

**THE TRIUNE EVENT:
EVENT ONTOLOGY, THE PRINCIPLE OF REASON, AND LOVE**

James Bradley
Memorial University of Newfoundland, Canada

My claim is simple and straightforward: that an adequate discussion of event ontology is seriously deficient without serious consideration of the theory of the triune event. Philosophical debates in contemporary event ontology are dominated primarily by the traditions of thought associated with the great names of Whitehead, Deleuze and Badiou. Into these debates I would like to introduce another and much older tradition: that associated with the doctrine of the trinity. I shall argue that, in “the logic of events” of Charles Sanders Peirce, event theory finds an original and powerful articulation of the principle of triunity that stands critically over against current formations. In most of the literature, admittedly, Peirce is presented as a naturalist, in line with the prevailing culture of the schools. I shall maintain to the contrary that his theory of the triune event, like the other event ontologies we are discussing, is a speculative metaphysics. That is to say, it is a theory of the conditions of the actualization of the empirical world.

These claims will be developed by way of the presentation and discussion of six theses. At the outset I shall assume, in common with the major contemporary event ontologies, the hypothesis of reality: namely, that reality is that which has a nature of its own in the sense that it is so independently of our minds or independently of whether or not we think it to be so. I shall also assume the hypothesis of universalism, or the reality of universals, which is another familiar feature of event ontology. Nevertheless, claims that support both hypotheses will be advanced in what follows.

1. *The Principle of Reason*

My first thesis is that the furnace in which event ontology should be tested is the principle of reason. This is the principle that ‘Nothing is without a reason’, or ‘Everything that is the case must have a reason why it is the case’.ⁱ It has its corollary in the principle of unity of truth: the claim that all the features of experience are in some way intelligibly interconnected.ⁱⁱ

Negatively, the principle of reason requires the rejection of the no-hypothesis hypothesis: “the hypothesis that no hypothesis is possible” (Peirce, MS 956, c. 1890). For the principle of reason rejects the essentially skeptical theory or hypothesis that there are things which no theory or hypothesis can explain. It rejects the hypothesis that there is anything that is ultimately inexplicable in the sense that there is anything about which no explanatory theory can be sought and entertained.

Positively, the principle of reason requires unrestricted commitment to the search for explanation. No appeal is made here to an *a priori* rule. We have only the experimental or hypothetical application of the principle of reason to the fact that we live in a puzzling world. Further, because even the most basic laws and operations of logic, mathematics and physics do not attempt to account for why there are laws or operations at all, the principle of reason requires that we look for an ultimate that is self-justifying or self-explanatory.

A self-explanatory theory of reality would be one which is ultimate in the sense that no further reasons are required to answer the question, ‘Why is there existence?’ or ‘Why are there events?’ Such a theory would necessarily be a theory of the actualization of the empirical world. It would also necessarily be a theory of the *activity* of actualization, for, as has been noted, no specific law or operation is self-explanatory. Moreover, such a theory would have to meet the stringent requirement that whatever is held to be the ultimate principle of actualization must possess in its own nature, or provide out of its own nature, all the reasons needed to explain its existence or activity.

Self-explanatoriness is not of course the same as proof. Indeed, the question as to what constitutes an adequate self-explanatory theory of the activity of actualization is hotly debated between the different schools that seek the self-explanatory. For brevity, I shall dub them the

‘explanatorists’. In that tradition, from Plato on, the principle of reason generally has the status of an experimental, hypothetical principle that investigates just how far reason can go in the analysis of reality. The explanatorist project is to elaborate self-explanatory hypotheses out of experience. It is anti-foundationalist in that, without claiming any privileged starting points for reflection, *a priori* or phenomenological, some one or more features of experience are generalized as models or analogies for a self-explanatory theory of actualization. This procedure of analogical generalization is neither deductive nor inductive but abductive. That is, it has the form defined by C.S. Peirce: “The surprising fact *C* is observed/ But if *A* were true, *C* would be a matter of course/ Hence, there is reason to suppose that *A* is true” (*CP* 6.528ⁱⁱⁱ). The argument is not a deduction, since it does not claim that its conclusion must be true if its premises are true. It is not inductive, since the statement referred to in the conclusion is not tested by sampling. Whereas induction tells us that a statement, true in some cases, is likely to be true in unobserved cases, abduction allows us to conclude to the likelihood of something unlike anything that is observed. It is inference to the best possible explanation. The procedure is fallibilist: repeated application of abductive inference may lead to continued revision of our hypothesis in the light of new observations, as has always been the case with speculative theories of actualization. And the hypothesis is not just tested against experience. Experience is tested against the hypothesis, which has the status of a critical principle: do the putative observations, or our descriptions of the observed, display the characters posited by the hypothesis? Ostensive demonstration cuts both ways. Or, more precisely, it moves in a virtuous circle.

