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Befriending the Other & Another: Trinities & Trilogue

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Abstract: This paper carries the conversations between the ‘I-Thou’ or ‘I-Other’ a step further by introducing a ‘Third’ therein. We randomly use clichés like: “Two is company, three is a crowd.” Begging to differ, the author hypothesizes that, “Two is comfort, three is either community or conflict.” Beginning with examples of family life and cinema, and acknowledging contributions of thinkers like Homi Bhabha and Martin Buber who’ve reflected upon ‘threeness’ or ‘thirdness’ as hybridity or some Absolute Being, respectively, the paper is more specifically theological. Noting that many of the world’s religions have Trinitarian conceptions of the Divine, the paper reflects upon the Christian Trinity—Father, Son, Spirit—as a model of communion and community. With insights from eminent theologians, and also from Pope Francis’s insights on “The Trinity and the Relationship between Creatures,” in his encyclical entitled ‘*Laudato Si*’, it strives to show how the Christian Trinity inspires us to comprehend and commune with ‘threeness’ not only among human beings, but with God-Others-Nature, which ‘is’ the heart of reality. Finally, it proposes that all peoples of goodwill embark upon a path of ‘trilogue’—transcending dialogue, which could be the meeting ground of all those cooperatively working for a better world.

Keywords: I-Thou; Thirdness; Dialogue; Trilogue; God; Trinity; Community;

Introduction: Befriending ‘An-other’

Human beings are relational beings. At birth, a baby is the most helpless of creatures who gradually grows into ‘being human’ in and through its relationships with other human beings. Being-in-relationship shapes our humanity; for, the ‘other’ is indispensable in building a stable and mature sense of the ‘self’.¹ In technical terms, such relationships have been studied as an ‘I-Thou’ category.² Indeed, the study of the dynamics of ‘otherness’ or ‘alterity’ in the fields of philosophy, theology, sociology and psychology has led to much theorizing on the complexities of relationship. Moreover, the JDV Diamond Jubilee seminar’s theme ‘Befriending the Other’ is yet another instance of delving deeper into the subject.

While accepting that the ‘I-Thou’ primordial relationship is of great significance, this paper argues for a tridimensional view of reality and discusses its possibilities in the field of theology. In other words, I attempt to take our conversations a step further by introducing a ‘third’ in the dynamics between the ‘I-Thou’ or ‘I-Other’. The ‘third’, I hold, engenders situations of cooperation and communion, on the one hand, as well as conflict and crises, on the other. This is best seen in the Christian paradigm of the Triune God, which holds together one-ness and three-ness in perfect harmony. I begin with mundane, everyday ideas of two-ness and three-ness, and then transport the discussion to the transcendental terrain.

1. Negotiating the ‘Third’ in Everyday Encounters, in the Arts, and Academy

“Two is company, three is a crowd” is a cliché which most people hold to be true. Simply stated, most people think that a relationship of two people—for example, between husband and wife, or two friends or two parties in a contract—ensures smooth functioning. Bring in a third party and there’s bound to be some friction or open conflicts, so goes the reasoning. While

there is some truth in such logic, an exclusive relationship of two persons need not necessarily be an ideal one in terms of values or ultimate goals which human beings normally strive for. For instance, a person who relates to another in any form of relationship (friendly, contractual, business, spousal, etc.) could be ‘befriending the other’ simply for selfish, self-seeking and utilitarian purposes rather than for love, selfless giving, sacrifice and in order to ensure the other’s growth and welfare. Such relationships can be verified as genuine if it opens out to a so-called ‘third’.

Based on the aforementioned reasoning, I hold that: “Two is comfort, but three is either community [if negotiated skillfully] or conflict [if mishandled].” Introduce a ‘third’ into any twosome, and one is likely to realize whether or not one’s other-centeredness and ‘befriending’ is genuine or not. Let us discuss some instances of this. Take the case of a married couple that enjoys marital bliss for many years. The attention and energy of each spouse is entirely and exclusively directed towards the ‘other’. However, the birth of a child could initially be a source of great joy, but could also lead to conflict; because now, besides giving time and attention to each other, the couple must care for the child. There is the possibility of either spouse giving so much of attention to the child so as to neglect the ‘other’ spouse, leading to resentment and conflict. Or, it could also happen that the husband and wife are so lost in loving each other so as to neglect the child. Seen from anyone’s viewpoint—i.e., father or mother or child—it is easier to relate only to just one ‘other’ rather than to relate to two others at the same time. Indeed, it’s not easy to include a ‘third’. Yet, it is only when the love of two opens out to a ‘third’ that true love is tested and ‘company’ (that can often be self-seeking comfort, at best, or selfish utilitarianism, at worst) blossoms into what I would call ‘the first moment of community’ with the possibility of either communion (positive) or conflict (negative).

