Divine simplicity in the theology of Irenaeus

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DIVINE SIMPLICITY IN THE THEOLOGY OF IRENAEUS

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Declaration or Statement of Authorship and Sources

This thesis contains no material that has been extracted in whole in or part from a thesis that I have submitted towards the award of any other degree or diploma in any other tertiary institution.

No other person's work has been used without due acknowledgement in the main text of the thesis.

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Abstract

Scholars have examined early Christian appropriations of the philosophical language of divine simplicity, but there is no extended study focused specifically on Irenaeus, even though he provides the earliest extant Christian explanation of the concept. This thesis argues that Irenaeus develops a rich account of divine simplicity that is intrinsically related to several other more well-known aspects of his thought. This account emerges from a complex appropriation and development of philosophical ideas, biblical exegesis, and diverse discussions of divine simplicity among contemporary Christians.

In Part 1, the thesis focuses on Irenaeus' definition of divine simplicity (*haer*. 2.13). The account of God provided by the rule of truth is clarified by the claim that God is simple. Specifically, this concept of divine simplicity sets parameters on appropriate statements about God *in se* and God's relationship to creation. In Part 2, the thesis explores the implications of divine simplicity for Irenaeus' wider thought, focusing especially on how divine simplicity affects his theology and scriptural interpretation in later books of *Against Heresies* when discussing divine will, generation, activity, and power.

For Irenaeus, the concept of divine simplicity involves the fundamental principle that God's will, activity, names, and powers cannot be understood separately, but should instead be thought of as mutually entailing, because God, unlike humans, is not composite. By "mutually entailing" I mean that God's names and powers imply one another without being identical, since they are distinct in unity. Because God is simple, language about humans cannot be applied univocally to God, and instead, God is understood as self-similar. Irenaeus' account of divine simplicity provides an important insight into second-century theology and should be viewed as a significant development in the history of the concept in early Christian thought.

Abbreviations

ACW	Ancient Christian Writers
ANF	Ante-Nicene Fathers
CUP	Cambridge University Press
GSC	Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte
HTR	*Harvard Theological Review*
Hv	Harvey, W. W., ed. *Santi Irenaei Episcopi Lugdunensis Libros Quinque Adversus Haereses*. 2 vols. Cambridge, 1857.
JECS	*Journal of Early Christian Studies*
JTS	*Journal of Theological Studies*
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LLT	Library of Latin Texts A
LS	Lewis, Charlton T. and Charles Short. *A Latin Dictionary*. Oxford: OUP, 1956.
LSJ	Liddell, Henry George and Robert Scott, ed. *A Greek-English Lexicon*. 9th ed. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940.
OUP	Oxford University Press
PO	Patrologia Orientalis
SC	Sources Chrétiennes
ThQ	*Theological Quarterly*
TU	Texte und Untersuchungen
VC	*Vigiliae Christianae*
ZAC	*Zeitschrift für Antikes Christentum*

Abbreviations for classical and patristic texts come from:

Lampe, G. W. H., ed. *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961.
Whitmarsh, Tim, ed. *The New Oxford Classical Dictionary*. 4th ed. Oxford: OUP, 2018.

Introduction

For Irenaeus of Lyons, the concept of divine simplicity is central for describing God and God's interaction with humans, or as some have labelled them, theology proper (or metaphysics) and economy. In the recent wave of scholarly interest, these two themes have been dichotomised.[1] Some have focused on the latter and rejected the former–for example, a recent treatment by John Behr considers the theme of simplicity in Irenaeus, but rejects the claim that Irenaeus is deploying parameters for speech about God or that he is establishing a system of metaphysics logically prior to an economy revealed in scripture. For Behr, any conception of metaphysics emerges from economy. Others have focused on the former in absence of the latter–Anthony Briggman's recent *God and Christ in Irenaeus* examines divine simplicity in Irenaeus as a doctrine separate from scripture. He explores divine simplicity as philosophical theology without developing an account of how and where it shapes the rest of Irenaeus's thought, particularly God's interaction with humanity. Theology proper is developed apart from economy. Separating these two categories seems to divide Irenaeus's argument in a way that is not reflective of *Against Heresies*. When I explore divine simplicity in the "theology" of Irenaeus, I build on the work of Behr and Briggman, and argue that Irenaeus's claim that God is simple is based on scripture and is used to interpret scripture, and by the term "theology" I envisage both God *in se* and God's interaction with creation.