There are two main objections to explanatorism that need to be considered at the outset. First, there is the objection from contingency, the claim that there is no need for an ultimate principle of actualization at all. For what is wrong with contingency as the ultimate principle? Why is contingency not enough?

From the Greeks onwards, many speculative philosophers have made contingency an essential element in their theory of the self-explanatory nature of reality. But it cannot be the only element. For the question ‘Why not just contingency?’ answers itself. The contingent is that which may and also may not be. So it is not self-explanatory: to be contingent is to be in relation

to something to else, such as the laws of logic or physics. The contingent is always relative and so cannot *by itself* be a self-explanatory principle.

Perhaps what is really meant here is 'chance'. Yet if that is the case, chance is something more than an event whose cause is unknown to us, and it is more than the concurrence of two independent causal chains. As definitions of chance, both these notions simply mean: 'an order whose operations cannot be predicted by us' - and so we are not talking of chance in any realist or ontologically significant sense.

The notion of 'chaos' cannot help either. In the first place, there can be no such thing as 'pure chaos'. Chaos is always relative chaos because, even if there is chaos of some kind, there must be determinate entities (*ens*) that have some sort of unity (*unum*) - that is, irreducibility - about them in order for them to be chaotically related, or related at all. And if there are distinct entities, not only must they stand to one another in relations of difference (*aliquid*), no matter how minimal, but they must also persist, or display certain characters, or behave in a specific way (*res*), no matter how fleeting. To be in chaos, that is, they must possess individual identities or internal order, no matter how simple. The notion of chaos also seems to depend upon that of sequence - a sequence of events - which again entails order of some kind. It hardly needs adding that so-called 'chaos theory', in which causal systems are unpredictable, is not only thoroughly deterministic but assumes that order is a given, introduced, so to speak, in one dose in the 'initial conditions'.

What contingency and chance might mean in the context of a self-explanatory event ontology will be further considered below. The second main objection to explanatorism is more immediately relevant, for it is in various degrees characteristic of contemporary event theory. It is an historical as much as a conceptual objection and indeed has considerable historical justification.

This second objection is the claim that explanatorism necessarily issues in a theory of the All, or Totality, or Absolute, or One, understood as a complete and all-containing Presence.^{iv} Such a theory, because it refers things away from themselves to a self-explanatory principle or ground, has no place for real contingency or the really new and so is inextricably committed to a

necessitarian ontology. This is clearly a serious claim to make against any attempt unrestrictedly to introduce the principle of reason into event ontology. Much of what follows will attempt to examine its cogency. My second thesis is a step on the way.

2. *A Taxonomy of Principles of Actualization*

My second thesis is that it is historically illuminating and critically significant to assess event ontologies in the context of a taxonomy of the different principles of actualization elaborated in speculative metaphysics. There are five basic types to be considered.

A principle of actualization could be monadic, as is Nietzsche's theory of the Will to Power, or, most obviously, the Judaic and Islamic account of the creator God as an absolutely unique, singular being whose nature is defined as completely transcending human powers of reason.

A principle of actualization could be binary or dyadic, as when the foundations of the cosmos are held by Empedocles to be the twin principles of Love and Strife, by Democritus to be atoms and the void, by Schopenhauer to be Will and Idea, by Samuel Alexander to be Space and Time, or by M. Badiou to be Being and Event.

A principle of actualization could be triadic, as is Plotinus' hierarchy of the One, Mind, and Soul, Spinoza's hierarchy of Substance, Attributes, and Modes, and Deleuze's non-hierarchical threefold of Difference (or Event, or Being^v), virtualities, and specific differences or events.

A principle of actualization could be tetradic, as in Plato's *Timaeus* with its fourfold of the Good, the God, Form, and Matter, or as with Whitehead's creativity, God, eternal objects and actual occasions.

There can be no question, however, that the tradition which dominates the history of Western speculative thought is that which holds the principle of actualization to be a triunity of three inseparable and coequal elements. Most would acknowledge that this tradition stretches from Plato's *syntrisi* or three-in-one^{vi}, through the medieval period, to the idealism of Hegel and

Schelling. It is not so often noticed, however, that it has been a significant feature of modern developments in event theory over the last one hundred and fifty years. I refer primarily to Peirce's ontology of firstness, secondness and thirdness, and to the later Heidegger's *das Ereignis* ('the Event'), with its triunity of *Es gibt* ('It gives'), *die Sendung* ('the sending'), and *die Gabe* ('the gift').^{vii}

Two comments may help to dispel any puzzlement there may be at the persistence of the notion of triunity in event theory.

First, because the triune theories mentioned are explanatorist, they are elaborated so as to address three basic questions. These are the questions of the nature of origin, difference and order. For in the first place a theory of the activity of actualization requires a theory of the origin of difference and order. That is, it requires an account of that activity which is in some sense prior to difference and order because it is the condition of difference and order. In the second place, an explanatorist theory requires an account of the actualization of difference or individuality, of the nature of differentiation. And in the third place, such a theory requires an account of the actualization of order. The primacy attached to these issues is of course characteristic of the triune tradition itself. But they have a certain obviousness about them that helps to indicate the rationale of the general position.