In the fields of drama and cinema, too, we have many instances of the conflict that arises from the proverbial “I-You and s/he” triangular relationship. In Indian cinema—be it in Bollywood, Kollywood or Tollywood—one recurrent theme is the ‘*Hum-Tuum-Whoh*’ [I-You-s/he] when a ‘third’ enters into a twosome friendship and creates heartache or heartbreak for one or the other of the friends. This ‘third’ turns what seemed like heaven into hell. Interestingly, Sartre’s famous axiom, “Hell is other people” comes from his play ‘No Exit’ wherein three unknown and unrelated persons are locked together in a room with no possibility of exit or escape.³ As the play progresses, each one of the three realizes how detestable the company of the ‘other’ is and how each of them unwittingly becomes ‘hell’ for the other two: a good example of ‘three is conflict’!

We can also think of the theorizing that has been going on in academic circles. For instance, thinkers like Homi K. Bhabha have developed terms like ‘Third Space’,⁴ which refers to a *hybridity*—an ‘in-between’ that is syncretistic and characterized by negation and silence. This space is that of an apophatic ‘undecidability’ in the realm of cultural description.⁵ Such a position can be reached by a dialectic of thesis, antithesis and synthesis, the third term being a syncretic *hybrid* of the first two. Likewise, the philosopher Martin Buber whose conception of the ‘*I-Thou*’ was extremely influential in existential philosophy reflects upon ‘*threeness*’ or ‘*thirdness*’ in terms of human relationships opening out to a transcendental Third.⁶ In all these cases we see that the ‘third’ has given rise to a new situation which calls for added caution and consideration. Let us now move on to the field of religion and theology.

2. Trinities in Global Religious Consciousness

A phenomenology of religion reveals that many of the world's religions have Trinitarian conceptions of the Divine: (a) Christianity believes that Jesus revealed God as Triune or Trinity; (b) Classical Hinduism has conceptions of *Trimurti* (Brahma-Vishnu-Siva) and *Saccidānanda*; (c) Buddhism understands Buddha as being *Trikāya* (*dharmakāya-nirmanakāya-sambhogakāya*); (d) Zoroastrianism has the trio of Zurvan, the mighty god of time, and his two sons, Ahriman (active force) and Ormazd (passive force) and so on. Furthermore, the Babylonian triad of Anu, Bel and Ea and the Egyptian triad of the Father, Son and Ka-mutef give added credence to the belief that the 'three' is significant as an archetype of divinity or religious consciousness.

Apart from a phenomenology of religions, Carl G. Jung, the founder of analytical psychology hypothesizes that triads are archetypes in the history of religions that provide religious communities pregnant possibilities to discuss divinity. With the help of many examples, he shows how the number 'three' is significant, worldwide, when imaging or conceiving of deity. Without going into details of the many trinities conceived of and worshipped in the world's religions, let us reflect more closely on how we can think of the Christian Trinity as a model or paradigm of communion and community.

3. The Development of Trinitarian Theology for Life in Community

It is not uncommon in Christian circles nowadays to speak about the Holy Trinity—Father, Son, and Spirit—as a 'communion of persons'. Many theologians have been reflecting upon this idea of 'trinitarian communion of persons' in many parts of the world, including India. Theological thinking in this realm is more popularly called 'social trinitarianism'. While the term 'social trinitarianism' is fairly

new, the origins of such person/communitarian-oriented theologizing goes far back to the early centuries of Christianity. The earliest proponents of the social analogy were the 4th century Cappadocian Fathers who likened Father, Son and Spirit to three human persons.⁷ The social analogy reappeared in a new avatar in the 12th century with Richard of St. Victor's trinitarianism based on interpersonal love. However, the 19th century Russian Orthodox theologian Nikolai Fedorov's (1829-1903) oft-quoted axiom: "The Trinity is our social programme," most clearly sums up the thinking in this sphere.

