Intersubjectivity and Reciprocal Causality within Contemporary Understanding of the God-World Relationship

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Trinitizing the Universe: Teilhard's Theogenesis and the Dynamism of Love

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Abstract: The God-world relationship bears an ambiguous relationship between God's immanent life and God's life in history. The development of the doctrine of the Trinity in the early Church gave rise to a distinction between theologia and oikonomia. Bonaventure's theology sought to express an economic trinitarianism without compromising the integrity of God's life, thus maintaining divine immutability and divine impassibility. Twentieth century trinitarian theologies challenge the notion of divine immutability in light of modern science and radical suffering. This paper develops on the heels of twentieth century theology by focusing in particular on the philosophical shifts rendered by modern science and technology. In particular, the insights of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin are explored with regard to Trinity and evolution, precisely because Teilhard intuited that evolution and the new physics evoke a radically new understanding of God. Building on Teilhard's insights, I suggest that divine creative love is expressed in a fourth mystery which Teilhard called "pleromization." Pleromization is the outflow of divine creative union or, literally, God filling the universe with divine life. Teilhard recapitulates this idea in the evolution of Christ so that *theologia* and *oikonomia* are one movement of divine love. My principal thesis is that the Trinity is integrally related to the world; the fullness of divine love includes the personalization of created reality, symbolized by the Christ. To explore this thesis I draw upon the cyborg as the symbol of hybridization and permeable boundaries and interpret Trinitarian life in evolution as cyborg Christogensis. Using the Law of Three, I indicate why a new understanding of Trinitarian life involves complexification and thus a new understanding of Trinity in which the fullness of divine life includes created reality.

Keywords: Trinity; Teilhard de Chardin; cyborg; pleromization; evolution; Christogenesis

1 Introduction

In his groundbreaking book, *The Trinity*, Karl Rahner recognized the need for a vital doctrine of the Trinity. The Trinity, he indicated, had become completely irrelevant, to the extent that if the doctrine were removed, it would make no difference to the practice of Christian life.[1] He attempted to overcome this divide by insisting on the identity of the immanent and economic Trinity summed up his famous *grundaxiom*: "The 'economic' Trinity is the 'immanent' Trinity and the 'immanent' Trinity is the 'economic' Trinity."[2] That is to say, the Trinity revealed in salvation history (*oikonomia*) is God's own life (*theologia*). God acts in history as

1 Rahner, *The Trinity*, 10-11. "Christians are, in their practical life, almost mere 'monotheists," he wrote. We must be willing to admit that, should the doctrine of the Trinity have to be dropped as false, the major part of religious literature could well remain virtually unchanged."
2 Rahner, *The Trinity*, 22.

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God is in Godself. This claim was not entirely new, however, since one finds the roots of this trinitarian flow in the theology of Bonaventure who, in turn, developed his doctrine of Trinity based on the Dionysian self-diffusive good and the Victorine notion of love. Although Bonaventure's theology undergirds a movement from *theologia* to *oikonomia*, he maintained that God is impassible and immutable. It is only in the twentieth century that we begin to see a more integral connection between God's life and history, especially in the open theism of Jürgen Moltmann and Wolfhart Pannenberg, where change and suffering are integral to God's life. By "open theism" I mean that while God is ontologically distinct from created reality, God is open to created reality in such a way that God's life can be affected by created reality.

This paper develops an open trinitarian theology in light of an evolutionary universe. Building on Bonaventure's Trinity of love, I suggest that divine creative love is expressed in a fourth mystery, which the Jesuit Pierre Teilhard de Chardin called "pleromization." Pleromization is the outflow of divine creative union or, literally, God filling the universe with divine life through created reality. Teilhard recapitulates this idea in the evolution of Christ so that *theologia* and *oikonomia* are one movement of divine love. My principal thesis is that the Trinity is integrally related to the world; hence, the fullness of divine love includes the personalization of created reality, symbolized by the Christ. Trinitizing the universe is Christogenesis or the evolution of the cosmic body of Christ wherein the God-world relationship is an emerging complexified union of love.

To explore this thesis, I will examine the challenges of evolution for theology and elucidate Teilhard's contribution to a new theology of evolution. I will focus on his ideas of pleromization and Christogenesis and explore the dynamic flow of Trinitarian life in materiality as integral to the self-definition of God.