Secondly, there is a set of considerations connected with the development of mathematics and the rise of natural science. In the medieval period, the doctrine of the triune God, with its 'subsistent relations' of Father, Son, and Spirit, is expounded as a supernatural or revealed mystery of faith. This is not to deny that the triune God is employed to provide a self-explanatory account of the activity of actualization. In Aquinas, for example, all things have their *esse*, or act of being, which is given by the Father; their individual nature (species), which is given by the Son or Logos; and their relation to other things which is given by the Spirit, the principle or gift of love or community (S.T. 1i, Q. 45, art. 7, Resp.). Nevertheless, the concept of an essentially relational being cuts across the Aristotelian view that finite substances exist independently and that relations are accidents. Hence it is difficult in this context to develop a trinitarian account of all the features of the created world. By contrast, once mathematics and natural science had

established the intrinsic relationality of the natural world,^{viii} the relational model could unproblematically be transposed, under the rubric of triunity, not only to the analysis of the constitution of the finite subject (Kant^{ix}), but also to the whole of reality, defined as an Absolute Subject with three essential modes or functional operations (Hegel and Schelling^x). Triunity here becomes an immanent principle of actualization, although it is still apprehended as complete and all-containing. In order to prepare for the sea-change Peirce works in the theory of triunity, transforming the medieval theory of subsistent relations and the German Idealist theory of the subject into a logic of events, my third thesis extends the analysis of the principles of actualization so far offered.

3. The Activity of Actualization and the Principle of Reason

My third thesis is that the preceding taxonomy of five types of principle of actualization can be considered from the point of view of their relation to the principle of reason. The relevance of this to event theory should quickly become apparent.

There are three basic orientations here, and a little reflection will show that they cut across the fivefold taxonomy. At one extreme are the explanatorists, who subscribe to the unrestricted application of the principle of reason. This orientation will be considered at some length below. At the opposite extreme are those who regard the principle of actualization as in some essential respect irrational. Schopenhauer is I believe one of the few figures that belong here. Standing in varying degrees between these two extremes of explanatorism and irrationalism are what I shall call the ‘descriptivists’. Their theories of actualization are in one way or another either explicitly opposed to the unrestricted application of the principle of reason - M. Badiou is one of these - or they stand ambiguously to it. Whitehead and Deleuze belong to the latter group, and because of their central importance in event theory I will make some remarks on both.

On Deleuze, M. Badiou has made the essential point: that there is in Deleuze “no clear position on the question of the One.”^{xi} Where there is nothing prior to the endless multiplication of differences, what is Difference, or the Event, or Being? A univocal concept, yes; but is it

supposed to explain the togetherness and continuity of differences, or is it to be taken as a descriptive posit, an underivable primordial given? Further, if it is an infinite in the sense of inexhaustible activity, is it so as a plenitude of some kind or as an iterative movement of synthesis? Presumably the latter; but if so, what is the relation of differentiation to synthesis (order)? Difference or the Event is at once a principle of origination, a principle of differentiation, and a principle of synthesis or organization, but its nature as such is not clearly explicated. In particular, there is no obvious philosophical reason why differentiation is good, and is treated always in such a sacral, celebratory style. Deleuze's speculative metaphysics definitely looks like a form of speculative descriptivism, though perhaps shot through with a quasi-theological dimension.

Whitehead is if anything harder to pin down. On the one hand, his tetrad appears to have some kind of self-explanatory principle in God. On the other hand, there is the ultimate category of creativity, which is defined on the set-theoretical definition of the function as the class of many-to-one relations. Here, the activity of actualization is constructivistically construed as the inexhaustible activity of the mapping of relations between a domain and a codomain.^{xii} Now, so far as it is inexhaustible activity, creativity is a self-explanatory principle of actualization. Yet no reason is given as to why this inexhaustible activity is a mapping activity, that is, an activity of differentiation and ordination. Differentiation and ordination are simply posited as components of the ultimate principle, and both God and occasions are held to be instances of that structure. The necessary consequence of attempting to construct a speculative metaphysics of actualization out of the mathematical-logical function is that functional analysis already has built into it the very features that require explanation.

These brief comments on Whitehead and Deleuze indicate that the decisive issue for event ontology is the theory of origin. This is of course the subject of endless debate in the explanatorist tradition. Since Plato the origin is that which is described as 'beyond being (*ousia*)', which means not that the origin is beyond activity (*einai*) but that it is not a determinate thing (*ousia*) because it is the ground of determination. My next thesis concerns the various ways in which this has been understood.

