio* for the purpose of creation.[719]

Tertullian maintains that the eternal property of reason subsisting in the mind of God initially was a quasi-person: it was not (fully) hypostatic or personal because it was God's own mind-independent property of reason, rationality or consciousness (*Aduersus Praxean* 5).[720] God's primordial reason functioned eternally as immanent deific thought. The generated "person" of the Son posteriorly gave hypostatic existence to divine reason (*ratio*) on the first creative day recorded in Genesis.[721] Tertullian expressly writes that God made his own *ratio* the Son.[722] The immanent word (λο,γος ενδια,θετος) became the uttered word (λο,γος προφορικο.ς) when the Father spoke creation into existence.[723] Tertullian's claim that there was a time when the Son *in his capacity as Son* did not exist is familiar to historians of Patristic thought (*Aduersus Hermogenem* 3.4). By this affirmation, he seems to mean that God did not generate the Son until

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[716] Tertullian evidently argues that God (the Father) was the only hypostasis (= fully personal being) in existence until God brought forth his Son for the world's sake. See Adolf von Harnack, *History of Dogma*, trans. Neil Buchanan, 7 volumes (New York: Dover, 1961), 2:259. Otto W. Heick makes a similar analysis in *A History of Christian Thought*, 2 volumes (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1965-1966), 146.

[717] One must exercise prudence when describing Tertullian's conception of divine personhood. One consideration revolves around the denotation of *persona* in his writings. Some of the necessary caveats regarding a study of *persona* are discussed briefly in Edgar G. Foster, *Angelomorphic Christology and the Exegesis of Psalm 8:5 in Tertullian's Adversus Praxean: An Examination of Tertullian's Reluctance to Attribute Angelic Properties to the Son of God*. (Lanham: University Press of America, 2005), 83-84. See Fortman, *Triune God*, 150; Eric Francis Osborn, *The Emergence of Christian Theology* (Cambridge, UK and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 190-191.

[718] *Adversus Hermogenem* 3.4. See Kasper, *God of Jesus Christ*, 181; Brown, *The Lord's Prayer*, 223; Jan H. Waszink, *Quinti Septimii Florentis Tertulliani Adversus Hermogenem liber*, Stromata patristica et mediaevalia 5 (Utrecht: Spectrum, 1956).

[719] Kelly, *Doctrines*, 112; Adhémar D'Alès, *La Theologie De Tertullien* (Paris: Gabriel Beauchesne, 1905), 92-93.

[720] Fortman, *Triune God*, 113-116.

[721] Harnack, *History of Dogma*, 2:211.

[722] *Adversus Praxean* 11: Quam nos probamus illum sibi filium fecisse sermonem suum.

[723] Waszink prefers to construe Tertullian's remarks in *Adversus Hermogenem* through the hermeneutical grid of Middle Platonism (i.e. Albinus) rather than the well-known Stoic distinctions of the innate and expressed Logos. See Jan H. Waszink, "Observations on Tertullian's Treatise against Hermogenes," *VC* 9 (1955): 129-147.

God (the Father) uttered the words, "let light come to be" (*lux fiat*).[724] The complete nativity of the Logos (*nativitas perfecta sermonis*) then occurred[725]; God then made the Word his Son (*Aduersus Praxean* 11).[726] God becomes a Father to his own Word in this manner.[727]

The term "Father" evidently does not signify an eternal distinction in the Godhead for Tertullian;[728] nor does he insist that it is a proper name for deity. Rather, Tertullian ostensibly thinks of "Father" as a metaphor for the God who temporally brings it about that the Logos becomes his Son (chronologically) prior to and for the purpose of creation; he apparently views God's fatherliness as a "relative disposition" over against construing it as an onto-constituting divine relation.[729] One can grasp this approach to the problem of intra-trinitarian relations by considering the Carthaginian apologist's preferred metaphysical theory for analyzing the accidental dispositions or relations in question. Tertullian was indebted to Stoic thought.[730] He chose to utilize the four Stoic categories of being in his theological system rather than Aristotle's renowned ten ontological predicates.[731] One Stoic category of being is relative disposition.[732] But in what sense do the Stoic relative dispositions differ from the Aristotelian category of relation? What role do relative dispositions play in Tertullian's thought?

The relative states or dispositions of Stoicism are at variance (to some extent) with Aristotelian relations in that Stoicism does not contend that a specified entity's particular constitution is dependent on its correspondent relative state. All that accidental dispositions tell us

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[724] *Adversus Praxean* 5-7. See Studer, *Trinity and Incarnation*, 71; Edmund Hill, *The Mystery of the Trinity* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1985), 51; Hägglund, *History of Theology*, 54-55.

[725] *Adversus Praxean* 7. See Kasper, *God of Jesus Christ*, 181.

[726] Wolfson observes that Tertullian does not apply "Father" to God before the generation of the Son or "prior to the creation of the world" (*Philosophy of the Church Fathers*, 1:195).

[727] See *Adversus Praxean* 7; *Adversus Marcionem* 2.27; O'Collins, *Tripersonal God*, 108.

[728] See Boughton, "More than Metaphors," 292.

[729] Lacugna, *God for Us*, 58-59. Thomas F. Torrance prefers to use the expression "being-constituting relations" or onto-relations. See his work *The Mediation of Christ* (Colorado Springs: Helmers and Howard, 1992), 47.

[730] See Jean Daniélou, *The Origins of Latin Christianity* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1977), 3. Colish argues that Tertullian was not an exclusive supporter, enemy or transformer of Stoicism. Rather, he simultaneously supported, militated against and transformed this philosophical school of thought (*Stoic Tradition*, 2:13-14).

[731] Tertullian's debt to Stoicism is noted by Labriolle, *History and Literature of Christianity*, 57-59; Eric Francis Osborn, *Tertullian, First Theologian of the West* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 125-126, 131.

[732] The other three Stoic categories are substance, quality, and disposition. A. A. Long analyzes all four of these categories in *Hellenistic Philosophy* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1974), 160-163. See Edward Vernon Arnold, *Roman Stoicism: Being Lectures on the History of the Stoic Philosophy with Special Reference to Its Development within the Roman Empire* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1958), 165-166 for a further delineation of the four Stoic categories.

is how some particulars (i.e. masters or parents) relate to other particulars (slaves or children) in the sensible realm of particulars.[733] For the philosophers of the ancient Stoa do not believe that the (metaphysical) constitution of a relation depends on a relation being "toward something" (`ta pro.j ti`).[734] As Catherine Lacugna explains, "In the case of the father-son relation, if the child dies, the man ceases to be a father [functionally] but he does not cease to exist. By contrast, in the use made by theologians of Aristotelian philosophy, a father is *constituted* as father by his son, and vice versa."[735] Hence, ancient Latin theologians generally believe that the putative triune relations (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) constitute the divine persons, making them what they are ontologically, as opposed to Greek ecclesiastical thought, which suggests that triune relations only disclose the mode wherein the three hypostases evidently subsist.[736] In the Greek Trinitarian tradition: "relation will show only *how*, but not what, something is."[737] Tertullian (although he is a Latin theologian) favors the Stoic or eastern Christian understanding of relations as being "toward something" in the world without necessarily adjudging that one relative disposition ontologically constitutes another disposition such that a father constitutes the being of his son. Consequently, Tertullian can maintain that although God subsists from eternity to eternity (Psalm 90:2),[738] there was a time when the Son as such or the Father as such did not exist.[739] The relative states do not constitute the divine persons *qua* persons; it is possible for the Father to be God without being "Father." It is also factually possible (Tertullian contends) for divine reason to obtain without

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[733] See Lacugna, *God for Us*, 59; Margaret E. Reesor, "The Stoic Categories," *The AJPh* 78 (1957): 63-82.

[734] Long, *Hellenistic Philosophy*, 163.

[735] Lacugna, *God for Us*, 59.

[736] Marsh, *Triune God*, 155.

[737] Lacugna, *God for Us*, 59.

[738] Psalm 90:2 [89:2] in the Vg reads: Antequam montes nascerentur et parturiretur terra et orbis a saeculo et usque in saeculum tu es. The Hebrew lexeme that translators render as "everlasting" or "eternal" is *olam*. There is probably no connotation of timelessness in the word. It simply denotes boundless temporality of undetermined duration. This definition of *olam* is discussed in Alan G. Padgett, *God, Eternity, and the Nature of Time* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992), 24-37; Ernst Jenni, "Das Wort olam im Alten Testament," *Zeitschrift fur die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 64 (1952): 197-248; P. A. Nordell, "Old Testament Word Studies: Time and Eternity," *Old Testament Student* 8 (1889): 373-377.

[739] Bigg argues that Tertullian did not differentiate between eternity and time: "Eternity, in his case, simply means all time, time without beginning and without end, not that life of spirit to which time with its sequences does not belong at all" (*Origins*, 394). See *Adversus Marcionem* 1.8; *Adversus Hermogenem* 4 for Tertullian's observations on time.

being God's Son. The divine relations do not make the persons what they ontologically or structurally are; they only tell how the persons exist respecting one another.

The contention that there was a time when the Son as such was not has caused Bernard Lonergan to question the logical coherence of Tertullian's Christology. Although Lonergan avoids reproaching the pre-Nicenes for their ostensible need to excise incongruous (non-rational) elements from theological notions which they adopted regarding the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, he points out that Tertullian's argument concerning a time when the Son *as such* was not conflicts with his fundamental case made against Praxeas respecting the three persons.[740] Tertullian supposedly holds that the Son is God as the Father is God. But this does not mean that he believes that the Father and Son have every divine-constituting property in common.[741] The Latin apologist is convinced that the Son (being a portion of the divine substance) is God (*Aduersus Praxean* 9).[742] Nevertheless, Tertullian also believes that the entity generating the preexistent Christ is eternal or everlasting whereas the Son *qua* Son is not. But Lonergan insists that this position is logically untenable. For if God is everlasting and the Son is God, then the Son must also be everlasting; furthermore, if God is the whole divine substance and Christ is God, then Christ too is identical with the whole divine substance.[743] A claim to the contrary simply appears incoherent, based on the law of transitivity. The logical law of transitivity states that if A=B & B=C, then A=C. Stated non-formally, if Marcus is Tullius and Tullius is Cicero, then Marcus is Cicero.[744] If the term "God" identifies as opposed to predicating divinity of a subject, then

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[740] Bernard J. F. Lonergan, *The Way to Nicea: The Dialectical Development of Trinitarian Theology: a Translation [from the Latin] by Conn O'Donovan from the First Part of De Deo Trino* (London: Darton, Longman, and Todd, 1976), 48. See Michael O'Carroll, *Trinitas*: *A Theological Encyclopedia of the Holy Trinity* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1987), 209. He makes similar observations concerning some of Tertullian's christological remarks.

[741] What this study calls "divine-constituting properties" are similar to what philosophers and theologians call great-making properties. Thomas V. Morris defines a great-making property as "any property, or attribute, or characteristic, or quality which it is intrinsically good to have, any property which endows its bearer with some measure of value, or greatness, or metaphysical stature, regardless of external circumstances" in *Our Idea of God*: *An Introduction to Philosophical Theology* (Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 1991), 35. The difference between a divine-constituting property and a great-making property is that while non-divine beings may possess the latter, only a being that is fully divine can possess the former. See Hoffman and Rosenkrantz, *Divine Attributes*, 13-20.

[742] Seeberg, *History of Doctrines*, 1:126.

[743] Lonergan, *The Way to Nicea*, 48.

[744] See Bertrand Russell, *Introduction to Mathematical Philosophy* (London: G. Allen and Unwin, 1970), 33; Simon Blackburn, *Think*: *A Compelling Introduction to Philosophy* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 134; Alfred Tarski, *Introduction to Logic and to the Methodology of the Deductive Sciences*, fourth edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 70.

Lonergan's argument seems convincing. However, it is possible that "God" is not a term marking absolute identity, but one that predicates relative identity of a subject; and relative identity is most closely associated with terms that philosophers consider "sortal." The next paragraph will discuss the difference between absolute and sortal-relative identity. The parameters of this investigation, however, do not permit a full-blown discussion of this topic.

The chief objection to Lonergan's syllogisms is probably the theory of sortal-relative identity which Richard Cartwright, Christopher Hughes and John Perry all view as suspect.[745] The theory of sortal-relative identity claims that it is logically possible for two entities (A and B) to be the same F without being the same G.[746] For example, a couch and chair (A and B) may have the same color (F) but still be different pieces of furniture (G).[747] Advocates of sortal-relativity thus contend that identity is never absolute since two different or distinct objects can bear one identical color or property. One could also reason that the marble constituting a statue is the same F but not the same G as the statue of which it is the material cause. Two entities (A and B) are always purportedly discernible in some crucial aspect or relativized with respect to a sortal noun (e.g. bird, dog, cat, chair, star, couch or tree). John Feinberg, Christopher Hughes, Saul Kripke, Peter Geach, Thomas V. Morris and Peter van Inwagen adequately treat the topic of sortal-relative over against absolute identity in their respective studies.[748] While a deeper exploration of identity (relative, absolute, qualitative or numerical) is outside the bounds of this work, this investigation espouses the position that Lonergan's syllogisms fittingly comport with the theory of absolute identity.

If Lonergan's analysis is sound and valid,[749] then Tertullian's Christology would seem to

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[745] See Richard Cartwright, *Philosophical Essays* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1987); Hughes, *Complex Theory*, 157; John Perry, "The Same F," *Philosophical Review* 79 (1972): 181-200. Compare Michael C. Rea, "Relative Identity and the Doctrine of the Trinity," *Philosophia Christi* 5.2 (2003): 431-446.

[746] Hughes, *Complex Theory*, 157. G and F are simply two predicates attributed to a logical subject.

[747] Ibid. 158.

[748] Ibid. 156-161; Kripke, *Naming and Necessity*, 3; Peter Geach, "Ontological Relativity and Relative Identity," in *Logic and Ontology*, ed. Milton Karl Munitz (New York: New York University Press, 1973); Peter van Inwagen, *Ontology, Identity, and Modality*: *Essays in Metaphysics* (Cambridge University Press, 2001); Thomas V. Morris, *The Logic of God Incarnate* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986); John Feinberg, *No One Like Him*: *The Doctrine of God* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2006), 494-496.

[749] Formal logic makes a technical distinction between the validity and soundness of an argument. A valid argument is one that does not contain any formal mistakes such as a denial of the antecedent (p) or an affirmation of the consequent (q). A sound argument is one in which the premises force the conclusion to be true. That is, both the premises and conclusion are true. Richard Von Dohlen explains this philosophical distinction in *An Introduction to the Logic of the Computing Sciences* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1999).

contain problematic theological elements, not the least of which is the nexus that he posits between soteriology (the doctrine of salvation), theology proper (the doctrine of God) and cosmology (doctrine of the universe).[750] The Father and Son (in his assessment) are always "for us" or "in relation to us."[751] For Tertullian, neither the Father nor the Son are immanently disclosed to rational creatures in the divine act of revelation.[752] He thereby makes a pronounced distinction between immanental *theologia* and salvific-historical *oikonomia*.[753] Hill nonetheless concludes that Tertullian believes that God is atemporally tripersonal: "he has so economized himself eternally."[754] But even if Tertullian does think that *oikonomia* is a reference to God's tripersonal immanental being, he still evidently does not attribute personhood to the Son or Spirit apart from God's action in the divine economy of salvation history. Nor does Tertullian seem to distinguish carefully the personhood of the Son or the Spirit from the temporal *oikonomia*: the Son and Spirit become persons or fully hypostatic only for creation (*Aduersus Praxean* 5-7). Lampe thus appears to ascertain more closely Tertullian's intent behind the use of *oikonomia* when he suggests that it probably refers to "the disposition or 'deploying' of the single Godhead into Father and Son or Word (and Spirit) in accordance with the Father's intention to create."[755] Edmund Hill is also critical of the view set forth by Prestige which insists that the divine economy is eternal.[756]

By making the contention that God becomes Father or the Logos becomes "Son" when God initiates his creative work, Tertullian implies that "Father" is a metaphorical term for God that

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[750] Studer, *Trinity and Incarnation*, 65ff. Daniélou (*Origins*, 365-366) recounts that the Trinity doctrine was only liberated from cosmological concerns at Nicea (325 CE). See also Vladimir Lossky, *In the Image and Likeness of God* (Crestwood: St Vladimir's, 2001), 16.

[751] Harnack, *History of Dogma*, 2:257.

[752] Tertullian supposedly uses *oikonomia* as a reference to "a distribution in the immanent being of the Godhead." See William J. Hill, *The Three-Personed God: The Trinity as a Mystery of Salvation* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1982), 36-37. If this claim were true, it would mean that the economy of God (understood as *Deus pro nobis*) would reflect the inner depths of God's being as triune. However, there are certain elements found in Tertullian's writings that indicate that he views the Trinity as a temporal development in the divine *oikonomia* (*Adversus Hermogenem* 3.4).

[753] *Oikonomia* here denotes God's redemptive activities in *Heilsgeschichte*. Lacugna writes: "Originally it had the purely secular meaning of administering and managing goods or a household, or overseeing an office according to some plan or design" (*God forUs*, 24).

[754] W. J. Hill, *Three-Personed God*, 37.

[755] See G. W. Lampe, in *A History of Christian Doctrine: In Succession to the Earlier Work of G.P. Fisher, Published in the International Theological Library Series*, ed. Hubert Cunliffe-Jones, et al. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), 55.

[756] Hill, *Mystery*, 51.

does not describe deity according to his essence (*quoad essentiam*).[757] This implied viewpoint has undoubtedly made it possible for certain scholars to proffer critical assessments of Tertullian's *oeuvre* such as the claim that Tertullian's concepts had a questionable effect (historically) on orthodox Trinitarian doctrine.

For instance, Thomas Weinandy is critical (to an extent) of Tertullian's doctrinal formulation of the three divine persons. Although he believes that the Son and the Holy Spirit are fully God in Tertullian's theology, Weinandy argues that his deployment of emanation theory "has a weakening and blemishing effect on the unity and equality of the persons within the Trinity."[758] One could state that Tertullian's model of the Trinity seems to have a debilitating effect on the consubstantial relation of the three persons for these principal reasons: (1) The Father is the source of divinity (*fons totius divinitatis*) for the Son and the Holy Spirit. However, this view appears to entail subordinationism (i.e. the Son is inferior in essence to the Father or a lesser deity);[759] (2) Tertullian thinks that the persons are arranged in a graded hierarchy of being: the Son and the Spirit are subordinate (ontologically) to the one from whom they emanate in an ordered under manner; (3) Divine emanation theory suggests that God undergoes an ontological change when he generates the Son and the Holy Spirit. Tertullian "implies that God *has become* a trinity [sic], that the divine unity has been distributed into a trio in the course of putting into effect the economies of creation and redemption."[760] Subordinationism or ontological change in God do not comport with orthodox Trinitarian doctrine. Tertullian's formulation of the Son's generation from the Father thus appears problematic from the standpoint of formal Trinitarian dogma.

Weinandy insists that one significantly problematic aspect of Tertullian's "emanationism"[761] is that it entails that God (the Father) changes ontologically when he generates the Son. Tertullian evidently indicates that God brings it about that the Logos becomes a Son to deity (*Aduersus Praxean* 11.1).[762] Emanation also implies a diminution of that which is produced.

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[757] See *Adversus Praxean* 8.

[758] Thomas G. Weinandy, *Does God Change?* (Still River: St Bede's, 1985), xxvi.

[759] Hodgson, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, 100-102.

[760] Hill, *Mystery of the Trinity*, 52. Daniélou is also critical of Tertullian's so-called doctrine of `probolh,`. See *Origins*, 364.

[761] Compare Harnack's remarks on Tertullian's emanationism in *History of Dogma*, 2:258.

[762] See George C. Stead, "'Eusebius' and the Council of Nicaea," *JTS* n.s. 24 (1973): 85-100.

Tertullian himself reasons this way in *Aduersus Hermogenem* 3. Accordingly, it is possible that he envisions God as a metaphorical or provisional Father to Christ: Fatherhood is not essential to God but only accidental in the writings of Tertullian.[763] The Son emanates from God and returns to the Father when handing over the kingdom to him (*Aduersus Praxean* 4). Nevertheless, if the apologist does adopt this view, it equally seems that he does not restrict the Father's accidental or figurative paternity to his generation of the only-begotten Son of God. Hence, the remainder of this section will explore the diverse applications of "Father" introduced by Tertullian.

Tertullian maintains that God is Father to all persons whom he has imbued with the common spirit of holiness, namely, those individuals whom God has transferred from a state of ignorance to "the light of truth."[764] He insists that male Christians (in particular) now hold all things in common since they are figurative children of God the Father.[765] But female believers also value the privilege of being metaphorical offspring of deity: the Father exalts Christian women by adopting them as spiritual daughters who repose their trust in the Son of God.[766] However, God's paternity not only extends to Christians: Tertullian apparently writes that God also engenders abstract properties subsisting in concrete objects. Expanding on the notion of God's paternity, Tertullian asks: "Now what wise man is so devoid of truth, as not to know that God is the Father and Lord of wisdom itself and truth?"[767] God engenders "wisdom itself" and "truth" (*ipsius sapientiae ac veritatis*). These words point to an emblematic understanding of divine fatherhood; they suggest that God causes wisdom and truth to obtain: he is their primal source. The preeminent wisdom of God or personified truth (= Christ) is not under consideration in this context (*Ad nationes* 2.2). Tertullian evidently means that God is the Father of intangible properties that are capable of subsisting in metaphysical entities.

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[763] Boughton, "More than Metaphor," 292. Jürgen Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom: The Doctrine of God*, trans. Margaret Kohl (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981), 137-139.

[764] *Apology* 39. See *The Apology of Tertullian*, trans. Herbert Bindley (Oxford: Parker and Co. 1890).

[765] Tertullian writes that Christian men only refrain from sharing their wives with one another (*Apology* 39). They otherwise liberally share their material goods with one another.

[766] See *De cultu feminarum* 2.1.1; *De Anima* 9; *Stromata* 5.9 (Clement of Alexandria).

[767] *Ad nationes* 2.2. For the Latin text used in this study, see Tertullian, Q. S. Fl. *Ad nationes libri II, In Opera Omnia,* CCSL I, ed. J. W. Ph. Borleffs (Turnhout: Brepols, 1954).

Tertullian's exegesis regarding the Lukan account of the prodigal son illustrates another facet of God's paternity.[768] He discerns in Luke's Gospel "that most gentle Father," one who is "truly a Father" since there is no other entity who abounds in "paternal love."[769] The father mentioned in the Lukan parable receives his son back after the latter chooses to pursue a course of patent debauchery.[770] The parabolic father of the prodigal son could only depict God.[771] Tertullian thus seems to argue that God is Father *apropos* his qualities: God compassionately receives those who (after straying from God) penitently return to the Christian community. Therefore, divine masculinity does not seem to be Tertullian's focus when he employs the designation "Father." He appears to believe that God is Father in a metaphorical sense: the deity is fatherly in terms of his attributes. The term "Father" thereby apparently evokes a system of associated commonplaces; Luke possibly creates a new meaning when he employs "father" and God in a particular sentential locution. While divine paternity is a salient motif in many of Tertullian's works, however, one encounters some of the most poignant or significant uses of the term "Father" for God in *On Prayer* (*De oratione*) which states: "Happy are they that acknowledge the Father!"[772] That work now deserves consideration.

Michael Brown has demonstrated that the *Pater Noster* is a distinctive invocation since it does not contain any sacred epithets (*cognomina*) that one would expect to find in first century invocations.[773] He suggests that the prayer, when heard by a typical Greco-Roman, would probably have evoked notions of a Roman household head (*paterfamilias*)[774] or called to mind the ancient patron-client liaison as well as similar types of divine prayers incorporated in then

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[768] Luke 15:11-32.

[769] *On Repentance* 8.

[770] Ibid.

[771] Ibid.

[772] *De oratione* 2.7-8: Felices qui patrem agnoscunt. See *De oratione liber*: *Tract on the Prayer*, ed. Ernest Evans (London: S.P.C.K., 1953).

[773] *The Lord's Prayer*, 4.

[774] Cf. Matthew 10:25; 13:27, 52; 20:1, 11; 21:33; 24:43. One Biblical Greek term for a household head is oivkodespo,thj. See also the entry for ku,rio,j in *BDAG*.

contemporary Greco-Roman literature. Moreover, the prayer may have reminded some Roman citizens of the Emperor, whom they considered father of the homeland (*pater patriae*).[775]

Tertullian himself probably viewed "Father" as a divine *cognomen* and metaphor.[776] His exegesis of the dominical oration indicates as much since he linguistically parallels "Father" and "God," indicating that he believes the paternal title is an integral figurative designation for the maximally excellent being: "Moreover, in saying 'Father,' we also call Him 'God.' That appellation is one both of filial duty and of power."[777] Tertullian reasons that addressing God as Father obligates believers to dutifully worship God. And by rendering "filial duty" (*pietas*) to the Father, one simultaneously honors the Son.[778] The *Pater Noster* also expresses an inextricable nexus between God the Father and his earthly progeny. Tertullian professes: "in the Father and the Son is recognized the mother [the Christian assembly], from whom arises the name both of Father and of Son" (*De oratione* 2). By referring to the Christian assembly (*ecclesia*) as "mother" in this context,[779] Tertullian probably means that those who articulate the *Pater Noster* tacitly acknowledge the church by means of this prayerful speech-act.[780]

An examination of Tertullian's *oeuvre* implies that he utilizes "Father" as a metaphor that delineates the uniquely generative relationship between Christ and his Father (*Aduersus Praxean* 5-7, 11). Nevertheless, God is also Father for those who implicitly trust in and obey him through his Son. Finally, Tertullian appears to contend that one cannot have God as Father without having the church as a figurative mother.[781] We therefore learn that the doctrine of God's fatherhood in Tertullian has several facets: (a) God is the Father of the Logos; (b) God is the Father of abstract

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[775] Brown, *The Lord's Prayer*, 4; Eva Marie Lassen, "The Roman Family: Ideal and Metaphor," in *Constructing Early Christian Families*: *Family as Social Reality and Metaphor*, ed. Halvor Moxnes, (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), 110-112. The designation *pater patriae* was not restricted to the Roman Emperor, however, since men deemed great by the Romans (e.g. Cicero) also were ascribed this nomen. See Lily Ross Taylor, *The Divinity of the Roman Emperor*, Philological Monographs, number 1, ed. Joseph William Hewitt (Middletown, CT: American Philological Association, 1931), 47.

[776] Brown, *Lord's Prayer*, 246.

[777] *De oratione* 2.10-11: Dicendo autem patrem, deum quoque cognominamus: appellatio ista et pietatis et potestatis est (Evans).

[778] Ibid.

[779] See Isaiah 54:1-13; Galatians 4:26.

[780] See Bloesch, *Battle*, 38; *De baptismo* 6.

[781] *De oratione* 2.

qualities that subsist through metaphysical subjects or entities and (c) God is the Father of those who utter the words "*Pater Noster*" in recognition of *mater ecclesia*.

Novatian of Rome seeks to refine the divine paternity concepts found in Tertullian. Section B of this chapter addresses his doctrine of God's fatherhood as well as his thoughts on the eternal generation doctrine. Moreover, the next section examines the issue of causal priority in relation to the Father and the Son. Does Novatian affirm the "eternal generation" of the Son from the Father? Does he espouse a form of causal priority? These questions will now be examined in the light of the Novatian concept of divine paternity.

B. Novatian of Rome (d. 257)

Novatian the presbyter was the first Roman ecclesiastical writer to compose a systematic theological exposition in Latin.[782] The major literary work that he undertook titled *De regula veritatis* (*On the Rule of Truth*) or *De regula fidei* (*On the Rule of Faith*) is methodical and written in an eloquent or refined manner.[783] This treatise, which an unidentified scribe later assigned the title *On the Trinity* (*De Trinitate*),[784] eventually became a "*vademecum*" in the West.[785] Early western Christians viewed this document as one of the principal Latin texts to outline the Trinity doctrine.[786] Nonetheless, Kelly believes that Novatian's formulation of the three divine persons in *De Trinitate* is "more archaic" than the triune schemata conceptually wrought by Tertullian or Hippolytus.[787] The presbyter's delineation of God's fatherhood in relation to the Son may also fail to emulate the rigorous treatment that one encounters in *Aduersus Praxean*. Novatian specifically appears to lack conceptual precision in the context of discussing the Father and Son's immanent

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[782] See Fortman, *Triune God*, 119; Quasten, *Patrology*, 2:217; Russell J. DeSimone, *The Treatise of Novatian, the Roman Presbyter on the Trinity*: A *Study of the Text and the Doctrine*, Studia Ephemeridis "Augustinianum," 4 (Roma: Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum, 1970), 7; James Leonard Papandrea, " 'Between Two Thieves': The Christology of Novatian as 'Dynamic Subordination,' Influenced by His Historical Context, and His New Testament Interpretation" (Ph.D. diss. Northwestern University, 1998), 1-5.

[783] Cruttwell, *Literary History*, 2:628.

[784] Russell J. DeSimone, *Novatian*: *The Trinity, The Spectacles, Jewish Foods, In Praise of Purity, Letters*, The Fathers of the Church, volume 67 (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America, 1974), 22-23; Joseph M. Hallman, *The Descent of God*: *Divine Suffering in History and Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991) 70.

[785] Fortman, *Triune God*, 119.

[786] Ibid. See DeSimone, *The Trinity*, 22-23.

generative relationship. That is in all probability why historians of Christian doctrine have pointed to linguistic or conceptual weaknesses in Novatian. Some of the more complex passages found in Novatian and their alleged incongruities will be explored below. First, it is imperative to review the manner in which he sketches the elementary professions of Christianity as manifested in the "rule of faith." That rule is closely associated with the Christian religion's public acknowledgment of God as Father of the Son. Novatian's initial literary concern in *De Trinitate* is the "rule of truth" (*regula veritatis*) or the "rule of faith" (*regula fidei*). He alludes to the *regula veritatis,* which in principle regulates teaching or biblical exegesis undertaken by the assembly of Christ:

> It requires that we should first of all things believe on God the Father and Lord Omnipotent; that is, the absolutely perfect Founder of all things, who has suspended the heavens in lofty sublimity, has established the earth with its lower mass, has diffused the seas with their fluent moisture, and has distributed all these things, both adorned and supplied with their appropriate and fitting instruments (*De Trinitate* 1).[788]

The presbyter's opening words elicit memories of the Apostles' Creed ("I believe in God, the Father Almighty") which underscores having faith in God the Father before it stresses additional tenets of the Christian religion.[789] As the apparent original title of *De Trinitate* leads one to surmise, Novatian stresses the ecclesiastical ascendancy of the "rule of truth."[790] He thereby demonstrates the integral nexus that obtains between the Father, the Son and that rule which elevates Christian truth. However, to what extent are the Father and the Son related in Novatian's thought? Does he affirm the eternal generation of the Son? This study will now discuss these issues by appealing to *De Trinitate* 31 and modern historico-theological literature.

1. *De Trinitate* 31

For Novatian, God the Father is the unbegotten, ingenerate, unlimited or atemporal deity. He suggests that the ingenerate God has always been Father, even prior to the Son's generation.[791]

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[787] Kelly, *Doctrines*, 125.

[788] Compare Novatian, *De Trinitate* 17.

[789] Seeberg, *Text-book of the History of Doctrines*, 1:84.

[790] *De Trinitate* 21.1.

[791] Kelly writes: "Further, in his reasoning about time, Novatian would have it that the Father was always Father; but he would also have it that he who had no origin or source should come before him who had" (*Doctrines*, 125).

But God did not have a Son until he willed "the sacred and divine nativity" (*De Trinitate* 31) of the Logos (a Stoic-informed doctrine familiar to readers of Justin, Tertullian and Lactantius). In this case, one again witnesses the old philosophical distinction between the `lo,goj endia,qetoj` (the immanent word) and the `lo,goj proforiko.j` (the uttered word).[792] With customary flourish, Novatian writes:

> Thus God the Father, the Founder and Creator of all things, who only knows no beginning, invisible, infinite, immortal, eternal, is one God; to whose greatness, or majesty, or power, I would not say nothing can be preferred, but nothing can be compared; of whom, when He willed it, the Son, the Word, was born, who is not received in the sound of the stricken air, or in the tone of voice forced from the lungs, but is acknowledged in the substance of the power put forth by God, the mysteries of whose sacred and divine nativity neither an apostle has learnt, nor prophet has discovered, nor angel has known, nor creature has apprehended.[793]

The problem with this text stems from its overt mention of the Father willing the Son's inscrutable preternatural nativity. The mention of divine volition implies that the Son's generation is both non-eternal (possibly infected with temporality) and contingent: Novatian does not appear to believe that the Word is an eternal hypostatic entity known as the Son. God could have elected to generate the Son (on this reading of the text) or the Father could have elected not to generate the Son; thus the contingent nature of the Word's nativity.

Novatian evidently implies that the Son's nativity is an act of God the Father's supreme will, "something he chose to do but need not have done."[794] Yet, one would expect the Son's generation to be intrinsic to the being of God, if he were fully deity or eternally generated by the Father.[795] But Novatian almost certainly postulates a contingent generation for the Son; one that

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[792] See Colish, *Stoic Tradition*, 2:35-36. She appears to minimize Novatian's dependence on Stoic philosophy.

[793] *De Trinitate* 31.1-2: Est ergo Deus pater omnium institutor et creator, solus originem nesciens, inuisibilis, immensus, immortalis, aeternus, unus Deus, cuius neque magnitudini neque maiestati neque uirtuti quicquam, non dixerim praeferri, sed nec comparari potest. Ex quo, quando ipse uoluit, sermo filius natus est: qui non in sono percussi aeris, aut tono coactae de uisceribus uocis accipitur, sed in substantia prolatae a Deo uirtutis agnoscitur. Cuius sacrae et diuinae natiuitatis arcana nec apostolus didicit, nec prophetes comperit, nec angelus sciuit nec creatura cognouit. See the Latin text in *Novatiani Romanae Urbis Presbyteri De Trinitate liber*: *Novatian's Treatise on the Trinity*, ed. William Yorke Fausset (Cambridge: University Press, 1909), 115-116.

[794] Kelly, *Doctrines*, 125.

[795] If the Son's generation is non-contingent, this means that given the fact of the Son's generation, it is not possible that the Son's generation not obtain. Employing the tools of modal logic, one could say that the putative eternal generation of the Son would thus obtain in all possible worlds, if it were non-contingent. It would therefore be metaphysically necessary. David Chalmers offers a clear definition of metaphysical necessity along with an

finds its source in the omnipotent will of God.[796] Besides intimating that the Son's nativity is contingent, a mysterious generation of the Son by means of divine volition further seems to entail that the Father's decision to engender the Son of God is somewhat arbitrary or voluntarist (i.e. the divine will is preeminent with respect to an event or action). However, does Novatian avoid problems of this sort in his formulation of the Son's first generation? It is certainly possible that he circumvents making the Son's generation conditional; but the following paragraphs will explore *De Trinitate* 31 to discern how Novatian might avoid introducing voluntarism to his account of the Son's generation.

2. Novatian on the Son's Generation from the Father

Novatian reputedly believes that God is eternally Father with a personal (i.e. substantial) Son. On the other hand, he is apparently "far from envisaging the idea of eternal generation"; moreover, Novatian generally thinks of the Father and Son's relationship in terms of a moral rather than an essential unity.[797] He also evidently contends that the divine perfections "in the true sense"[798] belong solely to God the Father:

> And still, nevertheless, the Father is proved to be one God; while by degrees in reciprocal transfer that majesty and divinity are again returned and reflected as sent by the Son Himself to the Father, who had given them; so that reasonably God the Father is God of all, and the source also of His Son Himself whom He begot as Lord.[799]

Novatian professes that divinity in its fullness belongs to the Father alone. The Father is the "God of all" and "source" of the Son. Consequently, Kelly argues that Novatian only avoids ditheism "by strongly subordinating" the Son to the Father or by positing filiation as "a passing moment in

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illuminating example that illustrates the concept of metaphysical necessity in his text *The Conscious Mind*: *In Search of a Fundamental Theory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 132.

[796] Hans Urs von Balthasar tries to avoid this conclusion by postulating an ontological identity of divine freedom and necessity *ad intra Deum*. He suggests that the Father's generative act vis-à-vis the Son is both free and necessary. It is neither constrained *per se* nor arbitrary since it "coincides" with the "act-quality" of God's essence. See Margaret M. Turek, *Towards a Theology of God the Father*: *Hans Urs von Balthasar's Theodramatic Approach* (New York: Peter Lang, 2001), 96-99. Even if this move adequately explains what transpires *ad intra Deum*, Balthasar does not necessarily account for the problematic implications that follow from Novatian's thought.

[797] Kelly, *Doctrines*, 126.

[798] Ibid.

[799] *De Trinitate* 31.21.

the divine life of the Father."[800] Furthermore, the word "Trinity" does not appear in Novatian. He seems to be unaware of God's putative triunity even on a conceptual level.[801] In the context of defending the belief that the Son of God is not a mere man, the presbyter implies that the Spirit or Paraclete is one of Christ's inferior productions: "But if He [the Paraclete] has received from Christ what He may declare to us, Christ is greater than the Paraclete, because the Paraclete would not receive from Christ unless He were less than Christ" (*De Trinitate* 16).[802] Those arguing that Novatian's theology clearly anticipates post-Nicene orthodoxy possibly have misconstrued his position.[803] On the other hand, perhaps interpretational confusion stems from Novatian's imprecise formulation of the Trinity or eternal generation doctrine as opposed to his distinct theological beliefs. For instance, Fortman suggests that what Novatian professes concerning the Son's generation is not that transparent or precise.[804] It is possible that he believes the Son is a hypostatic distinction eternally generated by the Father. Nevertheless, Fortman points out that "It is difficult to escape the impression that Novatian is not clear about his own thought on this matter."[805] Conversely, Ayres insists that "Novatian does not possess a theology of eternal generation" since the Word is *in* the Father eternally, then proceeds from the Father as Son when the Father wills.[806] Despite the variant interpretations, however, one thing does appear certain; Novatian apparently borders on ditheism or subordinationism in order to delineate the Father and the Son's purported ontological relationship, whereas he virtually ignores the Holy Spirit in his famed treatise.

One Biblical account that shapes the thought of Novatian regarding the Son is the first century apostolic letter to the Philippians that recounts Christ's self-emptying kenotic act (*De*

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[800] Kelly, *Doctrines*, 126. Theologians customarily distinguish between functional, ontological and theanthropic subordination where the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are concerned. Kelly evidently alludes to ontological subordination in his comments pertaining to Novatian, although he does not make his meaning explicit in the text. DeSimone argues that Novatian is so intent on avoiding ditheism that he falls "headlong" into the pit of subordinationism (*Treatise of Novatian*, 169).

[801] See Joseph Priestly, *An History of Early Opinions Concerning Jesus Christ (*Birmingham: Pearson and Rollason, 1786), 281-282; Stuart George Hall, *Doctrine and Practice in the Early Church* (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans, 1992), 83-84. On the other hand, J. F. Bethune-Baker suggests that Novatian favors an economic rather than immanent form of the Trinity doctrine. See *An Introduction to the Early History of Christian Doctrine, to the Time of the Council of Chalcedon* (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd, 1962), 107.