In the first part of the thesis, I begin with the fundamentals of Irenaeus's account of simplicity. In *haer.* 2.13.3 God "is simple, and non-composite, and self-proportionate, and altogether similar and equal to himself" (*simplex et non compositus et similimembrius et totus*

[1] John Behr, "Synchronic and Diachronic Harmony: St. Irenaeus on Divine Simplicity," *Modern Theology* 35, no. 3 (2019); Anthony Briggman, *God and Christ in Irenaeus* (Oxford: OUP, 2019), 90-99.

ipse sibimetipsi similis et aequalis est) and yet may be spoken of as possessing or being a series of powers: "he is all mind, all spirit, all understanding, all thought, all reason, all hearing, all sight, all light and the entire source of all that is good" (*totus cum sit sensus et totus spiritus et totus sensuabilitas et totus ennoia et totus ratio et totus auditus et totus oculus et totus lumen et totus fons omnium bonorum*). Because God is simple, the scriptural language describing God, such as God's Word or God as light, cannot be understood in the same way as language about composite humans. Irenaeus introduces theological terminology for these descriptions about God and he sets limits on their possible meaning. Because of these parameters, while God is not comparable to humans, God can be understood in terms of himself, so the scriptural names and titles of God are mutually entailing (in *haer.* 2.13.8-9). By "mutually entailing" I mean that God's names and powers imply one another without them being identical, since they are distinct in unity. After exploring these themes in Irenaeus's definition, I argue that they help shape descriptions of God in the rest of Irenaeus's theology.

In this investigation, I try to avoid "retrospective history," so I focus on the ways Irenaeus's explanation of divine simplicity addresses second-century concerns.[2] In the study of early Christian thought, scholars, such as Christopher Stead, have questioned the efficacy of early Christian appropriation of divine simplicity, claiming that early assessments of this principle could not cogently use the Biblical language of a personal God.[3] Irenaeus claims

[2] For an ongoing discussion against retrospective history, see John Passmore, "The Idea of a History of Philosophy," *History and Theory* 5, no. 5 (1965); Quentin Skinner, "Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas," ibid.8, no. 1 (1969); Adrian Blau, "Extended Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas," ibid.58, no. 3 (2019).

[3] Initially, Stead claimed that simplicity was a problem for orthodoxy in the first four centuries because (1) a self-absorbed unity cannot also be considered a social Trinity, (2) modern philosophy requires that language be univocal to carry meaning, and (3) simplicity would preclude an active God, particularly one who responds to prayer. Later in his career, Stead included Irenaeus in his criticisms. See Christopher Stead, "Divine Simplicity as a Problem for Orthodoxy," in *The Making of Orthodoxy: Essays in Honour of Henry Chadwick*, ed. Rowan Williams (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 265-66, 68; *Philosophy in Christian Antiquity* (Cambridge: CUP, 1994), 131. For another modern challenge to early Christian appropriations of divine simplicity, and a recent response see Pannenberg's critique and Ip's response. Pui Ip, *Origen of Alexandria and the Emergence of Divine Simplicity before Nicaea* (Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame University Press,

that God is simple, and he is primarily known for his dependence on the scriptural language of a personal God, so he certainly attempts to do so. However, Irenaeus also leaves many fourth-century and modern theological challenges unanswered, which is highlighted by his terminological and topical intersection with later explorations of divine simplicity (see Conclusion). Furthermore, one could argue that Irenaeus is not always cogent, particularly if cogency follows the modern requirement of univocal language. However, in this thesis I do not to ask whether his account of simplicity answers challenges raised by fourth-century Nicene theology or modern critiques. The presence or absence of terms in Irenaeus's account are explored, not as evidence of proto-Trinitarian or proto-Monarchian tendencies, but in the context of contemporary questions. By the time of Irenaeus, multiple Christian authors from Asia Minor and Rome refer to divine simplicity, two locations where he had ongoing communication. Irenaeus develops beyond the larger Christian appropriation of this philosophical concept by addressing second-century concerns, and he provides the first extant Christian explanation.

1. Irenaeus's Mobility and Correspondence

Although Irenaeus only occasionally gestures toward Asia, Rome, and Gaul, the record of his movement between these locations and his ongoing epistolary correspondence with Asia and Rome after settling in Gaul provide possible connections to theologically and philosophically aware circles where ideas related to divine simplicity were being exchanged.