Today, eminent proponents of social trinitarianism are Joseph A. Bracken,⁸ Leonardo Boff,⁹ and Jürgen Moltmann,¹⁰ among others. In India, Geevarghese Mar Osthathios initially used the analogy of the nuclear family to explain the Trinity and the consequent demands of establishing a classless society.¹¹ Though his approach to the Indian situation of inequality and injustice incorporates Marxian insights, the society he envisages is more Gandhian since he sees *sarvodaya* (development of all) as the ideal of classless society.¹² In a later work, Geevarghese develops his trinitarian theology in terms of a 'Sharing God' by using traditional concepts like *koinonia* and *agape*, borrowing from Moltmann and Boff, and incorporating insights from Scripture and Tradition.¹³

Based on my own experiences with the *adivasis* (tribals) of south Gujarat, I earlier attempted to evolve a social paradigm of Trinity by using insights from the tribal worldview.¹⁴ In line with Rahner's "from the economic to the immanent trinity" principle, I argued that doctrine on the Trinity arose and developed not as abstract metaphysical principles about God descending *from above*, but as a process of reflection on communitarian experiences emerging *from below*. The first Christian believers' experiences of calling God *Abba*-Father in prayer, and the power they received from the Holy Spirit, were not only expressed in the creedal confessions of

scripture, but also in their ritual and liturgical celebrations now focused upon Jesus Christ. In Jesus' person and life, the early Christian community tangibly experienced the love of Jesus-Father-Spirit, expressed it in word (Jn 3:16; Rom 8:38-39) and emulated it in their everyday living (Acts 2:42-7; 4:32-37). Their focus was on love, service, caring, sharing, sacrifice, solidarity and communion with God and with one another.

Common to early trinitarian confessions is the aspect of their relevance for communion and community life. This new life was possible only through their 'experience of salvation'¹⁵ in the Holy Spirit and in Jesus who taught them that God is *Abba*,¹⁶ Father—intimate, mother-like, and approachable (Gal 4:4-7; Rom 8:15-16). This relationship of nearness and intimacy animated their own teaching and liturgy (*leitourgia*), as well as their community life (*koinonia*) overflowing into service (*diakonia*). Thus, from earliest times, the trinitarian focus was always soteriological and practical, namely, stressing God's salvation *in practice* of liturgy, sacraments and everyday life, rather than seeking precise articulation in theory or in dogmas.

It is important to note that the trinitarian theology or 'God-talk' that emerged early in the Christian Tradition was developed through analogical thinking and articulated in analogical language;¹⁷ for, "we have no choice whatever but to speak of God in terms derived from our experience of creaturely reality—that is, by analogy."¹⁸ Thus, since the parables, analogies and images that Jesus used for talking about God were drawn from the human person and from the communitarian nature of love. Christ's first disciples and later theologians would speak about God from what they experienced, read and reflected upon the life, love and liberation that Jesus came to bring.¹⁹ Unfortunately, in the later development of trinitarian doctrine, the aspect of love, sharing and true relationship was eclipsed by terms and concepts

consonant with the popular philosophies of the times. This often led to aberrations and heresies.

The aberrations and heresies that arose in the Christian Tradition in trinitarian thinking were outcome of steering the trinitarian debate either excessively towards the pole of oneness or towards that of threeness. In the Patristic theology of the East, for instance, the idea prevailed that the one God is God the Father, and that the Son and the Spirit share with him his divine life. Though based on Scripture, this conception led to subordinationist ideas that culminated in the Arian controversy. By contrast, the West conceived of God as the one divine substance comprising Father, Son and Holy Spirit, often losing sight of the distinction and giving rise to modalist tendencies. Consequently, while modalism and monarchianism so stressed the divine unity thereby eclipsing the distinction between the divine persons, subordinationism and tritheism erred by dividing the Godhead into three different beings unequal in rank or entirely separate from each other. One might hold that while the West reflected on the unity, only then to include threeness, the East reversed this: it began with the three different beings (*hypostaseis*) and attempted to understand their unity. Although this East-West typology should not be exaggerated, it prompts us to stay away from theological terminology that arose in bygone contexts, which are very different from those of our day, and to reinterpret the Trinity using the language of person, relationship, community and communion.