[802] See Priestly, *An History of Early Opinions Concerning Jesus Christ*, 281-282.

[803] Kelly, *Doctrines*, 126.

[804] Fortman, *Triune God*, 121.

[805] Ibid.

[806] Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 71.

Trinitate 22.5-6). Novatian construes Philippians 2:6 (in which the apostle Paul elaborates on the Son's kenosis) as a passage that unfolds the Son's (ontological) inequality with the Father. Hence, Edmund Hill notes:

> For Novatian, to argue the divinity of Christ, which he does with great vigor, actually involves arguing his inequality to the Father. The assumption is that Christ can only be both divine and other than the Father if he is divine in a different and lesser degree. Novatian interprets the famous text of Phil 2:6, 'who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped,' as meaning that though Christ was divine, in the form of God, he never dreamt of claiming equality with God.[807]

But if Novatian professes that the Son is divine "in a different and lesser degree" than the Father, it makes the manner in which he may posit an eternal generation for the Son somewhat problematic. In what sense could the Son be "truly God" for Novatian, if his mode of being God is inferior to the Father's mode of being God? Of course, there are rival interpretations of Novatian that attempt to interpret coherently the doctrine of Christ that one finds in his *De Trinitate*. This investigation will now examine one such construal of Novatian's Christology. However, exploring a variant interpretation of his doctrine of Christ will necessitate scrutinizing the notion of causal priority formulated by Aristotle. Therefore, the next section of this chapter will probe the topic of causal priority as it relates to the Trinity doctrine. After discussing causal priority, this study will then endeavor to ascertain whether the notion of causal priority appears in Novatian.

3. Causal Priority and Eternal Generation in De Trinitate 31

According to Stuart Hall, Novatian argues that the Father (in some sense) precedes the Son. Nevertheless, he contends that the Son exists in the Father before the creation comes into existence.[808] Hall believes that Novatian professes: "God is in himself a Father with a Son, and the Son is not simply a function of God's action in time ('economic trinitarianism'), but belongs to his

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[807] Hill, *Mystery of the Trinity*, 52. Compare DeSimone, *Treatise of Novatian*, 108. He concludes that "The distinctive mark of subordinationism is clearly and apodictically found" in Novatian's exegesis of Philippians 2:6-11 (*De Trinitate* 22).

[808] Hall, *Doctrine and Practice*, 83. See *De Trinitate* 31.2-3: "To the Son alone they are known, who has known the secrets of the Father. He then, since He was begotten of the Father, is always in the Father. And I thus say always, that I may show Him not to be unborn, but born."

own being."[809] The insinuation here is that "Father" does not function as a metaphor (an as-if construct) or accidental signifier for God (as in Tertullian), but serves as an essential description of an invisible and ingenerate divine person. This interpretation may do justice (in some respects) to Novatian's doctrine of God the Father. Nevertheless, other portions of his treatise imply that God does not eternally or atemporally generate the Son:

> He, then, when the Father willed it, proceeded from the Father, and He who was in the Father came forth from the Father; and He who was in the Father because He was of the Father, was subsequently with the Father, because He came forth from the Father. [810]

The Son is generated because the Father wills that his Son be generated. A generation brought about by means of divine volition seems to be non-eternal or contingent in nature. The text also raises questions concerning the Father's causal relationship to the Son. The notion of causal priority with respect to the Father and the Son consequently needs to be examined since this issue has a significant bearing on Novatian's use of paternal terminology for God. In this connection, one thought-provoking aspect of *De Trinitate* 31 is the text wherein Novatian insists that the Father precedes the Son:

> And He is always in the Father, unless the Father be not always Father, only that the Father also precedes Him, in a certain sense, since it is necessary, in some degree, that He should be before He is Father. Because it is essential that He who knows no beginning must go before Him who has a beginning; even as He is the less as knowing that He is in Him, having an origin because He is born, and of like nature with the Father in some measure by His nativity, although He has a beginning in that He is born, inasmuch as He is born of that Father who alone has no beginning.[811]

The Logos is always "in" the Father, but the omnipotent Father precedes the Son "in a certain sense" and to a certain degree. Novatian may also think that God somehow exists as Father "before" he generates the Son, suggesting that the Father is prior to his Son, in an undefined sense. But what type of priority might Novatian be referencing? Is he alluding to temporal or logical priority?

It is probably advisable not to emphasize Novatian's employment of the adverbial "before" since he confesses that God the Father atemporally generates the Son of his own volition. Contra

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[809] Hall, *Doctrine and Practice*, 83.
[810] *De Trinitate* 31.4.
[811] Ibid. 31.3.

Tertullian, Novatian seems to consider God "Father" even before the uttered Word emanates from him, before the foundation of the world. Granted, he makes a case for the Son having a "beginning" which seems to militate against the eternal generation doctrine. Nevertheless, there apparently is no thought of the Father existing temporally prior to the Son since Novatian believes that God is timeless.[812] Therefore, temporal qualifiers such as "always" or "before" might bear figurative or anthropomorphic senses when applied to the Christian deity. Wielding such nomenclature is possibly a creaturely method of expressing transcendent concepts with a degree of inadequacy. Wolfson nonetheless has insisted that when Novatian speaks of priority or antecedence in the Godhead, he is referring to the causal priority of the Father in relation to the Son.[813] What, however, does Wolfson mean by "causal priority"? Does Novatian truly espouse this concept?

Aristotle outlines five distinct senses of the term "prior." He initially analyzes temporal (e.g. X is older than Y), sequential (e.g. the asymmetrical priority of numbers), orderly (e.g. the letters of the alphabet are prior to syllables) and natural (e.g. according other humans a form of superiority or honor) priority, of which the latter category he adjudges "strange" (`avllotriw,tatoj`).[814] Finally, the Stagirite evaluates a fifth type, namely, causal priority. He explains:

> For in those things, the being of each of which implies that of the other, that which is in any way the cause may reasonably be said to be by nature "prior" to the effect. It is plain that there are instances of this. The fact of the being of a man carries with it the truth of the proposition that he is, and the implication is reciprocal: for if a man is, the proposition wherein we allege that he is true, and conversely, if the proposition wherein we allege that he is true, then he is. The true proposition, however, is in no way the cause of the being of the man, but the fact of the man's being does seem somehow to be the cause of the truth of the proposition, for the truth or falsity of the proposition depends on the fact of the man's being or not being.[815]

Christopher Hughes maintains that causal priority refers to a type of precedence wherein some entity (X) makes, causes or is responsible for the existence of another distinct entity (Y).[816] For

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[812] Wolfson, *Philosophy of the Church Fathers*, 1:196.
[813] Ibid.
[814] *Categories* 12.
[815] Ibid. See Copan and Craig (*Creation out of Nothing*, 176) for an insightful discussion of logical priority.
[816] Hughes, *Complex Theory*, 32.

example, a father (X) per necessity is causally prior to his son (Y), whose existence the father efficiently causes. Moreover, Leonardo da Vinci is causally prior to the Mona Lisa since he is the efficient cause of the painting: he brings it about that the Mona Lisa exists. Aquinas too argues that the "form" (that by which an entity subsists) of a material substance is causally prior to both matter (i.e. the individuating principle of the substance) and the material substance itself.[817] Therefore, the soul (in Thomistic thought) as the form or act of the organized body is causally prior to the body (*SCG* 2.68); it is the formal means by which the body subsists.[818] Finally, that which causes the existence of an object—being the ground of its existence—is causally prior to the entity whose being it causes: God is thus causally prior to the world since God causes its existence.

This type of Aristotelian priority implies that the cause of a particular entity may be temporally prior to its effect, although this may not be a necessarily implication of causal priority.[819] Does Novatian employ the notion of causal priority to explicate the generative relationship obtaining between the Father and the Son? Is he asserting that the Father precedes the Son with respect to causality and only causality? Perhaps this explanatory move resolves a number of supposed perplexing texts encountered in *De Trinitate*; for it is conceptually possible that Novatian does have causal priority in mind when he places the Father before the Son in some sense and to some degree.[820] While conceptually possible, however, even this view does not fail to be unproblematic for at least two reasons.

Firstly, Vladimir Lossky points out that the language of causality with respect to the Godhead is probably inadequate and somewhat defective.[821] Vocabulary that posits causality of God conatively endeavors to articulate the monarchy of the Father and his alleged relation of origin to the Son and the Holy Spirit. Nonetheless, Lossky argues that causality is an unsatisfactory expression of how the Father relates to the Son since there is evidently neither posteriority nor priority of any form in the Trinity: "This unique cause [the Father] is not prior to his effects, for in the Trinity there is no priority and posteriority. He is not superior to his effects, for the perfect

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[817] *ST* Ia.13.1.
[818] Ibid. I.75.1, *Responsio*.
[819] See Hughes, *Complex Theory*, 32.
[820] *De Trinitate* 31.
[821] *In the Image and Likeness of God*, trans. John H. Erickson and Thomas E. Bird (Crestwook, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1985), 82-83.

cause cannot produce inferior effects. He is thus the cause of their equality with himself."[822] The Father (strictly speaking) does not "cause" the Son and the Son is not (strictly speaking) an "effect" of the Father:

> The Greeks use the words "cause" and "principle" indifferently, when speaking of God; whereas the Latin Doctors do not use the word "cause," but only "principle." The reason is because "principle" is a wider term than "cause"; as "cause" is more common than "element." For the first term of a thing, as also the first part, is called the principle, but not the cause. Now the wider a term is, the more suitable it is to use as regards God (*ST* I.33.1, ad. 1).

It is evidently a category mistake to literally attribute "cause" and "effect" to God.[823] The terminology is considered a necessary but unsatisfactory attempt to articulate the Father's generation of the Son. Even "Greeks" such as Athanasius, who may use "cause" or "principle" without distinction still believe that there is no priority or posteriority in God (in the strictest sense). Bulgakov similarly affirms that the Son and Holy Spirit essentially *are* (i.e. they do not come to be or originate by means of the Father).[824] While Novatian had not developed his thought about the Father and Son to the same extent as post-Nicene theologians like the Cappadocians or Athanasius had, he must have known at least some of the philosophical conclusions that appear to follow from employing the concept of Aristotelian causal priority. Novatian certainly knew that if God is timeless or atemporal, then there is neither before nor after, neither causality nor effect subsisting between the Father and the Son.

Even if atemporal causality is an objective phenomenon *ad intra Deum*, we evidently have no knowledge of it in the sensible realm. For example, William Hasker suggests that an atemporal causal relationship may obtain between the soul and the body.[825] But the "soul" (as traditionally understood) is not a phenomenal entity. Kant contends that it is a noumenon that is thinkable but not knowable (a postulate of pure practical reason). Hence, there possibly are epistemological constraints that limit creaturely theoretical knowledge of a causal nexus between the soul and the

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[822] Ibid. Aquinas contends that there is neither priority nor posteriority in God (*ST* I.42.3). He attributes this view to Athanasius.

[823] Lossky, *In the Image and Likeness of God*, 82-83.

[824] Bulgakov writes that the hypostases "do *not* originate. They exist eternally. The interrelation of the hypostases, as the interrelation of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, should be understood not on the basis of their origination but on the basis of their concrete self-definition" (*The Comforter*, 136. Italics in original).

body, if one takes Kantian epistemology seriously. Furthermore, the discussion concerning the soul in the *Critique of Pure Reason* (*Kritik der reinen Vernunft*) appears to restrict the extent to which one can rationally demonstrate the logical possibility of the soul's existence without encountering various antinomies.[826] On the other hand, one might choose to take issue with the Kantian bifurcation of noumena and phenomena, thereby obviating certain arguments that are opposed to the notion of atemporal causality. But any attempt to subvert the intuitive understanding of causality presupposed in the Cappadocians or other early church writers—an understanding that implies spatio-temporal contiguity as well as a relation of dependence obtaining between a cause and effect—ultimately does not appear successful in this context. Not even Hasker's approach seems to ameliorate the discomfited features of causality language with respect to the Father and Son since talk of causality in relation to the divine naturally implies priority or posteriority in God. Yet, according to the ancient church writers, God is timeless (there is no "before" or "after" in the immanent divine life).

The Cappadocians would later point to the inadequacy of causality language vis-à-vis the Godhead based on deity's reputed immanental timelessness.[827] Since Novatian affirms the immanent atemporality of God (*De Trinitate* 2.1-3), it does not appear that he simultaneously acknowledges (in any metaphysical or ontological sense) the causal priority of the Father in relation to the Son.[828] Although one could legitimately infer that he adopts causal priority with respect to the Father and the Son, another likely possibility could be that this inference stems from Novatian's imprecise speech acts or his persistent efforts to undermine Sabellianism. The mode of expression wielded in *De Trinitate* may not be sufficiently clear or distinct; it may accordingly lead to certain hermeneutical misapprehensions among his interpreters.[829]

Secondly, various passages from *De Trinitate* lead one to believe that causal priority does not satisfactorily account for Novatian's understanding of the Father-Son relationship. For instance, this study already has scrutinized the claim: "the Father also precedes Him [the Son], in a

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[825] *God, Time, and Knowledge*, Cornell Studies in the Philosophy of Religion (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989), 153.

[826] See note 158 above.

[827] Lossky, *In the Image and Likeness of God*, 82-83.

[828] Hallman, *Descent of God*, 70.

[829] DeSimone, *Treatise of Novatian*, 101, 181.

certain sense, since it is necessary, in some degree, that He should be before He is Father."[830] Novatian claims that the Father precedes the Son in that he exists as God "before" he generates the Son. Furthermore, he maintains that God the Father has no beginning, but is the Son's divine locus of origination. Most significantly, Novatian is rather vague when it comes to explaining the Father's priority with respect to the Son since he uses the qualifying expressions "in some degree" or "in some sense."[831] It is thus not altogether clear whether he excludes the Father from being temporally prior to the Son or not. On the other hand, certain passages indicate that Novatian may invoke the notion of causal priority to delineate the mysterious generation of the Son: "And reasonably, He [the Son] is before all things, but after the Father, since all things were made by Him, and He proceeded from Him of whose will all things were made. Assuredly God proceeding from God, causing [constituting] a person second to the Father as being the Son, but not taking from the Father that characteristic that He is one God."[832]

In the final analysis, one may justifiably conclude with Fortman that much of what Novatian writes about God generating the Son is not very clear. This same principle could apply to the issue of causal priority in Novatian. Alternatively, there is sufficient evidence that Novatian possibly did not believe that the Son is eternally generated from the Father. He appears to argue that the Son is an entity resembling the anhypostatic "immanent Word" that becomes "the uttered Word." However, Novatian affirms that God is inherently paternal before the Son's first nativity occurs. Consequently, he probably thinks of God as "Father" properly or non-metaphorically, unlike Lactantius or Tertullian. This existential priority of the Father in relation to the Son is coherent when one apprehends Novatian's concepts through the metaphysical lens of Stoicism that conceives of relations in terms of corresponding accidental dispositions over against thinking of them as entities that constitute the being of a thing. Nevertheless, this investigation submits that subordinationist thought manifestly occurs in *De Trinitate*:

> Moreover, the Son is God of all else, because God the Father put before all Him whom He begot. Thus the Mediator of God and men, Christ Jesus, having the power of every creature

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[830] *De Trinitate* 31.3-4.

[831] Ibid.

[832] Ibid. 31.5: et merito ipse est ante omnia, sed post Patrem, quando per illum facta sunt omnia. qui processit ex eo, ex cuius uoluntate facta sunt omnia, Deus utique procedens ex Deo, secundam personam efficiens post patrem, qua filius, sed non eripiens illud patri, quod unus est Deus (Fausset, *De Trinitate*, 118-119).

subjected to Him by His own Father, inasmuch as He is God; with every creature subdued to Him, found at one with His Father God, has, by abiding in that condition that He moreover "was heard," briefly proved God His Father to be one and only and true God.[833]

The subordinationist position of Novatian remains salient despite the extensive redacting that has occurred in the final section of *De Trinitate*.[834] The Son is God in relation to all created things. But in relation to the Father, the Son is subordinate in that he endeavors to glorify the "one and only" true God. Novatian believes that the Father has subjected all things to the Son; the Son, however, remains subject to God the Father (*De Trinitate* 22). He ultimately affirms that the Son is divine "in a different and lesser degree" vis-à-vis the Father (Hill, *Mystery of the Trinity*, 52).

C. Minucius Felix (160-240 CE)

Another African writer, who exploits the term "Father" metaphorically, is Marcus Minucius Felix. Although the Christian apologist was from Africa, in time, he practiced law as a skilled advocate at Rome (*De viris illustribus* 58; *Epistle 70 ad Magnum*).[835] Minucius' legal background shaped his literary style and approach to apologetics. Moreover, it undoubtedly explains the setting that appears in the *Octavius*, namely, a cordial dialogue between acquaintances that is conducted along the coast of Ostia (at the mouth of the Tiber River).[836] Clarke argues that the setting further reflects an exploitation of the philosophical dynamic encountered in Cicero's *De natura deorum*.[837] The literary background and dialogical approach taken in Minucius' work may also be a result of his rhetorical training which entailed writing declamatory treatises known as *controversia* (wherein a thesis is affirmed or denied).[838] In any event, there apparently is no need

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[833] Ibid.

[834] Grant, *Gods and the One God*, 160; DeSimone, *The Trinity*, 111; idem, *Treatise of Novatian*, 175; Harnack, *History of Dogma*, 2:314. However, Fausset thinks that the form of subordinationist thought one encounters in Novatian's De Trinitate is not at variance with the orthodox doctrine of Christ that came into being after Nicea. See *De Trinitate*, xxxiii.

[835] Compare *DI* 5.1.22.

[836] *Octavius* 2.

[837] *The Octavius of Marcus Minucius Felix*, ed. G. W. Clarke (New York: Newman Press, 1974), 26-27. The Latin text used in this study for literary work composed by Minucius Felix is Bernhard Kytzler, *M. Minuci Felicis Octavius*, Bibliotheca Scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana (Leipzig: B.G. Teubner Verlagsgesellschaft, 1982).

[838] Clarke, *Octavius*, 28. See Gerard L. Ellspermann, *The Attitude of the Early Christian Latin Writers Toward Pagan Literature and Learning* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1949), 6.

for an appeal to symbolic factors in order to account for the *mise-en-scène* of the *Octavius*.[839] The author's training sufficiently explains the literary setting chosen in the apologetic treatise.

One on-going question in patristic scholarship is whether Minucius wrote *Octavius* before or after Tertullian composed *Apologeticum*.[840] On one hand, Daniélou thinks that Minucius preceded Tertullian in the literary tradition of the West, but Frend places Tertullian before Minucius.[841] The latter argues that Minucius borrows copiously from Tertullian's work and he suggests that *Octavius* could have been written as late as 240 CE.[842] Clarke notes that Lactantius is the first pre-Nicene to reference or mention the *Octavius*. He considers it a product of Severan Rome and places Minucius' flourishing "within the first third of the third century."[843] Clarke also attaches much weight to Cornelius Fronto's polemic speech (fl. ca. 140-175 CE) against Christian customs (*Octavius* 31) in order to establish a *terminus a quo* for the work of Minucius. Finally, he reasons that Minucius possibly influenced the literary content of Cyprian as opposed to shaping Tertullian's concepts (Clarke, *Octavius*, 11-12). In the final analysis, it seems that Tertullian is the originator of Latin theology. Nevertheless, while Minucius probably is not the first Latin theological writer, he certainly has informative thoughts concerning God the Father. Before examining his concept of divine paternity, however, it is necessary to review the theological presuppositions that govern Minucius' notions of God's transcendence. Firstly, he reasons that creatures who sufficiently uphold God's majesty readily acknowledge that God is incomprehensible:

> This God cannot be seen; He is too bright for sight. He cannot be grasped; He is too pure for touch. He cannot be measured; He is too great for our senses—a boundless infinity, sharing with Himself alone the knowledge of His vastness. But the understanding we have is too limited to comprehend Him and that is why we measure Him worthily when we say that He is immeasurable.[844]

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[839] Ibid. 27.

[840] Dennis V. M. Holmes, "The Date of the Octavius," *AJPh* 50:2 (1929): 185-189; Clarke, *Octavius*, 8-12. Ellspermann (*Attitude of Early Christian Writers*, 14) favors the literary priority of Minucius.

[841] Daniélou, *Origins*, 192; Bowen and Garnsey, *Divine Institutes*, 283.

[842] Frend, *Rise of Christianity*, 291-292.

[843] Clarke, *Octavius*, 9-12.

[844] *Octavius* 18.8: Hic nec videri potest: visu clarior est; nec conprehendi potest nec aestimari: sensibus maior est, infinitus inmensus et soli sibi tantus, quantus est, notus. Nobis vero ad intellectum pectus angustum est, et ideo sic eum digne aestimamus, dum inaestimabilem dicimus (Kytzler Latin text, 15).

The apologist's teaching here evokes concepts found in Philo, who stresses God's beyondness, ineffability or utter incognoscibility (*De posteritate Caini* 169; *De somniis* 1.11.67; *Quod Deus immutabilis sit* 13.62). Minucius contends that one cannot know God by means of the senses or the intellect: the divine one is completely incircumscribable (*Octavius* 18). While it is possible that one can detect hints of Stoic or Gnostic influence in his particular brand of apophatic theology, Gnosticism or Stoicism are by no means the only possible resources that shaped Minucius' thought since he follows conceptually in the steps of his Christian predecessors.[845]

One particularly can witness the influence of early Latin theology in the emphasis on God's anonymity. Minucius urges that humans should dispose of names for God because they evidently originate "by nature" (fu,sei), not "by convention" (qe,sei).[846] He thus contends that creatures should abandon all titles for God (including Father) or simply invoke the Christian God as *Deus*—a practice that purportedly upholds the divine transcendence (= beyondness):

> Nor should you seek a name for God: God is His name. We have need of titles in cases where we want to separate individuals from a large group; we use, then the distinguishing mark of personal names. But God is unique; all He has for title is God. Should I call Him father, you would consider that He is earthly; should I call Him king, you would suspect that He is made of flesh; should I call Him lord, you would certainly understand that He is mortal. Remove the aggregate of names and you will clearly see His splendor.[847]

Minucius' proposal is that names obfuscate rather than clarify the nature of God. Hence, creatures should eliminate divine names to behold God's glory. Daniélou considers this view "radical"; he attributes it partly to the influence that Stoicism probably had on the working concepts that one encounters in *Octavius*.[848] Moreover, this radical statement of the apologetic work is reminiscent of what one encounters in the Philonic corpus (*De mutatione nominum* 13-15). It stresses the absolute ineffability of God, as suggested in the maxim: "It is easier to say what God is not than to say what he is."[849] Minucius is convinced that names diminish God.[850] Therefore, he maintains

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[845] Daniélou, *Origins*, 192-193.
[846] One encounters the famed debate regarding language being a product of convention or nature in *Cratylus*. See Daniélou, *Origins*, 193; *Octavius* 16.
[847] *Octavius* 18:8-10: Nec nomen deo quaeras: Deus nomen est. Illic vocabulis opus est, cum per singulos propriis appellationum insignibus multitudo dirimenda est: deo, qui solus est, dei vocabulum totum est. Quem si patrem dixero, terrenum opineris; si regem, carnalem suspiceris; si dominum, intelleges utique mortalem. Aufer additamenta nominum et perspicies eius claritatem (Kytzler Latin text, 15).
[848] See Daniélou, *Origins*, 189-207; Colish, *Stoic Tradition*, 2:30-31.
[849] Oden, *Systematic Theology*, 1:44-45. See *SCG* 1.30; *De Trinitate* 8.2 (Augustine).

that when one does not wield designations such as "Father" or "Lord," one then allows God's splendor (in all its fullness) to manifest itself. Although Minucius generally prefers to shun all divine names (*nomina divina*) with the exception of "God" (*Deus*), his preferred appellation for the Supreme Being is "the Parent of all."[851] He manifests a predilection for the term in *Octavius* 19.[852]

The term *parens* can denote a procreator, parent—a father or mother.[853] Ancient writers also employ it with a transferred sense to signify ancestors or grandparents (i.e. progenitors).[854] Furthermore, the word is used metaphorically as a reference to an emblematic father in the sense of a founder, inventor or author.[855] The term appears as a metaphorical reference to Jupiter in Horace's *Carmina* 1.12.1: "Whom praise we first? The sire on high, Who gods and men unerring guides, Who rules the sea, the earth and sky (*quid prius dicam solitis parentis laudibus, qui res hominum ac deorum, qui mare ac terras variisque mundum temperat*).[856] Lactantius also refers to God as the "parent of all" in a passage about the Father dispatching his Son to extricate humankind from bondage to evil (*Divinae institutiones* 4.13.1). The potential meaning of *parens* seems to be "parent" although context may determine whether the term is translated "Father" or "Parent" in reference to God.

Appealing to the familiar Platonic text *Timaeus* 28C, Minucius acknowledges God as the cosmic parent, who constructed all things in heaven and on earth; he professes that this Father-Creator nevertheless is ineffable or unknowable.[857] On the other hand, in spite of God's presumed ineffability, Minucius contends that acknowledging God as a parent (i.e. Father) somehow promotes unity among Christians:

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[850] Daniélou, *Origins*, 192.

[851] See *Octavius* 17, 19, 31. Compare Lactantius' use of this expression (*De opificio dei* 2; *DI* 4.13.1).

[852] *Octavius* 19.14-15: Platoni itaque in Timaeo Deus est ipso suo nomine mundi parens, artifex animae, caelestium terrenorumque fabricator, quem et invenire difficile prae nimia et incredibili potestate et. "Eadem fere et ista, quae nostra sunt: nam et deum novimus et parentem omnium dicimus et numquam publice nisi interrogati praedicamus" (Kytzler Latin text, 17-18).

[853] Cornelia (mother of the Gracchi) was venerated as *Deus parentem* by her sons. See Taylor, *Divinity of the Roman Emperor*, 49; Marleen B. Flory, "The Deification of Roman Women," *The Ancient History Bulletin* 9.3-4 (1995): 127-134.

[854] William Smith and Theophilus D. Hall, *A Copious and Critical English-Latin Dictionary* (New York, Cincinnati and Chicago: American Book Company, 1871), 536.

[855] Ibid.

[856] *Horace: Odes and Epodes*, ed. Paul Shorey and Gordon J. Laing (Chicago: B.H. Sanborn, 1930), 1919.

[857] Compare *DI* 1.8.2.

> Thus, in short, we do not distinguish our people by some small bodily mark, as you suppose, but easily enough by the sign of innocency and modesty. Thus we love one another, to your regret, with a mutual love, because we do not know how to hate. Thus we call one another, to your envy, brethren: as being men born of one God and Parent, and companions in faith, and as fellow-heirs in hope. You, however, do not recognize one another, and you are cruel in your mutual hatreds; nor do you acknowledge one another as brethren, unless indeed for the purpose of fratricide.[858]

He apparently does not conceive God the Father in ontologically gendered terms. First, Minucius believes that Father is a term that one can eradicate in order to achieve a clearer vision of God himself.[859] Father does not predicate what God is according to essence (*secundum essentiam*). Second, Minucius ostensibly prefers the designation "Parent" (*parens*) to "Father" (*pater*). Even when these appellations are employed, however, he qualifies these terms by associating *parens* with the world's creation or with spiritual redemption. This investigation therefore submits that Minucius Felix appears to view the term "Father" as a metaphor for God. He does not utilize this concept to designate an eternal or immutable distinction within the triune God. The paternal title for deity does not function as a proper name in *Octavius*.

D. Arnobius of Sicca

Arnobius Afer (fl. 290-303 CE) probably taught Lactantius the art of rhetoric.[860] He was born in rustic Sicca Veneria (Proconsular Africa in Numidia) near Carthage and in time converted to Christianity.[861] The writing style of Arnobius resembles that of a neophyte who articulates concepts earnestly, but simultaneously lacks the epistemic wherewithal to formulate theological notions systematically. Yet Arnobius does appear competent in the matter of subverting pagan arguments promulgated against the Christian faith.[862] Conversely, his thought is evidently

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[858] *Octavius* 31.8: Sic nos denique non notaculo corporis, ut putatis, sed innocentiae ac modestiae signo facile dinoscimus; sic mutuo, quod doletis, amore diligimus, quoniam odisse non novimus; sic nos quod invidetis, fraters vocamus, ut unius dei parentis homines, ut consortes fidei, ut spei coheredes. Vos enim nec invicem adgnoscitis et in mutua odia saevitis nec fraters vos nisi sane ad parricidium recognoscitis (Kytzler Latin text, 30).

[859] See Justin's *Apology* 2.6.

[860] J. A. Tixeront, *Handbook of Patrology* (St. Louis: Herder, 1944), 125; Wace and Piercy, *Early Christian Biography*, 49.

[861] H. D. McDonald, "The Doctrine of God in Arnobius' 'Adversus Gentes' " *SP* 9.3 (1966): 75.

[862] Michael Bland Simmons, *Arnobius of Sicca: Religious Conflict and Competition in the Age of Diocletian*, The Oxford Early Christian Studies (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 16-18; Micka, *Problem of Divine Anger*, 158.

"unorthodox" in some respects.[863] Cruttwell writes that while Arnobius articulates the person of Christ in glowing terms or affirms that he is truly God, "he yet regards Him rather as the Divine Revealer of the One God than as Himself the object of worship."[864] Cruttwell's observation might be technically inexact since Arnobius does appear to profess that he and other then contemporary Christians worshiped the Son as God.[865] However, the ancient professor apparently vacillates between a ditheistic and a subordinationist outlook (*Aduersus nationes* 1.27; 2.74-75; 3.2-3).[866] Arnobius views Christ as more of an exalted sage, who (to some degree) is less majestic or divine than the Father is; he believes that the Son is a demiurgic entity appointed by the Father to mediate between God and man.[867] Nevertheless, Arnobius does profess that the Son is (in some sense) God. His apologetic treatise also indicates that second-third century Christians (in some manner) venerated Christ as deity.[868]

Certain historians charge Arnobius with being heterodox in his description of the man, Jesus Christ.[869] Some comments made by Arnobius categorically imply a form of Docetism (the doctrine that asserts that Christ only seemed to be human).[870] In particular, *Aduersus nationes* 1:53.4 states: "But, freed from the body which He carried about as a small part of Himself, He afterwards suffered Himself to be seen and allowed it to be known who and how great He was."[871] Arnobius speaks of Jesus carrying about his body. Truth-claims such as these have confounded patristic scholars. Which influences does Arnobius reflect in his *prima facie* Docetic

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[863] See Hagenbach, *Textbook*, 1:234-235. Simmons, *Arnobius of Sicca*, 16; McGiffert, *History of Christian Thought*, 1:43. Cf. *De viris illustribus* 79; *Adversus nationes* 3.8-15.

[864] *Literary History*, 2:638-639. The capitalization of certain terms appears in Cruttwell's original text.

[865] *Aduersus nationes* 1.36: " 'But,' they say, 'the gods are not hostile to you because you worship the Omnipotent God but because you maintain that a man, born a human being, and one who suffered the penalty of crucifixion, which even to the lowest men is disgraceful punishment, was God, and you believe that He still exists and you worship Him in daily prayers.' " Arnobius professes that Christians of his day worshiped one who was born man (*Aduersus nationes* 1.37). Although his comments suggest that Christians worshiped Christ in the ancient liturgy, Theodor Klauser's observation seems pertinent when he argues that prayers of the liturgy usually were directed primarily to the Father through the Son. See *A Short History of the Western Liturgy: An Account and Some Reflections* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), 30.

[866] See McGiffert, *A History of Christian Thought,* 2:43-44 regarding Arnobius' ditheism and modalism. Moreover, this section of the investigation is heavily indebted to McCracken (*Case against the Pagans*, 1:27).

[867] *Aduersus nationes* 1.53.

[868] Ibid. 1.37-38, 56; 2.65.

[869] McCracken, *Case against the Pagans*, 1:298.

[870] See *Aduersus nationes* 1.61-62.

[871] McDonald believes that Arnobius' "insufficient stress" on the humanity of Jesus results from his insistence that Christ is God ("The Doctrine of God in Arnobius' *Adversus Gentes*," 80).

passages? Is his Christology quasi-Gnostic? Do fashionable notions of pagan deities shape his doctrine of Christ or is the Arnobian Christology proto-Nestorian? Answers to these questions are not wholly unproblematic.[872] For instance, Michael von Albrecht and Gareth L. Schmeling believe that the reputed Docetic sentiments articulated by Arnobius emanate from "some kind of dualism" or "African Platonism" latent in *Aduersus nationes*.[873] On the other hand, it is conceptually possible that Arnobius ornamented his portrait of Christ (*Christusbild*) with the garb of language befitting pagan divinities without making ontological assumptions about Christ.[874] Perhaps his Christological speech-acts only appear heterodox: it is likely that confusion stems from Arnobius' manner of expression rather than the material content of his doctrines. In the final analysis, it appears that the extant work of Arnobius does not allow one to make definitive conclusions regarding this matter. The immediate source of his Docetic proclivities remains a matter of speculation.

Arnobius seems to be heterodox in other respects. For instance, he palpably espouses the "aloofness of God" doctrine.[875] Divinities cannot experience anger, he states, because wrath is savage, cruel, poisonous and insane; these properties do not befit authentic gods.[876] Moreover, Arnobius reasons that if God instantiates emotions, then he is susceptible to grief or vicissitudinal change; but where there is sorrow or grief, weakness and decay obtain.[877] But none of these attributes properly characterizes deity.[878] Arnobius thus insists that God does not instantiate or

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[872] McCracken, *Case against the Pagans*, 1:298.

[873] *A History of Roman Literature, Vols. 1 & 2 from Livius Andronicus to Boethius: with Special Regard to Its Influence on World Literature*, Mnemosyne, Bibliotheca Classica Batava, 165 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1997), 2:1591. Ernst Robert Curtius also uses the expression "African Platonism," but he does not elaborate on its meaning. See *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, trans. Willard R. Trask (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 544. However, we do know that Plotinus of Deltaic Lycopolis exemplified so-called African Platonism in *The Enneads* as did Apuleius in *The Golden Ass* and *On Plato and His Doctrine*. See Inge, *Philosophy of Plotinus*, 93.

[874] McCracken, *Case against the Pagans*, 1:298.

[875] See *Aduersus nationes* 1.19-20. Micka, *Problem of Divine Anger*, 49-54; Pelikan, *Christian Tradition*, 1:53; Labriolle, *History and Literature of Christianity*, 191-192. The Latin text that this study uses for the writings of Arnobius is *Arnobii Adversvs nationes libri VII,* Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum, volume 4, ed. August Reifferscheid (Vindobonae: apvd C. Geroldi filivm, 1875).

[876] *Aduersus nationes* 1.17 (Reifferscheid CSEL 4:13): Quid est enim aliud irasci, quam insanire, quam furere, quam in ultionis libidinem ferri et in alterius doloris crucibus efferati pectoris alienatione bacchari?

[877] Ibid. 1.18 (Reifferscheid CSEL 4:14): Ubi enim est ullus, sicut sapientibus videtur, adfectus, ibi esse necesse est passionem: ubi passio sita est, perturbationem consentaneum est consequi; ubi perturbatio est, ibi dolor et aegritudo est; ubi dolor et aegritudo est, imminutioni et corruptioni iam locus est; quae duo si vexant, adest vicinus interitus, mors omnia finiens et cunctis adimens sentientibus vitam

[878] See Ibid. 7.4-8, 36; McCracken, *Case against the Pagans*, 7-8.

experience emotional states. While the teaching of impassibility (ἀπάθεια) is common in the pre-Nicenes, however,[879] his doctrine of impassibility seems to deviate from orthodox teaching. The concept becomes pure detachment in *Aduersus nationes*.[880] But regardless of his alleged heterodox tenets, Arnobius is an important witness to the North African church's early understanding of God the Father. Additionally (on balance) he may not be "heterodox" at all in the matter of God's nature.[881] A relatively current investigation possibly redeems Arnobius, even if some of its suggestions are questionable.

The influential study written by Michael Simmons has advanced scholarly knowledge of Arnobius and his theology. Despite its problematic elements, Simmons' investigation clarifies Arnobian thought by attempting to establish a historical context for *Aduersus nationes*. Simmons indicates that "Saturnian theology" possibly informs the Arnobian concept of God.[882] This terminology refers to the doctrine of God that prevailed in Roman North Africa during the age of Diocletian (284-305 CE).[883] Saturn was the chief god of North Africans and his cultus revolved around agrarian concerns such as crops, farming implements or weather control.[884] Certain factors that lead Simmons to adjudge that "Saturnian theology" informs Arnobius' theology are portions of *Aduersus nationes* that disputably attribute Saturnian epithets to the omnipotent deity of Christianity. One readily encounters the terms *genitor*, *pater*, *dominus* and *frugifer* in Arnobius.[885] Of course, this linguistic phenomenon does not necessarily confirm that the cult of Saturn functions as a backdrop for Arnobius; nonetheless, Simmons considers it a likely

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[879] See Peter R. Forster, "Divine Passibility and the Early Christian Doctrine of God," in *The Power and Weakness of God: Impassibility and Orthodoxy*, ed. Nigel M. de S. Cameron (Edinburgh: Rutherford House Books, 1990), 33. He discusses how Justin (inadvertently) posits change in God.

[880] Hallman, *Descent of God*, 72-73. Lactantius also affirms the Father's impassible nature but still believes emotions subsist in God (Compare *DI* 2.8.44 with *De ira Dei* 5). Hence, the former student of Arnobius logically obviates belief in the aloofness of God doctrine.

[881] See McCracken, *Case against the Pagans*, 1:33.

[882] Simmons, *Arnobius of Sicca*, 16.

[883] Ibid.

[884] Ibid.

[885] Ibid. See *Aduersus nationes* 1.29.7; 1.65.8 (*virtutum omnium dominus*); 6.10.5. The North Africans in Carthage demonstrably identified Saturn with Jupiter or Pluto, and deemed him protector of harvests (*frugifer*). Constantine provides evidence of this tendency when he invokes the divinity thus: *Iovi Saturno Augusto*. On the other hand, the Egyptians imputed the designation *frugifer* to Osiris (cf. Lewis-Short entry on *frugifer*). *Vide* Serge Lancel, *Carthage: A History*, trans. Antonia Nevill (Oxford and Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1995), 436 for the reference to Constantine.

possibility. While pagan concepts may shape the Arnobian understanding of divine fatherhood, it nonetheless seems more feasible that polemical strategy or unawareness respecting certain doctrines as well as his situational context influences the Arnobian doctrine of Christ.[886]

One perplexing element of Arnobian thought is that there is no authentic Christology in his work nor does he refer to the Trinity, the Incarnation or the consecrated sacraments.[887] How can one justify omissions of this nature? One could account for them by appealing to the author's status as an ecclesiastical neophyte. However, it is more probable that genre (i.e. polemical strategy) regulates the inclusion or omission of familiar theological motifs.[888] *Aduersus nationes* is reputedly an apologetic treatise; hence, the range of knowledge exhibited by its author is broad, but its *raison d'etre* is somewhat narrow. One probably should not be astounded to find inchoately developed theological formulations in Arnobius since his task is apologetic, not systematic. Furthermore, he possibly vacillates between subordinationist and ditheistic thought. While Arnobius ostensibly believes that Christ is God (*Aduersus nationes* 1.42),[889] Gabarrou suspects that he may not positively affirm the deity of God's Son; Micka, however, does not agree with his assessment of Arnobian Christology.[890]

Arnobius seems to think that two distinct natures are morally united in Christ; that is, he submits that the hypostatic union is not ontological in nature but functional.[891] But the extent to which Arnobius views Christ as deity or the manner whereby he subordinates the Son to the Father and his beliefs concerning the Incarnation remain unresolved questions.[892] Nonetheless, his literary work does explore God's paternity in that Arnobius conceives of divine fatherliness within a determinate cultural matrix. He relates that Christians worship "God, the Father of all things," (*Deum colimus rerum patrem*) and "from Him ask protection when we are tired or

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[886] Simmons, *Arnobius of Sicca*, 18.