To some extent, Irenaeus always kept one foot in Asia Minor. Before Irenaeus became bishop in Lyons, the churches of Gaul and Asia Minor were linked by the Gallic martyrdoms. In the letters to the churches of Asia and Phrygia, the martyrdom accounts of

forthcoming), Chapter 1; Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, 3 vols., vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1988); "The Appropriation of the Philosophical Concept of God as a Dogmatic Problem of Early Christian Theology," in *Basic Questions in Theology* (Augsburg: Fortress Publishers, 1971).

Christians in Lyons and Vienne (*HE* 5.1.1-5.3.3) specifically mention martyrs from Pergamum and Phrygia (*HE* 5.1.3). Before Irenaeus, there was an established connection between these geographically separated communities. It is possible that Irenaeus learned about the philosophical principle of simplicity before leaving Asia Minor. Asia had three of the educational centres of the Second Sophistic period (Ephesus, Pergamum, and Smyrna), so he could also have been exposed to it through an education outside the ecclesial context.[4] However, we have no biographical information to demonstrate that he had any formal grammatical or rhetorical training. Instead, he describes how, as a child, he learned at the feet of Polycarp of Smyrna (*Letter to Florinus* in *HE* 5.20.4-7). This ecclesial training may have given him more than a heresiological lineage for his polemic.[5] A creed-like fragment that is attributed to Melito of Sardis, a contemporary of Irenaeus, describes the Incarnation of Christ, "clothed in flesh while not constraining the simplicity (ἁπλότητα) of his divinity."[6] The language of simplicity was applied to God among bishops of Asia Minor. After Irenaeus left Asia Minor, he remained connected to its churches. [7] He used his influence in Rome on behalf of the bishops from Asia Minor during the Quartodeciman controversy by reprimanding the actions of Victor of Rome, and he did so by appealing to a precedent

[4] Ewen Bowie, "The Geography of the Second Sophistic: Cultural Variations," in *Paideia: The World of the Second Sophistic*, ed. Brarbara E. Borg (Berlin: DeGruyter, 2008).

[5] He retells intimate stories of the Apostle John in Ephesus, who fled the bathhouse when Cerinthus entered, lest it collapse on him while near this "enemy of truth" (*haer.* 3.3.4), which is compared with the anti-heretical efforts of Polycarp of Smyrna.

[6] *fr.* 14. Translation from Stuart George Hall, ed. *Melito of Sardis: On Pasca and Fragments* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), 81-82. Syriac and reconstructed Greek from I. Rucker, ed. *Florilegium Edessenum Anonumum* (München: Verlag der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1933), 14-15.This Syriac fragment was preserved alongside another fragment (*fr.* 15) which is attributed to Melito, but the parallel Armenian, Ethiopic and Arabic are attributed to Irenaeus. In it, Jesus Christ is referred to as "perfect Intellect" before a long catena of descriptions that show him as present in the Old Testament (law, prophets, priests, kings) which is fulfilled through his Incarnation. The authorship of Melito seems much more convincing. For a discussion on the authorship, see Hermann Jordan, ed. *Armenische Irenaeusfragmente mit deutscher Übersetzung nach Dr. W. Lüdtke*, vol. TU 36.3 (Leipzig: Hinrich, 1913), 56-60. For more recent discussion or to see a summary of sources for these references, see Alistair C. Stewart, ed. *Melito of Sardis: On Pasca, with the Fragments of Melito and Other Material Related to the Quartodecimans* (Yonkers, New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2016), 96-98.

[7] Secord notes that a large number of specialists (Greek sophists and doctors) were welcomed to Gaul during this time. See Jared Secord, "The Cultural Geography of a Greek Christian: Irenaeus from Smyrna to Lyons," in *Irenaeus: Life, Scripture, and Legacy*, ed. Sara Parvis and Paul Foster (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012), 32.

between Asia Minor and Rome (*HE* 5.24). He could have learned about divine simplicity from the philosophic or ecclesial context of Asia Minor, or after leaving, through ongoing correspondence.