4. The Christian Trinity as Triune Being-in-Communion

In countries of the East, and especially in India, although we see a gradual growth of individualism, the family-clan-community holds precedence over the individual. Relationships are given great importance in social life. One's

personhood is defined in and shaped by one's relationship with one's family-clan-community. However, there is a difference between saying 'human persons are relational' and 'God is relational'. In the former case, we are referring to the *capacity* or *potentiality* to enter into relationships and thereby to develop 'personality', which is the sum total of the moral, attitudinal and behavioural qualities one imbibes and possesses. Here, the more and better relationships that one '*has*', the more and better are one's chances of actualizing one's personhood into a balanced personality.²⁰ In this sense, when we speak of anyone being relational, we mean that one *has* relationships or is relational in a secondary sense. But, when we say 'God is relational' and speak of 'person' in God, we assert that being relational is the very *essence* or *nature* of God.²¹ Thus, while we *have* relations, God *is* the relations that God has.²² Or, for God, 'to be' and 'to be in relation' is one and the same thing.

As compared to Western, modern and postmodern societies that foster independence and individualism to a large extent, communities in India that are bound together by relations of interdependence, sharing, caring and community-spirit are more likely to resonate with the image of a God-in-communion. In these communities, while the primacy of the community is stressed over the individual, it does not mean that the individual is unimportant, for there is also respect for the life of all members. This is not exactly so when we speak about the Trinity since, in the Triune God, 'person' and 'community' coincide. This is well expressed by Barry who writes:²³

God is perfect community. The three persons are so united with one another that they share everything in common; the only difference between them is their mutual relationships to one another. Hence, in the community that is God there can be no disunity, no separation, and no fear.

The multiplicity of three persons does not in any way imply a division of the divine nature, since the three divine persons coinhere; and, the entirety of divine nature is in each of them.

To conclude our discussion, we can affirm: “God’s being is communion”²⁴ or God is personal *Being-in-Communion*, meaning, God eternally exists as a ‘communion of persons’. In other words, God does not exist as some substance or as some abstract principle but as a relationship of persons.²⁵ Each member of the Trinity “is a person, a distinct person, but scarcely an *individual* or *separate* person. For in the divine life there is no isolation, no insulation, no secretiveness, no fear of being transparent to another.”²⁶ Thus, ‘person’ becomes a primary ontological category, and the ‘being-in-communion’ of divine persons becomes a model and a challenge for the being of human community, and for every Christian community, in particular.

5. Pope Francis’s Insights into Trinitarian Relationship and Community

One of the world’s religious leaders who is immensely influential for his moral integrity, spiritual insights and social teachings is Pope Francis. His recent reflections on: “The Trinity and the Relationship between Creatures,” in his Encyclical Letter ‘*Laudato Si*’ shows us how the Christian Trinity could inspire us to comprehend and commune with ‘threeness’ not only among human beings, but with God-Others-Nature, which is at the heart of everyone and everything that exists.²⁷ In other words, Pope Francis takes our discussion deeper by embracing not only all of humankind, but also the whole of God’s created universe. He writes:²⁸

The divine Persons are subsistent relations, and the world, created according to the divine model, is a web of relationships. Creatures tend towards God, and in turn it is proper to every living being to tend towards

other things, so that throughout the universe we can find any number of constant and secretly interwoven relationships. This leads us not only to marvel at the manifold connections existing among creatures, but also to discover a key to our own fulfilment. The human person grows more, matures more and is sanctified more to the extent that he or she enters into relationships, going out from themselves to live in communion with God, with others and with all creatures. In this way, they make their own that trinitarian dynamism which God imprinted in them when they were created. Everything is interconnected, and this invites us to develop a spirituality of that global solidarity which flows from the mystery of the Trinity.