[887] Ibid.

[888] McCracken, *Case against the Pagans*, 1:26. Cruttwell attributes the doctrinal inadequacies of *Adversus nationes* to Arnobius' neophyte status as a Christian (*Literary History*, 2:632).

[889] Compare *Aduersus nationes* 1.39.

[890] See Simmons, *Arnobius of Sicca*, 19; Micka, *Problem of Divine Anger*, 52-53.

[891] Ibid. 54.

[892] The subordination of Christ to the Father in Arnobius is possibly hierarchical rather than ontological (Simmons, *Arnobius of Sicca*, 172). See M. Nilsson, "The Most High God and the Mediator," *HTR* 56 (1963): 101-120. Micka states that Arnobius believes that "Christ is in some way subordinated to the Father" (*Problem of Divine*

weary."[893] However, Arnobius does not limit the extent of God's paternity to Christians or pious individuals. Similar to Lactantius or Justin Martyr, he considers God to be the Father of all things (animate and inanimate).[894] There is thus somewhat of a metaphorical cast to his affirmation of God's fatherhood.

Arnobius further underscores the emblematic nature of God's fatherhood when analyzing the human soul. His attempt to refute pagan concepts of the soul results in God's universal paternity being solidified. Attempting to subvert Neo-Platonism, Hermetism, the Chaldean Oracles and other then current religio-philosophical movements, Arnobius contends that rational beings are not born with souls that God has immunized from death.[895] He deems the immortal soul doctrine an artificial construct woven by "certain upstarts" (*nouis quibusdam dicitur uiris*) who ostensibly introduce novel concepts at variance with the Christian faith:

> Wherefore there is no reason that that should mislead us, should hold out vain hopes to us, which is said by some men till now unheard of, and carried away by an extravagant opinion
> of themselves, that souls are immortal, next in point of rank to the God and ruler of the world, brought forth by that Begetter and Father, divine, wise, learned, and not touchable by any contact with the body.[896]

The *novi quidam uiri* (i.e. Neo-Platonists, Hermetists, Chaldean Oracles, et al.) delude others by means of the immortal soul doctrine. They apparently set the human soul on par with divinity. Conversely, Arnobius maintains that souls do not causally emanate from God the Father (*Aduersus nationes* 2.36). He reasons that it is the height of folly to assume that souls belonging to rational creatures resemble the supreme Father in the matter of immortality[897]; for God has reserved deathlessness as his sole prerogative. On the other hand, souls "have one origin, we

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Anger, 53). Nevertheless, he demonstrates that the ancient professor is not reticent about explicitly ascribing *Deus* to Christ (Ibid).

[893] *Adversus nationes* 1.28.

[894] Ibid.

[895] See McCracken, *Against the Pagans*, 1:301.

[896] *Aduersus nationes* 2.15.1: Quare nihil est quod nos fallat, nihil quod nobis polliceatur spes cassas, id quod a nouis quibusdam dicitur uiris et inmoderata sui opinione sublates, animas immortales esse, domino rerum ac principi gradu proximas dignitatis, genitore illo ac patre prolatas, diuinas sapientes doctas necque ulla corporis attrectatione continguas (Reifferscheid CSEL 4:59-60). See Garth Fowden, *The Egyptian Hermes: A Historical Approach to the Late Pagan Mind* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 200; Colish, *Stoic Tradition*, 2:37. Both sources explain the distinctive teachings of the "upstarts."

[897] Ibid. 2.16.3.

therefore think exactly alike; we do not differ in manners, we do not differ in beliefs; we all know God (*Deum*); and there are not as many opinions as there are men in the world, nor *are these* divided in infinite variety."[898] Arnobius thereby submits an explanation for the primal origin of human souls in his polemic against certain upstarts. He believes that souls derive from an angelic intermediary.[899] Their source consequently is not the Father since he transcends evil; nor can the Father relate to inferior human beings in view of his transcendence. Furthermore, it appears that if souls initially originated from one primordial fount, then they would have begun to exist at a definite point in time. If souls began to exist at a definite point in time, however, then it would appear that they are not innately deathless. If they are not innately deathless, then souls do not exist into perpetuity. This is the fundamental line of reasoning utilized by Arnobius (*Aduersus nationes* 2.19, 35-36). Nevertheless, this is not the only conclusion that seems to follow from the major or minor premises that he sets forth in his argument. The native from Sicca contends that if multitudes of gods exist (as the Greeks and Romans claim) then such deities evidently are beholden to the vicissitudes of temporality since they reputedly were generated posterior to the Father:

> They are also later in order and time: if later in order and time, they must have an origin, and beginning of birth and life; but that which has an entrance *into* and beginning of life in its first stages, it of necessity follows, should have an end also.[900]

The consensus among theists of Arnobius' time was that there is one Father of all things, who generated lesser divine entities.[901] If these subordinate divine beings naturally had their origin in the Father or existed posterior to him in a temporal sense, Arnobius infers that they must also

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[898] Ibid. 2.15.3: Et quia uno ex fonte omnium nostrum defluunt animae, idcirco unum conueniensque sentimus, non moribus, non opinionibus discrepamus, idem [*Deum*] omnes nouimus nec, quot in orbe sunt homines, nobis sunt sententiae totidem necque infinita uarietate discretae (Reifferscheid CSEL 4:60). The expression "*quot homines*, *tot sententiae*" is a famous adage evidently first encountered in Terence (*Phormio* 454). Cicero also uses the maxim in *De finibus bonorum et malorum* 1.15. See *De Finibus Bonorum et Malorum*, trans. H. Rackham (London: W. Heinemann, 1914), 18-19. Where some MSS read *idem*, McCracken favors *Deum* in *Aduersus nationes* 2.15.3. See his *Case against the Pagans*, 1:316.

[899] See *Aduersus nationes* 2.36.

[900] Ibid. 2.35.4: Nam si omnes concedimus, unum esse rerum patrem, immortalem atque ingenitum solum, nihilque omnino ante illum quod alicuius uocaminis fuerit inuenitur, sequitur ut hi omnes quos opinatio credit deos esse mortalium aut ab eo sint geniti aut eo iubente prolati. Si sunt prolati et geniti, et ordinis sunt posterioris et temporis; si ordinis posterioris et temporis, ortus necesse est habeant et exordia natiuitatis et uitae: quod autem habet introitum et uitae incipientis exordium, necessario sequitur ut habere debeat et occasum (Reifferscheid CSEL 4:76).

have a temporal end.[902] But if the "immortals" experience birth and death, necessarily they must be inferior to the impassible and eternal Father who allegedly engenders them; this line of reasoning functions as an argument *reductio ad absurdum* for Arnobius.[903] Whether his arguments are valid or sound, however, the Arnobian polemic directed against Greco-Roman deities illustrates one early Christian understanding of divine paternity. God is not a literal Father for Arnobius. Rather, divine paternity marks God as "the first cause, the place and space of things created, the basis of all things whatsoever they be."[904] As the source of all things in the universe, God is not necessarily masculine. Arnobius seems to reason that the maximally excellent being only discloses "himself" as masculine in relation to us (*quoad nos*). He is inclined to contend that the practice of referring to God with masculine terminology is an accidental feature of human language (*Aduersus nationes* 1.59). The next section examines texts that evidently uphold this suggestion.

1. Arnobius on the Question of Divine Gender

Arnobius seems to disclose his thoughts on divine gender in two sets of texts, both of which merit our attention. First, he manifestly denies the belief that God is male. Arnobius bases his confutation of God's maleness on how Christian belief regarding the Father conflicts with both the paternal and maternal god or goddess veneration of Greco-Roman mythology:

> And yet, that no thoughtless person may raise a false accusation against us, as though we believed God whom we worship to be male, for this reason, that is, that when we speak of Him we use a masculine word, let him understand that it is not sex which is expressed, but His name, and its meaning according to custom, and the way in which we are in the habit of using words. For the Deity is not male, but His name is of the masculine gender: but in your ceremonies you cannot say the same; for in your prayers you have been wont to say

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[901] Belief in God's existence was a common presupposition in antiquity. See *Octavius* 32; *Stromata* 5.12-14 which testify to this phenomenon.

[902] *Aduersus nationes* 2.35. Compare the observation of Tatian in *Oratio ad Graecos* 21: "If you speak of the origin of the gods, you also declare them to be mortal."

[903] *Aduersus nationes* 2.36. Arnobius believes that God does not generate souls, but his argument is an example of polemic concession or granting the argument to his opponents.

[904] Ibid. 1.31: Prima enim tu causa es, locus rerum ac spatium, fundamentum cunctorum quaecumque sunt (Reifferscheid CSEL 4:20).

whether thou art god or goddess, and this uncertain description shows, even by their opposition, that you attribute sex to the gods.[905]

Referring to God with masculine terms is a human convention possibly necessitated by the accidents of language.[906] Arnobius insists that God does not have a sexed body; *corpora* differentiated by gender or sex only belong to the created order.[907] Gender or sexual identity is for the purpose of reproduction (*Aduersus nationes* 4.19-29). Deities evidently do not need bodies informed by hormones, genitalia or chromosomes since they do not literally generate offspring:

> We cannot, then, be prevailed on to believe that the divine is embodied; for bodies must needs be distinguished by difference of sex, if they are male and female. For who, however mean his capacity, does not know that the sexes of different gender have been ordained and formed by the Creator of the creatures of earth, only that, by intercourse and union of bodies, that which is fleeting and transient may endure being ever renewed and maintained?[908]

Arnobius appears to closely associate sex and gender in this passage. Of course, this view was common in times of antiquity. The propensity to form a conceptual disjunction between gender (a cultural or sociological category) and sex (a biological category) is relatively modern. Arnobius probably would have found this disjunction somewhat hard to understand. He certainly implies that there is a natural correlation between gender and sex within the created order. Moreover, Arnobius associates differentiation of gender or sex with reproduction. That is, he contends that God has ordained these socio-biological variations in order that men and women may have the potential to generate offspring. Arnobius thus appears to doubt that it would be appropriate for God to possess a gender, whether masculine or feminine. On the other hand, he suggests that God

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[905] Ibid. 3.8.1-2: Ac ne tamen et nobis inconsideratus aliquis calumniam moueat, tamquam deum quem colimus marem esse credamus, ea scilicet causa, quod eum cum loquimur pronuntiamus genere masculino, intellegat non sexum sed usu et familiaritate sermonis appellationem eius et significantiam promi. Non enim Deus mas est, sed nomen eius generis masculini est, quod idem uos dicere religione in uestra non quitis. Nam consuestis in precibus 'siue tu Deus es siue dea' dicere, quae dubitationis exceptio dare uos diis sexum disiunctione ex ipse declarat (Reifferscheid CSEL 4:116).

[906] McDonald, "The Doctrine of God in Arnobius' *Adversus Gentes*," 77.

[907] A similar contention appears in Ambrose of Milan's writings (*De fide* 1.12.78): "Surely the common order [of human generation] is determined by difference of sex; for this is implanted in the nature of our flesh, but where flesh is not, how can you expect to find the infirmity of flesh?"

[908] *Aduersus nationes* 3.8.3: Adduci ergo non possumus, ut corpora credamus deum. Nam esse necesse est corpora, si sunt mares ac feminae, insignificatam esse generum disiunctionem. Quis enim uel exigui sensus nescit terrenorum ab illo animantium conditore non alia de causa generis diuersi sexus institutos esse atque formatos, nisi ut per coitus et conubia corporum res caduca et labilis successionis perpetuae innouatione duraret (Reifferscheid CSEL 4:116-117)?

possibly transcends the ontological category of gender. A consideration of his remarks on Greco-Roman thought certainly indicates that Arnobius professes the divine one's transcendence in relation to the category of gender.

In an attempt to demythologize ancient Greco-Roman legends, Arnobius appeals to the notion of sexless deities in order to reason with his audience. He believes that if "reason has demonstrated, and truth declared, that among the gods there is no difference of species, and that they are not distinguished by any sexes," then myths concerning gods with distinct sexes should be forsaken[909]; for imputing sex to the gods would seem to be an erroneous act, if the gods are not differentiated in terms of sex. If the gods exist, then they do not appear to be categorized in terms of male/female oppositions since they are reputedly immortal. Moreover, gods do not literally engender progeny. Arnobius thereby reckons that they are not distinguished in terms of sex or (probably) gender.[910] His analysis of paternal or maternal speech for divinity appears to indicate that gender-specificity applies neither to God nor to the Greco-Roman gods.

E. Cyprian (martyred 258 CE)

The final writer that will be discussed in this chapter is another ecclesiastic, namely, Bishop Cyprian (Thascius Caecilius Cyprianus). In addition to being a North African Christian, he also was a rhetorician (*Divinae institutiones* 5.1.24-28). As such, he received a comprehensive education in the noted Roman provincial city of Carthage.[911] Cruttwell proposes that Cyprian was an aristocrat.[912] His sophisticated literary style certainly lends itself to that suggestion, as does his overall tranquil bearing exhibited in the epistolary correspondences with those subject to his bishopric. Moreover, Cyprian was an affluent disciple of Christ,[913] who not only encouraged his

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[909] Ibid. 7.19.1.
[910] Ibid. 7.19.2: Sapientium uirorum non aduocabo sententias, qui risum nequeunt continere, cum discrimina sexuum diis audiunt immortalibus attributa: unoquoque ab hominum quaero, an ipse apud se credat sibique ipse persuadeat, distinctum esse deorum genus, mares ac feminas hos esse et ad generandos fetus conuenientium membrorum dispositione formatos (Reifferscheid CSEL 4:252-253)?
[911] *De viris illustribus* 67.
[912] *Literary History*, 593.
[913] Campenhausen, *Church Fathers*, 2:37.

flock to give alms,[914] but also established a salutary pattern by being liberal in his own life.[915] In spite of his socio-economic background, however, the memorable historical details regarding Cyprian are his ecclesiology, sacramental theology and turbulent episcopate.[916] The focus of this section is Cyprian's use of Father as a metaphor for God. This portion of the study will concentrate on texts that appertain to his paterology.[917]

Cyprian argues that there is no salvation outside the church: "He can no longer have God for his Father, who has not the church for his mother" (*Habere iam non potest Deum Patrem*, *qui ecclesiam non habet matrem*).[918] He reasons that the Christian assembly eternally liberates those who participate actively in the liturgy and sacraments.[919] Cyprian argues that unless one recognizes the church as mother through the sacraments (= the external signs of God's inward grace), corporate worship and dutiful submission to the bishop, one cannot have God as Father.[920] It seems that both "mother" and "Father" are metaphors or tropological figures in this context.[921] The church is not an ontological mother, but fulfills a maternal role.[922] Hence, it seems reasonable to believe that for Cyprian, "Father" does not refer to God's essence; the term is a metaphor with an as-if character. Other portions of Cyprian's *oeuvre* indicate that paternal speech for God (in a Christian context) is a linguistic pronouncement, not a metaphysical truth-claim. One instance of an unfamiliar identity synthesis or metaphor is the Cyprianic speech-act, "God, in proportion as

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[914] *On Works and Alms* (*De opera et eleemosynis*) 25.

[915] *De viris illustribus* 67; *De vita Cypriani* 2. See Cruttwell, *Literary History*, 2:595; Wace and Piercy, *Early Christian Biography*, 218-219; Josef A. Jungmann, *Christian Prayer Through the Centuries* (New York: Paulist Press, 1978), 10; Ellspermann, *Attitude of the Early Christian Latin Writers*, 45.

[916] Campenhausen, *Church Fathers*, 2:57.

[917] Seeberg, *History of Doctrines*, 1:170.

[918] *On the Unity of the Church* (*De Unica*) 6; *Epistula* 73.7; 74:6.

[919] The Greek leitourgi,a generally has religious connotations in Christian literature. It bears the potential lexical sense "public service" (Hebrews 8:6). See *BDAG* 591. The English term "liturgy" fittingly refers to corporate worship.

[920] Campenhausen, *Fathers of the Church*, 2:48. Joseph Conrad Plumpe argues that the concept of mh,thr evkklhsi,a (*mater ecclesia*) for the visible *Corpus Christi* began to emerge by the middle of the second century CE. See *Mater Ecclesia: An Inquiry into the Concept of the Church as Mother in Early Christianity* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1943), 20-21. *Visions* 2.4.1; 3.8.2-5 demonstrates how early writers formulated concepts of the church as "mother."

[921] Galatians 4:21-26 employs "mother" as a trope.

[922] See the entry for mh,thr in *BDAG*; Plumpe, *Mater Ecclesia*, 45-47; J. H. Moulton and G. Milligan, *Vocabulary of the Greek Testament* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1997), 411.

with the affection of a Father is always indulgent and good, in the same proportion is to be dreaded with the majesty of a judge."[923]

Cyprian states that God is a father or judge.[924] He appears to use these divine terms figuratively. Furthermore, Cyprian affirms that believers can recognize divine fatherhood through God's manifestation of qualities like indulgence or goodness. However, the North African bishop does not believe that God is blithely permissive; one must honor or fear the Father "in the same proportion" as one honors or fears the authority of a human judge or father (Malachi 1:6).[925] Cyprian thus preserves the requisite tension existing between the transcendent goodness and severity (*bonitas et severitas*) of God (Romans 11:22). Moreover, he implies that God is an emblematic Father to his people—not a literal masculine progenitor. Cyprian further stresses the metaphorical character of God's fatherliness when explaining the *Pater Noster*. Emulating his literary and conceptual exemplar, Tertullian,[926] Cyprian is motivated to compose a treatise on the famed prayer recorded in the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew 6:9-13). His reflections on the dominical invocation provide vital insight regarding God the Father. They imply that "Father" is treated as a metaphor. Hence, this study will analyze his exposition of the notable prayer to God in the remaining paragraphs of this section. It will consequently attempt to determine whether he employs "Father" metaphorically or literally.[927]

1. Cyprian on the *Pater Noster*

Cyprian deems the *Pater Noster* a compendium of spiritual virtue and heavenly teaching.[928] It avers that God is Father for the regenerated, those who have experienced a spiritual birth from

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[923] *On the Lapsed* (*De Lapsis*) 35.

[924] Compare *Adversus Hermogenem* 3.4 (Waszink Latin text).

[925] *De lapsis* 35.

[926] *De viri illustribus* 53.

[927] See James Moffatt, "Cyprian on the Lord's Prayer," *The Expositor* 18 (1919): 176-189. It is linguistically possible that Cyprian could employ "Father" both literally and figuratively of God. However, that possibility seems unlikely in view of how Christians have traditionally applied the term to deity.

[928] *De oratione Dominica* 9. See Tertullian's comments on the *Pater Noster* in *De oratione* 1.36-37: "so that really in the prayer there is contained an epitome of the whole Gospel" (*Ut re vera in oratione breviarium totius evangelii comprehendatur*). Latin: Evans; ET: Souter. See *Tertullian's Treatises*: *Concerning Prayer and Baptism*, trans. Alexander Souter, (London: SPCK, 1919).

above (*De oratione Dominica* 9). Such individuals have received the Son (i.e. placed their faith in him) and, consequently, the Son has granted believers the right (*potestas*) to address God as "Father."[929] Christians (to a degree) accordingly renounce their mundane fathers while steadfastly recognizing one Father in heaven. Cyprian thus makes a stark contrast between earthly fathers and the authentic parent addressed in the *Pater Noster*.[930] These sentiments underscore the exhortation in Matthew 23:9. Rather than applying the Matthean passage to religious authorities, however, Cyprian directs attention to biological fathers.[931] That is to say, he exhorts Christians to disavow (in a sense) their biological fathers in order to reverence God the Father.[932] Cyprian evidently believes that the Messiah's kenotic assumption of flesh and his ignominious death profoundly altered God's covenant relationship with Israel. While Christians ostensibly have a divine right to invoke God as Father, he argues that Israel (as a nation) has lost its right to approach the Father.[933] Cyprian maintains that one can identify a son by the obedient path that he chooses to take; Israel (he insists) has spurned the preeminent Son of God, thence renouncing its omnipotent Father.[934] God consequently has become the Father of Christians, while no longer being Father to Jacob's progeny: "In repudiation of these, we Christians, when we pray, say Our Father; because He has begun to be ours, and has ceased to be the Father of the Jews, who have forsaken Him."[935]

Although Cyprian's interpretation of the *Pater Noster* discloses in what sense he affirms that God is Father to Christians, his seemingly pejorative remarks directed towards Judaism may appear anti-Semitic to modern-day readers of his text. The present author nonetheless submits that a more precise categorization of the discourse found in *On the Lord's Prayer* (*De oratione Dominica*) is "de-Judaizing locutionary performative" (not anti-Semitic rhetoric).[936] Cyprian's speech-acts reveal a tendency to distance Christianity from Judaism and establish the former as a

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[929] Ibid. See John 1:11-12.

[930] *De oratione Dominica* 9.

[931] Contrast Cyprian's observation with that of J. P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida in *Lexical Semantics of the Greek New Testament*, Resources for Biblical Study, number 25 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992), 45-47.

[932] *De oratione Dominica* 9.

[933] Ibid. 10.

[934] Ibid.

[935] Ibid.

[936] See Pelikan, *Christian Tradition*, 1:55.

well-defined religion or figurative nation over against Israel.[937] While the locutions of Cyprian may seem distasteful in our era, they actually do not seem to provide any support for an anti-Semitic position since his remarks are motivated by ecclesiastical rather than ethnic concerns: the Cyprianic remarks directed against the Jewish nation are rooted in pastoral matters.

Finally, Cyprian reminds those under his episcopal care that being deemed a child of God entails certain responsibilities: "We ought then, beloved brethren, to remember and to know, that when we call God Father, we ought to act as God's children; so that in the measure in which we find pleasure in considering God as a Father, He might also be able to find pleasure in us."[938] Developing a Pauline metaphor found in the Corinthian Epistles (1 Corinthians 3:16-17; 2 Corinthians 6:16-18), he exhorts believers to comport themselves in a manner that befits regenerate offspring of God.[939] The writings of Cyprian thus seem to indicate that he views God as a tropic Father. Preeminently, God is he Father of Jesus Christ; secondarily, he is Father of those who receive the Son in faith.[940] Cyprian is also convinced that invoking God as "Father" obligates a believer to comply with the divine will. He contends that adoption into the divine family should orient one's conduct and speech in a hallowed direction, in order to accord with the Father's reception of justified children into his family. These notions regarding God the Father accordingly presage concepts that one encounters in the *Divinae institutiones* of Lactantius.

Findings

An exploration of the Latin pre-Nicenes indicates that most of these writers conceived God as Father metaphorically. Tertullian seems to have believed that there was a time when God was not Father as such but only after he spoke the Son into existence, thereby making his Word, the Son of God (*Aduersus Praxean* 11:1; *Aduersus Hermogonem* 3.4). The term "Father" in Tertullian is at the very least an accidental rather than an essential divine signifier. He evidently thinks that it is possible for God to exist without being Father or Son. This view may also be found in the

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[937] *Epistle to Diognetus* 3-4.
[938] *De oratione Dominica* 11.
[939] Ibid.

writings of Novatian, although it is hard to determine whether Novatian affirms the eternal generation of the Son or not. It is also hard to ascertain whether Novatian believes that God is a literal, eternal or metaphorical Father in relation to the Son. The problematic nature of Novatian theology may arise from the imprecision of his language as opposed to the content of his ideas. With the exception of Novatian, however, the pre-Nicenes generally seem to think of God as Father in a metaphorical sense.

Not only does Tertullian appear to employ "Father" as an accidental or metaphorical term for God, but Cyprian uses both metaphors and similes that point to the figurative nature of God's paternity. God is "like" a Judge or Father for the bishop. Yet, even granting the as-if character of metaphor in the case of Cyprian, he nonetheless affirms that God is "Father" in the most authentic sense. But God's authentic paternal nature must function at the level of metaphor, not in terms of literally exemplifying the properties attributed to the maximally excellent being. Both Justin Martyr (*Apology* 2.6.1) and Minucius Felix (*Octavius* 18.1-10) are examples of the pre-Nicene tendency to construe "Father" as a term that is accidental to God's existence or metaphorical. The latter maintains that removing the term from God actually results in worshipers of God more clearly grasping his transcendence or clarity. Finally, Arnobius of Sicca manifests a predilection for not interpreting "Father" as a term that implies God is male or masculine. Any associations with gender emanate from the accidents of human language; just because a word is grammatically masculine does not mean that its referent instantiates masculinity *in se*. There are passages in the writings of Lactantius that indicate he too does not conceive God the Father in masculine ontological terms. God is comparable to a Father. The paternal imagery evidently should be construed metaphorically. It seems that the pre-Nicenes were aware that God speaks to humanity in terms that finite minds can grasp. They did not generally infer that "Father" or "King" are metaphysical pronouncements regarding the divine one. These writers appear to have understood that God uses familiar objects from the created order to help us grasp a semblance of his glory (Hilary, *De Trinitate* 1.18-19).

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[940] Quotquot autem receperunt eum dedit eis potestatem filios Dei fieri his qui credunt in nomine eius (John 1:12-13).

Excursus B: Hippolytus of Rome (died ca. 236)

Although Hippolytus did not compose any theological documents in Latin, Tertullian extensively shaped his thought concerning God the Father and Logos Christology. Briefly reviewing his theory of how the Son of God ontologically developed in stages will thus facilitate comprehension of Lactantian paterology and Christology. The Logos is an emergent, dynamic entity in Hippolytus' system. He accordingly posits three progressive stages for the Logos—which is God's Word that ultimately becomes the perfect Son of God.[941] Initially, Hippolytus proposes, God exclusively or eternally subsists as one person in solitariness.[942] Nevertheless, God was not alone in the strictest sense because within his eternal being resides the immanent word, which is analogous to human ratiocination: "In the first phase, then, the Logos (`endia,qetoj`) was eternally in the Father, but impersonally as divine intelligence and wisdom."[943] Hence, wisdom, power and counsel reside in God by means of the Logos.[944]

In the second stage discussed by Hippolytus, when God creates the world, he generates the Logos from his own substance and becomes a Father by making the Logos his Son.[945] Hippolytus (like Tertullian) creates a nexus between his doctrine of Christ and cosmology.[946] The Logos becomes Son prior to or for the sake of creation. Nevertheless, although God becomes a Father to the Son in the latter's second phase of ontological development, Hippolytus still maintains that the Son's gradual development is not complete until he assumes human flesh (*Contra Noetum* 15).

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[941] See Bethune-Baker, *An Introduction to the Early History of Christian Doctrine,* 108-109.

[942] *Refutatio* 10.29; *Contra Noetum* 10.

[943] Fortman, *Triune God*, 118.

[944] *Contra Noetum* 10.

[945] Ibid. *Refutatio* 10.33; *Contra Noetum* 14. Cf. Seeberg, *History of Doctrines*, 1:127-128; Studer, *Trinity and Incarnation*, 71.

[946] J. A. McGuckin, *Handbook*, 164.

In the third phase, the Word comes to be enfleshed; at that point, he emerges as the perfect Son of God.[947] Hippolytus' concepts additionally entail that the first generation of Christ is a logical consequence of God's free decision to produce the Son in salvation history.[948] Yet, Fortman and Lonergan hold that the temporal or volitional generation of the Son does not impugn his deity since a requirement for being God supposedly is complete exemplification of the divine substance, not eternal existence *per se*.[949] Conversely, Henry Barclay Swete provides an extensive quote from *Contra Noetum* 8, and then he writes:

> Neither of the terms "economy" and "person," which Hippolytus uses perhaps for the first time, suggests the existence of eternal relations in the life of God, and the Divine Unity [sic] appears to be secured by a subordinationism which it is difficult to reconcile with the essential equality of the persons.[950]

Whether the language of Hippolytus is tinged with subordinationism or not, his inchoate theology and paterology contribute meaningfully to an ameliorated understanding of God's emblematic paternity.[951] Furthermore, one encounters the dynamic view of divine fatherhood posited by Hippolytus in *Divinae institutiones*.

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[947] Lampe in *A History of Christian Doctrine*, 58.

[948] Studer, *Trinity and Incarnation*, 71.

[949] See Fortman, *Triune God*, 114; *Contra Noetum* 10, 16.

[950] *The Holy Spirit in the Ancient Church*: *A Study of Christian Teaching in the Age of the Fathers* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1966), 103.

[951] Hippolytus apparently believes that God is one immanently but three in terms of his economic expression (οἰκονομία). God makes a threefold manifestation in his historical act of redemption. See *Refutatio* 8.2.

Chapter 5

The Anonymous God and Father of All

The main purpose of this chapter is to document conceptual antecedents of Lactantian thought pertaining to God's innominable fatherhood. Discernable traces of apophatic theology are contained in *Divinae institutiones*. An examination of Christian and pagan writings that predate Lactantius' apologetic treatise indicates that the apophaticism manifested in his work is influenced mutually by pre-Nicene and Greco-Roman writings. On the basis of sources that Lactantius utilizes in his treatise, this chapter will make Philo and Christian predecessors of Lactantius the focal point of inquiry. It will explore the respective propensities of the former and latter to attribute innominability to God before examining the concept of innominability in *Divinae institutiones*.

Another aim of this chapter is to spell out the theological, logical and practical implications of God's paternity. To that end, this chapter will discuss how God's fatherhood affects the Christian understanding of why God permits evil, how it might shape the Christian justification of God's ways to rational creatures and finally, the chapter will review what Lactantius has to say about the practical implications of God's fatherhood. First, this study will lay the groundwork for tracing the concept of divine innominability in Lactantius.

The pre-Nicenes are in general agreement that no designation except God (*Deus*) is suitable for the (presumed) first person of the Trinity (Novatian, *De Trinitate* 4; *Apology* 2.6.1 [Justin Martyr]; *Octavius* 18.1-10).[952] Therefore, ancient ecclesiastical writers living prior to Nicea generally do not use "Father" as a proper name for God. Rather, they profess that the

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[952] Cooper supplies four distinctions for the term "name": (1) proper name (e.g. Bill, Yahweh, and John); (2) proper noun (e.g. Lord, God, President, King); (3) common name (e.g. dog, cat, and tree); (4) any linguistic reference (e.g. X is Y). The pre-Nicenes, when arguing that God has no name, seem to mean that God has no proper name. See *Our Father*, 118.

supreme divinity is the anonymous God and Father of all.[953] The only proper name (*nomen proprium*) that the Most High possesses is *Deus*: "Because God is unique, his proper name is God" (*Divinae institutiones* 1.6.5).[954] The *Corpus Hermeticum* (5.34) supplies an analogous portrait of the divine: "And for this cause He has all Names, because He is the One Father; and therefore He has no Name, because He is the Father of all."[955]

One encounters a less paradoxical testimony regarding the anonymous God and Father in Justin Martyr: "To the Father of all, no name is given; for anyone who has been given a name has received the name from someone older than himself. Father and God and Creator and Lord and Master are not names but appellations derived from his benefices and works" (*Apology* 2.6.1).[956] He forthrightly states that rational creatures do not possess a true appellation for the supreme and ineffable divinity. Signifiers that appear to be names for God are nothing more than conceptual vehicles that outline God's manifold functions toward creation.[957] Furthermore, the terms that Justin enumerates (e.g. "Father" or "Creator") ostensibly are ways to invoke God based on his interpersonal revelatory activity (Romans 1:19-20).

Nevertheless, in order to apprehend Justin's doctrine of innominability, it is imperative to make a conceptual distinction between names (o;nomata) and forms of address (prosrh,seij). Expressions such as "Father" (path,r) or "Lord" (ku,rio,j) are not o;nomata but prosrh,seij.[958] They do not designate what God is, but simply permit finite rational beings to invoke God with reverential awe. Osborn maintains that God is a person to whom one may speak "but of whom one may not speak"; he is known as "thou" but never as "he," so to speak.[959] For Justin, consequently, not even the lexeme "God" is a name since it does

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[953] See E. Bikerman, "Anonymous Gods," *Journal of the Warburg Institute* 1.3 (1938): 187-196.

[954] Comparable affirmations occur in *DI* 2.16.5-6: "As I explained in the beginning, God needs no name because he is the only god, and though the angels are immortal, they do not allow themselves to be called gods nor do they want to be: their one and only duty is to attend to the wishes of God and to do absolutely nothing without his command" (Bowen and Garnsey, 162) See Braun, *Deus Christianorum*, 35. He quotes Lactantius thus: Deo autem quia semper unus est, proprium nomen est Deus (*DI* 1.6.5).

[955] Bowen and Garnsey (*Divine Institutes*, 70) indicate that the pentateuchal account of the thornbush in Exodus 3:13-15 possibly influenced Lactantian thought concerning God's innominability.

[956] Compare *Dialogus cum Tryphone* 127. See Carabine, *Unknown God*, 227; Warner, *After the Apostles*, 160.

[957] Marsh, *Triune God*, 189. Justin even denies that qeo.j is a divine name.

[958] Eric Francis Osborn, *Justin Martyr*, Beiträge zur historischen Theologie, 47 (Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 1973), 22.

[959] Ibid.

not have a discernable meaning.[960] Osborn maintains that his use of the word `prosrh,seij` is "much more perceptive" than Clement of Alexandria's preferred terminology which suggests that the human mind utilizes divine titles as "forms of support."[961] Yet, both Justin and Clement believe that God is strictly innominable.

Justin categorically affirms his belief in God's utter namelessness when professing that the Father is "a God who is called by no proper name."[962] Affirmations such as these cause Osborn to observe: "The similarity of these statements with those of contemporary Platonism is clear. Albinus speaks in similar terms of the inapplicability of names to the One. God is ineffable and to be grasped by mind alone because he is neither genus, species nor differentia."[963] It thus appears evident that Middle Platonism shaped Justin's doctrine of innominability. He too formulated his doctrine of God in a particular cultural milieu or specific Christian matrix informed by contemporary Platonic thought.[964] God has no proper name (according to Justin): he is anonymous; and it is not hard to perceive a conceptual nexus between Justinian innominability and the Lactantian doctrine of God's namelessness. Both writers forged their individual theistic notions in the same cultural milieu or discourse universe. Their questions concerning God are framed within similar intellectual or problematic contexts. The next section will delineate the intellectual context of Lactantius; the focus particularly will be divine anonymity.

A. Divine Anonymity in Philonic Thought

Philo of Alexandria (50 BCE-20 CE) was a preeminent Second Temple advocate of divine innominability.[965] A number of passages in the Philonic corpus reveal his thought concerning God's namelessness, which he bases partly on the Tanakh and partly on theoretical abstractions.

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[960] Ibid. 22-23. Compare Novatian, *De Trinitate* 4.
[961] Ibid.
[962] *Apology* 1.10.
[963] Osborn, *Justin Martyr*, 22. See Erwin Goodenough, *The Theology of Justin Martyr* (Jena: Frommannische Buchhandlung, 1923); Thomas G. Weinandy, *Does God Suffer?* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2000), 85.
[964] Compare *Didaskalikos* 10.
[965] Harry Austryn Wolfson, *Philo: Foundations of Religious Philosophy in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam*, 2 volumes (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1947), 2:110-112; Jean Daniélou, *Gospel Message and Hellenistic Culture* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1973), 326-327.

In accordance with the Pentateuch, Philo recapitulates the significance of the thorn bush account in Exodus by writing: "First tell them that I am He Who Is, that they may learn the difference between what is and what is not, and also the further lesson that no name at all can properly be used of me, to Whom existence belongs."[966] He appeals to Exodus 3:14 in order to demonstrate that God is both anonymous (`avkatono,mastoj`) and ineffable (`a;rrhtoj`).[967] Furthermore, Philo contends that there is no designation aptly befitting the existent one.[968] He evidently thinks that God is innominable.[969] However, it is here that the Philonic writings become somewhat complex. In what sense is God nameless? Is it possible for theists to utter sacred terms of address (`prosrh,seij`) to or about deity?

Philo answers these queries by making a distinction between the ineffable sacred name and the appellation that God reveals in his creative works: "The third law [contained in Exodus 20:7] is one about the name of the Lord, not about that name which has not yet reached his creatures; for that name is unspeakable, but about the name which is constantly applied to him as displayed in his powers; for it is commanded that we shall not take his name in vain."[970] Based on this passage, Philo apparently believes that one may reverentially speak the name that the

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[966] *Vita Mosis* 1.75-76:

`to. me.n prw/ton le,ge fhsi,n "auvtoi/j o[ti evgw, eivmi o` w;n ×na maqo,ntej diafora.n o;ntoj te kai. mh. o;ntoj prosanadidacqw/sin w`j ouvden o;noma to. para,pan evpv evmou/ kuriologei/tai ≤ mo,nw| pro,sesti to. e≡nai."`

[967] In the Tanakh, a name could be directly associated with the entity bearing the name or with the substance of a name-bearer (Borchert, *John 1-11*, 117). For example, Isaiah 62:2 speaks about Israel acquiring a new name or identity. The apocalyptic NT book of Revelation also contains references to a "new name" (`o;noma kaino.n`). Ben Witherington III argues that the "new name" that the exalted Christ mentions in Revelation 2:17 "implies a new identity and being someone special in the kingdom." See *Revelation*, New Cambridge Bible Commentary (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 104. Robert Thomas adds that the "new name" refers to a new state of being. He also points out that the Bible practically identifies one's name with one's personality (*Revelation 1-7*, 202). Hence, the words of John's Apocalypse fittingly describe the resurrected believer's new condition in Christ. Significantly, the Platonic One transcends "all being, names and knowledge." See Joseph C. McLelland, *God the Anonymous: A Study in Alexandrian Philosophical Theology*, Patristic Monograph Series, number 4 (Cambridge, MA: Philadelphia Patristic Foundation, 1976), 10; *Platonis Respublica* 509b. Nevertheless, compare *Symposium* 211a-b which seems to qualify the statements made in *Platonis Respublica*. For the Lactantian view of Christ's name, see *Divinae institutiones* 4.7.1-5.

[968] *Vita Mosis* 1.75.

[969] Sean M. McDonough, *YHWH at Patmos: Rev. 1:4 in Its Hellenistic and Early Jewish Setting*, WUNT, 107 (Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 1999), 80.