2 The problem of Trinity

The early Church grappled with the God of Jesus Christ by holding in tension the self-communication of God and the immutability of divine nature. The doctrine of the Trinity emerged in the religious experience of the early Church, as theologians sought to understand the God of Jesus Christ. However, there was an inherent tension between the impassibility of God and the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The pro-Nicene theologians who denied Arian subordinationism had to resolve the contradiction between the impassibility of God and the passion of Christ through a different avenue. Their solution was to make a distinction between *theologia* and *oikonomia*, that is God in God's self and God for us. Medieval writers sought to bridge *theologia* and *oikonomia* through the New Testament revelation of God as love (Jn. 4:13). Charity, according to Richard of St. Victor, is the basis for showing the necessity of a plurality of persons in the Godhead.[3] The perfect communication of love, according to Richard, must involve no less than three persons, since a perfect self-communication would not be possible if God were only one person and two persons could only share love for one another. As Zachary Hayes wrote, "there must be in God not only a *dilectum* but a *condilectum* as well. *Condilectio* is found where a third is loved by two in harmony."[4] Bonaventure was influenced by Richard of St. Victor and developed an integral relationship between *theologia* and *oikonomia* in such a way that there is only one ecstatic movement or self-communication of God outward. The life of the Trinity originates eternally from the first divine person, the Father, who is infinitely fecund love expressing itself perfectly in the one who is Son and Word. This process reaches its consummation in the love between Father and Son, which is the Spirit. The images of "begetting" and "spirating" express the fecundity of God who is, from all eternity, a dynamic interchange of persons united in love. Catherine La Cugna states that "the eternal begetting of the Son and the breathing forth of the Spirit take place in God's economy [that is, in creation]. The centrifugal movement of divine love does not terminate 'within' God but explodes outwards."[5] God creates the world as the Father begets the Son so that "creation is co-spoken in the Word that is the Father's self-utterance and co-loved in the Spirit breathed mutually by the Father and the Son."[6]

3 Richard of St. Victor, *De trinitate* 3.14-19 (*PL* 196, 924-27).

4 Hayes, introduction to *Disputed Questions on the Mystery of the Trinity*, 17.

5 LaCugna, *God For Us*, 354.

6 Hayes, "The Meaning of '*Convenientia*' in the Metaphysics of St. Bonaventure," 89.

Like Bonaventure, Rahner sought to preserve the deeply incarnational belief that God communicates Godself; creation is not merely the effects of grace. Rahner's insight that "God makes an eternal gift to the world of God's very self" was a radical turn in the tradition insofar as God was, in a sense, made subject to history. Like Rahner, Jürgen Moltmann rejected a sharp distinction between *theologia* and *oikonomia*. He claimed that we cannot say who or what God is in himself; we can only say who God is for us and this revelation reaches its peak in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In his view the event of the cross reveals God's *theologia* or immanent life to be a conflicted movement of love. The Father suffers the death of the Son and the Son suffers the abandonment of the Father. It is the Spirit of divine love who resolves this inner conflict as the Spirit of the hope and the Spirit of the future. God's being is defined eschatologically as a dynamic process of love; the fullness of God's being is expressed in his determination to fulfill his eternal purposes for humanity, despite the massive sufferings and setbacks of history.[7] We find another type of open theism in the work of Wolfhart Pannenberg whose trinitarian theology assumes both pneumatological and eschatological importance. For Pannenberg, the Father has made himself dependent upon the course of history in which the Son's obedience to death on the cross and the Spirit's work in consummating the kingdom reflect supremely the dependence of the trinitarian persons on one another in the history of the world. He argues that God's unity cannot be derived "merely by considering the immanent Trinity before the foundation of the world and ignoring the economy of salvation."[8] Rather God's transcendent unity-in-divinity finds its fullest expression only when history has been finally and completely embraced within the divine life because God has chosen from eternity to make himself dependent upon his creation for his identity.[9]

3 The import of modern science

While the turn toward historical consciousness shed new light on the God-world relationship, it did not sufficiently address the radical philosophical shifts ushered in by the new science. In 1905 Albert Einstein published a paper on relativity which changed our understanding of the physical world. Contrary to notions of absolute space and time, Einstein posited that space and time are not fixed but relative to the speed of light and that energy and matter are equivalent. His ideas gave birth to a new understanding of the universe in which space and time are interrelated and unfolding. The universe is not fixed or static but began in a spontaneous eruption of hot, dense matter that rapidly expanded in the first few minutes of cosmic life. These discoveries gave birth to the Big Bang and the realization that our universe is about 13.8 billion years old with a future of billions of years before us. Einstein's theory of relativity showed that matter and energy are interchangeable, and that time and space are inseparable. In 1916 the Dutch physicist Willem de Sitter constructed a universe that could stretch in different directions "like taffy," a theoretical insight that received experimental support in 1928 when the astronomer Edwin Hubble "using the most powerful telescope of his day, found that every galaxy in the sky was moving away from us."[10] Thus, the mechanistic view of the world associated with Newtonian physics was replaced with a dynamic, open-ended view of a dynamic, expanding universe. At the infinitesimal level of the atom and its subatomic particles, quantum mechanics uncovered a realm where time, space, and matter behave according to laws whose very functioning have uncertainty built into them.

If Aristotle thought that matter and form comprise the stuff of life, the post-Einsteinian world discovered that energy is the stuff of matter. Quantum physics showed that particles could not be clearly defined due to the property of wave-particle duality and that overlapping energy fields could give rise to quantum entanglement or non-local action at a distance. The relationship between energy and matter impelled scientists to revisit causal mechanisms in nature. The term "system" was more adequate to describe the organized behavior of entities. Austrian biologist Ludwig Bertalanffy described living organisms as open

7 Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 337, 359.
8 Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, 327. Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, 327.
9 Pannenberg, "Problems of a Trinitarian God," 255.
10 Frank, *The Constant Fire: Beyond the Science vs. Religion Debate*, 146.