4. *Theories of Origin*

My fourth thesis is that there are three basic theories of origin in the explanatorist tradition. To begin with, as in Plotinus and in the Judaeo-Islamic doctrine of God, the origin can be held to be a complete and all-containing One that is not only beyond specific determination but is for that reason beyond intelligibility. Here the principle of reason leads to the conclusion that the ultimate reason is beyond reason. This supra-rationalist position, as I shall call it, has of course influenced triune accounts of actualization. Thus, in Heidegger's writings published to date, the nature of the 'It' in 'It gives' (*Es gibt*) remains unexplicated, as he insists.^{xiii} Consequently it is not clear what the nature of this giving is and in particular why there is giving.^{xiv} Nevertheless, there are hints of a neoplatonic, all-containing origin to the extent that the transcendence of the *Es gibt* is described as a matter of its 'hiddenness' 'beyond being', its 'withdrawing' and 'withholding' behind the determinations which it sends.

At the opposite pole, secondly, there are the triunities of Augustine, Aquinas, and, most recently, Hegel, who at the highest level of his analysis of actualization defines the first principle of the threefold as "pure activity in itself... universal activity " whose "content is no other than the Universal itself".^{xv} This is the eternal, self-positing Idea. Hegel stands within what may be called the 'rationalist' tradition of triunity, going back to Augustine, which describes the threefold of actualization on the analogy of mind itself. Self-ordering mind is held to be the ground of order. The origin is 'thought thinking itself', not as Unmoved Mover but as all-containing, absolute completeness. It is important to note, however, that there is no single, simple origin here. Summarily: the Father is such only because he unconditionally gives the Spirit or gift (*donum*) of love to the Son.

In contrast to this rationalist triunity, there is thirdly an intermediate position: what may be called the 'explicabilist' view holds that all things are intelligible but does not identify the intelligible with mind or rationality. Here the first principle of the threefold is understood not as Idea (Hegel) or as self-consciousness (Augustine, Aquinas) but as activity alone. This activity is

held to be unconditioned because it is original. So it is free or spontaneous in that it is sole cause of its own activity. But it is activity, so it is essentially relational and teleological; for it is necessarily ekstastic in the sense that, whatever else it may be, activity is nothing less than ablative or abductive movement, movement out from itself. The notion of the first principle of the threefold as this kind of unity of the ecstatic and the unconditioned, of necessity and freedom, is the sort of position defended by voluntarists like Scotus and Schelling (who use the psychological analogy of will rather than mind to define origin) and by pragmatists like Peirce (who reinterprets will as action). They insist on the priority of activity to mind or thought, in particular to the laws of logic, and they maintain that activity is a perfectly knowable feature of experience.

As my reference to Peirce indicates, it is out of this explicabilist tradition that I think he weaves his triune of logic of events. His triunity is the subject of my fifth thesis.

5. Peirce's Triunity

My fifth thesis is that Peirce's is an ostensive trinitarianism, a natural theology of the trinity, that attempts to make manifest the necessarily creative and radically immanent triune principle of actualization across the fields of logic, mathematics, phenomenology, semiotics and speculative cosmology. Although there is no space to elaborate this large claim here, I will say something about how I interpret each principle of his triunity, drawing specifically on his cosmology, and I will try to indicate as I proceed something of its significance as an event ontology. Throughout, it is important to keep in mind that for Peirce any differentiable entity whatsoever is to be analyzed in terms of this triune principle of actualization, which is distinct but inseparable from that which it actualizes or creates. This means, as will become evident, that any differentiable entity has the nature of a triune event in the infinitely or inexhaustibly proceeding iterative movement of actualization.

In the first place, the self-explanatory first principle of actualization is pure ekstastic or ablative activity, abductive 'movement from....' Because it is origin, it is unconditioned. So it is

free or spontaneous in the sense that it acts wholly out of its own nature. Because it is unconditioned or free activity, it is limitless in the sense that it is absolutely indeterminate in its own nature. That is, free ekstasis, as such, possesses no ‘real’ or determining properties or predicates. Its character as free ekstastic activity means that in the nature of the case it is a non-determining power.

This concept of origin is elaborated by Peirce in terms of a particular kind of mathematical infinite. His is not the potential infinite of Aristotle and the intuitionists, where however many parts it is divided into, it is possible for there to be more. Nor is it the real categoric infinite of set theory, involving an infinite multiplicity of sets in which the parts or components are really there and their number is greater than any given. Rather, Peirce’s firstness is in my view a particular kind of syncategorematic infinite.^{xvi} That is, it is a potential syncategorematic infinite,^{xvii} for its absolute indeterminacy means that “it contains no definite parts” (CP 6. 168); it is a continuum of potential parts only (CP 6. 185, NEM 4: 343).

The significance of this theory of infinity is that here we have a concept of origin which in the nature of the case is not a One, not an All, not a Totality, not even a multiplicity of any kind. As Peirce stresses, this is a mathematical concept of pure chance (CP 6.201).