[970] *Quis rerum divinarum heres* 170.

incomprehensible "powers" (`duna,meij`) of God unveil, but he does not consider it possible to vocalize the unutterable designation hidden to creatures: "It was, therefore, quite consistent with reason that no proper name could with propriety be assigned to him who is in truth the living God."[971] The Alexandrian thinker also refers to YHWH as he "who may not be named nor spoken of, and who is in every way incomprehensible."[972] Philo thereby associates God's namelessness (`avkatono,mastoj`) with his incomprehensibility (`avkata,lhptoj`) or ineffability (`a;rrhtoj`).[973]

As an indication that Scripture is the primordial ground for the Philonic doctrine of divine innominability, we are informed that Moses is the sacred historian who "showed that he knew that there was none properly belonging to him; but that whatever appellation any one may give him [YHWH], will be an abuse of terms; for the living God is not of a nature to be described, but only to be."[974] It is factually impossible to describe a God whose nature is pure act: Philo consequently believes that the deity of the Tanakh is the anonymous `o` w;n` (the existing one) of Exodus 3:14-15 whose indefinable nature is "to be" *simpliciter*. He argues that existence and essence coincide in God. However, while Philo thinks that a proper name for God is not requisite or even possible (in the case of creaturely speech for God), he still infers that a divine referencing term has been unveiled to humanity in view of God's subsistent nature.[975] `o` w;n` is that proximate referring-expression.[976] It is "proximate" because the Greek noun phrase purportedly allows one to designate God without circumscribing his essence.[977] Rational creatures thus ostensibly have recourse to descriptive forms of address in order to articulate what divinity has disclosed: "And, if, in their natural weakness, they [rational agents] seek some [divine] title to use, tell them not only that I am God, but also the God of the three men whose names express their virtue," that is, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.[978] Creatures may need to employ divine appellations in view of mortal weakness. God has consequently unveiled a proximate term that allows creatures to speak

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[971] *De mutatione nominum* 11.15.
[972] *De somniis* 1.67.
[973] Wolfson, *Philo*, 2:111.
[974] *De Somniis* 1.230.
[975] See *De mutatione nominum* 12; McDonough, *YHWH at Patmos*, 81.
[976] *De Somniis* 1.231. See McDonough, *YHWH at Patmos*, 80.
[977] *De mutatione nominum* 11.

proximately of deity. Nevertheless, o` w;n does not define God's immanental essence; it merely delineates his autonomous existence (= aseity) in relation to the created order.[979]

The Greek expression (o` w;n) used by Philo and the LXX (strictly speaking) only depicts "an aspect of [God's] potencies"[980] since God reputedly does not possess any distinguishing self-assignation: "God indeed needs no name; yet, though He needed it not, He nevertheless vouchsafed to give to humankind a name of Himself suited to them, that so men might be able to take refuge in prayers and supplications and not be deprived of comforting hopes."[981] Philo effectively makes a distinction of reason (*distinctio rationis*) between names of substance (*nomina substantiae*) and names of mercy (*nomina misericordiae*) when he suggests that there is a proximate referring term for YHWH.[982] It is his contention that there exist names that are descriptive of God's substance and names vouchsafed to creatures founded on YHWH's compassionate mercy. However, Philo submits that God is immanently anonymous. One witnesses an analogous working concept in *Cratylus* 400d-e.

The Philonic doctrine of innominability seems aporetic in view of the emphasis on a *nomen proprium* for God in the Tanakh (Exodus 3:15; Isaiah 42:8; Zechariah 14:9).[983] The Tetragrammaton (YHWH) occurs nearly 7,000 times in the canonical Hebrew-Aramaic Scriptures.[984] Did Philo actually know Hebrew or was he personally acquainted with the

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[978] *Vita Mosis* 1.76.

[979] Aquinas believes that a definition (*definitio*) manifests the quiddity (whatness or essence) of an entity by supplying its genus and difference. Since God (*ex hypothesi*) has neither genus nor differentiae, he reckons that one cannot define God. See *ST* Ia.13.1.

[980] Carabine, *Unknown God*, 208-209.

[981] ovno,mastoj ga.r o` qeo.j ouv dei/tai mh. deo,menoj dH o[mwj evcari,zeto tw/| ge,nei tw/n anqrw,pwn klh/sin oivkei,an ×nH e;contej katafugh.n pro.j I`kesi,aj kai. lita.j mh. avmoirw/sin evlpi,doj crhsth/j (*On Abraham* 51). The name Philo speaks of here is "the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob." See *On Abraham* 54-55.

[982] See David T. Runia, "Philo, Alexandrian and Jew," Idem, in *Exegesis and Philosophy: Studies on Philo of Alexandria* (Variorum, Aldershot, 1990), 1-18.

[983] See Christopher R. Seitz, "The Divine Name in Christian Scripture" in *This Is My Name Forever*, 26; Robert Jenson, *Triune Identity*, 5.

[984] See Cooper, *Our Father*, 99-101. Concerning its religious significance, Maimonides writes: "It is well known that all the names of God occurring in Scripture are derived from His actions, except one, namely, the Tetragrammaton, which consists of the letters *yod*, *he*, *vau* and *he*. This name is applied exclusively to God, and is on that account called *Shem ha-meforash*, 'The *nomen proprium*.' It is the distinct and exclusive designation of the Divine Being; whilst His other names are common nouns, and are derived from actions, to which some of our own

quadrilateral name of God (YHWH) contained in the Tanakh?[985] It is highly probable that he was neither conversant with Hebrew nor the proper name of God (*Shem ha-meforash*).[986] A number of related factors certainly suggest that Philo lacked adequate proficiency in a Semitic language: his educational background, vital social context and philosophico-theological treatises all indicate that he did not have a suitable grasp of Hebrew.

Firstly, it is evident that Philo had a traditional Hellenic education.[987] He possessed a comprehensive knowledge of Homer, Demosthenes, Greek poetry as well as Platonic and Stoic philosophy (*De Congressu Quaerendae Eruditionis Gratia* 3.11; 4.16-18).[988] Although Philo had an "excellent education" in matters Greek, Dillon thinks that he was not proficient with Hebrew as evidenced by his vague allusions to the Tetragrammaton and his mistaken etymologies for Semitic names.[989] Philo "frequently" misconstrues Semitic etymologies, ostensibly being dependent on the Greek Septuagint (LXX) version of Scripture.[990] The extant data would appear to indicate that he scarcely knew any Hebrew and possibly did not even have first-hand acquaintance with the four letters that constitute God's proper name in Hebrew (YHWH or יהוה).[991]

Secondly, Koine Greek was the universal language (*Weltsprache*) of first century Jews in Alexandria.[992] This socio-historical datum is one factor that motivates David Runia to conclude: "That Philo himself had no knowledge of Hebrew is almost certain. It was therefore an event of

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are similar, as we have already explained" (*The Guide for the Perplexed*, 1.61). Compare how the Tanakh utilizes the term *meforash* in Nehemiah 8:8.

[985] See Wolfson, *Philo*, 2:122; *Vita Mosis* 2.23, 114-115; *Decal.* 19.93-94.

[986] But see McDonough, *YHWH at Patmos*, 81.

[987] Dillon, *Middle Platonists*, 140. To obtain a comprehensive view of ancient education, see H. I. Marrou, *A History of Education in Antiquity*. An updated account of education in the ancient period is *The Chreia and Ancient Rhetoric*: *Classroom Exercises*, trans. and ed. Ronald F. Hock and Edward N. O'Neil (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2002).

[988] Dillon, *Middle Platonists*, 140.

[989] Ibid. 141.

[990] Ibid. See Runia, "Philo, Alexandrian and Jew," 13-14; Lester L. Grabbe, *Etymology in Early Jewish Interpretation: The Hebrew Names in Philo*, Brown Judaic Studies, number 115 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988).

[991] See *Vita Mosis* 2:114; 2.132; McDonough, *YHWH at Patmos*, 81. On the other hand, Royse presents compelling evidence that the Tetragrammaton (written in paleo-Hebrew or Aramaic script) originally appeared in the Philonic *opera*. See "Philo, `ku,rio,j`, and the Tetragrammaton" in David T. Runia, et al. *Heirs of the Septuagint*, *Philo*, *Hellenistic Judaism and Early Christianity*: *Festschrift for Earle Hilgert* [=*The Studia Philonica Annual* 3 (1991)] (Atlanta: 1991) 167-183.

enormous importance for the Jewish community in Alexandria that the Hebrew Bible was translated into Greek."[993] Hence, Philo's lack of familiarity with Hebrew may partially explain his innominability doctrine. On the other hand, his theoretical assumptions pertaining to ultimate reality also categorically shaped this belief since Philo affirms that God (YHWH) is the "Creator and Father of all," a nominal phrase that he probably culls from *Timaeus* 28C (a text that alludes to God's incognoscibility).[994] The thorn bush account of Exodus 3:14 further shaped Philo's doctrine of divine namelessness. For the ancient thinker from Alexandria, God is the anonymous universal Father or existent being (*De legatione ad Gaium* 115-116).

Philo believes that God (as Father) profoundly esteems his figurative offspring.[995] The fatherhood of YHWH is therefore associatively connected with the divine governance and creation of the universe. The Abrahamic God "is in truth the father, and creator, and governor of all things in heaven and in the whole world" (*De mutatione nominum* 29-30). Copan and Craig accordingly propose that the deity acknowledged as Father in the Philonic corpus possibly engenders intelligible objects before creating the sensible realm of phenomena.[996] *De opificio mundi* 2.7 certainly lends itself to this interpretation, even if one construes intelligibles as *abstracta* (i.e. propositions, sets or classes).[997] Nonetheless, if the proposal set forth by Copan and Craig faithfully represents Philo's pragmatic locutionary intent, one evidently could say that God engenders or creates intelligible *abstracta* that at least logically precede sensible objects.[998] One detail supporting this interpretation is Philo's belief that YHWH (figuratively) generates the transcendent Logos: "His Father is God, who is likewise Father of all, and his mother is Wisdom, through whom the universe came into existence" (*De fuga et inventione* 109).[999] The identity of the Logos in this context is not easy to determine. But if one identifies the Philonic Logos with intelligible objects or with the noetic realm that God (possibly) engenders, then one could say that

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[992] See A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1934), 49-51.

[993] See David T. Runia, "Philo, Alexandrian and Jew," 1-18.

[994] *On the Creation of the World* (*De opificio mundi*) 2.7.

[995] Ibid. 2.7-12.

[996] *Creation out of Nothing*, 109-110.

[997] See Reale, *History of Ancient Philosophy*, 4:190-192.

[998] The emphasis, in this case, is on logical or explanatory as opposed to temporal priority since *abstracta* by definition are timeless or non-causal entities.

[999] See *Quis rerum divinarum heres* 205; Gregory J. Riley, *River of God*, 57.

God unequivocally is a Father to noetic objects that are capable of being apprehended by the intellect. Moreover, the writings of Philo might serve as evidence that the notion of a paternal being of whom one cannot predicate literal attributes or speak univocally characterized the established cultural milieu of first century Alexandria.[1000] However, early Christian writings may also demonstrate that the notion of God the anonymous is not just restricted to Philo or his philosophical contemporaries (*Pedagogus* 1.8). The Christian predecessors of Lactantius also chose to affirm God's putative namelessness. The next section will review the apparent pre-Nicene professions of God's innominability.

B. God's Name and the Pre-Nicenes

Christian, Jewish and pagan literature probably shaped Lactantian apophaticism. Philo thought that God is nameless, but he was not alone in this respect since post-apostolic Christians espoused analogous beliefs. In fact, this study proposes that the pre-Nicenes articulated a number of reasons for disavowing that God has a proper name or needs one. This investigation will now enumerate some of their stated motivations below which may not exhaust their psychological rationale for adopting the stance that God is nameless:

(1) The pre-Nicenes were acquainted with the Gnostic conscription of the Tetragrammaton (YHWH or Ia,w) in magic ceremonies. Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria and Justin Martyr show awareness of this Gnostic practice in their polemico-apologetic treatises designed to confute heresy.[1001] Cyril Richardson even suggests that Justin refuses to ascribe a name to God for this very reason.[1002] Discussing baptismal procedures in his day, the Martyr avers: "For no one can utter the name of the ineffable God; and if any one dares to say that there is a name, he raves with

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[1000] *De opificio mundi* 16, 20.

[1001] See *Adversus haereses* 1.4.1; *Stromata* 5.6; *Apology* 1.61. For the controversy surrounding YHWH or Iao in sacred texts, see Martin Rösel, "The Reading and Translation of the Divine Name in the Masoretic Tradition and the Greek Pentateuch," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 31.4 (2007): 411-428. John G. Gager (ed.) documents how Iao or the Tetragrammaton was employed in the magical papyri. See *Curse Tablets and Binding Spells from the Ancient World* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 55, 67.

[1002] It appears that "Justin was aware that the Old Testament divine name was used for magical purposes (as Iao and the like), and hence his vigorous condemnation of a practice he considers not only wrong (as all Jews would) but

a hopeless madness."[1003] Adherents of Judaism evidently no longer pronounced the divine name by the third century BCE.[1004] In a manner akin to Philo, they universally believed the Name (*Hashem*) was unspeakable or incomprehensible.[1005] Furthermore, worshipers of YHWH generally thought that vocalizing God's name was a sign of irreverence (*Sanh*. 7.5; 10.1). Tradition appears to state that during the Second Temple period only Jewish priests were permitted to utter the quadrilateral name of God at certain places or ordained times (*Mishnah Sotah* 7:6; *Tamid* 7:2; Ecclesiasticus 50:20) although devout adherents of Judaism certainly employed some form of the divine name in casual greetings elsewhere.[1006] In this regard, Josephus apparently called the Tetragrammaton that "hair-raising name."[1007] On the other hand, the Pre-Nicenes not only chose to avoid pronouncing God's covenantal designation (YHWH) but they customarily affirmed the divine innominability concept, thereby excluding a proper name for God the Father (*Dialogus cum Tryphone* 127). Then contemporary Gnostic practices may have shaped their view of attributing a proper name to God.

(2) Early Christian writers considered it less problematic to say what God is not than to say what he is.[1008] Hence, they reasoned that it is impossible to predicate literal attributes of God the Father such that any predicating term (F) discloses God's quiddity (i.e. whatness) or F-ness.[1009] Apophaticism largely infiltrated Christianity by means of Platonic thought.[1010] Both pre

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impossible." See *Early Christian Fathers*, trans. and ed. Cyril C. Richardson, et al. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1953), 283.

[1003] *Apology* 1.61. *Pace* Charles Gieschen, Justin does not teach that the quadrilateral name of God was pronounced over initiates during the ceremony of baptism. He seems to emphatically deny that God the Father has a personal name. Moreover, he considers anyone hopelessly deranged, who tries to pronounce *Hashem*. See Gieschen's "The Divine Name in Ante-Nicene Christology," *VC* 57 (2003): 115-158.

[1004] The manner in which Jews ceased to vocalize YHWH is attended by mystery. Christopher Seitz notes that it is "unclear" how articulating God's proper name stopped and divine circumlocutions started. See "The Divine Name in Christian Scripture," in *This Is My Name Forever*, 29-30; Jenson (*Triune Identity*, 19) dates the cessation of verbalizing the Tetragrammaton to the third century BCE. Cf. Owen Barfield, *Saving the Appearances*: *A Study in Idolatry* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1965), 112-113. He concurs with Jenson's observation. See *TDNT* 5:268-269.

[1005] Justin relates: "And all the Jews even now teach that the nameless God spoke to Moses" (*Apology* 1.63).

[1006] Thompson, *Promise of the Father*, 176.

[1007] Ibid.

[1008] *Stromata* 5.11-12. See Michael J. Dodds, *The Unchanging God of Love*: *A Study of the Teaching of St. Thomas Aquinas on Divine Immutability in View of Certain Contemporary Criticism of This Doctrine* (Fribourg, Suisse: Éditions universitaires, 1986), 195.

[1009] Novatian (*De Trinitate* 4.10-11) lucidly and representatively expresses this pre-Nicene viewpoint: "When God takes   for Himself a name or manifests it for certain reasons and on certain occasions, we know that it is not so

and post-Nicene thinkers commonly quote *Timaeus* 28C to substantiate the belief that one cannot declare what God is in Godself.[1011] McClelland rigorously traces the historical connections between Platonic thought and Christian apophaticism or the divine innominability doctrine. He notes that the Supreme Being in Middle Platonism "transcends the whole polarity of A and not-A."[1012] It is not just that one is able to conclude that God is B because he is not-A. The Platonists contended that God is beyond naming; he is ineffable (*Didaskalikos* 10). And it was in this cultural environment that Christians formulated their own type of negative theology. It must be conceded, however, that Origen of Alexandria (in opposition to Celsus) maintains that one can comprehend God in the sense that familiarity with divine attributes may conceivably guide one who heeds God's truth toward partial knowledge and understanding of deity. More specifically, Origen explains that it is factually possible for the Word of God (understood as Christ in this context) to facilitate understanding of the divine insofar as human nature permits.[1013] Origen thus circumspectly qualifies in what sense he believes that one can know or comprehend God:

> But if you take the phrase to mean that it is possible to represent by words something of God's attributes, in order to lead the hearer by the hand, as it were, and so enable him to comprehend something of God, so far as attainable by human nature, then there is no absurdity in saying that "He can be described by name."[1014]

Origen affirms that there is a sense in which creatures are able to describe or comprehend God. Such comprehension is not exhaustive but relative or to a degree. Therefore, the often heard maxim "God may be apprehended, but not comprehended"[1015] probably needs to be qualified.[1016] Origen indicates that rational creatures are able to describe or comprehend God—to an extent.

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much the real nature of the name that has been made known to us as a vague symbol appointed for our use, to which men may have recourse and find that they can appeal to God's mercy through it." See *Oratio ad Graecos* 4 (Tatian) and *Cratylus* 400d-e for similar observations on God's proper name.

[1010] See Charles Bigg, *The Christian Platonists of Alexandria* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1886).

[1011] *Dialogue with Heraclides* 3.26; *Stromata* 5.11-12. See Lampe in *A History of Christian Doctrine*, 24-25; Bowen and Garnsey, *Divine Institutes*, 74.

[1012] *God the Anonymous*, 19-20.

[1013] Ibid. 102-103. Widdicombe, *Fatherhood of God*, 57.

[1014] *Contra Celsum* 6.65ff. Origen evidently thinks that the words of Scripture really delineate God (*De Martyrio* 46). Moreover, he does not perspicuously differentiate God's describability from his cognoscibility. See Widdicombe, *Father of God*, 55.

[1015] Oden, *Systematic Theology*, 1:44.

[1016] *ST* I.12.7, *Responsio*.

(3) Certain pre-Nicenes argue that divine names are only human vehicles for addressing God.[1017] Terms of address for God do not say anything significative concerning the Father's quiddity; spatio-temporal bound language is not capable of unfolding the Christian object of worship with respect to his essence. Strictly speaking, the ancient ecclesiastical writers conceive divine names as manifestations of God's benevolence.[1018] Because of his unbounded or infinite compassion, the Father permits humans to use divine "forms of address" (prosrh,seij) rather than "names" (o;nomata).[1019]

(4) Justin reasons that God does not have a proper name since bearing a self-marking designation implies that a name-giver preceded the one so designated.[1020] Yet, there is no individual substance or entity temporally prior to God the Father: he is from eternity to eternity (Revelation 15:3).[1021] Therefore, the Father is nameless. Justin might fail to consider the logical possibility that God's proper name could be coextensive with his nature. That would obviate the need for the Father to have a name-giver. But Justin possibly believes that atemporal existence logically necessitates or entails deific innominability (= divine namelessness). However, the name of God the Father is probably not accidental but essential to God's being (Exodus 3:12-15).[1022]

(5) Another pre-Nicene line of reasoning is that only created entities have names: "He has no name, for everything which has a name is kindred to things created."[1023] Some early church writers openly reason that uncreated entities like the Father do not require designations. God is an individual uncreated (primary) substance; therefore, God (the Father) does not need a self-designation. The categories of genus or species do not apply to deity. Consequently, one does not need to differentiate God from other divine beings. Moreover, the pre-Nicenes generally contend

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[1017] *Octavius* 18-19; *De Trinitate* 4.11 (Novatian).

[1018] David T. Runia, "Philo of Alexandria and the Beginnings of Christian Thought, Alexandrian and Jew," *Studia Philonica Annual* 7 (1995): 144-145.

[1019] *Apology* 2.6 (Justin Martyr).

[1020] "For God cannot be called by any proper name, for names are given to mark out and distinguish their subject-matters, because these are many and diverse; but neither did any one exist before God who could give Him a name, nor did He Himself think it right to name Himself, seeing that He is one and unique, as He Himself also by His own prophets testifies, when He says, 'I God am the first,' and after this, 'And beside me there is no other God' " (*Cohortatio ad Graecos* 21).

[1021] See *Oratio ad Graecos* 4 (Tatian).

[1022] See Etienne Gilson, *Christian Philosophy*: *An Introduction*, trans. Armand Maurer (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1993), 12-13.

[1023] Aristides, *Apology* 1.

that appellations circumscribe the substances they name. To define an entity or substance implies that it has both genus and species (e.g. "Socrates is a man").[1024] But the Father is infinite (= without genus or species); therefore, the Father is anonymous (*Cohortatio ad Graecos* 20-21). The pre-Nicenes also believed that God's essence is unknowable since God is unique (*sui generis*). Ultimately, they argued that it is impossible to circumscribe God by means of terms or concepts since one cannot apply concepts to a being that does not possess genus, species or differentiae. There is only one authentic inestimable Creator and Father of all.[1025] Other objects of reverence are merely purported gods. If there is only one God, then it is unnecessary to name this deity:

> Neither must you ask the name of God. God is His name. Among those there is need of names where a multitude is to be distinguished by the appropriate characteristics of appellations. To God who alone is, belongs the whole name of God; therefore He is one, and He in His entirety is everywhere diffused.[1026]

(6) The Father has not published his proper name.[1027] Tertullian maintains that humans only know God as "Father" because Christ explained his Father (John 1:18) and taught his disciples how to pray (Luke 11:2).[1028] God the Father has not revealed his proper name: it is not even possible for the Father to disclose a name that delineates his essence since human language does not have the ability to define or express that which is perpetually infinite (*semper immensus*).[1029] For this reason, knowledge of the Father's proper name is unattainable: early Latin and Greek Christian thinkers insist that God has not deigned to reveal his consecrated self-appellation. These six factors do not exhaust their reasons for affirming God's anonymity; however, they do seem to epitomize the primary stated motivations undergirding the pre-Nicene adherence to the divine innominability concept.

But what are the logical implications of a conceptual framework that prefers to conceive the Father as God the anonymous? Are there potential theological problems that may result from

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[1024] Wolfson, *Philo*, 2:111.
[1025] *Octavius* 18.
[1026] Cyprian, *Quod idola dii non sint* 9.
[1027] *De oratione* 3.
[1028] Ibid.
[1029] See *De Trinitate* 4.10-11 (Novatian); Hallman, *Descent of God*, 70-71.

refusing to cataphatically predicate anything about the Father's essence or to assign God a name *quoad se*? The next section will address these questions.

C. Critique of the Innominable God Concept

Since rational creatures seem capable of knowing whether God exists by means of general revelation but utterly incapable of fathoming the divine essence (i.e. God's immanent being), Justin and Philo insist that we should utilize expressions which signify divine existence such as "He That Is" or "The Being" (o` w;n).[1030] Nevertheless, on this view, created entities cannot possess quidditative knowledge since knowing or articulating the quiddity of God would define his essence; the act of defining his essence, in turn, would objectively limit or encompass the boundless Creator.[1031] Therefore, Arnobius contends that the only legitimate alternative to defining God is reverential silence: "There is but one thing man can be assured of regarding God's nature, to know and perceive that nothing can be revealed in human language concerning God."[1032] However, is reverential quietude a plausible option for devout theists seeking understanding of the deity, whom they religiously profess? Frank Kirkpatrick ostensively addresses this question when he remarks that hardly any theist withdraws into silence concerning God. Rather, theists usually choose to articulate something definitive about God through corporate worship or theological discourse: "As the language about God as 'act-of-being' makes clear, *some* words continue to be used with respect to God."[1033] Deferential silence thus does not

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[1030] Carabine, *Unknown God*, 209.

[1031] Sanders, *God Who Risks*, 27.

[1032] *Aduersus nationes* 3.19: Unus est hominis intellectus de dei natura certissimus, si scias et sentias nihil de illo posse mortali oratione depromi.

Clement of Alexandria makes a similar observation in *Stromata* 6.18: "For human speech is by nature feeble, and incapable of uttering God. I do not say His name. For to name it is common, not to philosophers only, but also to poets."

[1033] Kirkpatrick, *Together Bound*, 35. One is here reminded of Wittgenstein's concluding proposition in the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*: "Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent" (*Wovon man nicht sprechen kann, darüber muß man schweigen*).

appear to be a viable theolinguistic option.[1034] Nevertheless, what genuine alternative to reverential quietude is there?

Arnobius of Sicca considers God indescribable; consequently, he maintains that the deity's name *ipso facto* is unspeakable and his quiddity unknowable (*Aduersus nationes* 3.19). On the other hand, more than one critical thinker has warned that impredicable deities cursorily become superfluous deities.[1035] In order for a transcendent referent to bear meaning in relation to finite moral agents, that entity apparently must be cognoscible or effable in some vital way or on some conceptual level; otherwise, a transcendent referent ultimately proves to be noumenal or completely estranged from sensible experience and the intersubjective affairs of humanity. Gordon Kaufman has accepted the logical consequences of postulating an inexpressible God.[1036] But most theists probably are not content with the logical corollary of an indescribable God. One can illustrate the natural outcome of positing an ineffable God (who is wholly other in a strict sense) by reviewing Tillichian concepts vis-à-vis the Absolute. This investigation submits that Tillich's systematic theological paradigm demonstrates the apparent non-viability of a strictly wholly other deity for Christianity. The manifest inadequacy of Tillich's theological framework for referencing God constitutes the reason for this study's examination of his approach.

Tillich has offered an innovative analysis pertaining to transcendent reality and the human belief in that which exceeds the finite stream of vicissitudinal relativities.[1037] He initially scrutinizes the etymology of "absolute" with respect to the cognitive realm of being, and then subsequently indicates that it is possible to ascertain the meaning of "absolute" by apprehending the definition for the term *absolvere*.[1038] This infinitive potentially bears the lexical signification, "to loosen."[1039] The potential denotation of the Latin verb (*absolvere*) implies that the absolute is

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[1034] Compare *ST* Ia.13.1. See Brümmer, *Speaking of a Personal God*, 36-37, 53; Kenneth Nordgren, *God as Problem and Possibility*: *A Critical Study of Gordon Kaufman's Thought Toward a Spacious Theology*, Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, 13 (Uppsala, Sweden: Uppsala Universitet, 2003), 86-87.

[1035] Oden, *Systematic Theology*, 1:28.

[1036] See Gordon D. Kaufman, *God the Problem* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1972), 50-55; Nordgren, *God as Problem and Possibility*, 150-151, 171.

[1037] Tillich's corpus includes: *My Search for Absolutes* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1967); *The Courage to Be* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1971); *Der Mut zum Sein* (Furche-Verlag: 1968); *Systematic Theology*, 3 volumes (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967); *Dynamics of Faith* (New York: Harper, 1958).

[1038] *Absolvere* is the present infinitive active form of *absolvo*.

[1039] Tillich, *My Search for Absolutes*, 66.

not fettered by subject-object dichotomies: it absolves, loosens or makes such distinctions wholly superfluous. From this starting point in *My Search for Absolutes*, Tillich reasons that being-itself is absolute in that no relation delimits or conditions it. Moreover, no metaphysical dichotomies are concomitant with undifferentiated reality. His argument thereby implies that it is not factually possible—not possible in view of reality's known structure—for finite existents to invoke the absolute as a subject or conceive it as an object of thought: being as such utterly transcends the bounded stream of conditioned relativities.[1040]

Since being-itself (within the framework of Tillichian thought) evidently surpasses the customary subject-object dichotomy experienced by ontic or particular beings, it does not appear that members of a specific phatic community can designate being-itself "*an* absolute being," as if it were one being among many. Tillich accordingly reasons that the absolute is not one entity alongside other lesser entities: it is being as such.[1041] Hence, to avoid conditioning that which is wholly other or unconditional, he christens the ultimate Ground of Being "the God above God" (*Der Gott über Gott*).[1042] By means of this linguistic formula, Tillich suggests that the unconditional supersedes the deity of traditional theism.[1043] The power of being (*Des Macht des Seins*) thereby remains incognoscible; not even mysticism can infiltrate this postulated "cloud of unknowing" (vocabulary not used by Tillich in this context but aptly descriptive of his theological project).[1044] However, "the power of being" evidently does not have much relevance for the finite realm of transitory sensibilia. Tillich intimates that the only thing that creatures are able to state with any propriety whatsoever concerning the absolute is that the unconditional Ground of Being is not not (i.e. double negation). His language accordingly reflects the pervasive influence of

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[1040] Ibid.

[1041] Ibid. 127.

[1042] Idem, *Courage to Be*, 186-190. Houston A. Craighead is extremely critical of this move by Tillich and argues that it is theologically unfeasible. See "Paul Tillich's Arguments for God's Reality," *Thomist* 39.2 (1975): 309-318.

[1043] Tillich's preferred nomenclature for being-itself or undifferentiated reality is the unconditional. Much ambiguity surrounds this technical term. Is it a reference to the ultimate concern of finite beings? Alternatively, does it refer to God or to being as such? Tillich himself characterizes the unconditional as "paradoxical." Yet, he explicitly states that God symbolizes the unconditional in the same way that faith (as *actus*) is a symbolic act. In the final analysis, it appears that Tillich believes that one must take a metalogical approach to undifferentiated reality: he seems to argue that the unconditional is cognitively impenetrable or beyond human comprehension. See Paul Tillich, *What Is Religion?* trans. James Luther Adams (New York: Harper and Row, 1969), 14-15, 79; Kaufman, *God the Problem*, 65, note 23.

[1044] See idem, *Courage to Be*, 182-187; *What is Religion*, 90-91.

Hegel's triadic dialectical scheme upon his thought. Hegel posits the historical unfolding of the World Spirit (*Weltgeist*) through the process of affirmation, negation and negation of the negation.[1045] Tillichian thought ultimately is an extension of German Idealism exemplified in Hegel, Schelling and Fichte.

Nevertheless, the conceptual influences that shape Tillichian thought cannot be restricted to Hegel, Schelling or Fichte.[1046] One further encounters adumbrations of the German theologian's system in early Hellenistic thought. The Presocratics Anaximander and Xenophanes reason that the absolute should be conceived as inexpressible, impredicable or undifferentiated: Anaximander refers to the unconditional as `to a;peiron` ("the boundless" or "indeterminate") to delineate its limitless, indeterminate or indeterminable nature.[1047] Of course, when employing this vocabulary, he apparently is referring to the rudimentary cosmic substrate; Anaximander is not speaking about the maximally excellent being that ultimately grounds all existence.[1048] Nevertheless, his indistinct portrayal of that which accounts for being as such is quite germane regarding certain formulations of "wholly other" language for the Christian God. For example, Burkert indicates that Anaximander's `to a;peiron` is all-encompassing, providential, immortal and "divine."[1049] The boundless or indeterminate neither comes to be nor passes away; in short, it grounds "beings" (`ta. o;nta`) and "being" (`o` o;n`).[1050]

[1045] See Merold Westphal, "Hegel, Tillich, and the Secular," *JR* 52.3 (1972): 223-239; Kenny, *Brief History*, 277.

[1046] Ibid.

[1047] Sanders, *God who Risks*, 27; Sandywell, *Presocratic Reflexivity*, 138-140; Peters, *Greek Philosophical Terms*, 19-20; John Burnet, *Early Greek Philosophy* (Cleveland and New York: Meridian Books, 1961), 52-53. Tillich's proposed undifferentiated reality shares certain features with Anaximander's notion of the "boundless" or "indeterminate." It also reflects vestiges of Plato's concept of the "unconditional." See Tillich, *What Is Religion*, 14.

[1048] Wheelwright, *The Presocratics*, 54. Guthrie contends that `to a;peiron` in Anaximander is boundless in several possible ways. It is certainly indeterminate with respect to time: the boundless has neither a temporal beginning nor temporal end (*History of Greek Philosophy*, 1:83-84). Anaximander, Guthrie cautiously mentions, also possibly believes that `to a;peiron` is quantitatively indeterminate respecting space (1:84). But he tends to rule out this possibility in light of the fact that Anaximander probably did not grasp the concept of strict quantitative infinity. The most likely sense in which the boundless is indeterminate for Anaximander is with respect to opposites such as hot-cold or wet-dry being initially indistinguishable or indeterminate (1:86-87). Nevertheless, one cannot rule out other possible senses for the construct `to a;peiron`.

[1049] *Greek Religion*, 307. Aristotle states that Anaximander's "indeterminate or "boundless" is divine. See *Physica* 3.4.203b7-15; 5.204b22.

[1050] See Karl Popper, *The World of Parmenides*: *Essays on the Presocratic Enlightenment* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998 [2001]), 36.

The biblical deity, conceived as absolute or wholly other in an unmitigated sense, allegedly is unspeakable and incircumscribable (*De Sacrificiis Abelis et Cain* 59).[1051] Additionally, the "wholly other" approach to God presupposes that human language and speech potentially circumscribes or delimits the divine being. This prevalent assumption concerning God prompts Sanders to inquire: "Does language have the capacity to limit the object, or is it merely our understanding that is limited?"[1052] Is it ontologically possible for human speech to restrict (objectively) God's essence? Does vocabulary that creatures employ to designate seemingly mind-independent entities such as ants or dogs circumscribe those particular beings? Upon closer inspection, what language or speech apparently delimits are human concepts—not extramental designated objects.[1053] Moreover, it seems unlikely that a finite creature could experience genuine kinship with an (absolutely) infinite or unbounded God of whom it is not possible to predicate P or Q *quoad se*.[1054] Such a being likely would bear little to no significance for the determinable world of phenomena inhabited by rational and non-rational creatures. For an impredicable God would probably belong to Kant's proposed noumenal realm of things-in-themselves which is ostensibly the epistemic boundary point for rational creatures.

This investigation submits that there is another factor to consider in this matter regarding a deity of whom one cannot predicate P or Q *quoad se*. Feuerbach brings this issue to the forefront by categorically insisting that an ineffable substance cannot exemplify any predicates whatsoever.[1055] However, logically speaking, that which does not instantiate predicates such as P or Q necessarily cannot subsist: it cannot be an actual concrete entity that obtains. Therefore, a God that does not instantiate predicates necessarily cannot subsist: "To deny all the qualities of a being is equivalent to denying the being himself."[1056] A strictly ineffable God does not seem to

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[1051] See Frank G. Kirkpatrick, *Together Bound*, 68; Walter T. Stace, *Time and Eternity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press), 153-155; Jenson, *Triune Identity*, 163-164.

[1052] *God Who Risks*, 29.

[1053] Ibid.

[1054] See Donald G. Bloesch, *God the Almighty*: *Power, Wisdom, Holiness, Love* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1995), 53. Along with Barth, he denies the "absolute infinity" (limitlessness) of God. Rather, he elects to argue that finitude is grounded in Almighty God. Bloesch contends that God can make himself finite and thereby commune with finite entities.

[1055] Ludwig Feuerbach, *The Essence of Christianity*, trans. George Eliot (New York, Evanston and London: Harper and Row, 1957), 14. Compare Sanders, *God Who Risks*, 29ff.

[1056] Feuerbach, *Essence of Christianity*, 14.

be a viable option for those who are theists.[1057] Renouncing all cataphatic terms of predication for the divine essence seems to be "a subtle, disguised atheism."[1058]

Finally, reason dictates that one must know (to a certain degree) that which one denies: "Rational denial seems clearly to presuppose rational affirmation. Knowledge of what something is not seems to be based upon knowledge of what, to some extent, it is."[1059] If one predicates immutability (not-P), immortality (not-Q) or impassibility (not-R) of God, it seems that one must know or claim to know what God is (to some extent). It is hard to deny P concerning what one does not know. Perhaps it is conceptually possible for one taking the strict apophatic approach to justify this kind of unspeakable deity on the grounds of divine mystery or revelation. But the satisfactory alternative to strict negative theology—this investigation tentatively submits—is the employment of full or partial univocal cataphatic terms for God. Of course, there are apparently viable forms of apophatic or analogical speech that systematic theology uses in order to preclude theolinguistics from becoming "misleading" lest one obfuscates divine appellations such as Judge, King or Father.[1060] In the case of such assignations for God, Christians often appear to be "saying and unsaying to a positive effect."[1061] That is, God is "Father" but he is not a male or God is "King" but a throne does not literally circumscribe him. Nevertheless, genuine apophatic God-talk or analogical speech appears to be based on hitherto univocal cataphatic affirmations respecting the divine nature. Gregory Nazianzen even fittingly contends that rational creatures must employ cataphatic affirmations when speaking of God (*Oration* 28.9). This study maintains that the inability to say that "God is P or X" *quoad se* does not appear to be a suitable alternative to reverential quietude.

[1057] See *De Fide Orthodoxa* 1.1. Oden refers to God as "indescribable" and "ineffable." However, he submits that one must nuance this usage of apophatic terminology (*Systematic Theology*, 1:321). It must be factually possible to employ cataphatic expressions of God himself as well or theology becomes irrelevant.

[1058] Feuerbach, *Essence of Christianity*, 14.

[1059] Morris, *Our Idea of God*, 23. He is critical of those who construe apophatic theology in a strict fashion. See Bonansea, *Man and His Approach to God in John Duns Scotus*, 100. His work outlines Scotus' objection to a strict apophatic approach.

[1060] Ware, *Orthodox Way*, 14.

D. Lactantius and the Anonymous God of All

Now that the innominability doctrines of Philo and the pre-Nicenes have been analyzed, the focus of this section will be divine anonymity and paternity in Lactantius. The present section will discuss aspects of *Divinae institutiones* concerned with the namelessness of God. More specifically, it will demonstrate the conceptual associations that Lactantius explicitly makes between God's putative anonymity and his transcendent paternity.

Lactantius considers divine revelation immeasurably superior to human reason: "Even when he refers to the nature and reason of man, it is always God who must make accessible the way to real cognition."[1062] Therefore, the North African primarily is apophatic in his theological orientation, fervently seeking to persuade his audience that rational creatures cannot immediately apprehend God's quiddity through the senses or the mind.[1063] In Lactantius, one encounters another Christian writer maintaining that it is less complex to predicate what God is not (*quid deus non est*) than to predicate what God essentially is. Humans cannot penetrate the divine oracles unless the Most High deigns to reveal sacred truth to finite intellects (*Divinae institutiones* 2.8; 3.6.3-4; *Epitome* 4).[1064] Advocating supernatural revelation over against unilluminated reason, Lactantius argues that neither sensory experience nor human intellection can bridge the yawning chasm that demarcates infinite being and finite beings.[1065] He professes that spatio-temporal bound agents apprehend the infinite only when God unveils himself to those having pious inclinations.[1066] The disclosure of transcendent reality evidently occurs through God's revelatory initiative. For if the finite could grasp the infinite apart from the infinite condescending to the finite, then divine supremacy or otherness would severely be compromised.[1067] However,

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[1061] Cardinal Newman quoted in Ibid.