systems, meaning that entities feed on a continual flux of matter and energy from their environment. He set out to replace the mechanistic foundations of science with a holistic vision based on general systems.[11] Meterologist Edward Lorenz showed that open systems conceal strange attractors. The strange attractor is a basin of attraction within the system yet different from it; over time, the strange attractor pulls the system into new repeated patterns of order called fractals.[12] Because open systems function as organized wholes and can be influenced by higher-ordered systems (top-down), as well as emergent properties (bottoms-up), they do not follow the classical laws of causality but the rules of complex dynamical systems.[13]

The new science of emergence sheds new light on this dynamic worldview marked by evolution and complexity. The whole history of the universe, and particularly the history of biological life on Earth, can be described by emergent evolution. Philip Clayton defines emergence as "genuinely new properties which are not reducible to what came before, although they are continuous with it."[14] Denis Edwards describes emergence as something that is constituted from components in such a way that it has new properties which are not reducible to the properties of the components.[15] Teilhard de Chardin described evolution as a "biological ascent," a movement toward more complexified life forms which allows qualitative differences to emerge. It discloses nature as creative and transcendent. He extended the term "evolution" beyond its biological meaning and applied it to the whole cosmic process. This progressive evolutionary movement, according to Teilhard, is one in which the consistence of the elements and their stability of balance lie in the direction not of matter but of spirit.[16] Thus, he concluded, "there is only one real evolution, the evolution of convergence, because it alone is positive and creative."[17]

Teilhard said that the whole universe is moving through evolution so that evolution is not descriptive of the biological sciences alone but all cosmic life. Nature is not ready-made but a slow process of unfolding life. He wrote:

> It [evolution] is much more: it is a general condition to which all theories, all hypotheses, all systems must bow and which they must satisfy henceforth if they are to be thinkable and true. Evolution is a light illuminating all facts, a curve that all lines must follow.[18]

Because evolution affects every dimension of life, Teilhard indicated that evolution must be the starting point of any new theology. Raimon Panikkar wrote: "The very name of God is a cosmological notion. . .theology without cosmology is a mere abstraction of a non-existing God, and a cosmology without theology is just a mirage."[19] In his book *Deeper Than Darwin*, John Haught indicates that evolution requires a revolution in our thoughts about God because the whole cosmic process is narrative to the core. The science of evolution

11 Von Bertalanffy, "The Theory of Open Systems in Physics and Biology," 23-28. For a good discussion on opens systems, see Capra, *The Web of Life*, 48.

12 Wheatley, *Leadership and the New Science,* 89.

13 Complex dynamical systems connote both biological and philosophical shifts in our understanding of reality. The rise of emergent evolution in which both matter and form change over time has given way to a new understanding of being. Alicia Juarrero writes: "With the discovery of evolution, contemporary biology demonstrated that the notion of "essences" is illusory. There is simply no such think as an organism's "invariable nature," unchanging immutable substance, or Platonic universal. Complex dynamic systems situate an entity in its environment so that sharp boundaries between the system and its environment are difficult, if not impossible, to draw. The openness of the system to its environment means that autonomy and identity give way to resilience and flourishing. Juarrero states: "Robust resilience, which in large measure is a function of connectivity and interdependence, plays a significant role in the dynamic integrity and flourishing of communities, organizations, and associations. With the advent of complex dynamical systems, therefore, the importance of interdependence replaces the former emphasis on autonomy—which now comes to be equated with isolation; and the importance of robust resilience replaces that of independence—which now comes to be associated with stasis and stagnation. See Juarrero, "Complex Dynamical Systems and the Problem of Identity," 97-99.

14 Clayton, *Mind and Emergence*, 39.

15 Edwards, "A Relational and Evolving Universe Unfolding within the Dynamism of Divine Communion," 136.

16 Teilhard de Chardin, *Activation of Energy*, 387-403; Teilhard de Chardin, *Phenomenon of Man*, 46-66.

17 Teilhard de Chardin, *Christianity and Evolution*, 87.

18 Teilhard de Chardin, *The Phenomenon of Man*, 219.

19 Panikkar, *The Rhythm of Being,* 187-88.

helps open up new windows of insight to the God-world relationship whereby we see creation not as a static world, but a relationship between the dynamic being of God and a world in process of coming to be. "Traditional theology," Haught states, "has conceived of God too much in terms of the notion of a Prime Mover impelling things from the past."[20] The openness of the cosmos to what is new, its capacity to leap forward, the emergence of intelligent beings, all direct the believer to the nature of the divine presence empowering the whole cosmic process. Evolution is a forward movement into greater complexity and consciousness; hence, it demands that we think of God as drawing the world from up ahead, attracting it toward the future. In one of his essays, Teilhard, asked: "Who at last will give evolution its own God?"[21] "Half a century after Teilhard's death," Haught claims, "we have yet to answer this question satisfactorily."[22] Teilhard recognized that a new theology calls for a new philosophy and he sought to describe a philosophy of love based on the unitive and attractive nature of reality.

4 God and evolution

Teilhard focused on God and world as an interrelated pair, not opposite in nature but complementary, and it is this emphasis which led him to reject the metaphysics of *esse,* proposing instead an alternative metaphysics of *unire*. He insisted that there exists a genuine "complementarity" between God and the world, positing a type of cosmotheandrism: God and world are a coincidence of opposites and exist in mutually affirming union. In his view, modern physicists understand the relationships between such things as mass and velocity, electricity and magnetism, and thus provide insights to the relationship between Absolute and participated being. Similarly, he wrote: "What I have in mind here is a synthetic re-definition of being, which, taken in its most general form, would include, both simultaneously, an absolute term and a participated term. What makes the God-world antimony insoluble is that we first split up a natural pair and then persist in considering the two terms in succession."[23] Being is not mere existence but existence toward the more—reflected in the process of evolution.