Peirce describes free or indeterminate firstness as a no-thing or void (CP 6. 214ff.). That is, firstness is nothing not as all-containing plenitude (*per excellentiam nihil*), nor as vacuity (*omnino nihil*), nor as negation (*nihil privativum*), but only as infinite free indeterminacy (*nihil per infinitatem*).^{xviii} It may be objected that this infinite origin is a ‘unity’ of free indeterminacy. However, as will be more fully explained in a moment, unity is in Peirce as in M. Badiou an effect, not a property of the origin; in Peirce, unity emerges out of the triune relation as its realization. The sole kind of unity that the first considered in its own nature possesses is the unity of irreducibility (*unum*), for the first is the *principium non de principio* and as such is unconditioned freedom. Peirce’s firstness is not a unicity in any other sense; rather, it is the univocal concept of a dynamical free indeterminacy that as such has no nature of its own, and, in communicating itself to all things, is necessarily never the same.

This brings us to Peirce's principle of secondness. Because the first principle is ekstastic, self-realizing movement, it gives rise out of itself to a second activity or principle of actualization: the principle of essentially and spontaneously self-differentiating activity, of dative 'movement to....' The distinctness of this second principle resides in the fact that it is not in its own nature indeterminate activity but is the activity of determination: it constitutes differences or singularities, and it does so by communicating to them the spontaneity that is the positive basis of all determinacy or actuality. Such differentiating activity is also the positive basis of the logical laws of noncontradiction, negation and the excluded middle.

There cannot, however, be any such thing as pure differences, as we noted earlier in connection with chaos. Rather, for ekstastic activity to realize its differentiations as such - and so to realize itself in relation to its differentiations - it articulates its communicative nature as a law or rule for itself and its differentiations. That is, because ekstasis is essentially communicative and self-realizing, it determines itself as a relation or medium of continuous communication or creation. This power is the potentiality of structure, and it is the medium in which differences are constituted. The distinctness of this third element resides in the fact that it is the activity of ordination, the dynamic principle of order.

Peirce's thirdness or power of mediation defines the implications of his theory of origin for specific laws or rules. Like differences, all structures are determinations of free indeterminacy, which is inexhaustible. In consequence, all structures carry free indeterminacy within their nature. So all structures possess an inexhaustible indeterminacy. What this means is that all specific laws or rules are essentially and intrinsically vague: they are infinitely or inexhaustibly determinable determinations.^{xix} Thus there are no really complete or completable wholes; as Peirce insists (*CP* 5. 532), for any given whole or continuity (e.g. 'All men are mortal'), the universal quantifier is to be interpreted distributively ('For each...') not collectively ('For all...'). Wholes are infinite in the distributive, not the collective, mode; and they are distributive wholes because they are intrinsically vague or infinitely indeterminate.

What we have in this *mathesis universalis* is one of the great revolutions in the theory of universals. Forms do not constitute an infinite multiplicity of fixed entities, as for Whitehead and

Badiou; rather, they are potentials that are subject to evolution, to development and decay. This is an explanatorist theory of the activity of actualization in which there is no complete, all-containing Totality or One. Unity - and with it the unity of truth - is an effect, not an origin. All achieved unities -including that of the triune principle of actualization itself - are dynamical events of spontaneity, difference, and order, which as such are essentially incomplete and open to further determination.

With Peirce's explanatorist theory of the activity of actualization now laid out, at least as I understand it, a number of clarificatory points about its nature and implications as an event ontology are in order.

First, this *is* a triunity. The three distinct and mutually irreducible principles of activity, differentiation, and ordination do not constitute a temporal sequence. There is not *first* activity and *then* difference and order. Rather, the communicative activity of actualization is only realized in and by spontaneous activity, spontaneous differentiation and spontaneous ordination. Thus in the nature of the case all three principles are correlative and interdependent as well as irreducible. They are intrinsically relational because each is essential to the realization of the others, and they can be defined only by way of the opposition of relations that constitute their triunity.

Secondly, the triune theory of events *is* a theory of the radically new. For there is on this ontology not even a pre-given multiplicity of possibilities, however understood. Further, no axioms need to be invoked, and the laws of logic themselves are actualizations, infinitely determinable indeterminacies that are subject to development.^{xx} There is here only the open, eternal dynamic of triune actualization.

Thirdly, because this triunity constitutes the nature of any differentiable entity, nominalism is completely rejected. In contrast to Whitehead, Deleuze, and Badiou, there are no absolute individuals or events, for all individuals or events are unities of free individuality and vague structure. As in all event ontologies, difference or individuality is the site of decision or determination and is essentially relational in that it is a constitutive component of an iterative series; for Peirce, however, its intrinsic sociality or communality arises from the fact that its

infinitude it is never complete or closed, never final. Here we approach the subject of my sixth thesis.

6. *The Agapeic Community*

My sixth thesis is that the theory of the triune event of actualization is the basis of a transformative ethics and politics.

For consider. Being or activity is not here primarily analyzed as substance or as subjectivity but as communication, the unconditional communication of freedom by the triune principle of actualization. Unconditional communication is thus the actualizing condition of substance and of subjectivity, of all determination. At this point we cannot avoid the question: just what is unconditional communication?