Irenaeus's road merely led through Rome, but his network there remained, as demonstrated by extant letters and his ongoing engagement with the different schools from Rome. The first record of Irenaeus in Rome is based on the Moscow manuscript of the *Martyrdom of Polycarp,* which claims that Irenaeus was in Rome when Polycarp was martyred (c. 156/157).[8] About twenty years later, while Irenaeus was still a presbyter, a letter commending him to Eleutherus, bishop of Rome from 174-189 CE, accompanied the record of the martyrdoms of Vienne and Lyons.[9] Scholars have assumed that Pothinus, then bishop of Lyons, sent Irenaeus with letters destined for Rome and Asia to protect him from the persecution of 177 CE.[10] Therefore, Irenaeus arrived in Rome around 154/5 CE, was there through 156/7 CE, and he returned to Rome around 177 CE to carry the letter from Pothinus. Beyond visiting Rome at least twice and mediating in disagreements between the Sees of Rome and Asia Minor, Irenaeus also remained aware of the different Christian schools of Rome and their writings.[11] Despite having written *Against Heresies* from Gaul,[12] he claims to have commentaries written by the followers of Valentinus and texts written by other

[8] The dating of Polycarp's martyrdom is based on the argument made by T. D. Barnes. Behr argues that Irenaeus was born around 130 CE, he would have visited Rome around 154-155 CE, and he would have been there in 156/7 CE during the martyrdom of Polycarp. See T. D. Barnes, *Early Christian Hagiography and Roman History* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 367-78; John Behr, *Irenaeus of Lyons : Identifying Christianity* (Oxford: OUP, 2013), 67.

[9] *HE* 5.1, 4. Eusebius places several letters together: the letter describing the martyrs of Lyons and Vienne was sent to the churches in Asia Minor, and was accompanied by a letter that addressed the prophetic dissension in Phrygia, and a letter of the martyrs commending Irenaeus to the bishop of Rome.

[10] Based on his *Chronicon*, the date would be 167 CE, but scholars generally follow his *Historia Ecclesiastica*. See Behr, *Irenaeus of Lyons*, 16, n. 13.

[11] Irenaeus specifically addresses the schools of Valentinus, Ptolemy, Marcion, and Basilides. I follow Markschies' argument for Valentinian schools. He argues that describing these groups as "schools" follows their own self-understanding, not just a heresiologist division. See Christopher Markschies, "Valentinian Gnosticism: Toward the Anatomy of a School," in *The Nag Hammadi after Fifty Years*, ed. John Turner and Anne McGuire (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 401-38.

[12] In the preface of Book 1, Irenaeus is writing from Gaul, and based on his list of bishops in Rome in *haer.* 3.3.3, Irenaeus completed Book 3 of *Against Heresies* while Eleutherus was still bishop, so before 189 CE.

opponents (*haer.* 1.praef.2; *haer.* 1.31.2; 4.praef.2), many of whom were based in Rome. John Behr has described the diversity of Christian communities in Rome (including Hermas, Cerdo, Marcion, Valentinus, Justin Martyr, and the Carpocratians), and concludes that "Rome was a microcosm of Christianity throughout the empire" that was "diverse to begin with, and this diversity increased only with the influx of more Christian teachers and leaders" who were working out how to "relate to each other collectively."[13] Irenaeus participated in this effort, opposing many of the schools from Behr's list, but because of his distance from the capital, he had to rely on the texts coming out of Rome and his past experiences there.

One student of Valentinus, Florinus, had previously been an acquaintance of Irenaeus from their youth in Asia. Irenaeus appealed to him, based on the teaching they both received from Polycarp.[14] However, he also wrote about him to Victor the bishop of Rome, warning against the teaching of this presbyter of Rome and describing the books he had written.[15] Irenaeus, in Gaul, had access to texts written by Florinus in Rome. While we do not know if Florinus ever examined the principle of divine simplicity, we do know that Ptolemy, another student of Valentinus, did. Ptolemy ends his *Letter to Flora* by distinguishing between the Demiurge who created the world and the Father who is simple (ἁπλοῦν) and singular.[16] Even if Irenaeus never read the *Letter to Flora,* if he had access to some writings of Ptolemy or his followers, it is likely that a discussion about his system of creation or divinity included the