[1062] Van Campenhausen, *Fathers of the Church*, 2:70.

[1063] *DI* 1.1.5.

[1064] Ibid. See Albrecht Bender, *Die natürliche Gotteserkenntnis bei Laktanz und seinen apologetischen Vorgängern* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1983), 21.

[1065] *DI* 1.1.5. See *Quod idola dii non sint* 9 (Cyprian).

[1066] Ibid. 1.1.6-7.

[1067] Ibid. 1.1.5.

since "it is impossible for divine thinking to become known to man by his own efforts," both God's preeminence and otherness remain unscathed in the transcendent act of revelation.[1068]

In a relatively succinct manner, Lactantius appears to contend that humans are incapable of attaining the secret counsel of the Most High God by means of natural ability or shrewd ratiocination.[1069] He endeavors to persuade his readers that there would be no objective (metaphysical) difference between God and rational creatures, if unaided reason could fathom the eternal counsels or heavenly decrees of the Supreme Being.[1070] In harmony with his overall eristic project, Lactantius emphasizes the utter impotency of creatures to know God apart from revelation. But the Father has not left rational creatures to their own devices. Rather, the deity has taken active steps to bridge the ontological abyss separating finite beings from the maximally excellent being:

> As it is impossible for divine thinking to become known to man by his own efforts, so God has not allowed man in his search for the light of wisdom to go astray any longer, wandering in inescapable darkness with nothing to show for his toil: eventually he opened man's eyes and made him a gift of the acquisition of truth, first to demonstrate that human wisdom is non-existent, and then to show the errant wanderer the path to immortality.[1071]

God beneficently imparts wisdom or divine truth to humankind; he condescends so that rational creatures might navigate sagaciously the rugged upward path leading to immortal life. Nevertheless, Lactantius still believes that God the Father reveals no proper name to humanity except God (*Deus*), the only name that God requires.[1072] What literary or conceptual sources inform this Lactantian conviction? Why does Lactantius concur with the notion of divine namelessness that one finds in Philo and early Latin Christian writings?

The pre-Nicenes almost universally espoused belief in divine innominability based on certain metaphysical assumptions regarding God and the thornbush account in Exodus.[1073] Lactantius undoubtedly familiarized himself with select pre-Nicene writings and portions of

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[1068] Ibid. 1.1.6. See G. R. S. Mead, *Thrice-Greatest Hermes: Studies in Hellenistic Theosophy and Gnosis, Being a Translation of the Extant Sermons and Fragments of the Trismegistic Literature, with Prolegomena, Commentaries, and Notes*, 3 volumes (London: J.M. Watkins, 1964), 3:10-11.

[1069] *DI* 3.10.13.

[1070] Ibid. 1.1.5.

[1071] Ibid. 1.1.6.

[1072] Ibid. 1.6.5.

Scripture that either imply or explicitly teach divine namelessness.[1074] Furthermore, he intimately knew and profoundly respected the *Hermetica*.[1075] The Lactantian reliance on the quasi-inspired work of Hermes probably accounts for the strand of Egyptian notions (including his insistence on divine anonymity) found throughout *Divinae institutiones*. For instance, the apologist notes that Thoth (Hermes) eponymously bequeathed Egyptians the name of their first month, September.[1076] According to prevalent lore, Thoth also constructed the town of Mercury (the Greek Hermopolis) and primordially received honor or reverence there.[1077] Religion associated with Hermes Trismegistus ("thrice greatest Hermes") consequently had its inception in Egypt.[1078] It was in that geographical region that worshipers forged a conceptual link between Hermes and Thoth, the preeminent divinity of the Egyptian pantheon.[1079]

Johnson relates that certain Egyptians viewed Thoth as the god of wisdom and scribes; as a result, devotees of Thoth believed that he invented both languages and alien culture in conjunction with diverse social mores.[1080] Not only did ordinary Egyptians regard Thoth as a divine copyist associated with sages or scribes, however, but some members of the Egyptian priesthood ultimately attributed the role of a cosmic demiurge to Thoth. He thus assumed the role of universal artisan; or to be precise, Thoth functioned as an entity that brought the universe into being through distinctly enunciated articulations.[1081] There is clearly an eastern stress on the alleged power of verbal communication or magic in this account.[1082] More significantly, themes indigenous to eastern narratives markedly appear in the Lactantian corpus.[1083] The Greek rationale for associating Hermes with Thoth thereby becomes manifest. Both gods were

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[1073] See Goodenough, *Theology of Justin Martyr*, 130-131. Origen appears to part ways with other pre-Nicenes, in this respect (*Contra Celsum* 6.65).

[1074] See Bowen and Garnsey, *Divine Institutes*, 14-17; Pierre Monat, *Lactance et la Bible*: *Une propédeutique latine à la lecture de la Bible dans l'Occident constantinien*, 2 volumes (Paris: Etudes augustiniennes, 1982), 1:20.

[1075] Bowen and Garnsey, *Divine Institutes*, 16-17. *DI* 6.25.10-11; 7.18.3-4.

[1076] *DI* 1.6.3. See T. Nicklin, "The Origin of the Egyptian Year," *CR* 14.3 (1900): 146-148 for an example of how the Egyptians utilized "Thoth" as the name for one of their months.

[1077] *DI* 1.6.3.

[1078] Carabine, *Unknown God*, 66; Lebreton, *History of the Dogma of the Trinity*, 1:53.

[1079] Fowden, *Egyptian Hermes*, 22.

[1080] Johnson, *Civilization of Ancient Egypt*, 86.

[1081] Thorleif Boman, *Hebrew Thought Compared with Greek* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960), 59.

[1082] Fowden, *Egyptian Hermes*, 23; Lebreton, *History of the Dogma of the Trinity*, 1:53.

[1083] *DI* 1.6.3-4.

messenger divinities; both gods had a close affinity with the moon or underworld.[1084] Additionally, worshipers of Thoth were convinced that Trismegistus (*termaximus*) originated the popular Hermetic doctrines.[1085] Elysian "Hermes" uses symbolic terms such as Father, Son or Grandson that correspond to God, the cosmos and humanity.[1086] Trismegistus also states that the Creator is "the supreme Father" in that he produced the universe along with all its metaphysical trappings.[1087] Ultimately, it appears that these particular Hermetic concepts influentially shaped Lactantian paterological thought:

> He [Hermes] wrote books, and those in great numbers, relating to the knowledge of divine things, in which he asserts the majesty of the supreme and only God, and makes mention of Him by the same names which we do, "lord and father."[1088]

These words partly are an attempt to establish the authoritative nature of the *Corpus Hermeticum*. However, it must be conceded that Lactantius was not the first writer in antiquity to posit a terrestrial origin for the Olympian messenger Hermes; Cicero suggests that there were at least five persons who claimed to possess the moniker "Hermes."[1089] *De natura Deorum* further illustrates the tendency that some Greeks already exhibited to dissociate conceptually Trismegistus from Hermes (Thoth).[1090] Nevertheless, the narratival accretion concerning a god establishing the Egyptian city of Hermopolis ostensibly commenced with Lactantius: he was its innovator.[1091] Lactantius also demonstrates an awareness of what Hermes Trismegistus proclaims about God as Father. He refers to passages from the Hermetic literature when relating how the Father generates the Son.[1092] Furthermore, it is in the context of quoting Trismegistus that Lactantius speaks of God's Son as a creature or alludes to his first generation (*Divinae institutiones* 4.6.3-4, 9; 4.9.1-4).

Other passages in Lactantius reveal some Hermetic influence on his concept of divine innominability: "And that no one might inquire His name, he said that He was without name, and

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[1084] Johnson, *Civilization of Ancient Egypt*, 140; Florian Ebeling, *The Secret History of Hermes Trismegistus: Hermeticism from Ancient to Modern Times*, trans. David Lorton (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007), 3-4.
[1085] Carabine, *Unknown God*, 66.
[1086] Ibid
[1087] Ibid. 66-67.
[1088] *DI* 1.6.3-4.
[1089] *De natura Deorum* 3.22.
[1090] Fowden, *Egyptian Hermes*, 25.
[1091] Ibid. 24.
[1092] *DI* 4.6.3-4.

that on account of His very unity He does not require the peculiarity of a name. These are Trismegistus' words: 'God is one, and what is one needs no name. He that is is nameless.'"[1093] The *Corpus Hermeticum* declares that since God is unique or *a se esse*, God does not need a self-designating marker.[1094] The work recounts that it is not necessary to distinguish a *sui generis* existent from lesser beings. Similarly, a number of early pagan and Christian writers maintain that the providential Godhead is neither genus nor class nor species, because the Godhead is singular, whereas finite or complex entities are differentiated.[1095] Early Christians thus routinely affirm that God is limitless or unconditioned (in some sense): God qualitatively transcends the finite created order of sensory phenomena.[1096] Moreover, Latin Christian writers maintain that no socially constructed lexis is able to define God, much less attribute a name to the Father in order to circumscribe his quiddity.[1097] Lactantius argues in like manner that the Father possesses no self-distinguishing marker nor is he obliged to possess one.[1098] Hence, he professes belief in God the anonymous.

E. God the Father of All in the *Divine Institutes*

Reminiscent of Philo of Alexandria, Lactantius envisions God as a Father, who is innominable. But God is not literally or properly a Father for him since Lactantius believes that "Father" is a metaphor.[1099] In *Divinae institutiones*, God is portrayed as relating to Christ, the angels, and humans as though he were a Father. Accordingly, there are varied metaphorical aspects presented of God's paternity. The following paragraphs accordingly will stress Lactantian thought regarding the Father. Since Chapter 5 of this inquiry will discuss God's paternity as it relates to the Son, the manner in which God engenders humankind will comprise the focus of this section. The purpose

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[1093] Ibid. 1.6.4.

[1094] Ibid.

[1095] See Grant, *Gods and the One God*, 152-156.

[1096] *Ad Autolycum* 1.3; *Octavius* 18.8-10; *Quod idola dii non sint* 9.

[1097] *De Trinitate* 2 (Novatian).

[1098] *DI* 1.1.6; *Epitome* 4.

[1099] Colin M. Turbayne writes: "The use of metaphor involves the pretense that something is the case when it is not. That pretense is involved is only sometimes disclosed by the author." See *The Myth of Metaphor* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1970), 13.

of this discussion is to elucidate in what sense Lactantius believes God is Father to rational creatures.

There are a number of senses in which Lactantius thinks that God is Father. For instance, he contends that God is a Father to humanity, his principal terrestrial creation. Humans differ from other animate corporeal entities since "When our one and only father was making man as an intelligent being capable of reason, he raised him up from the ground and elevated him to contemplation of his maker" (*Divinae institutiones* 2.1.15).[1100] The Stoics teach that humans especially are "fragments of God"[1101] or qeoi, since God has invested humanity with the capacity to reason, cogitate or engage in discursive thinking.[1102] Lactantius seems to maintain that rational creatures enjoy cosmic preeminence because the divine one has fashioned men and women in an upright position to walk erect.[1103] Humans consequently exemplify the God-given ability to behold the starry heavens above or praise the splendor of God manifested in the starry firmament.[1104] Meditation on the celestial realm above can fill the human heart with awe: "[God] has made man straight and tall so that we may know that we are called to things on high in heaven."[1105] Lactantius suggests that God is Father in a unique sense to rational creatures. Humans have been created upright or "straight and tall" in order to behold and contemplate the awe-inspiring mysteries of God's creation.

Ovid, whom Lactantius describes as a "gifted poet" (*ingeniosus poeta*) attests to humanity's putative rationale for looking into the starry heavens (*Divinae institutiones* 2.1.15). The poet seemingly indicates that rational creatures base their faith partly on what they behold in the heavens.[1106] One could say that the heavens are doxastic in that they can inspire belief in God. Moreover, Scripture refers to heaven as God's abode (1 Kings 8:27, 43) or his majestic throne

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[1100] Compare *DI* 2.17.12, where Lactantius refers to "God the father of the human race" (*parentem generis humani Deum*).

[1101] *Discourses* 1.14; 2.8 (Epictetus).

[1102] See Bowen and Garnsey, *Divine Institutes*, 61 for the Stoic view of God. Compare *De natura Deorum* 1.39.

[1103] See *Cratylus* 399.

[1104] *DI* 2.1.16-19. Lactantius argues that "His heavenly father will know" the man who looks up to heaven and uses reason to praise God. This person acts in harmony with his or her God-given nature (Ibid. 2.18.6). Compare Immanuel Kant's observation: "Two things fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration and awe, the oftener and the more steadily we reflect on them: the starry heavens above and the moral law within" in *Critique of Practical Reason*, trans. Thomas Kingsmill Abbott (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 2004), 170.

[1105] Ibid. 2.17.9.

while it depicts earth as the deity's footstool (Isaiah 66:1). Therefore, Lactantius reasons that rational creatures are stirred to contemplate or put faith in God when they peer into the heavenly expanse since heaven is the Father's (symbolic) abode.[1107] Lactantius thereby illustrates how his life situation or the sacred Judeo-Christian writings of antiquity function as a crucible of ideas: Cicero and the prodigious bard Ovid (accompanied by Scripture) evidently inform Lactantian thought pertaining to God the Father.[1108] It becomes apparent that the apologetic notions of Lactantius did not arise in a vacuum (*in vacuo*); nor did post-Nicene writers in the Latin tradition utterly neglect his work. One can detect vestiges of Lactantian thought in the writings of Augustine.

Augustine offers this invocation to God: "For you have created us for yourself and our heart is restless until it might find repose in thee" (*Confessiones* 1.1).[1109] He clearly professes that rational beings cannot experience veritable peace unless they find rest in God. Furthermore, Augustine implies that the utmost end of humanity is to worship God and glorify him forever.[1110] Lactantius correspondingly insists that God formed the first man, Adam, so that he might give himself wholly to God the Father. He relates that Adam's teleological end was to offer exclusive devotion to his Father, who shaped him from the dust:

> After these things, God, having made man in the manner in which I have pointed out, placed him in paradise, that is, in a most fruitful and pleasant garden, which He planted in the regions of the East with every kind of wood and tree, that he might be nourished by their various fruits; and being free from all labors, might devote himself entirely to the service of God his Father.[1111]

> Therefore, God discharged the office of a true father. He Himself formed the body; He Himself infused the soul with which we breathe. Whatever we are, it is altogether His work.[1112]

[1106] Ibid. 2.1.15-17. See Ellspermann, *The Attitude of the Early Christian Latin Writers*, 77.

[1107] *DI* 2.1.17.

[1108] *Metamorphoses* 1.84-86. See Michel Perrin, *L'homme antique et chrétien: l'anthropologie de Lactance, 250-325* (Théologie historique, 59. Paris: Beauchesne, 1981), 73ff.

[1109] Quia fecisti nos ad te et inquietum est cor nostrum, donec requiescat in te. See *St. Augustine's Confessions*, LCL, trans. William Watts and W. H. D. Rouse, 2 volumes (London: W. Heinemann, 1912), 2-3.

[1110] For similar ascriptions, see Apocalypse 4:11 and the Westminster Larger Catechism.

[1111] *DI* 2.12.15-16; 2.17.9.

[1112] Ibid. 2.11.19-20.

Lactantius consequently believes that the utmost good (*summum bonum*) of created rational beings is to serve God: humanity's fashioner discharged the office of an authentic father by shaping the human body and permeating the soul with dynamic vitality.[1113] The term "Father" therefore appears to be a functional, not an ontological term for Lactantius insofar as God relates to humans. God is a tropic Father to humankind. Masculinity consequently does not seem to be a pressing concern for the Latin apologist when he applies the well-known epithet to God. Lactantius fittingly states that the Supreme Being is humanity's Father in that God creates rational existents body and soul: "And so of man alone the right reason, the upright position, and countenance, in close likeness to that of God the Father, bespeak his origin and his Maker."[1114] Even the human body testifies to the workmanship of God since it bears a glorious likeness to its Maker in some undefined manner (*De ira Dei* 8).[1115] This claim implies that Christians ought to eschew the denigration of human flesh: the body is a living testimony to God's peerless omniscience and wisdom. Yet, if the Father so deeply loves the creatures that he has invested with reason—namely, the finite entities made in his image (Genesis 1:26-28; Wisdom 2:23)—then why does God allow evil to obtain? Why does the God who has discharged the office of a true Father permit sentient or rational beings to undergo suffering or evil? The next section explores this issue and its relationship to divine paternity.

F. God the Father's Permission of Evil in the *Divine Institutes*

One of the most critical questions to preoccupy the human intellect is "whence evil?" What is the origin of evil? Why does God allow it to persist?[1116] In addressing these queries, let

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[1113] Ibid.

[1114] *De Ira Dei* 8; DI 3.10.10-12; 6.9.1.

[1115] McDonald, *Minor Works*, 25.

[1116] A sampling of secondary literature that reviews the philosophical preoccupation with the logical problem of evil and attempted solutions to the so-called "problem" includes Peter Karavites, *Evil, Freedom, and the Road to Perfection in Clement of Alexandria*, Supplements to *Vigiliae Christianae*, volume 43 (Leiden, Boston and Köln: Brill, 1998), 1-2; Richard Swinburne, *Providence and the Problem of Evil* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 4-5, Peter van Inwagen, *Problem of Evil*, 1-17; William Edward Gregory Floyd, *Clement of Alexandria's Treatment of the Problem of Evil*, Oxford Theological Monographs (London: Oxford University Press, 1971); Kaufman, *God the Problem*, 177-200; Gijsbert van den Brink, *Almighty God: A Study of the Doctrine of Divine Omnipotence* (Kampen-The Netherlands: Kok Pharos Publishing House, 1993), 268-269.

us define evil as that which brings it about that physical-mental harm, distress or pain exists. Richard Swinburne prefers to define evil as a "positive bad state,"[1117] although one finds evil commonly defined as a privation of good (*privatio boni*).[1118] The present author does not object to Swinburne's definition of evil. Yet, his approach to this metaphysical issue does not materially affect the view presented herein which primarily is expositional in nature. Swinburne's definition of evil may nonetheless illuminate an ancient logical problem concerning a widespread bane of human existence. His definition forces us to ask whether one should define evil in terms of a metaphysical presence or in terms of an absence. Regardless of the potential utility of Swinburne's treatment of evil, however, the following paragraphs will examine how Lactantius addresses the logical problem of evil in the context of a discussion regarding divine paternity. First, some vital conceptual distinctions must be made and this study must then emphasize certain Lactantian control beliefs (i.e. cognitive templates for the interpretation of experience) that help to render his treatment of the problem of evil coherent.

It is initially necessary to make a conceptual distinction between natural and moral evil.[1119] The former refers to phenomena such as earthquakes, hurricanes or floods (i.e. evil not wrought immediately by dint of human volition) while the latter entails purposive human behavior or human neglect that brings it about that harm or pain adversely affects sentient or non-sentient entities.[1120] Peter van Inwagen also makes a distinction between global and local arguments from evil, that is, between arguments based on vast quantities of evil in the world over against arguments based on particular cosmic evils.[1121] However one makes distinctions with respect to evil, it must be observed that all evil might not necessarily be immoral since one Hebrew prophet speaks of God creating both "evil" (*ra*) and peace (Isaiah 45:7 ASV).[1122] Similarly, a child whom parents might ground for a week could rightly deem the punishment to be an evil, which is not to say that the "evil" in question is perforce immoral. All evil nonetheless

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[1117] *Is There a God?* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 15.

[1118] Peter van Inwagen, *Problem of Evil*, 60.

[1119] Daniel L. Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding*: *An Introduction to Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 118-121.

[1120] See S. T. Davis, *Logic and the Nature of God* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1983), 98.

[1121] *Problem of Evil*, 8-9.

[1122] See Augustus Neander, *General History of the Christian Religion and Church*, trans. Joseph Torrey, 5 volumes (Boston: Crocker and Brewster, 1869), 3:144.

analytically (i.e. by definition) involves suffering or pain.[1123] But why does God allow suffering or grief to befall his creation? Lactantius essays a retort to the ancient query "whence evil" (*unde malum*)[1124] by appealing to three concepts by virtue of which he interprets the problem of evil, namely, virtue, vice and God's paternity.[1125] Lactantius provides three clear responses to the problem of evil; his rejoinders are discussed in the paragraphs below.

Firstly, God tolerates evil so that evil may battle with good: strife of opposites must exist as a natural matrix for the cultivation of virtue (*Epitome* 24).[1126] Lactantius contends that it would not be possible for endurance (*patientia*) to obtain, if rational agents did not undergo tribulation (*Divinae institutiones* 3.11.9).[1127] Defining virtue as "a sturdy resistance to vice and evil," he believes that it is self-evidently true that vice and evil must subsist jointly in order for virtue to be cultivated.[1128] For instance, he argues that neither virtue nor piety would be admirable unless the Father permitted a supernatural tempter to test the faith of God's people.[1129] Lactantius also professes that virtue would not be cherished for its rarity if God did not allow the impious to outnumber the pious.[1130] Evil must obtain in order that rational creatures may cultivate virtuous qualities such as goodness or piety (*De ira Dei* 13). God chiefly permits evil for this reason (*Divinae institutiones* 3.12.34-36).

Secondly, the Father tolerates atrocities in which he takes no pleasure so that vice patently may be contrasted with virtue. Lactantius makes a case for the notion that humans cannot know what is good or apprehend the nature of intrinsic goodness unless evil or badness subsists.[1131] He states: "God is like a most indulgent parent, however: when the latter days were approaching, he sent a messenger to restore that time long gone and to bring back judgment from exile" that humankind might be delivered from error.[1132] The Father dispatches a messenger of salvation

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[1123] See J. L. Mackie, "Evil and Omnipotence," in *The Problem of Evil*, ed. Marilyn McCord Adams and Robert Merrihew Adams (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 31-33.

[1124] *De ira Dei* 13.

[1125] *DI* 2.17.1.

[1126] Ibid.

[1127] Ibid. 5.7.6

[1128] Ibid. 5.7.8; 3.29.16. See Quasten, *Patrology*, 2:407; Bowen and Garnsey, *Divine Institutes*, 27.

[1129] *DI* 5.7.6; 6.4.1-2.

[1130] Ibid. See Bowen and Garnsey, *Divine Institutes*, 295.

[1131] *DI* 5.7.5.

[1132] Ibid. 5.7.4-6.

(Jesus Christ) to instruct humanity in the ways of divine truth. Nevertheless, God allows evil to persist in order that virtue and vice may be contrasted.[1133] Lactantius thinks that virtue cannot be manifested "without the contrast of vice or is not perfected without the test of adversity."[1134] Just as one purportedly cannot apprehend the concept of light without a contrasting notion of darkness or grasp the concept of superiority without a disjunctive conception of inferiority, so Lactantius believes that it is impossible to identify virtue without the existence of its contrary trait, vice.[1135]

Thirdly, God has purposed that certain rational agents will suffer eternal punishment or shame but that others will experience perpetual honor: there is an appointed time for the living and the dead to receive everlasting judgment from God.[1136] The Father will reveal his unmitigated wrath at the "end of time" when the "dread forewarnings of the prophets of old" come to fruition.[1137] Lactantius accordingly insists that God's permission of evil is neither gratuitous nor in vain. The Father will rectify all wrongs committed in the here and now. In fact, Lactantius notes that God has preserved his righteous indignation for the eschaton; the Father will manifest divine wrath against the impious at that time.[1138] Meanwhile, Christians struggle with evil in order that virtue perceptibly might be distinguished from vice.[1139] However, evil is not just an immanent phenomenon. Christianity teaches that there is also a transcendent dimension to evil (Matthew 6:13; 1 John 5:19).

In this regard, Alvin Plantinga skillfully has demonstrated the formal possibility that demons (i.e. impious angels) are (possible) logical or explanatory causes for both moral and natural evil. The intricacies of his argument supporting the logical possibility that unclean spirits possessing free will cause both forms of evil have been rehearsed elsewhere in adequate detail.[1140] It will now suffice to observe that Lactantius probably would concur with Plantinga respecting the possible malevolent activity of ungodly angels. For Lactantius professes that

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[1133] Augustine reasons: "And in the universe, even that which is called evil, when it is regulated and put in its own place, only enhances our admiration of the good; for we enjoy and value the good more when we compare it with the evil" (*Enchiridion* 11).

[1134] *DI* 5.7.4.

[1135] But see Mackie, "Evil and Omnipotence," 30-31.

[1136] *DI* 2.17.1.

[1137] Ibid. 2.17.2.

[1138] Ibid. 7.17.10-11.

[1139] Ibid. 6.4.19.

[1140] Alvin Plantinga, *God, Freedom, and Evil* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), 58-62.

demons, since they abhor divine truth, apparently rouse the irreligious to persecute Christians with intemperate ferocity (Apocalypse 2:10).[1141] The Devil (as ostensible prince of the unholy angels) is "the author of evil himself."[1142] He has abused the free will given to him by God and motivated those without knowledge of divine truth to persecute those attempting to worship God the Father (*Divinae institutiones* 2.8.4-6). Yet, God allows Christians to be persecuted in order that the unjust will imagine that worship rendered to the Father is futile.[1143] But Lactantius is persuaded that those who esteem consecrated service to God a vain activity unwittingly are neglecting the ultimate depth or reason of human existence. The viewpoint espoused in *Divinae institutiones* is that the supreme reason for human existence is spiritual; bodily goods scarcely matter in comparison to the goods of the soul. Both the soul and its eternal goods are imperceptible to human sense organs.[1144]

A quote that Lactantius dubiously attributes to Euripides fittingly summarizes his evaluation of the physical in relation to the spiritual: "What here are thought ills are in heaven goods."[1145] These sentiments hearken back to the Pauline exhortation: "Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth" (Colossians 3:2 NRSV).[1146] This viewpoint anticipates the Thomistic insistence that no created good is capable of qualifying as the utmost good of humankind.[1147] Nonetheless, Lactantius is not simply an abstract or otherworldly thinker. He believes that Christianity has tangible implications for social creatures living in the present age. Therefore, the apologist reasons that worship of God the Father directly affects quotidian social intercourse. Section F consequently will analyze the connection that Lactantius perceives between God's fatherhood and ameliorated social conditions. Of particular interest are his remarks on piety and equity.

[1141] *DI* 5.21.3-6.

[1142] Ibid. 6.4.24.

[1143] Ibid. 5.21.7.

[1144] Ibid. 5.21.8-11. Lactantius contends that virtue is the soul's chief good.

[1145] See Bowen and Garnsey, *Divine Institutes*, 312. They point out that Lactantius gives the (Euripidean) verse in trimeter (poetic meter of three feet per line): quae hic mala putantur, haec sunt in caelo bona (Brandt CSEL 19:449).

[1146] Ta. a;nw fronei/te mh. Ta. evpi. th/j gh/j.

[1147] See Ralph M. McInerny, *Ethica Thomistica: The Moral Philosophy of Thomas Aquinas* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1997), 30.

G. The Social Implications of Acknowledging God's Paternity

Lactantius is convinced that the voluntary act of acknowledging God's paternity radically affects one's social behavior; specifically, when all members of a particular community or social institution adjudge that God is the universal Father or that all rational creatures are siblings because the Father has vouchsafed (impartially) soul and breath to every rational entity on earth, it then becomes possible for peace and goodness to obtain within a determinate social group.[1148] Irrevocable peace and goodness ultimately is based on communal recognition of God's paternity.[1149] But Lactantius believes that genuine equality only becomes a concrete reality when figurative children of the divine one coexist in unity. Hence, it appears that Lactantius is an egalitarian (in some respects). For he insists that Christians are spiritual equals (i.e. metaphorical brothers and sisters) in the sight of God.[1150] Therefore, even if a believer is confined to a life of servitude, even if a Christian's socio-economic status is marked by abject poverty or destitution, that Christian is still part of a familial community of believers.[1151] Lactantius recounts that only virtue causes one Christian to be more preeminent than another Christian.[1152] Equity is a pragmatic reality within the community of faith since Christians worship God the Father: "Though we are therefore all equal in humility of spirit, free and slave, rich and poor, yet in God's eyes we are distinguishable for virtue: the more just we are, the higher we stand with him."[1153] This view presages the Augustinian statement recorded in *De civitate Dei* 19.15: "By nature, in the condition in which God created man, no man is the slave either of man or of sin" (*Nullus autem natura, in qua prius Deus hominem condidit, servus est hominis aut peccati*).[1154] Nevertheless, while a cursory reading might lead one to conclude that Lactantius is a strict egalitarian, a circumspect perusal of his work reveals that the Lactantian understanding of

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[1148] *DI* 5.8.11; 5.15.2-3.

[1149] Ibid.

[1150] Ibid. Jane F. Ferguson suggests that the Christian notion of spiritual equality "is a protest against the reduction of the human person to the status of a thing." See *The Philosophy of Equality* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1943), 195.

[1151] *DI* 5.15.3.

[1152] Ibid. 5.14.4-5.

[1153] Ibid. 5.15.5.

[1154] For a discussion of varying ideological positions on slavery in antiquity, see Garnsey, *Ideas of Slavery*, 14-15.

equality (*aequalitas*) or fairness (*aequitas*) lends itself to certain nuances that may be at odds with the concept of rigid egalitarianism. One factor that must be considered is how Lactantius views private property and its relation to social equity.

The belief that humans are socially unequal by nature was prevalent in antiquity (*Politics* 1.1254bl-1255al). While the Stoics adopted the conviction that all rational beings are portions of God (Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 7.65), it appears that no ancient secular writer reprimanded then existing legal or social inegalitarianism, as does Lactantius.[1155] He sorts out justice in terms of piety and equity.[1156] Moreover, his construal of fairness (*aequitas*) as equality (*aequabilitas*) indicates that "Lactantius is sailing in uncharted waters."[1157] Advocating a form of equality in which humans arithmetically are on identical social planes seems progressive. However, other passages found in the Lactantian corpus may indicate that he is not consistent regarding his view of social equity.

First, Lactantius censures Plato's theory of a utopian republic since it eschews private property in the name of facilitating economic uniformity among philosopher-rulers or guardians (*Platonis Respublica* 416d).[1158] The political views of Lactantius conversely resemble those of Aristotle, who evidently believes that collective ownership of property is unfeasible or detrimental to a well-ordered polis (*Politics* 2.1261b34). All the same, one might inquire whether it is factually possible for equality to obtain in a society that espouses the legal concept of private property; for while non-collective ownership of property certainly appears to supply an environment in which personal freedom and responsibility can flourish, Garnsey and Humfress maintain that the legal or political notion of private property does not seem conducive to socio-economic equality.[1159] Hence, they conclude that Lactantian egalitarianism is not logically congruent since it advocates parity on one hand while, on the other hand, it evidently does not

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[1155] Garnsey and Humfress, *Evolution of the Late Antique World*, 204.

[1156] *DI* 5.15; *Epitome* 60; Cochrane, *Christianity and Classical Culture*, 213; Allen Verhey, *Remembering Jesus: Christian Community, Scripture, and the Moral Life* (Cambridge, UK and Grand Rapids: 2002), 465; Christopher Ocker, "*Unius Arbitrio Mundum Regi Necesse Est*: Lactantius' Concern for the Preservation of Roman Society," *VC* 40 (1986): 348-364.

[1157] Garnsey and Humfress, *Evolution of the Late Antique World*, 204; Elaine Fantham, "*Aequabilitas* in Cicero's Political Theory, and the Greek Tradition of Proportional Justice," *CQ* 23.2 (1973): 285-290.

[1158] *DI* 3.22.5: Quia non rerum fragilium sed mentium debet esse communitas (Brandt CSEL 19:251).

[1159] *Evolution of the Late Antique World*, 204.

favor eradicating the legal institution (i.e. private property) that apparently impedes social or accidental equality among individual phatic agents. Therein lies the ostensible incongruent reasoning of Lactantius. However, Ferguson suggests that only individual equality (in the liberal sense) entails the obliteration of private property: equality and ownership of private property are not necessarily at odds with one another.[1160] If Ferguson's analysis is preferable to Garnsey and Humfress' critique of Lactantian egalitarianism, then it does not follow logically that private property is at variance with basic principles of equality.[1161] Both private property and equity might be capable of obtaining coextensively.

Second, Lactantius evidently minimizes social equality in *Divinae institutiones* 5.15.2-3, turning instead to a discussion of spiritual equity that involves the human soul, which supposedly issues from the Father to all rational agents.[1162] The rhetorical change in direction indicates that Lactantius believes that socio-economic parity in this life is an elusive reverie. Nevertheless, although he thinks that social egalitarianism is unattainable at present, the apologist deduces that having a pious God-given soul is not unfeasible. In fact, he states that Christians experience equality or equity among themselves prior to the eschaton because of their spiritual relationship to the Father, the divine person who has evidently given rational souls to humankind.[1163]

One societal datum that Lactantius mentions in association with God's fatherhood is poverty. He asks not only what sociological factors contribute to crime,[1164] but he also explores what brings it about that acute poverty obtains in the first place. The Lactantian answer is predictably theological. He contends that indigence primarily subsists because rational agents refuse to acknowledge God as their common spiritual Father.[1165] Yet, Lactantius professes, socio-economic equity only subsists when rational agents honor or reverence God as Father.[1166] He thus painstakingly argues that it is not sufficient to worship God: one must revere or acknowledge deity as the common Father of all men and women: "If the godhead [sic] which governs this

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[1160] Ferguson, *Philosophy of Equality*, 257.

[1161] Ibid.

[1162] Cochrane, *Christianity and Classical Culture*, 211.

[1163] *DI* 5.15.3-5.

[1164] Compare Aristotle's observation that poverty "produces factional conflict and crime" (*Politics* 1265bl). See Carnes Lord, *The Politics* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1984), 65.

[1165] Ibid. 5.14, 15.

[1166] Ibid. 5.14.16-17.

world sustains the human race with an incredible generosity and cherishes it with a virtually paternal kindness, it surely wants thanks and honour in return."[1167] Lactantius consequently strives to persuade his audience that acknowledgment of God's paternity brings about the eradication of all social problems, including poverty, murder and crime.[1168] He reasons that since the Father created all things, it logically follows that the Father wills the eradication of all contingent extremes that pervade the human sphere.[1169] The Father does not will the existence of acute (i.e. severe) poverty or prodigious wealth (Proverbs 30:8-9).[1170] Nor does God will that the bodies of women should be utilized as commodities in the act of prostitution (*Divinae institutiones* 5.8.6-8). To the contrary, it is evidently the Father's good pleasure that fiscal equilibrium should exist in society, whereby there is no extreme stratification of classes or social inequalities resulting from economic deprivations.[1171] Lactantius therefore endeavors to demonstrate the auspicious social consequences that apparently stem from esteeming God as Father. Conversely, he believes that spurning the Father may lead to societal anarchy or chaos. Although there are multitudinous deities that rational agents evoke as "Father," Lactantius avers that there is only one being to whom creatures should append the title "Father": he is the proper Lord and Parent of all.[1172]

Findings

Lactantius derives his view of divine paternity from his Christian predecessors, Scripture, Hellenistic Judaism and the *Corpus Hermeticum*. He believes that the Father is nameless or anonymous; God is his name. For Lactantius, there is no need to distinguish the Father from other beings by assigning him a self-referential designation since God is unique (*Divinae institutiones* 1.6.5). The Supreme Being is peerless or without equal vis-à-vis other entities that he has brought into existence. Therefore, even though "Father" metaphorically describes God's rapport with his creatures, Lactantius does not think that the divine epithet is a proper name for deity since the

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[1167] Ibid. 4.3.3: nam si diuinitas, quae gubernat hunc mundum, incredibili beneficentia genus hominum sustenat et quasi paterna indulgentia fouet, uult profecto gratiam sibi referri et honorem dari.
[1168] Ibid. 5.8.5-9, 11.
[1169] Compare *Platonis Respublica* 421d-422b.
[1170] *DI* 6.12. The maxim "virtue stands in the middle" (*in medio virtus stat*) seems applicable in this case.
[1171] Ibid. 5.14.19-20.

Father does not need a *nomen proprium*. Divine innominability is an almost universal phenomenon among the pre-Nicenes who consistently argue that God the Father is nameless in view of the fact that he is *sui generis*. Lactantius believes that God is the anonymous Father and Maker of all. He appeals to the *Corpus Hermeticum* to argue that God does not need a name since he is unique and unbegotten. In this regard, Lactantius emulates his predecessors in the Christian East and West. Moreover, it is quite possible that the Lactantian reluctance to attribute a self-identifying marker to God also derives from Egyptian sources since Lactantius is accustomed to cull arguments and notions from diverse sources.

Lactantius argues that God is the Father of all creatures, his Son and of those who worship him in acknowledgement of his cosmic paternity. He believes that God has figuratively engendered humanity by bestowing a soul to each rational agent. The Father also made humankind upright in order that they might look to the authentic source of their being. Since God is the Father of rational creatures, they are obligated to use life in worship and praise to God. Lactantius professes that one can only find genuine fulfillment when human life is used in service to the Father and Maker of all (*Divinae institutiones* 2.12.15-16; 2.17). God made rational creatures to contemplate the utmost good or to use reason in consecrated service to deity. These abilities set humans apart from other earthly forms of life.

Despite his emphasis on reason in connection with human existence and the divine will, the paternity of God is not a mere abstract concern for Lactantius. He thinks that it has concrete or practical implications for life in the here-and-now. Acknowledging the fatherhood of God brings about peace among those who submit to divine authority (*Octavius* 18:1-10). Lactantius argues that worshiping the Father of all even results in ameliorated socio-economic conditions (*Divinae institutiones* 5.14-15). Christians do not practice stealing nor do they employ their bodies in the service of prostitution (Justin Martyr, *Apology* 1.27; *Divinae institutiones* 5.8.6-8; 6.20.27). Moreover, they share their possessions with one another as a united spiritual family that is equal in the eyes of God. Regardless of one's socio-economic status, Christians remain equal regarding their standing with God. Only virtue elevates one Christian above another; and honoring God as Father obviates anarchy, disorder and chaos.

[1172] Ibid. 4.3.13-21.

Excursus C: God-talk and Knowing God

There are three primary approaches that theists employ to articulate God's character or apprehend the divine.[1173] Christian worshipers of God commonly believe that one apprehends deity by embarking upon the intellectual paths of gradual ascension (*via eminentiae*), analogy (*via analogiae*) or negation (*via negationis*).[1174] Ancient Greek philosophers referred to the first intellectual path as ἐπαγωγή/| (*epagoge*). This term or its Latin equivalent denotes an "inductive return to the source."[1175] That is, the way of eminence (*via eminentiae*) positively derives divine attributes (*attributa divina*) by inductively elevating characteristics of entities in the finite created order "to the order of the infinite."[1176] Hence, by reflecting on the created order and all beings therein, one is able to reason from finite power to omnipotence (maximal power); from limited knowledge to omniscience (maximal knowledge). This method purportedly yields the datum that it is only God who necessarily instantiates maximal excellence in every possible world since deity is omnipotent, omniscient or omnibenevolent (*vel cetera*).[1177] The way of eminence suggests that God necessarily exemplifies great-making properties. Therefore, Aquinas writes that what humans refer to as "goodness" or "life" actually "pre-exist in the source of all things, although, in a higher way than we can understand or signify."[1178] This is a classic statement of the eminent way.