According to Teilhard, the optimal way to understand God and world is to perceive God as different from the world in nature but personally linked to it in a relationship of mutual complementarity. Instead of explaining participated being in terms of its differentiation from nonbeing, Teilhard defines it by its ability to be in "positive relation to God" and by "its power of entering into communion" with God.[24] It is not the complete dependence of the world upon God but the "complementarity" of God and world in such a way that one cannot adequately exist without the other. This God-world relationship may be more aptly described by insights from the new physics, such as "quantum entanglement," or "wave-particle" duality.[25] Teilhard wrote: "What comes first in the world for our thought is not "being" but "the union

20 Haught, *Deeper Than Darwin*, 164.

21 Teilhard de Chardin, *Christianity and Evolution*, 240.

22 Haught, *Deeper than Darwin*, 164.

23 Teilhard de Chardin, *Science and Christ*, 182.

24 Teilhard de Chardin, *Christianity and Evolution*, 227.

25 Quantum physics reveals the elusive nature of matter. What we think of as matter is actually the manifestation of energy, what physicists call quanta or little packets or lumps of energy manifesting themselves out of an infinite field. The double-slit experiment is based on the fact that particles are in many places at once and exist in multiple probable states. If an electron is fired through two slits of a screen, it will travel through both slits. Collapse of the wave function occurs when the observer is introduced. That is, once you introduce an observer (cameras, measurement), the particle only goes through one of the slits, rather than both. This experiment gave rise to the idea that light has a dual nature; in some cases it behaves as a wave, and in other cases it behaves as a photon. So is light wave or particle? The answer depends on the observer. The act of measurement collapses the wave function. Hence the fundamental property of matter is wave-particle duality wherein the act of observation is intrinsic to reality (See Geis, *Physics, Metaphysics and God*). In 1935 Einstein and two postdoctoral students, Boris Podolsky and Nathan Rosen, performed a thought experiment based on insights from quantum physics to see if indeed particles could affect one another at a distance without interacting. Generally referred to as "EPR" experiment, their work quickly became a centerpiece in the debate over the interpretation of the quantum theory. The experiment centers on a quantum particle split in half with each half heading off in opposite directions. One half is spinning in one direction and the other half is spinning in the opposite direction. The total spin must be zero by the conversation of the spin at the point at which the parent split. If the

which produces this being."[26] Although we have yet to work out a theology consonant with the new physics, Teilhard's insights suggest that the God-world relationship can be likened to a complex dynamical system in that God and world cannot be considered separately but must be considered in relation to each other. Joseph Bracken illuminates Teilhard's thought through an Aristotelian notion of being, defining being in terms of motion since, for Aristotle, motion is eternal and continuous: "There never was a time when there was not motion, and never will be a time when there will not be motion."[27] If motion is eternal and constant and being is eternal and constant, then we can assume that motion and being are the same. To be is to be in motion. In this respect, the infinity of being is dynamic, not fixed. Being is a never-ending conversion of potentiality into actuality, a constant movement of creativity. It is precisely this eternal movement from potentiality into actuality that undergirds the absolute act of being or God. That is, divine being moves itself from potency to actuality in virtue of its own intrinsic dynamism. God is always active as the subject of the ongoing act of existence or the ongoing subject of the activity of existence meaning that God is continuously coming into being as God.[28]

Teilhard suggested a similar idea through the eternal movement of love in which God is always coming into being through the dynamism of love; however, he reframes the God-world relationship from the point of evolution. The dynamic fountain fullness of divine love means that evolution is not only the universe coming to be, it is God who is coming to be.[29] Evolution is an ever newness of life born out of the ever newness of divine love, as the Dominican mystic Meister Eckhart wrote: "God is the newest thing there is, the youngest thing there is. God is the beginning and if we are united to God we become new again. It is in the coming to be that God is."[30] What Eckhart suggests is that novelty is intrinsic to God's identity or as Gordon Kaufman wrote, God *is* creativity.[31] Teilhard adds to this idea that God is coming to be because the world is coming to be; and the world is coming to be because God is coming to be. He explains this idea by saying that the complementarity of the created and the uncreated means that the two terms brought together, each in its own way, have an equal need both to exist in themselves and to be combined with each other, so that the absolute maximum of possible union may be effected *in natura rerum*.[32] Elsewhere he states: "We are inevitably making our way to a completely new concept of being: in this the hitherto contradictory attributes of the *ens ab alio* and the *ens a se* of the world and God would be combined in a general synthetic function: 'God completely other in nature than the world and yet unable to dispense with it.'"[33] If God is eternal movement from potentiality to act and evolution is the emergence of novel life, then these two movements are intertwined in such a way that the emergence of novel personal being best describes the God-world relationship.