6. Social Trinitarianism Fructifying into Trilogue

Our conceiving of the Christian Trinity as a ‘communion of persons’ and a model for community building leads us to theologize on what could be practical consequences of such a conception. For purposes of brevity, I merely suggest one: namely, as Christians, we are called and challenged to embark upon a path of ‘*trilogue*’. Whether in general terms,²⁹ or as literary form,³⁰ or in a more technical sense as used in the academy or by the disciplines,³¹ ‘dialogue’ refers to an exchange between two subjects or groups/communities, most commonly identified by the binary *I-Thou*, or *Self-Other*. Even if, at times, more than two persons/parties are involved in this exchange, the ‘more-than-two’ factor is again either identified as *Thou-Other* or simply as *Plural* or *Many*. In other words, ‘*Thirdness*’, if one might call it that, is not accorded special attention. Barring Bhabha and Buber, whom we mentioned above, and who explain ‘*thirdspace*’ or ‘*Third*’ as *hybridity* or some Absolute, respectively, Henri Lefebvre proposes triadic analysis as an effective way to encounter reality. He writes:³²

Triadic analysis distinguishes itself from dual analysis just as much as from banal analysis. It doesn’t lead to a synthesis in accordance with the Hegelian schema

... [it] links three terms that it leaves distinct, without fusing them in a synthesis (which would be the third term).

Thus, while the aim of dialogue normally seems to be some Hegelian synthesis or consensus,³³ *trilogue* maintains a *three-one tension* and *always* holds together reality within a *thirdspace*, so to say. Further elaboration from the field of music, might clarify the concept of *trilogue* more.

A 'trilogy' is a combination of *three* dramas, literary works, musical compositions or dance movements *closely related* into a *single* theme. The important words are: (a) three, (b) closely related, and (c) single. One can also think of three *distinct things* like: (a) a piece of wood called 'violin', (b) a length of wire called 'string' and (c) some hairs from a horse's tail drawn into a 'violin bow'. When an accomplished violinist draws the bow over violin strings, the ensuing music is nothing like wood, wire or a horse's tail, but while the audience enjoys the melodious music (One), it can point out where the violin's wood is, what the string does, and how a horse's tail makes good bows (Three). Note that there is *tension (conflict)* in this triad, for, if the violinist were to release the tautness of the strings, or the tension in the bow, he would be unable to make music. Though the word '*trilogue*' has been used before,³⁴ we need to stress three points that distinguish it from mere dialogue, as follows.

First, reality is never black or white, and our opinions are never simply right or wrong, but there is always a 'third' or a 'both-and' way to think, to relate, and to act in any encounter among human beings. In any situation, *trilogue* neither looks at reality as one-dimensional nor two-dimensional, but as tri-dimensional. Concretely, by looking at reality in its trinitarian complexity, and in seeking solutions with the 'other' and 'another' (persons, events, situations, ideologies, disciplines, etc.), we will be able to resolve our socio-politico-religious

concerns animated by deep faith that God—called by any and every name—is at the heart of any ‘befriending’.

Second, although we seek perfect community and ultimate communion in all our relationships, while we live here on earth, we will have to face tensions and struggles. Although there is no tension and conflict in the Triune God, God has revealed Godself in Jesus as a self-emptying Being. In theological terms we can say that God is a Kenotic (self-emptying) Being. There is perfect self-giving among the Three Persons, which was revealed to us in the Incarnation: Word made flesh, Jesus. Thus, those who believe in the Trinity and seek to be triloguers must undergo kenotic sacrifice in order to achieve *plerosis* (fullness) of life. Amaladoss writes:³⁵

This fullness is not given, but to be achieved (Eph 1:3-14). In this perspective, we are aware of our own limitedness on the one hand, which makes us open to and receptive of others. On the other hand, we are impelled to dialogue [trilogue]³⁶ with others so that through mutual interpenetration we can converge toward unity and reconciliation, purifying in the process what is merely human as limitation and sin, in ourselves and others.

Kenosis is the outcome of love. If one genuinely loves the ‘other’ and ‘another’ one will surely be ready to go beyond one’s narrow interests and viewpoints in order to embrace the other(s).