There is only one answer: it is love, not as need or desire in the sense of lack (*eros*) but as unconditional giving or donation, unconditional concern (*agape*). Hegel always translates 'love' into 'spirit'. The point here is that 'spirit' in the sense of the immanent triune structure of actualization should always be translated as 'love'. For the ultimate principle is not self-transparent, all-containing mind that comprehends everything in its nature; rather, it is unconditional concern. Only in this way can the spontaneity and individuality of things, and in particular the contingent evolution of physical nature, be properly secured. And the reason is that unconditional concern is open to what it does not determine. It does not stand in opposition to contingency, nor does it treat contingency as a lower moment of some all-containing absolute completeness. The completeness of all-containment is not to be confused with the eternally achieved completeness of perfection that is the threefold agapeic principle, for unconditional concern *surrenders* itself to contingency. We see this in parental love, in all genuine love. As Peirce says in his essay on 'Evolutionary Love', "The movement of love is circular, at one and the same impulse projecting things into independency and drawing them into harmony" (CP 6. 288).

The significance of this analysis of the triune principle of actualization should now be apparent. For the ancient Greeks as well as for a modern philosopher like Iris Murdoch, love as *eros* is the *medium* by which we come properly to apprehend and to participate in the ultimate reality. In contrast, the claim here is that the ultimate reality *is* love as infinite or inexhaustible *agape*. This is the infinity that characterizes the three principles of actualization in their unity of co-realization. And it is this infinite love which is the active condition of order in the universe, the ultimate ground of actuality, that which provides out of its own nature all the reasons needed to explain the existence of its ordering activity. In consequence, love is the ground of the complications that wherever possible accompany ordination. It is the ground of that synthetic, developmental tendency to inclusiveness or community of structure without which there could not be evolution as we mean the term, either generally or with particular reference to what has happened on this planet over the last few billion years. All specific complications or communities - not just the human mind, but mathematical order, time and space, possibly even extensity - *are* contingent. Yet ordination itself, as complication or inclusive community, is not. For these reasons, the real is not only the true; the real is essentially good.

I should perhaps add that in the context of the history of our philosophy and culture I do not think this claim is anything unusual or bizarre. This is an ancient claim, and I have tried to indicate that, in the context of the philosophical principle of reason, it is a powerful claim. And here is a further reason why: it is a claim that in fact tacitly informs all our attitudes, a claim by which in fact we tacitly measure all our actions. For what it implies is that the ultimate, the highest ethical and so political principle is that which is the ground of reality: namely, the impossibly demanding principle of universal unconditional concern. On this point, I challenge any of the schools of contemporary ethics amongst us, to explain why we do or should act in the way they say without at some point (as Kant thinks is essential) appealing to the principle of unconditional concern. Put it like this: do you value or have high regard for that principle? If so, note that it cannot be derived or based on any lesser principle. As I will try to show, it is irreducible. And its irreducibility (as Kant saw) constitutes an ethical clue to the ultimate nature of reality.

So let me ask a question of the various schools of event ontology. How would one go about analyzing the proposition 'Jane loves John'? For purposes of comparison, I will offer a triune analysis.

In the first instance a triune analysis of 'Jane loves John' would go something like this. We mean there is intense, spontaneous feeling toward another and in that respect Jane is what Peirce calls an "emotional interpretant". We mean also that there are actions and effort involved, and in this respect Jane is an "energetic interpretant". And we mean further that there is an adopted rule, habit of behavior, or ideal, in which respect Jane is an ideal or "logical interpretant" (CP 5. 473-76). It is the *unity* of all three that is meant by 'loves'. The interpretive power of triune analysis is I think well demonstrated here.

Yet it may be asked if we could not leave it at that. In other words, why not settle for some kind of descriptivist or naturalist theory of the triune event, as so many of those influenced by Peirce do? Does an explanatorist theory of reality have any role here? Just what does it add to the description?

However, experience demands that we go beyond descriptivism. For the hallmark of all genuine love is some element of unconditional concern. And as Kant puts it, unconditional love is not a matter of affection or "pathological love" but "practical love". It is not a feeling or a disposition, for we can and should show unconditional concern to those we may be disposed to dislike, even hate. We have here an alignment of feeling and action with an ideal, where feeling is no longer erotic, nor merely an affective sentiment of sympathy, but a matter of self-surrender.

How else can this be understood except as a spiritual act, in the sense of a total orientation of our natures that transcends natural impulse? It is something more than just 'mind', something more than ordinary 'feeling', and usually involves extraordinary action. Moreover, not only does unconditional concern extend beyond people to other things - so it is not an instance of species-centrism - but it obviously cannot be explained as enlightened egoism. Least of all can it be explained by some kind of consequentialism, for consequences are what it ignores, often to the point of the sacrifice of life itself. In short, it is irreducible, even to the imperatives of biological self-interest or evolutionary survival.