[13] Behr, *Irenaeus of Lyons*, 45-47. Behr argues that it was generally characters like Cerdo and Marcion who withdrew themselves by establishing their own churches, and the dozen Christian communities from the time of Paul (c. 50 CE) would certainly have grown in number by the second century.
[14] According to Eusebius, Irenaeus wrote a treatise to a Roman presbyter Florinus, titled *On the Monarchy/That God is not the Author of Evil* (*HE* 5.20.1, 4-8), and while the entire letter is no longer extant, the section preserved by Eusebius shows Irenaeus appealing to Florinus as fellow students of Polycarp.
[15] Irenaeus warned Victor about Florinus in *On the Ogdoad*, and though no longer extant, Eusebius claims that Florinus's Valentinianism was the cause of Irenaeus's warning. This is supported by the introduction found in the Syriac manuscript of this letter. See Syriac fragment 28 in W. W. Harvey, ed. *Santi Irenaei Episcopi Lugdunensis Libros Quinque Adversus Haereses*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: 1857), 2.457.
[16] G. Quispel, ed. *Ptolemy: Lettre a Flora*, SC 24 (Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1966), 77. Peter Lampe has argued that the Ptolemy of Justin (*apol.* 2.2), so c. 160 CE, and of the *Letter to Flora* are the same. See Peter Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus: Christians at Rome in the First Two Centuries*, trans. Michael Steinhausser (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2003), 237-40.

language of divine simplicity. Similarly, Tatian, who was the student of Justin (*HE* 5.13.1), wrote *Oratio ad Graecos* from Rome, a text which describes the Word springing forth from God's will of simplicity (ἁπλότητος).[17] Both Ptolemy and Tatian are explicitly mentioned in Irenaeus's refutation, so he knew of both of them, and as students of different schools in Rome, both of them used the language of divine simplicity in Christian discourse.[18] Rome was a crossroads and source for Irenaeus's exchange of letters, theological texts, and ideas. Tatian and Ptolemy are two examples of early attempts to appropriate this principle for Christian discourse about God, attempts that very well may have been available to Irenaeus.

Scholars have noted how little Irenaeus refers to Gaul.[19] However, the influence of the See of Lyons and the quick reception of Irenaeus's text bolsters my view that Irenaeus remained connected to intellectual and ecclesial networks through the Roman empire. First, the importance of the See of Lyons and the ecclesial boom in Gaul around his time period gave his arguments prominence and connected him to significant ecclesial and intellectual networks. After the Gallic wars, the towns of Vienne and Lyons were established as colonies for veterans, and by the time of Irenaeus, just as Lyons had become the capital of Three Gauls,[20] so too the bishop of Lyons presided over all the churches in the region of Gaul.[21] The record of Cyprian in 250 CE shows an ecclesial boom with a rapid increase in the number of bishoprics established.[22] Within a couple generations of Irenaeus, the Gallic churches grew exponentially. The Quartodeciman controversy further demonstrated the

[17] *orat.* 5. For the composition of the *oratio* in Rome and this section of text from Tatian, see Molly Whittaker, ed. *Tatian: Oratio ad Graecos and fragments* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), x, 10-11.
[18] For further discussion comparing Irenaeus, Tatian, and Ptolemy's use of the language of simplicity, see Chapter 4, section 1.
[19] Secord, "The Cultural Geography of a Greek Christian: Irenaeus from Smyrna to Lyons."
[20] See Behr, *Irenaeus of Lyons*, 18, n. 17; Greg Woolf, *Becoming Roman: The Origins of Provincial Civilization in Gaul* (Cambridge: CUP, 1998), 38, 103.
[21] The precedence of Lyons is demonstrated by Eusebius's record of the vote before the Quartodeciman controversy. See *HE* 5.23.
[22] Graeme Clarke, "Christianity in the First Three Centuries: Third-Century Christianity," in *The Cambrigde Ancient History: The Crisis of Empire, AD 193-337*, ed. Peter Garnsey Alan Bowman, and Averil Cameron (Cambridge: CUP, 2008), 590-91.

influence of Irenaeus's See. Although Irenaeus followed the theology supporting the Roman position on Easter, he nevertheless chastised the Roman bishop's praxis of excommunicating the Asian bishops, and his advice was followed.[23] He had influence in ecclesial controversies throughout the empire. His influence can also be seen in the speedy reception of his writing. For example, within a generation, *Against Heresies* was cited in Carthage and Alexandria.[24] It is clear that Irenaeus was an active participant in Christian debates throughout the empire, and he was exchanging texts and ideas in circles that explored divine simplicity.