Third, in a globalizing world, there are rapid flows of ideas, information, money, markets, skills and personnel. Sadly, while the rich and powerful manipulate and monopolize the world’s resources, the big bulk of the world’s poor get poorer and weaker every day. Trilogue must therefore be undertaken with an option for the poorest of poor in consonance with God’s option for the poor. While ‘befriending the other’, the triloguer must always keep the poorest of poor as ‘another’ and ask as Mahatma Gandhi would:³⁷

Whenever you are in doubt, or when the self becomes too much with you, apply the following test. Recall the face of the poorest and weakest man [woman] whom you may have seen, and ask yourself, if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him [her]. Will s/he gain anything by it? Will it restore him [her] to a control over his [her] own life and destiny? In other words, will it lead to swaraj [freedom] for the hungry and spiritually starving millions? Then you will find your doubts and your self melt away.

7. Conclusion: Towards Interfaith Trilogue

The Trinity is not just deity to be worshipped ‘up there’ but a God who has taken flesh in our midst and shown us what it means to ‘befriend the other’. Apart from an ‘I-Thou’ way of relating to the ‘other’ triadic analysis and trilogue inspires us to go beyond polarities and dualities and incorporate a triadic approach to life. In the meeting of religions, today, trinitarian trilogue will seek to bridge the apparent tension between the ‘prophetic religions’ or the ‘word religions’ (like Judaism and Islam) with a strong focus on the One, and the ‘mystic-cosmic religions’ (Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism) accommodative of the Many. Even beyond religions, trilogue is accommodative of those who claim to be atheistic or agnostic. Genuine, triune conversations of this type, I think, will enable and empower us to more concertedly work for a better church, better India, better world.

Notes

1. Existential philosophers like Emmanuel Levinas and Franz Rosenzweig are noted for their philosophies of relationship. See Michael Barnes, *Traces of the Other: Three Philosophers & Inter-faith Dialogue* (Chennai: Satya Nilayam Publications, 2000), 20-22, 50-53.
2. See, for instance, Martin Buber, *I and Thou*, 2nd ed., trans. R.G. Smith (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1994), 15-17, who explains the *I-Thou* as the primary word of relation.

3. See Jean Paul Sartre, *No Exit and Three Other Plays* (New York: Random House, 1955).
4. See Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London & New York: Routledge, 2000), 38.
5. Ibid., 127-138.
6. Martin Buber, *Between Man and Man* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1957), 26, considers human relationship as a spiritual act opening out to eternity.
7. The Cappadocian Fathers are Basil the Great (330–379), who was bishop of Caesarea; Basil's younger brother Gregory of Nyssa (c.332–395), who was bishop of Nyssa; and a close friend, Gregory of Nazianzus (329–389), who became Patriarch of Constantinople. The Cappadocian Fathers advanced the development of early Christian theology, especially the doctrine of the Trinity.
8. Joseph A. Bracken, "The Holy Trinity as a Community of Divine Persons – I & II," *The Heythrop Journal* 15/2, 3 (April-July 1974): 166-182, 257-270,
9. Leonardo Boff, *Trinity and Society* (New York: Orbis Books, 1988) and *Holy Trinity, Perfect Community* (New York: Orbis Books, 2000).
10. Jürgen Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom: The Doctrine of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993).
11. See Geevarghese Mar Osthathios, *Theology of a Classless Society* (Madras: Christian Literature Society, 1980).
12. Ibid., 132-133.
13. See Geevarghese, *Sharing God and a Sharing World* (Delhi: ISPCK & Tiruvalla: Christava Sahitya Samithy, 1995).
14. See my *God of Our Soil: Towards Subaltern Trinitarian Theology* (Delhi: ISPCK & VIEWS, 2010).
15. See Gordon D. Fee, "Paul and the Trinity: The Experience of Christ and the Spirit for Paul's Understanding of God," in *The Trinity: An Interdisciplinary Symposium on the Trinity*, ed. S.T. Davies et al., (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999): 49-72, for details. In brief, Fee argues that Paul has an 'economic

trinitarian' idea of God, and perhaps an 'ontological trinitarian' one, as well, although its philosophical and theological nuances are unclear to theologians. On p.52, he stresses that Pauline trinitarianism emerges out of Paul's 'experience' of 'salvation'.