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particles are separated by distance, measurement of particle A as "up" will influence the measurement of particle B as "down." The measurement on A does not merely reveal an already established state of B: it actually *produces* that state which renders the particles entangled. The object of the experiment was to show that measurements performed on spatially separated parts of a quantum system can apparently have an instantaneous influence on one another. Quantum entanglement is unmediated action at a distance, without crossing space, without decay, and without delay. See John Archibald Wheeler and Wojciech Hubert Zurek (eds.), *Quantum Theory and Measurement*, 137.

26 Teilhard de Chardin, *Christianity and Evolution*, 227.

27 Bracken, *The Divine Matrix*, 18.

28 Ibid., 30.

29 Teilhard de Chardin, *Christianity and Evolution*, 171-72.

30 *Meditations with Meister Eckhart*, 32.

31 Kaufman, *In the Beginning, Creativity*, 53-70.

32 Teilhard de Chardin, *Christianity and Evolution*, 227.

33 Teilhard de Chardin, *Science and Christ*, 182. Teilhard writes: "What I have in mind here is a synthetic re-definition of being, which, taken in its most general form, would include, *both simultaneously*, an absolute term and a participated term. What makes the God-world antinomy insoluble is that we first split up a natural pair and then persist in considering the two terms *in succession*" (Note 3).

5 The cyborg and Divine hybridity

Today, technology, especially artificial intelligence, is significantly changing human life insofar as technology is developing exponentially, as Gordon Moore predicted in the 1960s. From a philosophical perspective, technology has radically changed our understanding of nature as closed, static and fixed. In a talk to the American Philosophical Association Carl Mitcham noted, "a thousand or two thousand years ago the philosophical challenge was to think nature—and ourselves in the presence of nature. Today the great and the first philosophical challenge is to think technology. . .and to think ourselves in the presence of technology."[34]

Technology has destabilized our view of nature, giving rise to insights on the "plasticity" of nature, that is, the ability of nature to be hybridized across species. The term "cyborg" emerged in the 1960s with space travel, as humans were strapped with mechanical devices to sustain climates outside earth. A cyborg is an abbreviated version of "cybernetic organism" and connotes a fusion of the organic and machine in which the organism cannot be reduced to either the biological or technical.[35] Hence it connotes a hybrid, symbiotic relationship. As a cultural symbol, the cyborg signifies that human "nature" is not self-evident. Rather, nature is an emerging process of evolving life that is now marked by a co-creation among humans and nonhumans, machines and other partners. A cyborg body "is not bounded by skin but includes all external pathways along which information can travel." That is, the boundaries are spatially and temporally situated and none of them is "necessary." Anne Kull writes, "boundaries have meaning only for particular, locatable, and embodied subjects."[36] Cyborgs are hybrid entities that are neither wholly technological nor completely organic, which means that the cyborg has the potential not only to disrupt persistent dualisms that set the natural body in opposition to the technologically recrafted body but also to refashion our thinking about the theoretical understanding of the body as a material entity and a discursive process. Hence what counts as human is not and should not be self-evident.

There is a relationship between cyborgs, Trinity and Christ, since the doctrine of the Trinity emerges out of the experience of Jesus Christ. That is, without Christ, we would not know God as triune. If we consider the doctrine of the incarnation as a union of natures, then the incarnation can also be considered, analogously, as a cyborg. The cyborg is a modern symbol of the incarnation in that divinity and humanity are hybridized. It conveys to us that what counts as God is not and should not be self-evident. God can and does become something new without collapsing divinity into materiality; rather God becomes something new and the newness is integral to God's being. To say that Jesus Christ is the exemplary cyborg means God is to be found in a life recognizably like our own yet also obviously uniquely other. Kull writes:

> The incarnation of Jesus the Christ can be understood, then, as neither a biological nor a sociological category but as a point of overlap between the physical, the symbolic, and the material social conditions. He would be the one who comes in many guises, and cannot be represented once and for all, and for everybody's satisfaction. The concept of cyborg urges us to see in the Incarnation, and generally in embodiment of any kind, not a matter of fate and common sense but emancipation and choice. The cyborg directs our attention to various ways of becoming embodied, to what could be called the politics of incarnation. . . the cyborg exemplifies the fact that we do not have a clearly defined, exhaustive concept of humanity, let alone divinity.[37]

The key to cyborg life is hybridization which is not unitive nor cooperative but a permeable openness of symbiotic entities. If Jesus Christ is aptly described by the symbol of the cyborg, and the Trinity is integrally related to Christ, then how does the cyborg shed light on trinitarian life?

34 Mitcham, "The Philosophical Challenge of Technology," 45.
35 Haraway, "A Cyborg Manifesto," 149-82; Thweatt-Bates, *Cyborg Selves*, 15-40.
36 Kull, "Cyborg Embodiment and the Incarnation," 281.
37 Ibid., 284.