The second enunciative approach to deity that the ancients recognized is *via analogiae*. Ancient philosophers based this approach on Plato's analogy of the Sun in *Republic* 508a-c.[1179] Just as the Sun provides light in the sensible realm, so the Good elucidates intelligible objects apprehended by the mind. Christian theology subsequently came to affirm the doctrine of

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[1173] Gregory P. Rocca, O.P., *Speaking the Incomprehensible God*: *Thomas Aquinas on the Interplay of Positive and Negative Theology* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2004), 4.

[1174] See McLelland, *God the Anonymous*, 18.

[1175] See F. E. Peters, *Greek Philosophical Terms*, 6; *LSJ* entry for ἐπά,γω. Cf. *Topica* I56a4; I57a21 in Aristotle, *The Organon*, trans. Hugh Tredennick and E. S. Forster (London and Cambridge, UK: William Heinemann and Harvard University Press, 1938-1960); *Rhetorica* 1356b8.

[1176] Muller, *Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological Terms*, 326.

[1177] Peter van Inwagen, *Problem of Evil*, 32-33.

[1178] *ST* 1.13.2: Prout in eo praeexistit vita, licet eminentiori modo quam intelligatur vel significetur.

analogia entis, whereby creaturely effects stand in an analogical relationship to the uncreated first cause. Thomas Aquinas is an articulate representative of this approach. He develops his theory of analogy along Aristotelian lines (*ST* I.13.1). For Aquinas, analogical predication emphasizes the similarities and differences that obtain between God and creatures.[1180] The similarities and differences between God and creatures are rooted in the causal relation between the former and the latter (*ST* I.13.4).

The third path employed to predicate or articulate the sort of God Christians worship is the way of negation (*via negationis*) or way of remotion (*via remotionis*).[1181] Witt (following Albinus) appeals to geometry in order to illustrate how the way of remotion works in practice. He explains that a rational subject gradually reaches the conception of a geometrical point by abstracting the surface from the body, then abstracting the line from the surface and finally abstracting the point from the line.[1182] Predicating something of God evidently is an analogous process.[1183] Based on the way of negation or way of remotion, "we know God in some fashion" by means of knowing what God is not (*quid deus non est*).[1184] God does not exemplify the "imperfections" that attend creaturely existence; the way of remotion (*via remotionis*) therefore prescinds from such creaturely limitations by progressively stripping imperfections away from our conception of the maximally excellent being.[1185] This way systematically disavows the belief that God partakes of finite or temporal limitations (e.g. it asserts that God is immutable, immortal, impassible, atemporal). Moreover, the way of remotion reminds creatures that one cannot know God's essence: "In the case of God, however, we cannot know what he is; but we can know what he is not" (*ST* I.3. proem).

[1179] Cf. *Ennead* 6.10.

[1180] Oden, *Systematic Theology*, 1:43.

[1181] Rocca presses the functional distinction between *via negativa* and *theologia negationis*. The former, though it sometimes overlaps semantically with the latter, more specifically refers to a path or method which one utilizes in *vita beata et vita contemplativa* to attain union with deity. *Theologia negationis*, conversely, refers to a theoretical model that concerns itself with the signification of divine predicables. See *Speaking the Incomprehensible God*, 4

[1182] Witt, *Albinus and the History of Middle Platonism*, 132. See *Didaskalikos* 10.

[1183] *Symposium* 209e-211c; *Ennead* 1.6. Rocca notes that Albinus is dependent on Euclidean geometry's "negative definition of the point" here. One abstracts the Euclidean point by abstracting the three dimensions of space. Similarly, one only adequately delineates God (naturally) or reaches God (through reason) by disassociating sensible predicates from deity (*Speaking the Incomprehensible God*, 10).

[1184] Dodds, *Unchanging God*, 195. Gilson (*Christian Philosophy*, 43) cites Augustine's formula *melius scitur nesciendo* ("God is better known by not knowing") in *De ordine* 2.16.44.

Finally, certain ancient thinkers believed that one could only approach God by means of mystical union (e;ksta±sij).[1186] But this *modus operandi* is not necessarily opposed to the aforementioned intellectual paths to God.[1187] Diotima reportedly taught Socrates that mystical union is "the final object" of dialectical ascent toward the superlative form of absolute beauty.[1188] He relates: "When a man has been thus far tutored in the lore of love, passing from view to view of beautiful things, in the right and regular ascent, suddenly he will have revealed to him, as he draws to the close of his dealings in love, a wondrous vision, beautiful in its nature" which is e;ksta±sij.[1189] Therefore, mystical union is not necessarily at variance with the three intellectual ways to articulate, know or predicate P or not-P of God. It actually complements the other paths.[1190]

Excursus D: Widdicombe on Fatherhood in Origen

Origen contends that an "intrinsic relationship" obtains between signifiers and designated concepts (= signifieds) themselves.[1191] The classic debate regarding language being a conventional or natural phenomenon occurs in Plato's *Cratylus* with respective dialogue partners taking the side of convention (*nomos*) or nature (*phusis*). Being acquainted with at least three theories of language (Aristotelian, Epicurean and Stoic), Origen argues that names disclose intrinsic qualities of creatures and God.[1192] Hence, language is not a mere arbitrary convention. Moreover, based on his view of language being intrinsically associated with those concepts to which it refers, Origen also reasons that God's name is invariable or immutable.[1193] While there is possibly more than one name for God, he insists that any divine name must "have the same

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[1185] Dodds, *Unchanging God*, 195. See *Ennead* 6.3.9; Stace, *Time and Eternity*, 11.
[1186] *De vita Plotini* 23.
[1187] Rocca, *Speaking the Incomprehensible God*, 10.
[1188] *Symposium* 210e-211a.
[1189] Ibid.
[1190] *Ennead* 6.9.9-11.
[1191] Widdicombe, *Fatherhood of God*, 59.
[1192] Ibid.
[1193] Ibid.

meaning."[1194] This view is the logical outcome of the *simplicitas dei* doctrine that Origen affirms. The doctrine of God's simplicity further motivates him to invoke deity as ὁ ὤν (*De oratione* 24).[1195] First, he argues that the participle ὤν is God's "self-designation." God is being itself.[1196] The multiple names of God (all having the same meaning) thereby delineate his essence: God is "he who is."[1197] Additionally, "Father" is one of God's names (*De oratione* 14). Origen professes that this name (like every divine assignation) describes the very essence of God, not his uncreated energies.[1198] Widdicombe argues that addressing God as "Father" implies that he is inherently generative or intrinsically relational. Moreover, the Father (in Origen) appears to be the eternal source of existence insofar as he continuously or atemporally generates the Son.[1199] However, appendix B of this study will question this common reading of Origen. There appears to be some ambiguity that surrounds the expression "eternal generation" in his extant treatises.

[1194] Ibid.

[1195] Compare Exodus 3:14 (LXX).

[1196] Widdicombe, *Fatherhood of God*, 59.

[1197] Ibid. 60.

[1198] See *Homily on Jeremiah* 9.4.

[1199] Widdicombe, *Fatherhood of God*, 3.

Chapter 6

Relative Dispositions of Father and Son in the Divine Institutes

McGiffert apparently overstates his case, when he claims that Lactantius was not "at all concerned" with the essence of the Logos or the Father and Son relationship delineated in Scripture.[1200] Contrary to this claim, the fourth book of *Divinae institutiones* actually serves as a literary fulcrum for the entire Lactantian *magnum opus* in that it endeavors to unfold the sapiential work of Christ and his ontological provenance from the Father.[1201] That is, Lactantius does show concern for the essence of the Logos and he tries to explain how Father and Son generatively relate to one another. This chapter accordingly will scrutinize God's paternity as it pertains to Father-Son relations. More precisely, it will develop how Lactantius conscripts Stoic metaphysics to elucidate the transcendent nature of the Father and the Son.

Like his literary predecessor, Tertullian, Lactantius exploits Stoic conceptual distinctions to develop an understanding of Father-Son relations; he too conceives of Father and Son as an instance of relative dispositions. For Lactantius, Father-Son primarily explains how (not what) the Father and Son are. The purpose of accidental dispositions in Stoic thought "is to classify properties which one thing possesses *in relation to* something else."[1202] Particular examples of relative dispositions are father-son, mother-daughter, master-slave, and sun-sunbeam relations. One can discern the salience of "Father-Son" accidental dispositions in *Divinae institutiones* 4, which the following sections will analyze.

A. The Father and Son in Divine Institutes 4.6-7

Lactantius contends that before God produced the world and other angels, he "created a holy and incorruptible spirit whom he called his son," since this particular spirit personage was

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[1200] McGiffert, *History of Christian Thought*, 2:48.
[1201] Paul McGuckin, "Christology of Lactantius," 814.

firstborn or distinguished by "a name of divine significance" in that God granted his preeminent Son custodial ownership of his matchless authority and supremacy.[1203] Lactantius therefore believes that God applies the designation "Son" to the Logos (*sermo*), but only after the Logos performs some act which qualifies as a divinely ordained trial (*Divinae institutiones* 2.8.5).[1204] Hence, the Son does not inherently possess divine titles; they are not intrinsic to his being. Rather, God (the Father) refers to the Logos as "Son" or allows him to bear the name "God" because of his proven faithfulness to God (the Father).[1205] A subordinationist outlook consequently informs Lactantian theology.

Bowen and Garnsey believe that Lactantian thinking at some points "smacks of Arianism."[1206] They evidently think that certain statements in *Divinae institutiones* verge on subordinating the Son to the Father *quoad essentiam*. Conversely, other historians exhibit sympathy toward the Lactantian writings, presuming that they reflect the cultural situation in which he composed them prior to the first ecumenical council of 325 CE.[1207] This study proposes that there were certain angelic beings recognized in ancient Judaism who seemingly possessed the holy name of God *ex officio* or who stood in an exalted ordained relationship with deity (Exodus 23:20-22; 3 Enoch 12:5; Apocalypse of Abraham 10-11).[1208] Lactantius may perceive a correlation between the status of angels in Judaism and the position of the Logos in Christian circles when he argues that God the Father vouchsafes the divine name to the Son.[1209] In fact, it appears that he considers the Son an angel whom God promotes to the status of divinity: "In fine, of all the angels, whom the same God formed from his own breath, he alone was admitted into a participation of his supreme power, he alone was called God. For all things were through him, and

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[1202] A. A. Long, *Hellenistic Philosophy*, 163. Italics are in the original.

[1203] *DI* 4.6.1-4.

[1204] Ibid. See Schneweis, *Angels and Demons*, 21. Contrast McGuckin's remarks in "Christology of Lactantius," 816.

[1205] *DI* 2.8.2; 4.6.1-4.

[1206] *Divine Institutes*, 232. See Paul McGuckin, "Christology of Lactantius," 815-816.

[1207] Wace and Piercy, *Early Christian Biography*, 640.

[1208] See Darrell L. Bock*, Blasphemy and Exaltation in Judaism*: *The Charge against Jesus in Mark 14:53-65* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000); Saul M. Olyan, *A Thousand Thousands Served Him*: *Exegesis and the Naming of Angels in Ancient Judaism* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr/Paul Siebeck, 1993); Peter R. Carrell, *Jesus and the Angels*: *Angelology and the Christology of the Apocalypse of John*, Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series, 95 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 5; Gieschen, *Angelomorphic Christology*, 197.

[1209] *DI* 4.6.2.

nothing was without him" (*Epitome* 42).[1210] If Lactantius does view the Son as an angel (ontologically), one can venture to say that such concepts regarding the Son possibly find their provenance in Hermes, the ancient prophets of Judaism and other Christian writings. In order to buttress his argument for the unique status of Christ vis-à-vis the angels of God, Lactantius appeals to the prophetic words of Hermes Trismegistus and the *Sibylline Oracles*. The *Corpus Hermeticum* affirms that God the maker of all things produced a second deity, who was the Father's "first and unique creation," one whom he loved as a son.[1211] Lactantius apparently believes that this "created" Son spoken of by Hermes is God, but he implies that Christ does not exemplify all divine-constituting properties that God the Father instantiates.[1212] The Son evidently was brought into existence, whereas the Father was not. The apologist indicates that the Son might not be fully God. When invoking the prophets of antiquity, Lactantius also quotes Proverbs 8:22-31 and applies the sophianic account regarding Wisdom being "made" (*condidit*) "founded" (*fundavit*) or "fathered" (*genuit*) by YHWH to the generation of the Son.[1213] *Divinae institutiones* relates that God employed his Son as an "adviser" (su,mboulon) or "craftsman" (dhmiourgo.n) in the creation of the world.[1214] By using such language, Lactantius may subordinate the Son to the Father. This study will now explore the extent to which he possibly subordinates the former to the latter.

B. Relative Dispositions in Divine Institutes 4.8

Lactantius insists that the Father generates the Son twice: "First we affirm that he was born twice, in the spirit and then in the flesh."[1215] However, the Son's duplex origin does not entail that the Father had carnal intercourse with a feminine consort (whether supernal or earthly) since coitus is an activity indigenous to animals and humans, who both partake of creaturely

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[1210] Denique ex omnibus angelis, quos idem Deus de suis spiritibus figurauit, solus in consortium summae potestatis adscitus est, solus Deus nuncupatus. "Omnia" enim "per ipsum et sine ipso nihil." (*Epitome*, Heck and Wlosok, 51-52).

[1211] *DI* 4.6.4-5.

[1212] Ibid. 4.29. 12, 15; *Oracula Sibyllina* 8.264-266; Bowen and Garnsey, *Divine Institutes*, 232.

[1213] *DI* 4.6.6-8. See Monat, *Lactance et la Bible*, 1:168-169;

[1214] *DI* 4.6.9. See *Contra Noetum* 10.

[1215] *DI* 4.8.1.

mortality.[1216] From a natural standpoint, reproduction perpetuates human or animal species; therefore, God apparently has differentiated humans and animals in terms of gender or sex.[1217] But Lactantius reasons that God was alone before he produced the Son (*Divinae institutiones* 2.8.1-5). Consequently, the maximally excellent being could not have "fathered" his Son by coital means. Nor is God both male and female, as Orpheus reasons.[1218] For if God were dual-gendered, sexually dimorphic or both male and female, then God could have initiated sexual intercourse with Godself or been capable of procreating offspring without the employment of reproductive activity.[1219] Furthermore, if God were androgynous, it stands to reason that the holy prophets would call deity both "Father" and "Mother," which they manifestly refrain from doing, even though the sacred writings press into service paternal and maternal metaphors as well as similes when predicating the divine nature.[1220] Nevertheless, if God does not bring about the Son's existence through fleshly or carnal means, how does Lactantius think that God engenders him?

Lactantius deduces that while the preternatural acts of God "can neither be known nor fully reported by anyone," the holy writings of Christianity reveal that the Son is the Father's Word.[1221] He further contends that Scripture equates the angels of God with the divine breath.[1222] Having established this conceptual distinction between the Logos and consecrated angels (i.e. speech over against breath), he discloses his conception of God's Logos *qua* Son. Firstly, Lactantius characterizes human speech as "an expiration of breath with significant noise."[1223] Lactantius consequently thinks that the Son (in the capacity of Word or Discourse) differs from the angels as nasalized breath differs from articulated speech.[1224] The Son functions as divine speech; the angels as God's breath: "But since breath and speech emerge from different areas, in that breathing comes from the nostrils and speech from the mouth, there is a great difference between this son of God and the other angels."[1225] Lactantius suggests that the angels are sons of

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[1216] Ibid. 4.8.3-4.
[1217] Ibid. Compare Ambrose of Milan's pointed remarks in *De fide* 1.12.77.
[1218] *DI* 4.8.3-5.
[1219] Ibid.
[1220] Ibid. 4.8.5-6.
[1221] Ibid.
[1222] Ibid.
[1223] Ibid.
[1224] Ibid. 4.8.7-8.
[1225] Ibid.

God. The Word of God is also an angel (he appears to contend) with respect to his essence. Yet, the apologist states that there is a significant disparity between God's foremost Son and "the other angels."[1226] But what lack of metaphysical correspondence does he discern between God's preeminent Son and the holy angels of deity?

Lactantius believes that the Son (as speech *qua* speech) issues from the divine mouth while angels are *taciti spiriti* (from God's nose, figuratively speaking) in that they do not convey the Father's revelation to humans.[1227] In one sense, the hypostatic Word is an emblematic Son issuing from the Father's mouth. From another standpoint, he is a tropic notion of God's consciousness. For the Word of God was "conceived not in a womb but in a mind" (the divine consciousness).[1228] The Son *qua* Word actively formulates coherent divine vocalizations: "God uttered him in the first place so that he himself could speak to us through him, and so that his son could unveil for us the word and will of God."[1229] Nevertheless, Lactantius supposes that the angels are immortal as God is immortal since they constitute his metaphorical breath. But he states that God's Son draws potency and "sense" from the Father who is the unoriginated source of the generated Logos.[1230] This observation implies that Lactantius views the divine Word as a figurative Son ontologically subordinate to the Father. Schneweis proposes that Lactantius "leans considerably" in the direction of subordinationism, but nonetheless distinguishes "the Word sharply from the angels."[1231] Lactantius certainly discriminates between the begettal of the Son from God's mouth and the Father's later creation of the "other angels" by means of his nostrils. It thus appears that he posits a similarity of origin for the angels and God's Word: both are potent spirits derived from God.[1232] While issuing from the same fount of existence, however, Lactantius evidently believes that the Son and angels differ in their metaphysical constitution.

[1226] Lactantius may imply that both the Son and angels were created from eternity (Schneweis, *Angels and Demons*, 20-23). Justin uses similar language when referring to the Son and the "other angels" that are like the Son in *Apology* 1.6.1-2. See Grant, *Early Christian Doctrine of God*, 81; Gieschen, *Angelomorphic Christology*, 193-194.

[1227] *DI* 4.8.7.

[1228] Ibid. 4.8.9.

[1229] Ibid. 4.8.8.

[1230] Ibid. 4.8.9-11.

[1231] Schneweis, *Angels and Demons*, 67-68.

[1232] Ibid. See *Epitome* 42.

What is the provenance of these Lactantian christological notions? What literary antecedents possibly explain his version of the Son's first generation? Lactantius reveals his primary sources by quoting Psalm 33:6 and then applying it to the Son: in this context, he refers to Christ as God's breath through whom all things came into being.[1233] Second, like other early Christian apologists, Lactantius applies Psalm 45:1 to the Logos.[1234] Basing his thoughts on this nuptial psalm, he alludes to God's heart disgorging the Son prior to and for the purpose of creation.[1235] Subsequently, Lactantius quotes Ecclesiasticus 24:3-4, a Second Temple text expressly stating that Wisdom emanated "from the mouth of the Most High before all creation." Finally, there is an appeal to the Gospel of John 1:1-3, which further attributes mediatorial agency to the Logos.[1236] The Lactantian theory of divine emanative generation thus seems to find its chief provenance in Scripture or extra-canonical Judaic texts. Nevertheless, Scripture does not fully account for the unique aspects of Lactantius' theory regarding the Son's first generation (*prima nativitas*) since there are certainly residual elements of Tertullian's *Apologeticus* 21.11-14 in his narrative of the Son's *prima nativitas*.[1237] Additionally, the identifying marks of Egyptian Hermes seem discernible in Lactantian thought concerning the Son's generation: "God is in reality the first of all entities, eternal, unbegotten, craftsman of the whole of existence. But by his agency a second god came to be in his image, and by him the second god is sustained, nurtured and immortalized, as from an eternal father, everlasting because he is immortal" (*Corpus Hermeticum* 8.2). Lactantius most certainly extracted rudiments of his christological ideas from Hermetic literature.[1238] The Hermetists believed that God generated his Word with the consequence that this divine generation brought about an indissoluble bond between Father and Son-Logos: "Know that what sees in thee and hears is the Lord's Word (Logos); but Mind is Father-God. Not separate are they the one from other; just in their union [rather] is it Life consists" (*Corpus Hermeticum* 1.6). Neoplatonists thought of nou/j as an emanative divine hypostasis too.[1239] These ancient

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[1233] *DI* 4.8.14.
[1234] *Ad Autolycum* 2; *Adversus Praxean* 5-7.
[1235] *DI* 4.8.14.
[1236] Ibid. 4.8.15-16.
[1237] W. H. C. Frend, "*Lactance*: *Institutions Divines IV*," *JEH* 44.1 (1993): 102-103.
[1238] Digeser, *Making*, 70. See *DI* 4.6.3-4, 9; 4.7.3; 4.8.5; 4.9.1-3; 4.13.1-5; 4.27.19.
[1239] Digeser, *Making*, 70-72.

philosophical thinkers may account for some of the elements found in the Lactantian corpus. Yet, there are still other fundamentals of Lactantian Christology whose provenance requires an explanation.

The generation of the Logos from God's breath starkly bears some resemblance to what ancient Egyptian literature attests concerning Ptah.[1240] Ptah was the preeminent Memphite god, whom numerous citizens likely worshiped during and after the Early Dynastic Period (3000-2686 BCE).[1241] While it is possible that the cosmogonic story about Ptah and similar myths might have been introduced to subsequently legitimate the form of theocratic rule that obtained at the intersection of Upper and Lower Egypt posterior to 700 BCE,[1242] Johnson thinks it is more probable that *The Memphite Theology* (the significant Egyptian text containing the story of Ptah) was composed prior to the inception of theocratic rule in Memphis.[1243] It was theology which produced the political structure that revolved around Ptah, the creator. Other facets of this deity associate him with the Logos. These facets specifically reveal the nexus between the Logos being uttered and Ptah making other divine beings.

Egyptologists usually regard Ptah as a sun god, but this attribution is problematic.[1244] It is more likely that Ptah was the foremost deity of those working with metal and stone.[1245] This factor could explain why ancient Egyptians living in Memphis associated the god with Hephaestus (= Vulcan).[1246] Additionally, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead* professes that Ptah designed, conceived, planned and organized the cosmos in the manner of an artisan.[1247] Ancient Egyptians thought Ptah was a demiurgic accomplice in conjunction with Khnemu, who purportedly created material entities under the auspices of Thoth (creator and moon god).[1248] The

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[1240] See E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians or Studies in Egyptian Mythology*, 2 volumes (New York: Dover, 1969); Digeser, *Making*, 71; Johnson, *The Civilization of Ancient Egypt*, 25.

[1241] Budge, *Gods of the Egyptians*, 1:500.

[1242] Johnson, *The Civilization of Ancient Egypt*, 25.

[1243] Ibid. See Bruce G. Trigger, et al., *Ancient Egypt: A Social History* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 72-73.

[1244] R. E. Witt, *Isis in the Ancient World* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 157.

[1245] Budge, *Gods of the Egyptians*, 1:500-501. Cf. Morenz, *Egyptian Religion*, 23.

[1246] Witt, *Isis in the Ancient World*, 59. Herodotus likewise associates Ptah with Hephaestus (*Histories* 3.37). See Morenz, *Egyptian Religion*, 267.

[1247] See Plate XIX, chapter 15.

[1248] Budge, *Gods of the Egyptians*, 1:501. Michael Fishbane insists: "It will be remembered that at the creation of the world Thoth reduced the unseen and unknown creative *élan* to the words carried into effect by Ptah and

literary evidence thus suggests that the devotees of Ptah possibly viewed him as a divine artisan rather than a sun deity.[1249] In Memphis, Ptah worshipers professed that he fashioned the Egyptian pantheon by means of his heart and tongue.[1250] The pantheon of Egypt is fittingly spoken of as Ptah's teeth and lips.[1251] It is this particular religious belief that evidently approximates to Lactantian faith concerning the Word's first nativity. However, in Lactantius, the Father generates the Son by articulating speech or conceiving thought rather than brining about an entire pantheon of gods.[1252] The Son *qua* God's Word becomes the intermediate agent through whom the cosmos is brought into existence.[1253] Whether Lactantius is influenced by the Egyptian notion of Ptah is not easy to substantiate historically; but the emphasis in both literary accounts on speaking or bringing entities into existence by means of articulated speech is conspicuous. Furthermore, it is evident that Lactantius was exposed to Egyptian concepts through his reading of the *Corpus Hermeticum*. On the other hand, another possible source of Lactantian Christology is Ecclesiasticus 24:5: "I came out of the mouth of the most high, the firstborn before all creatures." Lactantius alludes to this text in *Divinae institutiones* 4.8.15. As this study has already maintained, however, neither Ecclesiasticus nor John's Gospel nor the Tanakh fully explain the Logos theology that one encounters in *Divinae institutiones*. There are unsolved variations in this ancient work that force one to seek elsewhere for the provenance of Logos concepts in Lactantius. Examining passages from the *Corpus Hermeticum* may provide a fuller understanding of how Lactantius frames his doctrine of Christ.

C. The Mission and Person of the Son in Divine Institutes

Earlier in this study, the question concerning the Son's subordination to the Father was broached. In this section, the issue regarding the extent to which the Christ is subordinate to the Father (in

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Khnemu." See "Jeremiah IV 24-26 and Job III 13: A Recovered Use of the Creation Pattern," *VT* 21. 2 (1971): 151-167. Compare the *Egyptian Book of the Dead* LXIV.

[1249] Maj Sandman Holmberg, *The God Ptah* (Lund: C. W. K. Gleerup, 1946), 45.

[1250] See Thorleif Boman, *Hebrew Thought Compared with Greek* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960), 59; Holmberg, *The God Ptah*, 6-11.

[1251] Ibid. 21; Mead, *Thrice-Greatest Hermes*, 89, 91-92.

[1252] *DI* 4.8.8-9.

[1253] Ibid. 4.8.14.

Lactantius' estimation) will now be addressed. Does Lactantius believe that the Son is ontologically or functionally subordinate? It seems that one can discern a Lactantian tendency to perceive an intimate connection between the Son's temporal mission, his divine nature and self-emptying. He reasons thus with respect to the kenosis of Christ:

> When God most high, parent of all, wished to transmit the worship of himself, he sent a teacher of justice from heaven so that the new worshippers received the new law in him, or through him, which was not what he had done before, when he did it through a man; this time he wanted his teacher to be born like a man, so that he would be like his supreme father in all respects. God the father himself, the origin and start of all things and having no parents, is most accurately called 'fatherless' and 'motherless' by Trismegistus because he was born of no one (*Divinae institutiones* 4.13.1-2).

God—who is parent of all—wills that humans worship him in truth. Accordingly, Lactantius relates that God dispatched a sage from heaven to instruct the Father's earthly children in the paths of divine justice or righteousness. This celestial teacher of righteousness assumed the nature of a man: Lactantius affirms that the teacher of justice (*magister iustitiae*) was human in all respects.[1254] He thereby argues that God purposed the human birth of the Son (the heavenly sage) in order that he might be similar to his celestial Parent, who is both "fatherless" (*apator*) and "motherless" (*amētor*).[1255] Lactantius emulates Trismegistus in his use of these expressions (*Divinae institutiones* 1.7.2; 4.13.2): he manifestly claims that there is a sense in which the Son is motherless and fatherless. Hence, the Son (so that he might resemble the Father) is generated "motherless" in his preexistence since God produces him without the cooperation of a feminine consort. Furthermore, Lactantius maintains that Christ becomes the motherless Son in spirit.[1256]

Lactantius believes that Christ is fatherless in that the Virgin Mary bore him without a male parent: "He had a spiritual father in God, and just as God was father of his spirit without a

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[1254] Ibid. 4.13-14.

[1255] Paul McGuckin argues for development in Lactantian thought concerning the Son. He construes the Lactantian language "in all respects" to mean that Christ is identical to the Father in an absolute sense. But it seems preferable to qualify Lactantius' words. He appears to be saying that the Son is completely like his Father in the sense that he is both "fatherless" and motherless." *DI* 4.13.1-2 associates Christ becoming like his Father "in all respects" with his assumption of humanity, not his exemplification of deity. Lactantius does not seem to believe that Christ exemplifies every divine-constituting property instantiated by the Father (*DI* 2.8.2; 4.6-7). See "Christology of Lactantius," 816.

[1256] *DI* 4.13.5.

mother, so a virgin was mother of his body without a father."[1257] In view of the Son's unique generative origin as a human, Lactantius confesses that the Son is simultaneously God and man (*fuit igitur et deus et homo*).[1258] He supports his belief in the Son's divinity by appealing to Psalm 45:6-7 (44:6-7 LXX), which is construed to mean that the Son is God.[1259] Like Tertullian (*Aduersus Praxean* 13.3) or other pre-Nicenes,[1260] Lactantius evidently interprets the Greek or Latin syntax of this biblical psalm as an instance of the nominative of address or vocative case ("Your throne, O God, is forever and ever").[1261] It thus seems that he does not regard the construction in Psalms as a subject nominative, although the LXX allows for either reading.[1262] In what sense is Christ God for the apologist? Does Lactantius profess that the Son is fully God—that he exemplifies all divine-constituting properties?

Once Lactantius explains the Son's mission and nature, it becomes apparent that his use of the proper noun "God" as a title designating Christ probably should be understood in a mitigated sense. He asserts that Christ is "God in the spirit" and draws a conceptual parallel between the Son and Apollo.[1263] The Son demonstrated faith and trust in the Father by fulfilling his God-given mission: "he taught that there is one God and that he alone is to be worshipped, and he never said that he was God himself: he would not have kept faith if after being sent to get rid of gods and to assert a single God he had introduced another one besides."[1264] Christ did not proclaim his own Godhood. Lactantius reasons that if the Son had publicly revealed his own divinity, then he would

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[1257] Ibid. 4.25.4: habebat enim spiritalem patrem deum et sicut pater spiritus eius Deus sine matre, ita mater corporis eius uirgo sine patre (Brandt CSEL 19:376). Lactantius employs the rhetorical device of chiasm here. Moreover, he addresses the question, *Cur Deus homo*, although it is debatable what he means by "God" (*Deus*).

[1258] *DI* 4.13.6; 4.25.5-6.

[1259] Ibid. 4.13.9: thronus tuus, Deus, in saecula saeculorum (Brandt CSEL 19:318).

[1260] See André Pautler, *Biblia patristica*: *index des citations et allusions bibliques dans la littérature patristique* (Paris: Editions du Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 2000).

[1261] Young (*Intermediate NT Greek*, 12-13) notes that Hebrews 1:8, which quotes Psalm 45:6-7 (44:6-7 LXX), has been interpreted respectively as a nominative of address, a subject nominative and a predicate nominative. Young thinks that this construction is a nominative of address. Other grammarians classify this usage as a nominative for a vocative. See Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*: *An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 59.

[1262] See Brooke F. Westcott, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (London: 1889), 25-26; Murray J. Harris, *Jesus as God*: *The New Testament Use of Theos in Reference to Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992), 216-218; George W. Buchanan, *To the Hebrews*, The Anchor Bible (Garden City: Doubleday, 1972), 20.

[1263] *DI* 4.13.11-13.

[1264] *DI* 4.14.18-20: docuit enim quod unus Deus sit eumque solum coli oportere, nec umquam se ipse deum dixit, quia non seruasset fidem, si missus ut deos tolleret et unum adsereret, induceret alium praeter unum (Brandt CSEL 19:329).

have contravened the teaching of monotheism. He also believes that Christ would not have demonstrated faith in the one true God of Scripture, if he had stressed his own divine nature.[1265] Nevertheless, because the Son proved himself "so faithful and because he took nothing at all for himself," never claiming to be God, he "received the dignity of eternal priesthood, the honour of supreme kingship, the power to judge and the name of God."[1266] It consequently seems that the Son progressively becomes "God" in the narrative of Lactantius; he does not inherently exemplify every divine-constituting property instantiated by the Father. On the other hand, Lactantian Christology might be informed by the self-emptying kenotic act of the Son, wherein the Son makes himself of no repute that through his relative poverty, many creatures might be enriched (Philippians 2:6-7; 2 Corinthians 8:9; *Divinae institutiones* 4.16.1-5).

First, the apologist contends that the teacher of justice (*magister iustitiae*) does not acquire the epithet "Son" until the Father allows him to be tried in the face of extreme duress.[1267] Then Lactantius states that God the Father rewards the faithfulness of the heavenly sage (vis-à-vis his cosmic mission) by granting him the eternal priesthood, supreme kingship, the power of judgment and the name of God. It therefore appears that Christ does not truly become *Deus* for Lactantius until he assumes flesh, instructs others about the one God, suffers, dies and experiences a resurrection by means of divine power (2 Corinthians 13:4; *Divinae institutiones* 4.19.2-11).[1268] *Divinae institutiones* suggests that the term "God" (*Deus*) only applies to Christ in a fuller sense after he undertakes his divine commission.[1269] Yet, the Son apparently is subordinate to the Father (respecting his essence) before and subsequent to his ascension.[1270] Lactantius at any rate ostensibly interprets the scriptural witness concerning the Son's person and work through the lens of subordinationism.

[1265] Ibid.

[1266] Ibid. 4.14.20.

[1267] Ibid. Studer does not think that the Lactantian treatment of Christ as *magister iustitiae* conflicts with the purported Lactantian belief in the God-man. See *Trinity and Incarnation*, 94.

[1268] *DI* 4.14.20. See Alvan Lamson, *The Church of the First Three Centuries*: *Or, Notices of the Lives and Opinions of the Early Fathers, with Special Reference to the Doctrine of the Trinity* (Boston: Walker, Wise and Co, 1860), 237. He points to *DI* 4.25.4, wherein Lactantius professes that the Son is "*mediam inter deum et hominem substantiam gerens*" (Compare *Quod idola dii non sint* 11). He concludes that in Lactantian thought, the Father is supreme in relation to the Son, who is ontologically subordinate to the Father (*DI* 4.25.1).

[1269] *DI* 4.17-18.

[1270] Ibid. 2.8.7.

No discussion of the Son's economic mission would be comprehensive without taking into account the Father's supreme act of liberating humankind from evil through the *crux Christi*. In this regard, Lactantius explains that God the Father permits Christ to suffer and die for the benefit of rational creatures.[1271] Both Scripture and the Christian tradition bear testimony to the Father's unfathomable love for his Son (John 3:35; 5:20; 10:17; 15:9-10; 16:32; 17:24-26; *Aduersus Praxean* 16; Novatian, *De Trinitate* 28; cf. Victorinus' *Commentary on the Apocalypse of the Blessed John*, chapter I). But if the Father supremely loves his Son, then why does he allow the Son to undergo the reproach associated with *crux Christi*? The Lactantian response is that Christ endures "the torture, the wounds and the thorns" for a transcendent universal good.[1272] He subjects himself to an excruciating or ignominious death befitting a criminal in order that rational creatures might conquer death through his example and sacrifice.[1273] Lactantius avers that Christ has overcome death by rendering it inoperative or placing it in figurative bonds.[1274] It seems that God permits his Son to undergo anguish with the intention of conquering death. Nevertheless, why does the "Supreme Father" not only allow but also prescribe an ignominious death for Christ? Why does the indulgent Father of all will that his own Son undergo this specific type of execution?[1275]

The Son's mode of execution appears to have been "indecent."[1276] He experienced a death befitting a criminal (*Aduersus nationes* 1.36).[1277] Hence, Lactantius adduces four primary reasons that Christ suffered execution on a *crux*: (1) The instructor of virtue had to die in an abased manner so that he could fully disclose the magnanimous universality of God's salvific act (*Epitome* 51). The Son's odious manner of dying confirmed that even the "lowest in society" could imitate the Son's faithful pattern of martyrdom;[1278] (2) Christ's body had to be preserved

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[1271] Ibid. 4.18.2; 4.26.29.
[1272] Ibid. 4.26.27.
[1273] Ibid. 4.26.28.
[1274] Ibid.
[1275] Ibid. 4.26.29.
[1276] Ibid. Compare *Octavius* 9.4; *Epitome* 51.
[1277] *DI* 4.16.1. Timothy George, *Galatians* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1994) demonstrates how first century citizens viewed the *stauros* or *crux*. Martin Hengel's *Crucifixion in the Ancient World and the Folly of the Message of the Cross* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977) thoroughly documents the ancient disdain for the penal *crux*.
[1278] *DI* 4.26.30.

for the resurrection, which Lactantius argues would occur two days after the "loathsome" execution of Christ;[1279] (3) by having Christ slain in a disgraceful public manner, God made him visible to all the nations in fulfillment of sacred prophecy;[1280] (4) God subjugates evil by means of the Son's horrific execution on an odious instrument of death.[1281] Christ is slain according to weakness, but defeats mortality through God's power (2 Corinthians 13:4); the instrument of death on which he is executed signifies the manner whereby God employs presumably abhorrent things to conquer evil: "For nothing in the dispensation of God is found to be mean, and ignoble, and contemptible. Such only occurs in man's arrangement" (*Aduersus Marcionem* 5.5). That which appears ignoble to non-believers is honorable in God's dispensation (*Divinae institutiones* 4.26.29-30).

From this brief appraisal of Lactantian comments pertaining to the ignominious death of Christ, it is evident that *Divinae institutiones* exploits numerous legal concepts recognizable to ancient Roman citizens. However, not only is the Son's death analyzed within the framework of ancient Roman law, but so is the manner in which the Father and the Son relate to one another. The remainder of this chapter will illustrate the attention that Lactantius devotes to father-son relative dispositions. Moreover, the following section discloses the seeming extent of Lactantius' subordinationist Christology.

D. The Son in the Father's Household

Lactantius appears to be utilizing the metaphysical categories of Stoic philosophy (i.e. relative dispositions) when he explains the ontological relationship between the Father and the Son. Father and Son are correlative concepts: that is, one cannot be deemed a father without engendering a child nor can a fetus have the potential for birth as a son unless a father "creates" him.[1282] There is a sense in which both father and son create one another (*Divinae institutiones* 4.29.4); for it is evident that one cannot be a son without having a father. However, one cannot be

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[1279] Ibid. 4.26.31.
[1280] Ibid. 4.26.33.
[1281] Ibid. 4.26.28.
[1282] Ibid. 4.29.3.

a father without having a child. The outcome of this relational process is that father and son come to have "one and the same mind in each, one and the same spirit and one and the same substance."[1283] Nevertheless, the difference between two accidental dispositions (in the case of Christ and his Father) is that the Father is comparable to a spring "in full flow," whereas the Son is analogous to a flowing stream that originates from the primordial source of divinity.[1284] Furthermore, employing another analogy, the Father is akin to the Sun; Christ, on the other hand, is comparable to "a ray projected from it."[1285] By means of these indirect speech-acts, Lactantius appears to emphasize a moral union[1286] that obtains between the Father and Son: the Son is one with his Father in that Christ is loyal to God the Father.[1287]

Lactantius not only uses a river or the sun as models of comparison, but he also invokes examples such as the necessary relationship between a voice and mouth or virtue and a body to depict the unitive and logically necessary correlation between God the Father and his Son: "Equally, a voice cannot be divorced from a mouth, nor can virtue or an act of virtue be detached from a body."[1288] A more "immediate example" (*propiore uti exemplo libet*) that explains the familial concord of the Father and Son is that of a compassionate father appointing his son over the household.[1289] Civil law in Rome permitted one male to be lord of the household; Roman law specified that fathers were the sole masters of their family units which included children and slaves. But the law did allow fathers to grant their sons "the name and power of master," under the overarching authority of the legal *paterfamilias*.[1290] Hence, while Roman fathers might permit their sons to be masters of the household, according to civil law, there was only "one house and

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[1283] Ibid.