16. See Luis M. Bermecjo, *Abba, My Dad!* (Anand: Gujarat Sahitya Prakash, 2003), for a good scriptural and systematic exposition of God as *Abba* of Jesus and *Abba* of all human beings.
17. Theological language is always metaphorical, symbolic and analogical. Though 'analogy' imputes 'likeness' it also always implies 'unlikeness'; hence, never exhausts the truth contained in *reality-in-itself*
18. William Hasker, "Tri-unity," *Journal of Religion* 50/1 (1974): 1-32, develops this thesis. The quote is from p. 2; see also John A. Thurmer, "The Analogy of the Trinity," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 34/6 (1981): 509-515.
19. See, for e.g., how Augustine [354-430] used the analogy of love to explain the Trinity: the Father being 'lover' (*amans*), the Son being the 'beloved' (*quod amatur*) and the Spirit being the mutual love (*amor*) passing between the Father and the Son, proceeding from both, and uniting the three divine 'persons'. See his *De Trinitate*, Book IX, especially ch.8, for this point. See also J.N.D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1978), 276-279, and Eugene TeSelle, *Augustine the Theologian* (New York: Herder, 1970), 232-234, for details on Augustine's analogies.
20. See Harriet A. Harris, "Should We Say that Personhood is Relational?" *Scottish Journal of Theology* 51/1 (1998): 214-35, for an insightful analysis of the questions of 'person', 'personhood' and 'relation'.
21. See E. Schillebeeckx and B. Iersel, eds., "A Personal God?" *Concilium* (1977), for aspects of God as person.
22. See Nicholas Lash, *Believing Three Ways in One God: A Reading of the Apostles' Creed* (Notre Dame, Indiana: Notre Dame University Press, 1992), 32.
23. William A. Barry, *Paying Attention to God* (Notre Dame, Indiana: Ave Maria Press, 1990), 72.

24. See also Abhishiktānanda, *Saccidānanda: A Christian Approach to Advaitic Experience* (Delhi: ISPCK, 1974), 98, who writes: "God's life is indeed Communion; Being is essentially Communion." Hence, he coins the word *samsat*, meaning, 'being-with' for the divine existence.
25. See John Zizioulas, *Being as Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1985), 40-49, who stresses the relational and personal aspects of the Triune God.
26. Cornelius Plantinga, Jr., "The Threeness/Oneness Problem of the Trinity," *Calvin Theological Journal* 23 (April 1989): 50.
27. See Pope Francis's Encyclical Letter '*Laudato Si*', nos. 238-240.
28. See *Laudato Si*', no. 240.
29. 'Dialogue' (Greek, *dialogos*, meaning 'through word') commonly refers to a conversation carried on between two or more persons or to a verbal interchange of thought between them.
30. As literary form it is "a carefully organized exposition, by means of invented conversation, or contrasting philosophical or intellectual attitudes." See *New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 15th ed., s.v. "Dialogue."
31. See, for instance, Sundar Sarukkai, "The 'Other' in Anthropology and Philosophy," *Economic and Political Weekly* 32 (June 14, 1997): 1406-1409
32. Henri Lefebvre, *Rhythmanalysis: Space, Time and Everyday Life* (London & New York: Continuum, 2004), 12.
33. One will immediately think of Hegel's 'synthesis' and John Rawls's 'overlapping consensus', respectively. While not excluding them, *spatial trialectic* transcends these two concepts.
34. For example, Jung Young Lee, *The Trinity in Asian Perspective* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996), 217-218, writes: "The conscientization of religious inclusivity is the beginning of *trilogue*. If all human beings began with the first family on earth, and all religions are part of their cultural heritage, then everyone and every religion is connected to every other just as a great river

is connected to many streams. In *trilogue*, many religions are in one religion and one religion is in many religions, because every religion bears the image of the Trinity.” This definition appears to mean ‘inclusiveness’. I develop *trilogue* differently.

35. Michael Amaladoss, “Syncretism and Kenosis: Hermeneutical Reflections in the Indian Context,” in *The Agitated Mind of God: The Theology of Kosuke Koyama*, ed. D. T. Irvin and A. E. Arkinade (New York: Orbis, 1996), 67.
36. While Amaladoss uses the word *dialogue* I hold that this is more in the nature of *trilogue*.
37. Mahatma Gandhi, *Last Phase*, vol. II (1958), 65.

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