2. Irenaeus's Usage of Sources

Irenaeus's argument for divine simplicity uses three kinds of sources: (1) scripture, (2) his opponents and predecessors, and (3) philosophy and literature. In some ways, these are hard to distinguish from one another, since Irenaeus, his opponents and his predecessors often refer to the same classical texts or disagree on the interpretation of the same scriptures. However, I can outline the general ways that his exposition of divine simplicity pulls from these different sources.

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[23] Irenaeus proposed a resolution between the churches of Rome and Asia based on the historical precedent of Polycarp and Anicetus. See *HE* 5.24.

[24] The influence of the See of Lyons may help explain the quick reception of Irenaeus's text: The Greek text of *Against Heresies* was present in Egypt within twenty years of being written, as preserved by Oxy. 405, which is a citation of Matthew 3:16-17 from *haer.* 3.9.2-3. For discussion, see Charles E. Hill, "Irenaeus, the Scribes, and the Scriptures: Papyrological and Theological Observations from P. Oxy. 405," in *Irenaeus: Life, Scripture, and Legacy*, ed. Sara Parvis and Paul Foster (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012); Colin H. Roberts, *Manuscript, Society and Belief in Early Christian Egypt* (London: OUP, 1977), 53. It seems that both Tertullian and Clement of Alexandria knew of the text of *Against Heresies* and cited it. See *adv. Val.* 5. and *strm.* 7.18. There is no doubt that Tertullian cites *Against Heresies,* and scholarship generally agrees with Hort, who used a philological examination of the two to argue that Tertullian used a Greek version of Irenaeus. For the view that Tertullian had access to a Latin version of *Against Heresies*, se Unger's introduction to his translation. See F. J. A. Hort, "Did Tertullian Use the Latin Irenaeus?," in *Nouum Testamentum Sancti Irenaei Episcopi Lugdunensis*, ed. William Sanday and Cuthbert Turner (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1923); D. J. Unger, rev J. J. Dillon, ed. *St. Irenaeus of Lyons Against Heresies, Book 1*, ACW 55 (New York: Paulist Press, 1992), 14-15. Clement's usage of Irenaeus is not based on a clear citations of the text, and though Rousseau points out six different places where Clement's text parallels Irenaeus, some with the exact same phrasing, he concludes that they are not sufficiently similar to warrant being included in the manuscript list. See A. Rousseau, Doutreleau, L. and Mercier, C., ed. *Irénée de Lyon: Contre les Hérésies, Livre V: introduction, notes justificatives, et tables*, SC 152 (Paris: du Cerf, 1969; reprint, 2006), 245-46.

Scholars often focus on Irenaeus's dependence on scripture,[25] but some scholars have argued that Irenaeus's definition of divine simplicity is devoid of scriptural support.[26] I disagree. First, when Irenaeus introduces divine simplicity, he cites Isaiah 55:8-9 to supports his claim that God's thinking is unlike human thinking, for God is simple and all thought. Then, when he introduces divine simplicity, he claims that it agrees with scripture and the truth, a claim similar to reference to the harmony of scripture, which he defends as a summary of the different parts of scripture (often referring to the Law, Prophets, the writings about the Lord, and/or the writings of the Apostles). As his argument develops, the principle of divine simplicity intersects with other theological themes and he reveals the particular scriptural passages he has in mind. So, for example, he initially states that the many titles and powers of the simple God are mutually entailing, but in Book 3, he supports his argument for the title "God" and "Lord" entailing both Father and Son through citations from the Septuagint, arguing in a way similar to Hebrews 1-3 and John 10. Much like the Rule of Truth, divine simplicity summarises scriptural descriptions of God, but it is also a lens for how scripture is to be read. His account of divine simplicity precludes using scriptural language about God to suggest division or parts within God.

Irenaeus, his opponents, and his predecessors were often adopting, adapting or refuting each other's theological terminology. Freidrich Loofs is infamous in Irenaean

[25] Scholars examine Irenaeus's usage of scripture in three main ways. Some study Irenaeus's use of a scriptural book or passsage, for example see Stephen Presley, *The Intertextual Reception of Genesis 1-3 in Irenaeus of Lyons* (Leiden: Brill, 2015); D. Jeffrey Bingham, *Irenaeus' Use of Matthew's Gospel* (Leuven: Peeters, 1998); Bernhard Mutschler, *Das Corpus Johanneum bei Irenäus von Lyon* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006). The most influential study of Book 4 organises the structure of its argument according to scriptural citations. See Philippe Bacq, *De l'ancienne à la nouvelle alliance selon S. Irénée: Unité du livre IV de l'Adversus Haereses* (Paris: Éditions Lethielleux, 1987). Lastly, since Lawson, scholars have described Irenaeus's theology as 'biblical." See John Lawson, *The Biblical Theology of Saint Irenaeus* (London: Epworth, 1948).