What has to be said I think is that where there is such love - and we can find it manifest in artworks as well as people - we have a glimpse of the *perfect* unity of feeling, exertion and rule. *Either* this is a perfection, an ideal, that is utterly without reason, is quite irrational and even self-destructive (as Nietzsche claimed, holding 'life' to be the *summum bonum*); *or* this is a perfection that has its reason - its only reason - in the ultimate order of things. So it is here that the self-explanatory theory of agapeic triunity finds its final and decisive vindication. It is in the *mathesis amoris* of the triune logic of events that justice and freedom have their only adequate basis. Anything less, anything besides the impossible demand of *agape*, is open to compromise and will betray us into a lack of faithfulness. For that reason, along with the others I have given, I have faith or trust (*fides*) in the self-explanatory hypothesis of the triune event.

James Bradley,
Department of Philosophy,
Memorial University of Newfoundland,
Newfoundland,
Canada, A1C 5S7.
jbradley@mun.ca

ENDNOTES

ⁱ For this latter formulation, see Alexander R. Pruss, *The Principle of Sufficient Reason: A Reassessment*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006, p. 3. I use the term ‘principle of reason’, and not ‘sufficient reason’, in order to disassociate the concept from the usual necessitarian interpretations, both of it and of Leibniz. See, for example, Alain Badiou, *Infinite Thought: Truth and the Return to Philosophy*, trans. Oliver Feltham & Justin Clemens, London & New York: Continuum, 2005, p.138

ⁱⁱ Whether or not the concept of the unity of truth is inextricably wedded to the notions either that it arises from a primordial unity, or that it is itself a primordial given, is a question that for the present may be left open.

ⁱⁱⁱ All references to Peirce’s published works are to his *Collected Papers*, eds. Charles Hartshorne & Paul Weiss, 8 Vols., Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1931-35.

^{iv} See Alain Badiou, *Being and Event*, trans. Oliver Feltham, London & New York: Continuum, 2005, e.g. pp. 9-10.

^v See Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, trans. Mark Lester & Charles Stivale, ed. Constantin V. Boundas, New York: Columbia University Press, 1990, pp.179-180; on which Robert Piercey’s excellent essay, ‘The Spinoza-intoxicated man: Deleuze on expression’, *Man and World*, 29, 1996, pp. 269-281.

^{vi} Plato, *Philebus*, 64-65; on which, H.-G. Gadamer, *The Idea of the Good in the Platonic-Aristotelian Philosophy*, trans. P. Christopher Smith, New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1986, 115-116.

^{vii} See Martin Heidegger, *On Time and Being*, trans Joan Stambaugh, New York: Harper Books, 1972 on which, see my article, ‘Transformations in Speculative Philosophy’, *Cambridge History of Modern Philosophy 1870-1945*, ed. Tom Baldwin, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 438-448. Josiah Royce’s Idealist theory of the triune structure of interpretation could be added to the names I have given in the text; see his *The Problem of Christianity* (1913), especially Volume 2. This is a book written under the acknowledged influence Peirce. It should also be noted that the triunity of existence, relation, and meaning expounded in John Dewey’s *Experience and Nature* (1929) is a naturalization of Peirce. Habermas’ ‘life, labour, language’ is also a naturalist echo of triunity.

^{viii} See Alain Badiou, *op. cit.*, Meditation Thirteen.

^{ix} Hegel says of Kant: “the conception of the Trinity has, through the influence of the Kantian philosophy, been brought into notice again in an outward [read: purely formal] way as a type, and, as it were, a ground plan of thought, and this in very definite forms of thought.” G.W.F. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, trans E.B. Speirs & J.B. Sanderson, New York: Humanities Press, 1974, Vol. 3, pp. 32-33.

^x That this position is not to be confused with Sabellianism is indicated by the fact that the theologians Karl Barth and Karl Rahner work within its purview. See Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, trans. G.T. Thomson, Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1936. Vol. 1, Part 1, Chapter III; and Karl Rahner, *The Trinity*, trans. Joseph Donceel, New York: The Crossroad Herder Publishing Company, 1970. It will I hope become evident below that it is regrettable that theologians generally tend to ignore Peirce, no doubt influenced by the predominant naturalist reading of him. For an exception to this rule, see Hermann Deuser, *Gott: Geist und Nature. Theologische Konsequenzen aus Charles S. Peirce’ Religionsphilosophie*, Berlin: Konigshausen & Neumann , 1993.

^{xi} Alain Badiou, 'Difference and Unity in Gilles Deleuze', in *Gilles Deleuze and the Theatre of Philosophy*, ed. Constantin V. Boundas & Dorothea Olkowski, New York & London: Routledge, 1994, p. 58.

^{xii} See my article, 'The Speculative Generalization of the Function: A Key to Whitehead', *Tijdschrift voor Filosofie*, 64, 2002, pp. 253-271.

^{xiii} Martin Heidegger, *op. cit.*, p.18.