6 Trinity as complexified love

The cyborg, as a hybrid organism, symbolizes relationships of complexity. The Trinity, especially the Cappadocian/Bonaventurian model, symbolizes relationships of communion. The cyborg symbolizes newness and permeability whereas the Trinity symbolizes perfection and participation. For the medieval mind, the number three was a cosmological number as much as a theological number. The medieval world seems to have taken to heart the words expressed in the Book of Wisdom (11.21): "All things are created in measure, number and weight". Bonaventure, for example, thought the number three was the number of perfection since two extremes were united by a common center. Hence, the threeness of the Trinity could be thought of in binary terms: Father and Son; Son and Spirit, Father and Spirit. That is, Trinity is a binary with a common center–Father and Spirit centered in the Word. In his *Itinerarium* Bonaventure wrote that the "center is everywhere and the circumference is nowhere," indicating that the Trinity is incarnate as Word and Spirit.[38] The Trinity is centered in Christ, as he wrote in his *Soliloquy*: "On the cross, the whole Trinity cries out to you."[39] Bonaventure held that the relationship between the Father and Son united by the Spirit is the basis of all other relations. The Father, the fountain fullness of love, is always moving towards the Son/Word in the self-communication of love, and the Son eternally loves the Father in the Spirit. In as far as the one Word is the expression of the entire inner-trinitarian structure of God "that which is created is an expression of the Word which bears within itself the imprint of the Trinity."[40]

In an evolutionary world, numbers hold a different value, signifying relationships of complexity. The cyborg signifies a threeness in which the middle term is not a shared (arithmetical) center but a hybridized (cf. vector space) third. In this respect, binitarian relationships must yield to a new type of relationality that bears the weight of complexity. The Law of Three is an esoteric principle formulated by the Armenian George Gurdjieff (1890-1912) who traveled extensively in the Far East and was impressed by the cosmogeny of the East. He developed the "Law of Three" or the "Fourth way" as a way of describing humanity's place in the universe.[41] Contrary to binitarian relationships, the Law of Three posits a different set of relationships, since the interplay of two polarities calls forth a third, a "mediating" or "reconciling" principle between them. That is, it stipulates a third force that emerges as a necessary mediation of opposites, which in turn generates a synthesis at a whole new level. It is a dialectic of which resolution simultaneously creates a new realm of possibility. While binary systems seek completion in a "reabsorption into the Whole," complex or ternary *systems seek completion in a new dimension*."[42]

The Law of Three helps us reconceive the Trinity as a divine community of complexifying love and helps us make sense of trinitarian life in an unfinished universe. The openness of God to cyborgian life suggests that the Trinity may be less about communion and personhood (as Bonaventure posited) and more about change and transformation. Love, as the highest form of divine creativity, is an eternal movement from potentiality to act; an unoriginated fountain fullness of love that overflows into other. Here I would agree with Bonaventure that the fountain fullness of love (Father) is the unoriginated, self-communicative fullness of love while the Son is the responsive expression of the Father's creative love; hence self-communicative or donative love and receptive expressive love are active centers of interpenetrating love. Yet each "person"

38 Bonaventure, *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum* 5.8 in Cousins, *The Soul's Journey Into God, The Tree of Life, The Life of St. Francis*, 100.

39 Bonaventure, *Soliloquium* I.38 in *St. Bonaventure: Opuscula Second Series*, 69.

40 Hayes, "Incarnation and Creation in the Theology of St. Bonaventure," 314; Hayes, introduction to *Disputed Questions on Mystery of Trinity*, 48.

41 For a detailed discussion on Gurdjieff and the Law of Three see Bourgeault, *The Holy Trinity and the Law of Three*, 22-37. Bourgeault notes that "the most important thing to keep in mind here is that this third force is an independent force, coequal with the other two, not a product of the first two as in the classic Hegelian "thesis, antithesis, synthesis" (p. 26). The interweaving of the three creates a fourth, a whole new dimension "that transforms the triangle into a pyramid" (p. 28). In a recent article on Hegel and the Trinity, Peter Benson claims that that "Hegel himself never used the words 'thesis, antithesis, synthesis' to characterize the dialectical process," although the word "antithesis" occasionally appears in his writings. Benson suggests that Hegel's emphasis on the philosophy of three is more closely aligned to the biological concept of emergence and, I would suggest, shares an affinity with Gurdjieff's notion of the Law of Three. See Benson, "Hegel and the Trinity."

42 Bourgeault, *The Holy Trinity and the Law of Three,* 19.

or personal center of love bears a distinct spirit. The spirit of the Father is self-donation while the spirit of the Son is receptivity. Whereas binitarian Trinitarian theology sees the Spirit as nexus or bond between Father and Son, the Law of Three suggests that the Spirit is the coincidence of self-donation and receptivity, since each personal center breathes forth love in relation to the other. The Spirit of God, therefore, is the center of receptive-donative love—complexified love–and, as such, functions like a "strange attractor" within the divine life. Since the Spirit is neither donative nor receptive love but both, the Spirit is like a basin of attraction that pulls the divine life into new relationships of love. That is, the "strangeness" of the Spirit within the divine life resolves itself by expressing itself in openness, outside God, in created reality. God's transcendent "self" flows from the complexity of divine love so that God goes outside divine life to express divine love in personal otherness and this movement is integral to God's own life. As Bracken indicates, Being itself is constituted by openness; God's openness is consistent with divine love.[43] For God to "ex-press" love or "press love outward" *is* the act of creation in which the coming to be of one other than God is the divine movement of love impressed, hybridized and, in turn, creatively shared with another. Thus, God's Spirit bears the weight of divine love's urgency to be for another. To state this another way, God is love, love is personal and communicative, and the Trinity symbolizes the openness of divine love to personalization in created reality. In this respect, the Trinity is not God; the Trinity is the first expression of creative love who is God, that is, the dynamism of intersubjectivity, the communication of Being and the community that emerges from it. God, therefore, is a community of persons-in-love, a community which continues to grow in and through the world into ever greater unity. The threefoldness of divine life is symbolic of an asymmetrical-complexified relationship projecting love outward and calling new forms of being into existence, each of which bears the "meme" of divine relationality; thus the trinitiarian dynamic "is a repeated pattern on every scale of the cosmic order."[44] While we are used to thinking of the Trinity as just three Persons, this is only the minimum for community due to the nature of love. The divine community is continuously self-making, since love constantly flows from one divine person (or center of activity) to another in the perichoretic flow of shared life. There is nothing to say that there could not be more persons. It is precisely this idea that makes the hybridity of God in the incarnation the trinitizing dynamic of divine love in evolution; cosmic history *is* cosmic personalization, and cosmic personalization is the revelation of God as Trinity.