[26] Richard Norris claims Book 2 as a whole lack scriptural support, and Anthony Briggman claims there is a lack of a scriptural appeal in Irenaeus's definition of divine simplicity. See Richard Norris, "The Insufficiency of Scripture: *Adversus Haereses* 2 and the Role of Scripture in Irenaeus's Anti-Gnostic Polemic," in *Reading in Early Christian Communities: Essays on Interpretation in the Early Church*, ed. Charles A. Boberts and David Brakke (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2002); Briggman, *God and Christ in Irenaeus*, 92.

scholarship for overstating the influence of Theophilus of Antioch on Irenaeus.[27] Since then, recent scholarship has sought to acknowledge influences on Irenaeus's thought, such as Justin or Theophilus of Antioch, without ignoring his own contribution.[28] I follow this trend. For example, in Chapter 5 I argue that Irenaeus develops beyond Theophilus, who describes God's Hands as helpers, because this could suggest parts in God and would undermine divine simplicity. Similarly, I highlight ways Irenaeus adapts the language that he shares with his opponents. Scholars have generally been cautious about drawing conclusions about Valentinians and his other opponents based on Irenaeus's testimony.[29] However, in many of the relevant passages, he acknowledges their shared terminology, but challenges their theological conclusions. For example, the description of the "containing, not contained" God, from Shepherd of Hermas *Mandate* 1.1 was prominent in descriptions of God for Irenaeus, his opponents, and his predecessors.[30] Logan has convincingly argued that the last section of Irenaeus's Book 1 (*haer.* 1.29-30) reflects a myth very similar to the *Apocryphon of John*, but he claims that Irenaeus was anxious to omit the description of a God who is "containing, not contained."[31] Irenaeus had already acknowledged that his opponents use this terminology

[27] According to John Behr, Loofs "dissected *Against Heresies* into various supposed sources, even if these 'sources' are no longer extant," and concluded that Irenaeus was hardly important as a theologian, but rather, had plundered Theophilus of Antioch without acknowledging his influence. Friedrich Loofs, *Theophilus von Antiochen Adversus Marcionem und die anderen theologischen Quellen bei Irenaeus* (Leipzieg: J. S. Hinrichs, 1930); Behr, *Irenaeus of Lyons*, 14-15.

[28] For example, Jackson Lashier structures his entire argument on the way Irenaeus builds on and differentiates himself from Justin, Theophilus, and Athenagoras. Jackson Lashier, *Irenaeus on the Trinity* (Leiden: Brill, 2014).

[29] For example, Thomassen argues that much of Irenaeus's work was pulled from earlier heresiological works (based on Tertullian's account of heresiological writings of Justin, Miltiades, and Proclus that are no longer extant) and that Irenaeus has contradictory meanings meanings for 'Valentinianism.' Similarly, Dunderberg describes Irenaeus and other heresiologists as a "hostile source" that "are not neutral accounts of what Valentinians taught and did but often show outright hostility toward them…[and] they did not aim at a balanced presentation of all aspects of Valentinian teaching." Einar Thomassen, *The Spiritual Seed: The Church of the "Valentinians"* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 9-22; Ismo Dunderberg, "The School of Valentinus," in *Companion to Second-Century Christian 'Heretics'*, ed. Antti Marjanen and Petri Luomanen (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 7-10.

[30] For a summary, see Chapter 3, n. 6.

[31] Alastair H. B. Logan, *Gnostic Truth and Christian Heresy* (London: T&T Clark, 1996), 75. Irenaeus claims that various opponents use this theme, and Logan himself demonstrates that the theme was present in the *Apocryphon of John*, the *Tripartite Tractate*, the system of Basilides, *Eugnostos the Blessed*, and the *Sophia of Jesus Christ.* Irenaeus addresses the fact that many of his opponents use this terminology, but opposes a dualistic creation narrative that, for him, contradicts this terminology.