^{xiv} Levinas sees Heidegger's *Es gibt* as abundant 'generosity'; see E. Levinas, 'Interview with Francis Poirié' in *Is It Righteous To Be?*, ed. Jill Robbins, Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 2001, pp. 45-6. If Levinas is correct, love may have been emerging as a central theme in the later Heidegger's work. This would represent a significant shift from his earlier attachment to Schelling's notion of freedom as the *Abgrund* or original ground of Being (see *The Essence of Reasons*, trans. T. Malick, Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, p. 105) which perhaps lies behind his definition of Being as "das transcendens schlechthin" in *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie & Edward Robinson, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1967, p. 62. The themes of freedom and love in Peirce will be discussed below, where it will become evident that Schelling's concept of freedom as origin – the first principle in his theory of triunity - is taken over by Peirce but is completely shorn of its character as all-containing reservoir of being. See F.W.J. von Schelling, *Philosophical Inquiries into the Nature of Human Freedom*, trans. James Gutman, La Salle IL: Open Court, 1936, and *Philosophie der Offenbarung, 1841/2*, ed. Manfred Frank, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1977. What happens to freedom when it is taken out of Schelling's trinitarian framework is amply illustrated by Schopenhauer's concept of will and its progeny. What happens to freedom and difference when they are so extrapolated is indicated by all theories of the irruptive event from Nietzsche to Badiou. What happens to form or structure when it is so treated can be seen with Baudrillard's world of simulacra. For a critical account of

Schelling's influence, which wisely omits Peirce, see Georg Lukás, *The Destruction of Reason*, trans. Peter Palmer, London: The Merlin Press, 1980.

^{xv} G.W.F. Hegel, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 8.

^{xvi} A syncategorematic infinite is an infinite that in some sense or another is essentially relative to something else. The first principle of actualization is a syncategorematic infinite in virtue of (a) its essential relation to the other principles of actualization and (b) its essential relation to that which is created. All three principles of the triunity of actualization are for the same reasons syncategorematic infinities, and (as will become apparent) all share the potential syncategorematic infinity of the first principle. Yet (as will also become apparent) because the second and third principles are the principles of specific modes of determination - differentiation and ordination respectively - they are not in their own natures simply potential syncategorematic infinities. Rather, they are best understood as syncategorematic infinities of specific or determinate potentiality; namely, that of differentiation and ordination. The infinity that characterizes all three principles considered in their unity will be defined in section 6 below.

^{xvii} Limits of space and personal competence mean that I will not attempt here to define the complex mathematical concept of real syncategorematic infinity, useful though that might be for purposes of comparison and contrast.

^{xviii} These various distinctions in the meaning of the term 'nothing' are made by Duns Scotus Eriugena; Peirce's version of the *nihil per infinitatem* is not of course Eriugena's. On Eriugena's theory of divine plenitude, Werner Beierwaltes, 'Negati Affirmatio', *Dionysius*, 1, 1977, pp. 127-159, especially pp. 133-134.

^{xix} Here, I believe, Peirce appropriates Scotus' theory of the 'imperfection' of metaphysical concepts and Kant's notion of the indeterminacy of regulative ideas and transforms them into a

realist theory of ‘vague’ universals. In this way he intends to dissolve the Scotist opposition of logic and metaphysics and the Kantian tension between mechanism and teleology by treating them as experienced and essentially interdependent modes of the realm of thirdness or order. For Peirce, Kant is a nominalist in that (1) in general he treats rules, unlike particulars, as purely constructs of the mind and so gives primacy to particulars; because (2) it is assumed that the Law of Excluded Middle applies universally to the real (see note 20 below), with the result that the indeterminate has a lesser status; hence (3) the noumenal realm of the *Ding an sich* is problematically treated as a realm of determinate yet unknowable individuals.

^{xx} More precisely: The logical laws of noncontradiction and the excluded middle, as well as the semantic principles of bivalence and *tertium non datur*, are inapplicable or irrelevant to the domain of the first principle of the threefold but hold in that of the second principle, which is their actualizing condition. Such rules, that is, are not universal, as on the standard interpretation, but necessary features of individuality and its semantics. Thus also, in respect of rules or generals, of which the third principle is the actualizing condition, the law of noncontradiction holds of them, but the law of excluded middle and the principle of bivalence do not. However, the principle of *tertium non datur* holds in the domain of the third as well as the second principle. That is, in Michael Dummett’s words, “it is always the case that for no proposition or property can we ever rule out both the possibility of its being true and that of its being false. In other words, there can be no circumstances in which a proposition or property can be recognized as being, irrevocably, neither true nor false” (*Truth and Other Enigmas*, London: Duckworth, 1978, p. xxx). (I have left here aside the special case of boundary propositions or properties in the domain of difference. In respect of these, noncontradiction holds but the excluded middle and bivalence do not. *Tertium non datur* is simply inapplicable to such propositions or properties.)