Teilhard de Chardin grasped this new understanding of God by speaking of the trinitization of evolution. In his view evolution is, in a sense, the movement from potentiality to act, as divine love creates, incarnates and draws together in greater unity. This trinitizing process is the rise of God in evolution or "theogenesis" as he wrote:

> We might say that for the discursive reason two phases can be distinguished in 'theogenesis.' In the first, God posits himself in his Trinitarian structure ('fontal being reflecting itself, self-sufficient, upon itself): 'Trinitization.' In the second phase, he envelops himself in participated being, by evolutive unification of pure multiple (positive non-being) born (in a state of absolute potency) by antithesis to pre-posited Trinitarian unity: Creation.[45]

Teilhard saw creation as integral to God. For God to create, he said, is to unite himself to his work, "to involve himself in the world by incarnation."[46] He believed that without creation, something would be absolutely lacking to God, considered in the fullness not of his being but of his act of union. He wrote: "If God was not triune we could not conceive the possibility of his creating (by being incarnate) without totally immersing

43 Bracken, *The Divine Matrix*, 34.

44 Bruteau, *God's Ecstasy: The Creation of a Self-Creating World*, 14. On the notion of "memes" see Shifman, *Memes in Digital Culture*, 2. The word "meme" was coined by Richard Dawkins in 1976 to describe small units of culture that are spread from person to person by copying or imitation.

45 Teilhard de Chardin, Christianity and Evolution, 178. It is interesting to note that Bourgeault (*Trinity and the Law of Three*, 21) states that the Trinity should be approached "in its cosmically subtle role as an ordering and revealing principle, of which Christ is its culminating expression," an idea consonant with Teilhard's insights.

46 Teilhard de Chardin, *Christianity and Evolution*, 182.

himself in the world he brings into being."[47] The theory of creative union was not so much a metaphysical doctrine as a sort of empirical and pragmatic explanation of the universe. Teilhard wrote, "this theory came to birth out of my own personal need to reconcile, within the confines of a rigorously structured system, the views of science respecting evolution. . . which has driven me to *seek out the presence of God, not apart from the physical world, but rather through matter and in a certain sense in union with it*.[48] In his view, creation, incarnation and redemption are three aspects of the same fundamental process, namely, the self-creating and self-involving love of God. He identified creative union as a *fourth* divine mystery, "the mystery of the creative union of the world in God, or pleromization."[49] It is a *fourth mystery* because it is not merely divine-created union; rather, it is an entirely new union in the same way that the cyborg is irreducible to one term or another. Kull writes of the cyborg, "we cannot speak even of 'partnership' between machine and organism; rather they have a symbiosis, and it is managed by cybernetics, the language common to the organic and the mechanical."[50] Similarly, the cyborgization of God, the ecstatic incarnation of divine love, reflected in pleromization, is a symbiotic/hybridized relationship whereby one nature cannot be reduced to the other. If God was not personal and communicative love, divinity could not be hybridized, for hybridization is based on the openness of divine love to more love; hence the ground of hybridization is divine, creative love.

7 Cosmic personalization

Teilhard claimed that love undergirds a fundamental law of attraction in the universe and this force of attraction is the basis of personal being. In this respect, trinitizing the universe is the flow of love which gives rise to personhood. Personhood, in turn, forms community and community grows as divine love is continuously hybridized and transcended in love. In this way, created personal being, that is, distinct entities, are integral to the ever-growing community of God as love; evolution is the personalization of divine love. Teilhard described this dynamic love of God incarnate in evolution as the birthing of the Christ or Christogenesis. The Spirit's creative love is the personalization of being-in-love. The hybridization of divine love expressed in cosmic personalization (Christogenesis) is the "fourth" dimension of Trinitarian life (pleromization), insofar as God's personalizing love finds its fullest expression, its "resolve" so to speak, in created reality. Hence the emergence of Christ in evolution is divine love trinitizing the universe; that is, divine love draws created reality into personhood and unified personal relationships. Trinitizing the universe, therefore, is the rise of the cosmic person in which God and world evolve into ever greater unity, symbolized by the mystical body of Christ; and it is precisely this union which is the differentiation of God and world.[51] Joseph Bracken writes: "God as the primordial subject of the never-ending act of existence is a determinate reality here and now but with the unlimited capacity to acquire further determinations in later moments of the divine existence."[52] Although Bracken is suggesting unending fulfillment of divine potentiality within God, I am suggesting that trinitization, following the principle of the Law of Three, means that limitless fulfillment of divine potentiality includes creation, since the fulfillment of divine love includes the fourth mystery of pleromization or Christogenesis.