[1284] Ibid.

[1285] Ibid. 4.29.4. See *Adversus Praxean* 13.

[1286] Lamson, *Church of the First Three Centuries*, 238.

[1287] Bowen and Garnsey, *Divine Institutes*, 10. McGuckin appeals to DI 4.29.4 to substantiate his belief that there is development in Lactantian thought regarding the Father and Son. However, it does not seem prudent to read approximate post-Nicene senses into the Lactantian formula, "*una utrique mens, unus spiritus, una substantia est*" (Brandt CSEL 19:392). While attempting to make an argument for catechetical development in the writings of Lactantius, McGuckin nevertheless concedes that the possible analogy between the "post-Nicene victory" and the language contained in DI 4.29.4 "should not be pressed." See "Christology of Lactantius," 817.

[1288] *DI* 4.29.5.

[1289] Ibid. 4.29.6-7.

[1290] Ibid.

one master of it."[1291] A father and son thus were one from a legal standpoint. It consequently seems that Lactantius relies on principles derived from ancient civil law to illustrate the Father and Son's moral (as opposed to ontological) oneness.[1292] Additionally, he draws a parallel between the Godhead represented in two persons and a family situation under Roman law whereby a father enables his son "to assume in a legal sense his father's personality."[1293] Lactantius is probably thinking of the Roman *paterfamilias* when he argues that God is master and father of the universal household that he allows the Son to govern (*Divinae institutiones* 4.29.8-9). Figuratively speaking, the Son only becomes legally competent or independent (*sui juris*) after a formal ceremony of emancipation (*emancipatio*).[1294]

Lactantius presumes that Christians can only approach or worship God with any semblance of definitive legitimacy through his peerless Son.[1295] Nevertheless, the Father is the exclusive master over the created order or universal household: "the world has one king, one father and one lord only."[1296] Lactantius insists that "So it is necessary, then, that the whole divine power be in one [person], by whose nod and command all things are ruled. He is so great that He cannot be described in words nor grasped by the senses of man" (*De ira Dei* 11.6).[1297] Other passages in the Lactantian corpus suggest that the "one person" (*necesse est in uno*) whom Lactantius references is the Father.[1298] He evidently believes that God the Father is the only true

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[1291] Bowen and Garnsey, *Divine Institutes*, 10. Compare Augustine's use of *dominus domūs* in *Confessiones* 8.8.19 (PL 32).

[1292] Lactantius is far from the formalized Trinity doctrine. He appears to be more of a ditheist (Hagenbach, *Text-book*, 244). Hagenbach believes that the thought of Lactantius (Christologically speaking) is "wholly Arian" since he compares Christ to an earthly son who shares all things with his father while dwelling in the father's house (*Text-book*, 244). Bowen and Garnsey (*Divine Institutes*, 10) posit a similar view. But Lamson probably expresses Lactantian thought best, when he refers to it as one step removed from Arianism (*Church of the First Three Centuries*, 238). See Campenhausen, *Fathers of the Church*, 2:75-77 for details concerning a first and second God (a major and minor divinity) in Lactantius.

[1293] Cruttwell, *Literary History*, 2:649.

[1294] Ibid. *Emancipatio* was a *pro forma* legal act to voluntarily release a minor from the authority of his or her parents. See Heikki E. S. Mattila, *Comparative Legal Linguistics*, trans. Christopher Goddard (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2006), 113; Antti Arjava, "Paternal Power in Late Antiquity," *JRS* 88 (1998): 147-165.

[1295] *DI* 4.29.14-15.

[1296] Ibid. 1.7.3.

[1297] Omnem igitur diuinam potestatem necesse est in uno esse cuis nutu et imperio regantur omnia, et ideo tantus est, ut ab homine non posit aut uerbis enarrari aut sensibus aestimari (Brandt CSEL 27:95). The English translation is McDonald, *Minor Works*, 86. Compare the language of *Quod idola dii non sint* 8. See *Epistula* 63.14 (Cyprian) and *Octavius* 18.8 (Minucius Felix) for analogous refrains.

[1298] *De ira Dei* 4; *Epitome* 2.

God in the strictest sense: the Father is deity without qualification.[1299] However, Lactantius presses his analogies respecting Father-Son relative dispositions further; he contends that the management of a household is comparable to exercising geo-political dominion (*Divinae institutiones* 4.29.8).[1300] One God is "the provident *paterfamilias* of the universe, both Father and Lord, with the power of reward and punishment."[1301] God as paternal head appropriately undergirds the discourse on justice in book 5 of *Divinae institutiones*.[1302] Since deity is both Father and Lord, rational agents ought to fear and love him in response to the beneficences brought about through his preeminent Son.[1303]

Findings

For Lactantius, God is Father to the Son in that the Logos was created as an angel, but given priority over the other angels by dint of having the Father's name conferred upon him, after he passed some type of divinely ordained arduous trial. Although God the Father has conferred the divine name upon the Logos, Lactantius possibly believes that he remains ontologically subordinate to the Father.[1304] The Father subsequently dispatches his preeminent angelic son as a teacher of justice to bring it about that men learn divine righteousness and true religion from the words and deeds of the Son. Since he is faithful to his divine commission, the Father allows the Son to possess the name "God."[1305]

Lactantius construes the Father-Son relative dispositions in legal or forensic terms. God and his Son are one in that the Father has permitted the Son to rule over the one household of God. Moreover, the Son is not *sui juris* in relation to the Father. He voluntarily and perpetually submits to the authority of his Father, even though Lactantius believes that he is one in mind and

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[1299] John 17:3 (*Vg*): solum verum Deum.
[1300] Frances Young, "Christianity," 656.
[1301] Ibid.
[1302] Campenhausen observes: "In his [Lactantius'] opinion, therefore, God is the 'Father,' just because He is simultaneously '*dominus*,' the Lord, and as such exercises the '*imperium*' " (*Fathers of the Church*, 2:78). Lactantius professes that God is the Emperor writ large. He accordingly emphasizes the *iustitia* and imperial authority of the Father (Ibid).
[1303] *DI* 4.4.1-2.
[1304] Ibid. 4.29.9.
[1305] Ibid. 4.14.20.

substance with the Father.[1306] Of course, the word "substance" in Lactantius probably has Stoic overtones. One probably should accordingly exercise discretion before imputing post-Nicene connotations to Lactantian usage. Lactantius believes that the Father is the one true God in the strict sense (*sensu strictu*).[1307] Nevertheless, he avers that worshipers of God must approach the Father through his exalted Son, who is God's veritable temple (on one hand) and the door of the temple (on the other hand).[1308]

Lactantius not only extracted his concepts from other early Christian writers or the sacred texts of Judeo-Christianity, but it seems that his formulations of the relation of origin between Father-Son or the ontological provenance of the Son from the Father partly rely on Egyptian notions communicated through Hermetic literature. The fourth book of *Divinae institutiones* also illuminates the sense in which God is Father to the Logos. Lactantius ultimately professes that Father (in the Son's case) functions as a tropic signifier that delineates the emblematic role God plays in bringing it about that the Son exists (*Divinae institutiones* 4.6-7). God does not literally engender the Son. Rather, the Father brings it about that the Logos exists in a manner resembling God's other angelic sons, but in a manner analogous to speech uttered from the mouth rather than air exhaled from the nostrils. It consequently appears that Lactantius is an ontological subordinationist, who presses Stoic categories into service: he possibly conceives of the Son in angelic rather than Angelomorphic terms. But Lactantius may avoid Arianism insofar as he does not argue that the Father creates the Son *ex nihilo*.

[1306] Ibid. 4.29.9.
[1307] Ibid. 4.29.12-13.
[1308] Ibid. 4.18.4; 4.29.14-15. See Koch, "Der 'Tempel Gottes' bei Laktantius," 236-237.

Chapter 7

Paterology and Eschatology in the Divine Institutes

Lactantius maintains that the God and Father of Jesus Christ uniquely manifests himself as Father in the eschaton. For Christian theology, the designation "Father" points forward eschatologically.[1309] When God thus reveals the extent of his universal dominion apocalyptically, another facet of divine paternity will become apparent. The final book of *Divinae institutiones* clarifies this aspect of God's fatherhood. Accordingly, it is fitting that the concluding portion of this study unfold the Lactantian understanding of God the eschatological Father by analyzing Book 7 of *Divinae institutiones*. This chapter will emphasize the paternal aspects of Lactantian eschatology and stress its conceptual influences. Its task is to make a case for the eschatological Father concept being present in Lactantius. In order to accomplish this task, book 7 of *Divinae institutiones* will be examined analytically. First, however, the ground must be prepared for this study's analysis of the Lactantian *magnum opus*.

A. The Eschatological Father's Indulgence and Severity

Eschatology signifies the study or doctrine of the last things.[1310] Although the term is relatively modern, it encompasses multifaceted notions that characterized the thinking of ancient ecclesiastical authors.[1311] Christian eschatology fundamentally professes that God will deliver his people from earthly tribulation or avenge the blood of holy martyrs (*Commentary on the Apocalypse of the Blessed John* 6.9; *De resurrectione carnis* 25; *Divinae institutiones* 1.1.15). The Father will bring about a re-creation of all things which entails a resurrection for those who are dead in Christ (*Contra Celsum* 5.17-20). Systematic theologians therefore contend that the scope of eschatology includes death, judgment, heaven, hell, as well as the *Parousia* and

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[1309] Kasper, *God of Jesus Christ*, 139.
[1310] John A. McGuckin, *Handbook*, 122.

millennial reign of Jesus Christ.[1312] Moreover, God's fatherliness is evidently unveiled in the fruition of these Christian "last things."

While the wrath of God will be revealed in the eschaton, one probably should not interpret God's eschatological paternity exclusively in terms of grave severity or vengeful remuneration. It is certainly possible to think of God the Father "as the sternly just distributor of rewards and penalties" rather than as a deity of unmerited favor or indulgence (*indulgentia*). However, Kelly insists that it is misleading to focus on "such one-sided expressions of the Christian faith."[1313] Eschatological thought in ancient Christian treatises attempts to balance conceptually the indulgence and severity of God. Hence, Christianity ultimately teaches that mercy triumphs over judgment: God is a perpetually good and merciful Father (James 2:13). But he is not permissive concerning evil.

Lactantius roots the dialectic of goodness or indulgence and severity in a number of diverse religio-philosophical traditions, which he synthesizes to good rhetorical effect (*Divinae institutiones* 7.19-20; *Epitome* 73).[1314] His thought represents a syncretistic cross-fertilization of early Latin eschatological speculation, the Asian chiliastic tradition (*Historia ecclesiastica* 3.39.11-13),[1315] and noted philosophico-literary reflections on death and immortality.[1316] Additionally, it seems that there are elements of Jewish apocalyptic found in the writings of

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[1311] Ibid.

[1312] Owen C. Thomas, *Introduction to Theology* (Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Pub, 1994), 217.

[1313] *Doctrines*, 461.

[1314] Bernard McGinn, *Visions of the End*: *Apocalyptic Traditions in the Middle Ages*, Records of Civilization, Sources and Studies, 96 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979), 23-24. Jean Doignon writes concerning DI 7.20: "The text of Lactantius is in reality the production of an amalgam of several sources (*Le texte de Lactance est en réalité le produit d' un amalgame de plusieurs sources*)." See "Le 'Placitvm' Eschatologique Attribué Aux Stoiciens Par Lactance" in Colloque d'études historiques et patristiques, Jacques Fontaine, and Michel Perrin, *Lactance et son temps: recherches actuelles: actes du IVe Colloque d'études historiques et patristiques, Chantilly, 21-23 Septembre 1976*, Théologie historique, 48 (Paris: Editions Beauchesne, 1978), 165-170. Leonhard Atzberger gives a very helpful overview of Lactantian eschatology in his text *Geschichte der christlichen Eschatologie innerhalb der vornicänischen Zeit: mit theilweiser Einbeziehung der Lehre vom christlichen Heile überhaupt* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Graz: Akademische Druck- u. Verlagsanstalt, 1970), 583-611.

[1315] McGinn, *Visions of the End*, 17-18. Moreover, Lactantius has a decided theological and literary preference for John's Apocalypse (Cruttwell, *Literary History*, 2:650). The NT book largely influences his eschatological framework. David Aune observes that *DI* 7.17.10-11 is reminiscent of Apocalypse 20:9 (*Revelation* 52C:1080).

[1316] Brian Daley, *The Hope of the Early Church*: *A Handbook of Patristic Eschatology* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 67; Ella Bourne, "The Messianic Prophecy in Vergil's Fourth Eclogue," *The Classical Journal* (1916): 390-400. See *Eclogues* 4.

Lactantius.[1317] One example of this conceptual strand is the doctrine of the last judgment, which Russell calls "the most characteristic doctrine of Jewish apocalyptic."[1318] The last judgment is the grand cosmic event for Jewish apocalyptic thinkers.[1319] God manifestly rectifies all wrongs during the final judgment. Of course, a possible *locus classicus* for the complementary relations of severity and goodness in Lactantius is the NT book of Romans: the apologist merely develops salient Pauline notions within his eschatological framework (Romans 11:22). However, it appears that the Pauline tendency to balance divine goodness and severity actually matures in the soil of ancient Judaism.

The sacred writings of Judaism and Christianity indicate that God is both good and severe, indulgent and rigorous (Exodus 34:6-7; Nahum 1:2-3). Furthermore, the goodness or severity of God the Father appears to be dependent on the free response of rational creatures: "The Father himself is not impassible. He has the passion of love" (*Homilies on Ezekiel* 6.6).[1320] Therefore, the Pauline Epistle to the Romans exhorts Christians to ponder the goodness and severity of God.[1321] Lactantius also endeavors to maintain the tension that seems to obtain between God's severity and illimitable goodness: "For to the wicked, who still rage against the righteous in other parts of the world, the Omnipotent will also repay the reward of their wickedness with a severity proportioned to its tardiness; for as He is a most indulgent Father towards the godly, so is He a most upright Judge against the ungodly."[1322] The impious receive divine severity; upright persons experience the Father's indulgence.

[1317] Compare *DI* 7.19.8-9 with 1 Enoch 91:9. See Hayman, "The Book of Enoch in Reference to the New Testament and Early Christian Antiquity," *VC* 37-46.

[1318] David Syme Russell, *The Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic, 200 BC-AD 100*, The Old Testament Library (London: SCM Press, 1964), 380.

[1319] Ibid.

[1320] Compare *Homily on Numbers* 23.2; Grant, *Early Christian Doctrine of God*, 30-32. Questions concerning God's impassibility have caused no little dissension in the scholarly literature. Pelikan contends that God (YHWH) involved himself with Israel in "love and wrath", implying that the Hebrew prophets did not view God's absolute freedom through the prism of impassibility (*apatheia*). See *The Christian Tradition*, 1:52; Davis, *Logic and the Nature of God*, 47-51; Kirkpatrick, *Together Bound*, 115-116. Conversely, Paul Helm and Edward Wierenga construe Tanakh narratives that delineate the wrath or love of YHWH as anthropomorphisms. Both thinkers maintain that God does not (strictly speaking) act in response to the actions of his creatures; he is not moved by the free acts of rational creatures. See Helm's *Eternal God*: *A Study of God Without Time* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997) and Wierenga's *The Nature of God* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003).

[1321] Vide ergo bonitatem et severitatem Dei in eos quidem qui ceciderunt severitatem in te autem bonitatem Dei si permanseris in bonitate alioquin et tu excideris (Romans 11:22 *Vg*).

[1322] *DI* 1.1.15.

The Father's unbounded indulgence (*indulgentia*) is not just associated with God's futurity, however; it is not exclusively proleptic. Lactantius indicates that Christians now partake of the eschatological Father's indulgence as an anticipatory token of the future eschaton.[1323] Furthermore, he contends that God is not going to dispense everlasting punishments with uncompounded severity. Rather, the Father discloses paternal qualities of compassion, indulgence or goodness prior and posterior to the Son's chiliastic reign (*Divinae institutiones* 6.25.13).[1324] Book 7 of the Lactantian *magnum opus* contains vivid depictions of God's indulgence and severity. The remainder of this chapter accordingly will examine how Lactantius attempts to reconcile these divine attributes within his eschatological framework. In order to discern how he formulates a rhetorical appeal to all rational creatures in association with Christian worship of the Father, this study will analyze Lactantian concepts about the Father's rationale for disciplining the impious.

B. The Father's Rationale for Disciplining the Impious

Lactantius affirms the existence of an indulgent God in whom resides "perfect virtue."[1325] He also professes that God the Father internally exercises "perfect patience."[1326] If the Father literally exemplifies patience and indulgence, however, then one seemingly may infer that God necessarily has emotions. Contra Arnobius and the Stoics, Lactantius does believe that God (the Father) matter-of-factly instantiates anger, sadness, joy and wrath along with mercy, love, indulgence (*indulgentia*) and patience (*Divinae institutiones* 5.22.13).[1327] But if God (the Father) instantiates divergent emotions, then Stoic thinking is evidently misguided.[1328] However, in what sense does Lactantius think that the Stoic theory of emotions is defective?

[1323] Ibid. 4.3.3.
[1324] Ibid. 6.9; 7.18.
[1325] Ibid. 2.17.3.
[1326] Ibid. 2.17.3-4.
[1327] Ibid. Compare Aristotle's list of emotions in *Ethica Nicomachea* 2.5.
[1328] See Sanders, *God Who Risks*, 145; Wilken, *Spirit of Early Christian Thought*, 297-298. Cf. *DI* 6.10.11; 6.14.1-10; 6.15.1ff.

The Stoics claim that God is impassible (avpa,qeia): deity does not feel compassion, love, hate, joy or sadness; nor does God act in response to events that occur in the phenomenal realm. According to these ancient Greek thinkers, God does not have emotions. There is no love, hate, joy or sadness in God. Additionally, the Stoics espouse a theory in which the soul is believed to be corporeal and exclusively rational.[1329] The logical corollary of this psychological theory is that emotions rather than being natural potencies of the soul (as in Aristotle)[1330] become mental disturbances experienced by rational creatures.[1331] But Lactantius reasons that the Stoics are in error; emotions cannot be "disturbances of the mind" befalling only creatures, if God exhibits various passions or sentiments.[1332] He contends that the philosophical belief which claims that emotions are mere disturbances of the mind or creaturely subjective effects is responsible for the obliteration of divine truth and authentic religion.[1333] Lactantius thus writes an entire treatise (*De ira Dei*) that endeavors to refute the Stoic theory of a transcendent being, who is never angry, wrathful or perturbed.[1334] In his thought-world, it is unreasonable to assert that God never exemplifies states such as wrath or anger.[1335] He ardently insists that only inanimate entities ontologically lack emotional states.[1336]

Based on what Lactantius writes in *De ira Dei*, certain Stoic philosophers evidently viewed anger or wrath as emotions not befitting the common Father of all.[1337] They maintained that if virtuous creatures universally praise rather than harm one another, then (*a fortiori*) God

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[1329] Simo Knuuttila, *Emotions in Ancient and Medieval Philosophy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004), 47.

[1330] Aristotle contends that three types of things can be discovered in the soul: emotions, capacities and characteristics. See *Ethica Nicomachea* 2.5.

[1331] Knuuttila, *Emotions*, 55.

[1332] *DI* 2.17.3-5

[1333] Ibid. 2.17.4-5.

[1334] Ibid. 2.17.5. Weinandy considers *De ira Dei* a "primarily pastoral" as opposed to philosophical treatise. See *Does God Suffer*, 106. But Lactantius directly addresses arguments set forth by the Stoics and Epicureans and some of his arguments are theologically or philosophically novel. The pastoral aspects of this treatise, which Lactantius apparently wrote for theological and philosophical reasons, do not appear that discernable.

[1335] Hallman, *Descent of God*, 66-70.

[1336] *De ira Dei* 5. Lactantius' reasoning possibly serves as a corrective to modern-day Stoic thinking exemplified in Hoffman and Rosenkrantz, *Divine Attributes*, 107-108. These authors suggest that God has non-emotive anti-attitudes and pro-attitudes toward actions such as the Holocaust (i.e. God non-emotively disapproves of this historical occurrence) or acts of charity (i.e. God dispassionately approves of helping those in need). Yet, Hoffman and Rosenkrantz say that God neither hates nor loves (*sensu strictu*) since God is incorruptible. The argument posed by *De ira Dei* controverts this Stoic-informed argument.

[1337] *De ira Dei* 5.

should perpetually act with supernal non-emotive kindness towards rational creatures. Nevertheless, while the Stoic argument is plausible, it is ultimately specious to Lactantius.[1338] He retorts by utilizing a mundane illustration to demonstrate the archetypal nature of God's anger. One can outline his argument by means of using analogical language.

Lactantius professes that God must exhibit anger toward the impious or else he does not love the pious. For if a given rational agent loves what is good, that agent presumably does not love what is evil; conversely, if an agent does not hate what is evil, the agent apparently cannot love the good. Lactantius accordingly believes that just as rational creatures are incapable of cherishing life without hating death or unable to seek moral light without fleeing from moral darkness, so God cannot love pious creatures without hating those who are impious.[1339] The same principle hypothetically applies to a housemaster (*dominus domūs*) in possession of both a good and bad servant. Lactantius reasons that a housemaster does not both love and hate or praise and reward good and bad servants equally.[1340] An equitable or prudent housemaster lauds a diligent servant, even assigning the servant greater responsibilities in the household; but the bad servant the master disciplines with scourging, shackles, hunger and thirst (Matthew 18:21-35; 24:45-51; 25:14-30; Mark 14:14).[1341] It is therefore just for God to recompense the pious; but he necessarily metes out vengeance on the impious.

Lactantius assumes that it is logically possible for the same master to love and hate, depending on the actions or dispositions of his servants. He subsequently infers: "there are those who ought to be loved and those who should be hated."[1342] His thoughts on divine anger and notions concerning hatred of the impious evidently comport with the imprecatory psalms of the Tanakh (Psalm 69:22-28; 83:16-18; 139:21-23).[1343] The logical consequence of Lactantius' analysis is that God cannot treat the pious and impious equally while continuing to uphold the righteous standards that he has eternally decreed. Unless the Father is angry at the wicked or manifests compassion for the godly, "human life will be disturbed and the state of affairs will

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[1338] Ibid.
[1339] Ibid.
[1340] Ibid.
[1341] *DI* 5.23 suggests that God will discipline the impious.
[1342] *De Ira Dei* 5.
[1343] See 2 Chronicles 19:1-2.

come to such great confusion" with resultant human audacity prevailing.[1344] Hence, Lactantius argues that a well-ordered household, society or cosmos only obtains where divine punishment or the conceptual possibility of divine retribution subsists.

Lactantius also persuades his readers that it is factually impossible for a just God to treat good and bad servants equally. Otherwise, the good servants will not be motivated to obey the Father; conversely, the bad servants will not reverence or fear God.[1345] Hence, in accordance with the dictates of absolute justice, the Father bestows unmerited kindness on the godly but punishment or wrath on the impious.[1346] Nevertheless, all humans are metaphorical children in the eyes of God, not just servants or slaves. Therefore, as a responsible Father who is concerned that order and justice obtain in the universal household, God has determined to recompense all evil that constantly plagues his obedient children. For "they will suffer punishment for their impiety and guilt, who, rebelling against God, the Father of the human race, have undertaken inexpiable rites, and violated every sacred law."[1347] God is our authentic Father since he created the universe.[1348] He thereby merits human adoration or reverence.[1349] Lactantius assures his readers that God will bring it about that rebels no longer mar his creation or disturb cosmic order.

The Father of humanity apparently cannot remunerate evil acts committed against his obedient children without meting out justice to the impious (*De ira Dei* 16). God's metaphorical offspring should thus exclusively adore the ineffable name of the divine parent; God (the Father of rational creatures) will repay the wanton impiety committed by those figurative children who rebel against him (*Divinae institutiones* 2.17.12). Otherwise, the pious will never experience a well-ordered life characterized by peace and prosperity: "When this happens, my dear Asclepius, then the lord and father and god and creator of the first and only god will look upon events and will defy disorder with his own will," concerning which Hermes prophesied.[1350] Lactantius consequently discloses that God will annihilate evil in his role as eschatological Father.[1351] The

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[1344] *De Ira dei* 16.
[1345] Ibid. 6.
[1346] Ibid.
[1347] *DI* 2.17.12.
[1348] Ibid. 7.5.5.
[1349] Ibid.
[1350] *DI* 7.18.4. Lactantius quotes *Corpus Hermeticum Asclep*. 26.
[1351] *DI* 5.18: God will reward the pious and punish the impious after death.

details of that fateful period are made explicit in the *Epitome* and book 7 of *Divinae Institutiones*. Hence, the next two sections of this study discuss how Lactantius unfolds his concept of the eschatological Father in these documents. An examination of the *Epitome* will be undertaken first. Then, this investigation will analyze the final book of *Divinae institutiones* and its eschatological content that pertains to God the Father.

C. The Eschatological Father in the *Epitome*

Lactantius believes that God will annihilate irreverent persons during his great day of wrath, wherein "torrents of blood shall flow," and "the prince also of the demons himself, the author and contriver of evils, being bound with fiery chains, shall be imprisoned, that the world may receive peace, and the earth, harassed through so many years, may rest."[1352] Lactantius follows John's Apocalypse closely here as he recounts that Christ will resurrect the pious dead to eternal life and rule with them on earth. "This kingdom of the righteous," he declares, "shall be for a thousand years."[1353] Moreover, Lactantius bases his apocalyptic vision of the Father's eschatological work on the ancient prophets (Isaiah 11:6-9; Hosea 2:18), who describe an age in which unreasoning beasts will reside harmoniously with one another and coexist peacefully with the righteous: "the dove shall be united with the hawk, the serpent shall have no poison; no animal shall live by bloodshed."[1354]

Nevertheless, the Apocalypse of John foretells that "the prince of the demons" will be loosed when the thousand years of Christ's millennial reign terminate.[1355] The Devil will then provoke multitudes from the nations to revolt against the people of God (Apocalypse 20:7-10). Those loyally adhering to the prince of demons consequently "storm the city of the saints."

[1352] *Epitome* 72. By contrast, God's Son is called "prince of the angels" in *DI* 4.14.17.

[1353] *Epitome* 72.

[1354] Ibid.

[1355] Lactantius contrasts Satan (*ha Satan*), "the prince of demons" with Christ "the prince of the angels" (*DI* 4.14.17). One again discerns the possible conceptual influence of Jewish apocalyptic literature in *Divinae institutiones*. Additionally, the *Testament of Simeon* 2.7 designates *ha Satan* "the prince of deceit" and the *Testament of Solomon* 6.7 conscripts the expression "prince of all the demons" when describing Satan. Compare Justin Martyr's *Apology* 1.28.1. He implies that early Christians generally utilized the epithet "prince of demons" (among others) in their ordinary religious discourse. Such nomenclature still does not mitigate the fact that Judaism earlier recognized Satan ("Beliar" in Qumran literature) as the "prince of evil spirits."

However, Lactantius affirms that the seditious multitudes will not prevail since God will cause a great earthquake to annihilate the impious rebels.[1356] Moreover, the Father will "rain upon the wicked fire with brimstone and hail, and they shall be on fire, and slay each other"; but he will conceal the righteous under the earth until the divine anger has passed (*Epitome* 72).[1357] Divine judgment culminates in an earthquake of immense magnitude, which ruptures mountains and sinks valleys. Lactantius reports that all carcasses belonging to the rebels led by the prince of demons will be "heaped" together at a burial place designated Polyandrion.[1358] The geographical name "Polyandrion" alludes to a common burial place for those killed in battle.[1359] The Lactantian utilization of this expression implies that the number slaughtered will be immense (Ezekiel 39:11). Yet, he believes that the eternal prospect of the unjust functions as a moral warning to those ascending the rugged path of truth. The Father is indulgent towards the pious but severe respecting the ungodly: "Therefore, unless a man shall have received Christ, whom God has sent, and is about to send for our redemption, unless he shall have known the Supreme God through Christ, unless he shall have kept His commandments and law, he will fall into those punishments of which we have spoken."[1360] All Christians accordingly are enjoined to scorn extravagant bodily pleasures in order to attain eternal goods.[1361] Eternal goods should take precedence over goods of the body; goods of the soul are paramount in relation to goods of the body. Lactantius outlines how the eschatological Father will reward the virtuous individual who pursues (foremost) the goods of the soul. The next section will analyze his treatment of this subject matter.

[1356] *Epitome* 72.

[1357] Compare Isaiah 26:20; Ezekiel 38:1-23; Zechariah 14:12-13.

[1358] *Epitome* 72.

[1359] See the entry for Polu,andreion in *LSJ*. The word is a compound of polloi. + a;ndrej ("many men"). Fittingly, it was a common designation for burial places in Greece. The LXX uses the term twice in Ezekiel 39:11 within the context of the decisive eschatological battle between YHWH and Gog of Magog. The prophet uses the term to delineate the "valley" wherein Gog is buried (Polu,andrion tou/ Gwg). W. Kendrick Pritchett also details controversial issues surrounding the nature of Greek burial for the dead in *The Greek State at War*, 5 volumes (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 4:94-95.

[1360] *Epitome* 73.

[1361] Ibid.

C. God the Eschatological Father in *Divine Institutes* 7

The seventh book of *Divinae institutiones* represents the culmination of Lactantian eschatological thought. This portion of his major apologetic treatise discloses the tension existing between divine severity and indulgence. Lactantius is convinced that the Father will recompense the pious. However, God will dispense retributive justice on those who repudiate his paternal authority. The following paragraphs analyze the salient aspects of Lactantian teaching regarding the Father's severity and indulgence. All in-text citations that appear below refer to *Divinae institutiones* unless otherwise indicated.[1362]

God the Father is severe and indulgent, rigorous and tolerant. Therefore, he cannot permit injustice or evil to obtain forever. God forthwith dispatches his Son to instruct rational creatures about the path of justice, and the Son brings about the eradication of unrighteousness by teaching justice to rational creatures (*Divinae institutiones* 7.18). Divine instruction through Christ also presages the annihilation of all humanly crafted deities (7.19). Not only does the Father act with severity toward artificial divinities and those venerating them, though, but he also resurrects individuals who have been consigned to the underworld by means of death. Christ will judge those who rise from the nether regions (7.20.1, 4) since the Father has appointed him the official potentate of heaven and earth (7.20.1-2). [1363]

But Lactantius qualifies his remarks about eschatology by noting that the Son will only judge pious individuals who are "well practiced in God's religion" (7.20.5); he is evidently alluding to the first resurrection concerning which John apparently testifies in Apocalypse 20:4-5.[1364] When bearing witness to this event, Lactantius tries to persuade his audience that it is superfluous for the Father to judge the impious at that time since he has already passed adverse judgment on them (7.20.5). It is unnecessary to pronounce judgment on those who completely disdain the exalted wisdom of God. Therefore, the Son juridically scrutinizes "only those who know God" (7.20.6) to determine their intrinsic worth for everlasting beatitude. The Father sifts

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[1362] Relevant Latin or English texts from each passage will appear in the footnotes for this section.
[1363] Daley, *Hope of the Early Church*, 67.

deeds performed by righteous persons in order to ascertain whether the just acts of those who know God offset their unjust acts. Ultimately, "if their good and just deeds are more numerous and significant, they will be dispatched to the life of bliss, but if their evil deeds prevail, they will be condemned to punishment" (7.20.6).[1365] One easily can discern inchoate adumbrations of purgatory in this account.

Although the human soul is purportedly incorporeal, Lactantius contends that God can nonetheless apprehend and everlastingly punish the soul "because it is God's part to be omnipotent" (7.20.11; 7.21.1). But even an omnipotent God seemingly cannot violate the law of non-contradiction. Aristotle reasons that not even God can change the past or do that which is logically impossible; God apparently does not countermand the law of non-contradiction.[1366] According to this logical law, a given entity or state of affairs cannot be A and non-A at the same time or in the same respect (*Metaphysica* 4). Applying the law of non-contradiction to Christian theology, one could say that the Father reasonably does only that which is logically, factually, conceptually or metaphysically possible.[1367] Nevertheless, how does God (*ex hypothesi*) bring it about that an intangible soul can be grasped or experience acute psychosomatic sensations like pain? Lactantius attempts to provide a response to this query in a discussion about the final judgment. The remainder of this chapter analyzes his treatment of the soul's possible capacity for receiving divine punishment.

Lactantius presumably thinks that it is not only logically or conceptually possible for God to punish the human soul, but it is also factually possible (i.e. possible within the framework of reality's structure) for him to chastise angelic spirits. Consequently, the demons believe in one God and tremble (James 2:19); they know that it is possible for them to receive justice at his figurative hand (*Divinae institutiones* 7.21.1). The Lactantian reasoning is straightforward: (a) God has the power to punish unclean spirits; (b) all rebellious angels (demons) are unclean spirits; (c) therefore, God has the power to punish all rebellious angels. The salient divine attribute under consideration is God's omnipotence (7.20.11). Is it factually possible for an omnipotent God

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[1364] Ibid. See Bowen and Garnsey, *Divine Institutes*, 429.
[1365] See *Oracula Sibyllina* 2:313-320 (Geffcken, 43).
[1366] *Ethica Nicomachea* 6.2.
[1367] Brümmer discusses these modal distinctions in *Speaking of a Personal God*, 68-83.

(*Deus omnipotens*) to bring it about that an incorporeal entity undergoes the sensation of pain? If the arguments of Lactantius are sound and valid, it follows that it is logically or conceptually possible for all unclean spirits to suffer (eternal) punishment from an omnipotent God (7.21.2). However, logical possibility is not sufficient for Lactantius. He deems the chastisement of unclean spirits a factual possibility. Moreover, if the Father is able to punish unclean angels, he supposedly can and will discipline incorporeal souls by reclothing them with flesh (7.21.3). But this flesh will be "indestructible and everlasting" in order that God may torment recalcitrant souls for all eternity by means of an inextinguishable fire (7.21.3).[1368] Additionally, Lactantius suggests that even the pious will be tested by fire, although they will not undergo anguish from the Father's disciplinary flames, if their good deeds outweigh their bad actions (7.21.6-7); and the Christian rhetorician is convinced that all deceased humans will remain in the underworld until they render an account for their earthly deeds. After the first resurrection, the pious will receive immortality; conversely, those who have not learned to worship God in accordance with his righteous decrees will be "doomed to certain punishment" by sharing the fate meted out to the impious ones (7.21.8). While Lactantius argues that God punishes rational agents for witting or unwitting impiety, he also believes that the Father grants all rational creatures the opportunity (beforehand) to know him through the teacher of justice (Jesus Christ). Only under such circumstances would God's judgment ostensibly be equitable.

Not only intractable humans receive God's wrath, however, but the Father also will dispense judgments on unclean angels depicted as "world forces of this darkness" (NASB).[1369] Both Judaism and Christianity attribute the universal phenomenon of evil to "the prince of demons," namely, the Devil.[1370] Lactantius affirms that God will not neglect this obstinate enemy of righteousness: the Father will recompense evil by means of the Devil's everlasting chastisement. Lactantius provides a distinct construal of the Devil's fateful end. This account (as one might expect) is largely based on chapter 20 of John's Apocalypse; it profoundly alludes to the millennial reign of Christ and events that transpire shortly thereafter. The seventh book of *Divinae institutiones* unfolds these events in a manner similar to the Apocalypse. This

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[1368] Daley, *Hope of the Early Church*, 67; Cf. Tertullian (*Apologeticum* 48.14); Minucius Felix (*Octavius* 35).

[1369] Ephesians 6:11-12: `tou.j kosmokra,toraj tou/ sko,touj tou,tou.`

investigation's final paragraphs examine the aspects of Lactantius' discussion that make God's fatherliness prominent in connection with his judgment upon the Devil.

Lactantius is a chiliast or millenarian: he interprets the Millennium of Christ literally.[1371] Closely adhering to John's Apocalypse in his narratival account, he vividly outlines how "the prince of demons" is bound with figurative divine chains at the commencement of Christ's "holy reign" spanning one thousand years in duration (7.26.1). After the thousand years have reached their *terminus ad quem*, Lactantius reports that God will liberate the Devil (the prince of demons) from his abyss or prison so that he may wage war upon the holy city of New Jerusalem (Apocalypse 20:9-10; 21:1-2). This event presages God's "final wrath" that comes against those wittingly subjecting themselves to the Devil (*Divinae institutiones* 7.26.2). Manifold displays of natural phenomena (fire, sulphur, brimstone and earthquakes) accompany God's wrath as the Devil undergoes defeat at the Father's omnipotent hands (7.26.2). God's paternal severity thus obliterates injustice and its associated menace, evil. On the other hand, the Father protects his own people by concealing them in the hollow of the earth for three days (7.26.3). Interpreting Ezekiel's apocalyptic narrative rather matter-of-factly (Ezekiel 39:8-10), Lactantius indicates that God's people will emerge from their "lairs" after three days to find corpses of the impious dead lying on the ground. Then the righteous (those constituting earth's sole nation) will annihilate carnal weaponry as they savor everlasting peace and quietude (*Divinae institutiones* 7.26.4).

Lactantius points out that when the thousand years have reached their end, God will "fold up the sky and alter the earth" (7.26.5). He insists that humanity eventually will assume an angelic form by becoming white as snow. The righteous (in this angelic form) will offer praise to God forever (Apocalypse 20:11-15). Nonetheless, despite the blessings that accrue to the righteous, the Father must still dispense justice on those he deems impious. Lactantius refers to "the second, public resurrection of everybody" by means of which God banishes the impious "into eternal torment" (7.26.6).[1372] They in conjunction with the Devil "will be condemned to punishment, and with him the whole mob of the impious will be burnt for their sins for ever with perpetual fire in the sight of the angels and the just" (7.26.7). This retribution comes upon the unjust or impious

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[1370] *DI* 4.14. See Wisdom 2:24; Life of Adam and Eve 16.
[1371] J. A. McGuckin, *Handbook*, 58; Bardenhewer, *Patrology*, 204.

because they obstinately refuse "to acknowledge the lord and father of the world" (7.26.6). The impious habitually employed their volition to repudiate the omnipotent Father and his peerless sovereignty; now it is time for divine recompense to occur in the sight of those deemed righteous persons (cf. Apocalypse 14:10-11).

Despite the severity of God's wrath, Lactantius indicates that deity is "the fairest of judges and kindest of fathers," one who ideally bestows peace and life rather than toil, strife, death or that which is ephemeral (7.27.2). The rewards that stem from the Father during the *eschaton* far outweigh "the bitterness and misery" that creatures presently undergo on earth. In this context, Lactantius appeals to the notable words of Terence (*Phormio* 249): "we must work at the mill, get flogged and carry fetters" (*Molendum esse usque in pistrino*; *uapulandum habendae compedes*).[1373] The lesson that one can extract from the playwright's words is that God the Father allows tribulation (i.e. evil) to refine Christians living in this age. But Terence only relates part of the cosmic story since (for disciples of Christ) "there are prison, chains and torture to bear, pain to suffer, and even death itself to be accepted and endured" (*carcer catenae tormenta patienda, sustinendi dolores, mors denique ipsa et suscipienda est et ferenda*) in order to attain the prize that the Father grants virtuous humans (7.27.3 Brandt). The Father (by means of special revelation) reassures his worshipers that he will bestow the everlasting reward for piety or virtue through the righteous sage that he dispatched to the world in order to liberate humans from cosmic evil. As Lord and Father, God "created and made out of nothing (*conflauit ac perfecit e nihilo*) everything there is in this world of his; he saw the mistakes of men, and sent a guide to open the path of justice for us" (7.27.5 Bowen and Garnsey translation). This leader sent from the Father did not merely articulate the path of justice. Lactantius professes that he personally walked in rectitude as he taught humanity how to live virtuously before the supreme God and Father of all (7.27.7). Christ is the paramount teacher of righteousness, who instructs Christians in preparation for the God ordained millennial rule on earth: he discloses the divine way of righteousness for obedient humanity (*hominum ducem misit qui nobis iustitiae uiam panderet*).[1374] Lactantius

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[1372] Daley, *Hope of the Early Church*, 68.

[1373] DI 7.27.3: English translation is Bowen and Garnsey. The Latin text is Brandt CSEL 19:669. See *Phormio* 249 in *Publii Terentii Comoediae sex*, ed. Edward St. John Parry (London: Whittaker, 1857).

[1374] DI 7.27.5-6. See Brandt CSEL 19:670; Bowen and Garnsey, *Divine Institutes*, 440-441.

acknowledges this preeminent sage as the unique guide whom Christians are bound to obey. He is the Father's preeminent Son.

Conversely, Lactantius notes that a different eventuality awaits those who spurn the eternal for the temporal or heavenly treasures for fleshly delights. He argues that those who insist on looking down toward earth instead of up toward heaven—those who choose to venerate lifeless idols rather than live in accordance with the eternal and righteous laws of God "will be punished as deserters of him who is their master, their commander and their father" (7.27.15). While the final book of *Divinae institutiones* may appear stringent, it seems that Lactantius still invokes God's indulgent treatment of the pious (amid his talk of judgment for the ungodly) so that Christians might be persuaded to "win from [their] lord the prize for virtue which he himself has promised."[1375] On the other hand, the Lactantian description of what awaits the impious evidently functions as a moral warning for those who tread the path of divine justice. His portrayal of God's judgment admonishes Christians that the *summum bonum* is "to serve our father and lord most high for ever and to be God's eternal kingdom."[1376] These sentiments purportedly encapsulate the Father's perduring counsels for humanity. The only authentic or suitable goods are those which are eternal in nature. Lactantius ultimately professes that the realization of God's will in the eschaton adequately illustrates how the Father balances his well-ordered attributes and divine paternity.

Findings

Christian eschatology attempts the difficult task of conceptually balancing God's severity and indulgence. Lactantius believes that God will manifest his severity to those rational creatures who fail to heed his voice or who spurn the teacher of justice (the Son of God). In order that he might distribute punishments in a just or righteous manner, God has dispatched the teacher of justice to disclose the way of righteousness (*Divinae institutiones* 4.10.1; 4.13.1). That instructor also has revealed the *summum bonum hominis* for the rational creatures whom God has fathered.

[1375] *Divinae institutiones* 7.27.16 (Bowen and Garnsey English translation).
[1376] Ibid. 7.6.1 (Bowen and Garnsey).

Lactantius argues that the utmost good for humanity is to serve the God and Father of all (2.11.19). Moreover, he suggests that divine paternity is eschatological in that rational creatures only have experienced a measure of divine goodness prior to the eschaton; it is just a harbinger of the paternal kindness that will be manifested when the Father blesses the pious but eternally punishes the ungodly (4.3.3). The final book of *Divinae institutiones* thus functions as an exhortation for rational creatures to glorify and praise humanity's Lord and Father (7.27.1).

Lactantius reasons that God the Father must be passible (in a certain sense) if he is going to treat both his good and bad servants with justice. He insists that a righteous God and Father must find pleasure regarding the pious acts of his servants but feel wrath for those acts which are not in accordance with divine law, those acts that do not promote human flourishing (*De ira Dei* 5). Nevertheless, if the Father is literally going to make a distinction in terms of the treatment that good and bad servants receive, then he must instantiate emotions. These states must be objectively differentiated in God lest he proves to be inanimate (*Divinae institutiones* 5.22.13). Since Lactantius is persuaded that some creatures—by dint of their actions—merit being hated or loved, he maintains that the Father must have actual emotions to qualify as a righteous deity (*De ira Dei* 6; *Divinae institutiones* 6.19.8). The only impassible entities are those beings that are inanimate or dead. Neither rocks nor trees nor sand can show emotions. However, Lactantius believes that the living God does experience such variations within himself (*De ira Dei* 4). Furthermore, he contends that where emotions do not exist, virtue cannot exist (*Divinae institutiones* 6.15.9). The virtuous Father of all is thus moved (internally) as he responds to virtuous or vicious human actions. His well-ordered experience of phenomenal subjectivity ensures that evil will not obtain forever since God apparently will treat evil and goodness in proportion to their respective dues (*De ira Dei* 16).

Lactantius reasons that if God is the authentic Father of all rational creatures with the pious constituting his children in the most eminent sense, then it seems almost certain that evil cannot plague humanity without ceasing (*Divinae institutiones* 7.19.1-2). Righteous agents often remember what others have done in their behalf. For instance, an indulgent master does not receive good treatment from a servant without reciprocating such behavior. While it must be conceded that a master legally does not owe anything to a servant for that which the latter is

obligated to do (Luke 17:1-10), Lactantius does profess that the indulgent or gracious master willingly renders kind acts to the good servant but distributes retribution on the bad servant (*De ira Dei* 5).

Since he avers that God the Father is an indulgent or equitable master, Lactantius apparently does not believe that it is factually possible for God to let pious behavior go unrewarded (*Divinae institutiones* 6.12.2). *Divinae institutiones* thus maintains that God's paternity is (to some extent) proleptic. It is only in the eschaton that God will reveal the full extent of his fatherliness. Furthermore, the ancient work written by Lactantius argues that the Father will not disregard the pious whose good deeds outweigh their bad. Lactantius consequently appears to be convinced that the Father will recompense all creaturely actions in the day of wrath: "the bitterness and misery we suffer here on earth when we perform our acts of justice cannot be compared or matched at all with that reward" (*Divinae institutiones* 7.27.2). The punishments and rewards meted out in the eschaton will demonstrate the eschatological nature of God's universal paternity.

Dissertation Conclusion

There are four major ideas that this study has made its focus. The conclusion will now review and synthesize the four primary concepts hitherto discussed. This study's focus has been to determine (1) the possible conceptual or ecclesiastical antecedents that motivated Lactantius to apply "Father" to God; (2) to explore what Lactantius and other Christian writers possibly mean by "Father" as a divine title; (3) to scrutinize how Lactantius conceives the relationship between the Father and the Son; (4) to probe the eschatological significance that "Father" possibly has for Lactantius. The first concept that this conclusion will review is how the pre-Nicenes (including Lactantius) understood God and divine gender.

Firstly, the ancient Christians (pre-Nicenes) acknowledged God as the Father of humanity and the Lord Jesus Christ (*Divinae institutiones* 2.8.3; 2.10.22). They generally did not think of God as masculine or as literally engendering the Son or humanity. Rather, they framed their discourse concerning divine paternity in terms of God engendering the Son like the created

intellect generates concepts or the mouth gives birth to speech (*Aduersus Praxean* 5-7; 11.1; *Aduersus Marcionem* 2.27). The early followers of Christ employed "Father" as a metaphor to delineate the relationship that God has with his people or to describe the unique relationship obtaining between the Father and the Son (*Divinae institutiones* 4.6.1-3). Similar to the Bible writers, the pre-Nicenes probably gave little thought to God's supposed ontological gender (Numbers 23:19; Hosea 11:9); it is likely that they did not ontologize divine gender. Professing God as "Father" was a rhetorical device as opposed to a metaphysical pronouncement (*Octavius* 18.1-10; *Divinae institutiones* 2.17.12). The metaphor of divine fatherhood was common in ancient Greece and Rome, in the venerable writings of Judaism and among other civilizations of the ancient near East (e.g. Mesopotamia and Egypt). Christians forged their concept of God the Father within a particular cultural milieu where the metaphor of divine fatherhood prevailed.

Secondly, it seems that the pre-Nicenes did not construe "Father" as a proper name for God. John W. Cooper has defined the expression "proper name" as that which is distinct from a proper noun in terms of its specificity and referential function (*Our Father*, 118). An example of a proper noun (according to Copper) might be Queen, President or King whereas proper names would include John, YHWH or Jesus. One can subsume proper names under the rubric of proper nouns, but the latter evidently does not exhaust the former. It also seems clear that proper names are more restrictive or narrower in scope than common nouns: they usually do not function as titles but as self-identifying markers. A proper name sets YHWH apart from other gods (e.g. Jupiter or Cronus) or John from other humans. But the pre-Nicenes evidently tended to believe that God the Father has no need of a proper *name* (in Cooper's sense of the word). While they worshiped God as Father, they apparently did not think that "Father" served to narrowly demarcate God from other deities (*Apology* 1.61). They reasoned that there is one God; hence, there is no need for a proper divine name (*Dialogus cum Tryphone* 127). The term "Father" served as what Cooper would call "a proper noun" as opposed to a proper *name*. However, neither Justin Martyr (*Apology* 2.6) nor Minucius Felix (*Octavius* 18.1-10) nor Novatian (*De Trinitate* 4.10-11) nor Lactantius (*Divine institutiones* 1.6.5) believed that "Father" serves to identify God's whatness or quiddity. The concept "Father" (they appear to contend) does not circumscribe God or refer to what God essentially is (*Cohortatio ad Graecos* 21). Minucius Felix actually suggests

that it is only by employing the *via remotionis* with respect to divine titles that one can discern God's transcendence. Christians must abstract from proper nouns such as "Father" or "Lord" to ascertain the divine majesty or beyondness. Lactantius also denies God has a proper name. He states *ex professo* that the only name requisitely belonging to deity is God (*Divinae institutiones* 1.6.5): "But since God is always one, his proper name is God" (*deo autem*, *quia semper unus est, proprium nomen est deus*).

It has been this study's contention that Lactantius employs "Father" as a metaphor to delineate what he perceives God's revealed nature to be. One could understand "metaphor" (in this context) as a rhetorical trope or a conceptual domain. Metaphor thus could be a way of speaking or a manner of thinking based on bodily experience. It is beyond the scope of this investigation to adjudicate matters concerning the rhetorical or conceptual nature of metaphor. There appears to be no strict linguistic reason to take an either/or approach in this instance: metaphors probably are both rhetorical and cognitive figures. But regardless of how one conceives metaphors, the evidence from antiquity suggests that metaphoric tropes exemplify an as-if (*als ob*) character. Quintillian, Cicero, Aristotle and Lactantius probably all think of metaphors as metasememes, that is, as words that highlight similarities or undergo some type of change in particular contexts (*De Oratore* 3.152-155; *Rhetorica* 3.1410b). The speech act of metaphoring entails taking words that apply to one entity or discourse field and applying them to other entities or discourse fields (*Poetica* 21.1457b*)*. Metaphoring (according to cognitive semantic theory) signifies an act of transferring concepts from one domain to another. Therefore, in the case of "Father," a term that conventionally applies to males in certain social, legal or biological contexts is applied to God. Hence, a certain level of incongruence is brought about; but when this incongruence is capable of being resolved, then one can say that a necessary condition for metaphoricity exists. Lactantius undoubtedly viewed metaphors in terms of as-if structures since he was familiar (as a rhetor) with the metaphor theories that appear in the works of Aristotle, Quintillian and Cicero. Moreover, he was probably influenced by these apparent substitution theories of metaphor or made use of them in his treatises. It is accordingly probable that Lactantius used "Father" as a metaphor or as-if structure. His specific uses of the word lead

one to believe that the term counted as a metaphor for him. The next paragraph reviews some of these usages.

Lactantius argues that God is the Father of humanity, the Son and the cosmos. He apparently accepts the narrative in Genesis about YHWH creating Adam from the dust of the ground and breathing into his nostrils the breath of life (Genesis 2:7). The first pentateuchal book indicates that God (as Father) placed Adam in a place of "great fertility and beauty" (*Divinae institutiones* 2.12.15) located in the East. That garden fulfilled every need of primordial man in order that he would be free to "serve God the Father with total devotion, free from any labour" (ibid.). His utmost purpose in life was to worship and glorify the Father. Lactantius relates that God assisted Adam in this endeavor by supplying "precise commandments" that would help him to attain immortality. However, the man disobeyed the explicit mandate of God concerning one tree in the midst of the garden (ibid. 2.12.16). This act of transgression occurred at the behest of a spirit whom the Father had endowed with free choice. The rebellious spirit chose to abuse the faculty of volition granted him by God (ibid. 2.8.4-5). Lactantius thus roots human anarchy or chaos in an act of disobedience to the Father. The poets and philosophers also indicate that human troubles are associated with a failure to acknowledge God's paternity. It is only by worshiping God as Father that humans can coexist in peace. This is the affirmation of Lactantius and other early Christian writers (*Octavius* 31; *Divinae institutiones* 5.23.1-2).

Not only is God the Father of humanity, however, but he has also engendered the Logos in a first and second nativity. Lactantius uses the language of creation *and* generation to delineate the nativity of the Son. In view of how he describes the generation of the Son in *Divinae institutiones* 4.6.1-3 and 4.8.1-8, it appears that Lactantius views God as a metaphorical or emblematic Father to the Son. God does not literally generate the Son. Rather, he "creates" or articulates the Son in some inscrutable manner. Passages such as the foregoing imply that there are most certainly elements of cosmological or ontological subordinationism in Lactantius. Nevertheless, it would probably be anachronistic to label him an Arian. On the other hand, the Lactantian use of "Father" as a metaphor seems to manifest itself when the apologist spells out the Son's relationship to the Father or explains how God brings it about that the Logos becomes

God's Son. His treatment (in this respect) is somewhat reminiscent of Tertullian's account in *Aduersus Praxean* 11: God made the immanent Word his own Son.

Besides functioning as a case study of Lactantius' *Divinae institutiones*, a major concern of this investigation is human discourse regarding the divine. What do Christians usually mean when they employ "Father" in reference to God? What implications are there for liturgy or how systematic theology formulates the Christian doctrine of God? This study implies that metaphoring is a speech act analogous to commanding, asserting, interrogating or promising. It is by means of constitutive rules that metaphors count as Y in a given context, C.[1377] Phatic or speech communities are responsible for valorizing the lexical meanings of signifiers or sentential locutions (*Aduersus nationes* 1.59). Denotations are communally derived unlike the *connotations* of terms which appear to be more pragmatic or shaped by the context of utterance.[1378] Consequently, in the case of "Father," it seems to be the phatic community known as the Christian *ecclesia* that determines the significance that "Father" will have in the liturgy or in systematic theology. However, the community of God's people must remain faithful to the inspired Word that contains Father imagery: "No one will be so impressed by the exhortations of any of the saints, as he is by the words of the Lord Himself, the lover of man" (*The Exhortation to the Heathen* 9). Furthermore, Christians address God as Father in the liturgy, but they must still recognize the tension that exists between the "is" and the "is not" of this metaphor: there is a sense in which God both is and is not Father. Metaphor ultimately emphasizes both similarity and difference between two distinct domains such as "father" and God.[1379] The ontologization of gender vis-à-vis the divine being should consequently be avoided; the metaphor must not become ossified or lose its significance *qua* metaphor. The Christian congregation thus has to ensure that Father will count as a metaphor in the context of liturgy (corporate worship) or theology. It should remind believers that "Father" (in this context) is a metaphor, not a metaphysical pronouncement concerning God's immanent being.

[1377] Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language*, 165.

[1378] See Teresa Dobrzyńska, "Translating Metaphor: Problems of Meaning," *Journal of Pragmatics* 24.6 (1995): 595-604.

[1379] See the caveats regarding metaphor given by Brian S. Rosner in his work *Greed as Idolatry: The Origin and Meaning of a Pauline Metaphor* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2007), 63. He argues that there are manifest

Metaphors have a necessary role or function in Christian discourse; they accomplish what "proper speech" cannot. Metaphors possibly mediate between the noetic world and the sensible realm or between the world of spirit and the corporeal realm of existence. Thomas Aquinas fittingly reminds us that metaphors which communicate spiritual truths are based on sensible appearances (*ST* Ia.1.9, *Responsio*). Such theological metaphors are also part of our lived existence insofar as tropic imagery of the divine plays a part in making human experience cohere. The metaphor "Father" helps us to structure our experience of God. For this reason, the first century Christians, Hilary of Poitiers, Lactantius, Augustine of Hippo, and Thomas Aquinas all recognized the integral role of metaphor in Christian discourse, even if they did not all concur with the assessment that "Father" is a metaphor. However, it is this study's contention that Lactantius views "Father" as a controlling theological metaphor that structures the Christian understanding of God. The concept exemplifies an as-if character for Lactantius to the extent that he uses it to describe God's relationship to the creation, the Son and to rational creatures living on earth.

This study has been an exercise in historical theology and theolinguistics. As such, it has appealed to metaphor and speech act theory as well as the categories of systematic theology to ascertain what Christians mean when using the term "Father." This investigation has taken a descriptive approach to the question of divine gender and the early church rather than assuming a prescriptive tone. While it appears that the early Latin church viewed "Father" as a metaphor or denied its status as a divine proper name, it is not the intent of the present writer to insist that the practice of the early Latin theologians should function as a normative precedent for the modern community of those who profess Christ. However, it does seem reasonable to assume that the contents of *Divinae institutiones* and other ancient Christian treatises should function as a matrix wherein theologians can formulate concepts or seek understanding (*fides quaerens intellectum*) of God the Father which includes the putative gender of God. However, gender evidently was not a central preoccupation for Lactantius. He apparently construed the "Father" as a metaphor that describes God's relationship with his covenant people and God's Son.

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similarities and differences between greed and the biblical metaphor of "idolatry" used to further define greed or covetousness.

Appendices

A. The Curriculum for Ancient Rhetoric

Initially, the Greek term rhetor denoted a "public speaker."[1380] Classical writers apply the morpheme to judges, politicians, legal advocates (in the papyri) and the terminology later describes professors who teach others the art of elocutionary speech.[1381] Cole describes rhetoric (in part) as "the influencing and swaying of the mind through words" (yucagwgi,a).[1382] It constitutes a te,cnh or craft of public discourse.[1383] In classical terms, on the other hand, rhetoric also is the science of persuasive speaking or writing.[1384] Aristotle himself defines this particular craft as the employment of available means for the sake of persuasion or for discerning "persuasive facts" in each individual case. Therefore, it seems probable that from a diachronic perspective, one can speak legitimately of rhetoric as "the written word attempting to do the work of the spoken word."[1385] Unfortunately, those who practiced the art of rhetoric during its inchoate stage lent an air of suspicion to the trade.[1386] Rhetoric thereby continued to be a pejorative signifier until modernity.

In spite of its established negative connotations, rhetoric became a distinctive or stable element of Greco-Roman education. Ancient professors of rhetoric usually delivered or read

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[1380] *Acharnians* 38, 680. The extant documents of ancient Greece lead one to believe that Plato devised the art of rhetoric. See Thomas Cole, *The Origins of Rhetoric in Ancient Greece* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1991), 2. The term "rhetoric" is not attested before the *Gorgias*. See *Gorgias* 453a, where Plato refers to rhetoric as "the artificer of persuasion" (Ibid). However, see Andrew Ford, "Sophists without Rhetoric: The Arts of Speech in Fifth-Century Athens," in *Education in Greek and Roman Antiquity*, ed. Yun Lee Too (Leiden, Boston and Köln: Brill, 2001), 87-90.

[1381] *LSJ* 1570.

[1382] See *Phaedrus* 261a7-8; 271c.

[1383] Kennedy, 3. The application of te,cnh to rhetoric illustrates the negative assessment that early Greeks generally had toward the craft. One can discern pejorative overtones vis-à-vis rhetoric in certain Platonic dialogues as well. See Habinek, *Ancient Rhetoric and Oratory*, 38-39.

[1384] See *Rhetorica* 1.2 1355b; 1.2.1356-57.

[1385] Cole, *Origins of Rhetoric*, 1.

[1386] Ibid. 159.

model speeches to their pupils as part of the learning curriculum.[1387] Moreover, prospective *rhetores* were taught speech structure as well as how to vary the style or subject matter of formal discourse.[1388] Those studying rhetoric also learned the five venerable canons of well-formed speech, namely, invention (eu[resij), disposition (oivkonomi,a or ta,xij), style (le,xij), delivery (u`pokri±sij), and memorization (mnh,mh).[1389] Pupils were thus obligated to construct periods (peri,odoi) in accordance with strict rules that governed the craft of rhetoric. Subsequently, their instructors would only permit them to quote or cite what could be demonstrated explicitly from their hitherto constructed texts.[1390] The goal of this extensive training (ideally) was developing the ability to speak extemporaneously in laudatory discourse. Lucian drolly alludes to this practice in *Dialogues of the Dead* 10.10.

B. Origen and the Eternal Generation of the Son

There is some debate to what extent Origen affirms God's paternity. Does he teach the eternal generation doctrine? In what sense is God "Father" in Origenian thought? While the ancient writer is not altogether clear in this respect, there probably is a sense in which Hall's analysis of Origen aptly encapsulates his thought: "God was however always Father; he could not change from one condition (not-Father) to another (Father). So the Son exists in God's timeless eternity."[1391] Origen himself possibly affirms the eternal generation of the Son in view of his sentential locution "There was not when he was not."[1392] Nonetheless, his theological account suggests that the Son is not intrinsically God (*autotheos*), but God by derivation only

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[1387] Hatch, *Influence of Greek Ideas*, 30.

[1388] Ibid.

[1389] Habinek, *Ancient Rhetoric and Oratory*, 102; Lanham, *Handlist of Rhetorical Terms*, 165-166. Donald L. Clark lists the Latin terms for these five parts of the rhetorical canon: *inventio*, *dispositio*, *elocutio*, *memoria* and *pronuntiatio* or *actio*. These expressions refer to the integral elements of a persuasive speech. One must bring the right elements together, arrange them effectively, find the appropriate terms, memorize a speech and deliver it with persuasion. See *Rhetoric in Greco-Roman Education* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1957), 69.

[1390] Hatch, *Influence of Greek Ideas*, 30.

[1391] Hall, *Doctrine and Practice*, 105.

[1392] See Crouzel, *Origen*, 186; Widdicombe, *Fatherhood of God*, 68. *Peri Archon* 1.2.2; 1.2.9; 4.4.1; 4.4.28; *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* 1.5 (PG 14); *Homily on Jeremiah* 9.4. However, Crouzel observes that Origen's use of aivw,n or aivw,nioj are not clear (187).

(*Commentary on the Gospel of John* 2.2).[1393] The Son is not "self-sufficiently" God[1394]; only the Father is Godself (*autotheos*) in Origen's theological paradigm. The Son is God in a strictly predicative manner[1395] or to a lesser degree than the Father is.[1396] But in what sense is the Father greater than the Son in Origen's system?

Hall indicates that Origen possibly balances his alleged subordinationism by means of the eternal generation doctrine, which would mean that the inferiority which he evidently ascribes to the Son is not ontological in nature.[1397] On the other hand, William J. Hill observes: "Still, eternal generation does not of itself give divine status because Origen views all spiritual beings, both what he calls *theoi* and human souls, as eternal."[1398] Similarly, Brown laments Origen's problematic approach to Christology and the Trinity since "he also taught the preexistence of individual human souls and spoke of those who are in Christ as eternally begotten."[1399] Nevertheless, it has been argued that this speculation about eternal souls does not diminish Origen's trinitarian contribution to the church. Nevertheless, Brown acknowledges that while Origen's eternal generation doctrine seemingly defeated the notion that the Son is temporally posterior to the Father, it "did not entirely throw off the assumptions of earlier Christian thinkers that the Son is subordinate to the Father" or not fully divine.[1400] Studer equally concludes that Origen "does not succeed in ruling out subordinationism."[1401] He points to Origen's belief that there are hierarchical grades in deity with the Son possibly being one of the Seraphim in Isaiah's vision of YHWH's glory (*Peri Archon* 1.3.4).[1402] Yet, certain scholars attempt to resolve the intricacies of Origen's scheme by positing the Son's subordination to the Father in an economic

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[1393] Studer, *Trinity and Incarnation*, 85.

[1394] Hall, *Doctrine and Practice*, 106.

[1395] Norris, *God and World in Early Christian Theology*, 155.

[1396] Hall, *Doctrine and Practice*, 106; Tripolitis, *Origen*, 18.

[1397] Ibid. Compare *Contra Celsum* 8.15.

[1398] W. J. Hill, *Three-Personed God*, 39. Granted, Origen attributes divinity to the Son. However, he makes a curious statement in *Commentary on John* 2.2 regarding the Son's maintenance of his divinity through uninterrupted contemplation of the Father.

[1399] H. O. J. Brown, *Heresies*, 90. See Jean Daniélou, *Origen* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1972), 256; Ehrman, *Lost Christianities*, 155.

[1400] *Heresies*, 91.

[1401] *Trinity and Incarnation*, 85.

[1402] Ibid. Both Fortman (*Triune God*, 57) and Daniélou (*Origen*, 255) refer to Origen's "hierarchical view of things" respecting the Father, Son and other spiritual beings. Joseph W. Trigg references the account of the

sense. What makes matters more problematic, however, is that the extant writings of Origen suggest that he himself may have inconsistently formulated his doctrine of the Father and the Son.[1403] It is possible that Origen views the Son as ontologically subordinate to the Father (*Contra Celsum* 8.15) whereas other passages appear to teach that he does not think the Son is lesser in relation to his Father.[1404] The treatises of Origen accordingly tend to be aporetic.

Another factor lending itself to the aporetic tendencies of Origen's theology is his use of the term "creature" (kti,sma) for the Son.[1405] This usage has generated many discussions in Origen studies, discussions that have not led to wholly satisfactory conclusions. The first systematic theologian evidently derives kti,sma from Proverbs 8:22-25 (LXX).[1406] Neoplatonism may also influence what seems to be an idiosyncratic utilization of "creature" (kti,sma).[1407] Crouzel in fact believes that "creation" (kti,sij) for Origen applies to "everything that comes from God."[1408] Along with Prestige and Wiles, he notes the fluid synonymity that existed between the words "generate" (genna,w) and "create" (gi,nomai) prior to Nicea.[1409] If this line of reasoning corresponds with the speech strategy of Origen, there would appear to be no genuine conflict between his supposed affirmation of the eternal generation doctrine and his manifest employment of "creature." Yet although the Father putatively generates the Son timelessly in the thought of Origen, he clearly adheres to the notion that there are grades of being in the divine.[1410] Bulgakov thinks that Origen does not master cosmological subordinationism "with reference to the mutual relations of the hypostases, with reference to their

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Seraphim but he does not make much of Origen's "subordinationism" nor the account contained in Isaiah. See *Origen* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), 23-24.

[1403] Brown, *Heresies*, 91. Compare *Peri Archon* 1.3.7 with *Commentary on John* 13.25; 25.152.

[1404] Ehrman, *Lost Christianities*, 155.

[1405] Widdicombe (*Fatherhood of God*, 89) insists that Origen "almost certainly called the Son a kti,sma in the original text of *De Principiis* [*Peri Archon*]." Nevertheless, he states that the word's sense in Origen (when applied to the Son) is not clear (Ibid). See *Peri Archon* 4.4.1; Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition*, 1:191; Charles W. Lowry, "Did Origen Style the Son a kti,sma?" *JTS* 39 (1938): 39-42.

[1406] Hill, *Three-Personed God*, 39.

[1407] Frend, *Rise of Christianity*, 377. See A.H. Armstrong, "The Plotinian Doctrine of nou/j in Patristic Theology," *VC* 8.4 (1954): 234-238.

[1408] *Origen*, 186. Cf. *Peri Archon* 1.2.10.

[1409] Maurice Wiles, "Eternal Generation," *JTS* 12 (1961): 284-291; Prestige, *God in Patristic Thought*, 37-54.

[1410] Murray, *The Problem of God*, 37.

equal dignity and divinity."[1411] Even if he did posit a timeless or eternal generation for the Son, Origen also argues that other "created" rational spirits are eternal.[1412] In the final analysis, if "Father" is a metaphor for Christianity's first systematic theologian, it is a rather curious trope that appears in his writings.

C. Nietzsche and Metaphor

Friedrich Nietzsche insists that contexts are never "absolutely determinable."[1413] They are mutable or in a constant state of flux. As a result, contexts seem to partake incessantly of Heraclitean becoming (*panta rhei*). Nietzsche appears to think that there are no brute facts (= mind-independent facts), only institutional "facts" which are in essence illusory.[1414] Furthermore, he does not believe it is essential to distinguish between phenomena and noumena since he completely disavows Kant's theory of the "thing in itself" (*Ding-an-sich*).[1415]

Nietzsche avers that metaphor filters every sort of human knowing. He thereby believes that sapient cognition only transpires under the auspices of metasememic indirection. Epistemologically, this means that rational sentient beings can never access the world immediately or directly: "There are no unfiltered facts."[1416] Nietzsche additionally contends that metaphors are signifiers that now and again bridge distinct entities which human beings reference through natural language systems: "It is this way with all of us concerning language; we believe that we know something about the things themselves when we speak of trees, colors, snow, and flowers; and yet we possess nothing but

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[1411] *The Comforter*, 20. Wiles also concludes that "The idea of eternal generation as it stands in Origen's scheme of thought as a whole does not really have any effective anti-subordinationist significance at all" ("Eternal Generation," 288). See Daniélou's remarks on Origen's "subordinationism" in *Origen*, 255, 261. On the other hand, Crouzel maintains that subordinationism is a "quite equivocal notion" in that it is capable of being employed to describe both Origen's and Arius' Christology. But he insists that the "subordinationism" of the former should not be confused with that of the latter *Origen*, 188.

[1412] R. A. Norris Jr., *God and World in Early Christian Theology*, 150-152.

[1413] Quoted in Ward, *Word and Supplement,* 89.

[1414] Naugle, *Worldview*, 101. However, one should qualify this Nietzschean belief since it ostensibly changes over time. See Danto, *Nietzsche as Philosopher*, 96.

[1415] Consult Nietzsche, *Human, All Too Human*; David K. Naugle, *Worldview: The History of a Concept* (Grand Rapids and Cambridge, UK: Eerdmans, 2002), 98-99; Schacht, *Nietzsche*, 84-85.

[1416] See Holmes, *Fact, Value, and God*, 170.

metaphors for things-metaphors which correspond in no way to the original entities."[1417] Naming is consequently an abuse of language; it is catachrestic for Nietzsche. There is allegedly no strict metaphysical association between signifiers and their creaturely designated referents. Therefore, he insists that metaphors (= the human implementation of language) are not "natural kinds" but contingent, social constructions.[1418] There purportedly are no facts, only interpretations; that is, there are no facts in themselves or, at least, one cannot demonstrate apodictically that brute facts objectively subsist.[1419] Of course, the belief that no brute facts exist is a natural consequence of the notion that God is dead. If God is dead, no extrametaphorical grounding obtains; rather, there is only an infinite play of signifiers utilized by discourse agents.[1420]

Nietzsche regrettably does not define the referring-expression "metaphor." However, he does conscript *Übertragung* or *ubertragen* to classify "the basic operation of tropes in general rather than name metaphor as such."[1421] This "basic operation of tropes" includes metaphor proper, metonymy and synecdoche. Nietzsche views these rhetorical tropes as variant forms of metasememic transference.[1422] One can observe an example of this line of reasoning, when he aphoristically postulates an identity between Will and Wave (*Wille und Welle*) in the posthumously named *The Will to Power* (*Der Wille zur Macht*).[1423] The sensible objects of the phenomenal realm (Nietzsche maintains) correspond to subjective states. Hence, he posits an existential correlation between "Will and Wave": the distinction between metaphor and world consequently disintegrates in his worldview (*Weltanschauung*).[1424]

Nietzsche is palpably convinced that the empirical world of sensible objects reflects subjective states externalized and nothing more.[1425] The phenomenal realm ostensibly is a projection of the will since the will holds primacy in relation to the external world or artistically

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[1417] *On Truth and Lies*, 82-83.

[1418] Murphy, *Nietzsche*.

[1419] John T. Wilcox argues (on the basis of *Beyond Good and Evil* 108 and *Twilight of the Idols* 8.1) that there considers morals or values matters of perspective or interpretation (*Truth and Value in Nietzsche*, 38-39). However, he qualifies this observation by noting that there appear to be passages in Nietzsche that imply values are not simply matters of perspective.

[1420] Schacht, *Nietzsche*, 118-121.

[1421] Murphy, *Nietzsche*, 22.

[1422] Ibid. 23.

[1423] Arendt, *Judging*, 164-165.

[1424] Ibid.

creates it.[1426] Consequently, for Nietzsche, all truth is "anthropomorphic" or filtered: reality is identical with "transference."[1427] He thus fatefully collapses the traditional distinction between metaphor and nature; Alan Megill fittingly classifies Nietzsche's theoretical framework as aesthetic.[1428] The world (on this view) is an aesthetically generated product.

Despite the manifest brilliance on display in his writings, one frequent criticism of Nietzsche's account respecting world and metaphor is that it appears to be self-referentially incoherent. If there actually are no brute facts, then his metaphorology cannot be representative of any ultimate state of affairs. It too must be an institutional "fact" or one individual's cosmic perspective.[1429] On the other hand, if a state of affairs does obtain beyond phenomenal appearances, then one cannot say what state of affairs (*Verhältnisse*) objectively subsists beyond sensible appearances; one is simply confined to asserting that mind-independent *Verhältnisse* subsist or do not subsist. Additionally, Nietzsche's philosophical approach does not facilitate ascertaining how he arrives at the conclusion that the world is a self-creating aesthetic object or metaphor. However, that does not seem to be a Nietzschean concern.

Contra Nietzsche, John Searle reasons that certain states of affairs or entities just are P, regardless of any given percipient subject's manner of representation. That the Sun is a certain distance from the earth or that the atomic weight of helium is two evidently does not depend on human subjectivity (i.e. phenomenality): Searle argues that these simply are brute facts.[1430] Moreover, if every so-called fact or utterance is metaphorical,[1431] it appears that there would be no possible way to differentiate metaphoric from literal language and then claim that all language is metaphorical.[1432] This investigation therefore submits that not all speech is metaphorical.[1433] Some literal permanence of semanticity must obtain in an abstract lexis in order for communication to

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[1425] Ibid. 166.

[1426] Arendt, *Judging* 165.

[1427] See Gumpel, *Metaphor Reexamined*, 26-27 for the thought that Nietzsche denies the existence of a thing-in-itself (*Ding-an-sich*) and *The Gay Science* (*Die Fröhliche Wissenschaft*).

[1428] See *Prophets of Extremity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987).

[1429] See McIntyre's *Three Rival*.

[1430] *The Construction of Social Reality*, 190-194.

[1431] Lawrence M. Hinman, "Nietzsche, Metaphor, and Truth," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 43.2 (1982): 179-199.

[1432] Danto, *Nietzsche as Philosopher*, 44-45; Zimany, *Vehicle for God*, 52-53.

[1433] See Murphy, *Nietzsche, Metaphor, Religion*, 23-24; Hick, *Myth of God Incarnate*.

occur and societies to cohere (in some sense); there must also be a sense in which contexts are relatively stable.

D. Father and Metonymy

A metonym is a rhetorical device or trope wherein one replaces the "proper terminology" (*verbum proprium*) with another term (*verbum*) that stands in "a real relationship" (not a comparative relationship) to the pragmatic intentionality of a determinate speaker or writer.[1434] Metonyms entail contiguity between A and B (e.g. God and Father) whereas metaphors emphasize similarities between A and B.[1435] Based on the foregoing definition, is it possible that "Father" is a metonym rather than a metaphor? Does it stand in a real (i.e. semantic) or does it stand in a comparative relationship to the signifier "God" such that "Father" can be a surrogate for "God"?

It appears that "Father" (as a divine title) is not a metonym for Christians. It appears that one cannot legitimately substitute "God" and "Father" *salva veritate* in the context of Christian discourse. This position allegedly derives from the testimony of Scripture and the Patristics.[1436] The terms "God" and "Father" are not substitutable without a loss of meaning. Hence, "Father" evidently is not a metonym for "God": Father is a signifier that predicates something of deity not contained in the term "God."

Not only do ecclesiastical writings demonstrate the plausibility of this notion, but Thompson maintains "the historical context of Jesus' own day, as well as the New Testament data themselves, mitigate [sic] against the claims that the name of God is Father or Father, Son, Holy Spirit."[1437] There appear to be no OT passages wherein YHWH directly applies "Father" to his person.[1438] Granted, worshipers of YHWH address him in this manner (Isaiah 63:8). But the divine title never seems to reach the level of a proper name (*nomen proprium*) in ancient Judaism. Just as father,

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[1434] Lausberg, *Handbook of Literary Rhetoric*, § 565.
[1435] See Louis Goossens, "Metaphtonymy: The Interaction of Metaphor and Metonymy in Expressions for Linguistic Action," in *Metaphor and Metonymy in Comparison and Contrast*, 350-351.
[1436] *Adversus Hermogonem* 3.4; *Apology* 2.6; *Octavius* 18.8.
[1437] *Promise of the Father*, 176.

mother, mom or dad are not proper names in human families, so "Father" or "Son" are not proper names with respect to the divine mode of being.[1439] And just as the quadrilateral self-designation of God was viewed as ineffable based on certain understandings of Leviticus 24:1-16, so "Father" probably became a reverential circumlocution in ancient Judaism (according to later rabbinic sources).[1440] Hence, ancient Jews or early Christians probably did not construe it as a proper name of God or as a metonym capable of being interchanged with the appellation "God."

[1438] Ibid. 177.
[1439] Ibid. 177-178.
[1440] *De Somniis* 1.67; *De Mutatione Nominum* 11-15; *Apology* 1.61, 63; *Apology* 2.6.1; *Stromata* 5.12.82.1.

Timeline for Lactantius

250-The birth of Lactantius.

275-The birth of Constantine.

303-Diocletian persecution of the church starts.

305-Lactantius leaves Nicomedia.

306-Constantine's father, Constantius Chlorus, dies in York and his son is made Caesar.

310-Constantine summons Lactantius to tutor Crispus.

312-Constantine has a vision or dream and conquers Maxentius at the Milvian Bridge.

315-Published *De mortibus persecutorum*.

320-Lactantius composes the *Epitome*.

321-Constantine made Sunday an official day of worship.

325-Council of Nicea convenes and decides that the Son is *homoousion to patri*. In the same year, Lactantius evidently dies.

337-Eusebius of Nicomedia baptizes Constantine on his deathbed.

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