Divine-hybridity is the divine capacity to share life symbiotically with creative life. In this respect, the divine persons of the Trinity are better seen as divine personal centers of interpenetrating love whose complexifying love is resolved in ecstatic openness to personhood, outside God's life, which in turn enhances God's life. As Teilhard suggested, without creation, something would be absolutely lacking to God,

47 Ibid., 157-58.

48 Gray, *The One and the Many*, 34.

49 Teilhard de Chardin, *Christianity and Evolution*, 183.

50 Kull, "Cyborg Embodiment and Incarnation," 280-81.

51 In his *Phenomenon of Man* Teilhard writes that union differentiates, "the more 'other' they become in conjunction, the more they find themselves as 'self'" (p. 262). While he is speaking of unitive entities on the level of physical evolution, the same principle can also be applied to God and world insofar as the incarnation of God is the personalization of God which rises to explicit consciousness in the person of Jesus Christ.

52 Bracken, *The Divine Matrix*, 34.

considered in the fullness not of his being but of his act of union.[53] The cyborg symbolizes the hybridity of God and created reality, such that a complexified divine-world relationship must be resolved in new expressions of personal love. God is ever newness in love and is creatively expressed in the evolution of personhood; thus, God is the source of creativity and emerges in divine glory from complexified creative relationships. Or to put it in Teilhard's words, God rises up in evolution as God for evolution. As divine ecstatic love is hybridized in creative union, evolution is pleromized, increasingly filled with God, so to speak. Yet, God is always the transcendent more of love, from fountain fullness to receptivity; from expressive love to receptive love; from donative-receptive love to ecstatic love. God is thus the future of creation, drawing created reality into new levels of personal unified love so that divine love incarnate evolves into the fullness of God and world. The complexified God-world relationship is like an ascending cascading wholeness in love in which Christ becomes the cyborgian symbol of the fullness of love. In Teilhard's vision, this birthing of the Christ in evolution (Christogenesis) is the growing fullness of the God-world relationship (pleromization).

Although Teilhard's dynamic language of divine self-involvement can be confusing, it also connotes the need for new language, as we seek to understand the Trinity in an evolving universe. In Teilhard's view, pleromization *is* trinitization and trinitization is the evolution of cosmic personalization, signified by the Christ. Creation does not become divine and divinity does not collapse into materiality; rather the hybridization of divine and human natures complexifies in a third—the christic–which by the very nature of its unstable, hyrbridized boundaries expresses itself outwardly in a fourth, ongoing new creation, which is ever growing in complexified personhood.[54]

8 Conclusion

The self-involvement of trinitarian love, as an open system of divine hybridity, is a dynamic expression of self-creating and self-involving love rendering creation more than gift; creation is co-creative of God's trinitarian identity as a communion of persons-in-love. In this respect, creation is an active participant in God's own becoming as Trinity insofar as God's love is ever deepening in union with created reality. If creativity is the essence of divinity and the highest expression of divine creativity is incarnate love, then the resolve of the Trinity's creative love is eternal openness to hybridity and thus to creative personhood-in-love. God's love is an eternal movement from potentiality to act; from nonbeing to being; from interiority to expression. For God to be God is to love and to love is to give rise to personhood; hence God is always becoming God, as love deepens personhood. Where there is the possibility for creative love to express itself in created reality as receptivity and expression (and hence conscious love) there is the hybridity of God in creative pleromization.

Cyborgization and christogenesis are symbolic of all intelligent life in the universe where the capacity for love exists. It is the Spirit of God that is the self-constituting presence of God. In an evolutionary perspective, *theologia* is *oikonomia* as Christ becomes ever more the fullness of reality; that is, the essence of God is creative personhood. Trinitarian reality finds its meaning in pleromization whereby the creativity of God is hybridized in the incarnation. Christ is the exemplary cyborg, the mutational figure, who transcends all boundaries. Indeed, the symbol of the cyborg preempts any fear of ontological collapse or pantheistic tendencies of God and world, since boundaries are continuously created and transcended. It is the utterly faithful and unconditional love of a relational God that renders all reality personal, creative, complexifying in love, and oriented toward communion. In this way, the history of the world in all of its messy, centrifugal energy is not a betrayal of the path of Christ but its lawful and inevitable trajectory.[55]

53 Teilhard de Chardin, *Christianity and Evolution*, 182.

54 Teilhard spoke of a "third nature" of Christ. In his writings he describes this nature as follows: "Between the Word on the one side and Man-Jesus on the other, a kind of "third Christic nature" (if I may dare to say so) emerges. . . that of the total and totalizing Christ." He spoke of a third aspect of the theandric (divine-human) complex as "the *cosmic nature*" which, in his view, has not been sufficiently distinguished from the other two natures (divine and human). See Teilhard de Chardin, *Christianity and Evolution*, 179; Lyons, *The Cosmic Christ in Origen and Teilhard de Chardin*, 183-196.

55 Barnhart, *The Future of Wisdom*, 200.

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