(*haer.* 1.1.1), but in the opening of Book 2 he describes it as the common weakness of all his opponents, and he then adopts it in a different way.[32] Similarly, both Ptolemy and Tatian describe God as simple in their own writings, one in the context of the Demiurge and the other in the context of God generating. Irenaeus opposes both of them by name, and elsewhere he engages the questions raised by their usage of the language of simplicity (see Chapter 4, section 1), so it is not impossible that he was aware of their usage of divine simplicity but retained it for his own argument. Furthermore, in *Eugnostos the Blessed,* which has been labelled a "Gnostic text," the author describes a God who is "all thought, all mind," which central to Irenaeus's explanation of divine simplicity.[33] The same terminology for God was being adopted and adapted by Irenaeus, and its presence in the writings of his opponents or his predecessors did not dictate its usefulness.

Lastly, Irenaeus uses philosophy and literature to defend his description of a simple God. In the argument of divine simplicity, he explicitly draws on the terminology and arguments of pre-Socratic and Stoic philosophy, to support his own claim and to argue that his opponents have misused many of these same authors in an attempt to bolster their own cosmological systems. Previously, scholars argued that Irenaeus had little interest in philosophy, with access to a doxography at the most,[34] but recent scholarship has argued that he had greater philosophical knowledge.[35] Just prior to his introduction of divine simplicity,

[32] Fantino has shown Irenaeus knew of his opponents' use of the term *oikonomia,* and I have argued the same for *homoousios*. See Jacques Fantino, *La théologie d'Irénée* (Paris: du Cerf, 1994), 96-108; Jonatan Simons, "God and *eiusdem substantiae* in *Against Heresies* 2.17-18," *Studia Patristica* (forthcoming).
[33] *Eug.* NHC III.73.3-14 (NHC 3.58); Meyer, 276-7.
[34] Irenaeus had access to philosophical doxographies (see *haer.* 2.28.2, 7 and 3.25). William Schoedel, "Philosophy and Rhetoric in the *Adversus Haereses* of Irenaeus," *VC* 13, no. 1 (1959); W. C. van Unnik, "Two notes on Irenaeus," ibid.30, no. 3 (1976); William Schoedel, "Theological Method in Irenaeus ("Adversus Haeresus" 2.25-28)," *JTS* 35, no. 1 (1984); Anthony Briggman, "Revisiting Irenaeus' Philosophical Acumen," *VC* 65, no. 2 (2011).
[35] For a summary of scholarship on Irenaeus's philosophical and rhetorical knowledge, see Briggman, "Revisiting Irenaeus' Philosophical Acumen."; "Literary and Rhetorical Theory in Irenaeus Part 1," *VC* 69, no. 5 (2015); "Literary and Rhetorical Theory in Irenaeus Part 2," *VC* 70, no. 1 (2016). While not conclusive, his usage of these sources suggests that Irenaeus had some sort of formal education. In *haer.* 1.praef.3. he claims that he did not have rhetorical training but this could be an instance of the *topos* of humble simplicity. Nautin suggests that he was educated in Rome: Secord suggests that he was trained in Smyrna as a contemporary with Aristides of Smyrna, along with other individuals from the Second Sophistic. Slusser argues that Irenaeus could

he employs Stoic psychology to argue that his opponents have wrongfully applied human affections and passions to God. Then, in his definition of divine simplicity, he cites Xenophanes, echoing not only his language, but also his opposition to the anthropomorphising of deities. Then, in the section immediately following his definition of divine simplicity (*haer.* 2.14), Irenaeus lists fifteen different poets and philosophers to suggest that his opponents rearranged, not only biblical references, but also classical and philosophical ones.[36] He also reflects philosophical language when he uses the principle of divine simplicity. For example, when examining his opponents claims on causality, he accuses them of blaming fate and necessity, instead of recognising providence as the cause of creation, language that is used in the Middle Platonic argument against Stoic ideas about fate and causality (*haer.* 2.5.4-2.6.1; see Chapter 3, section 4). In this case, Irenaeus illustrates his point with a citation of Homer, but elsewhere he also references Aristophanes, Hesiod, and Horace. Irenaeus is not writing a philosophical text, but he was able to manoeuvre philosophic and literary texts and ideas of his time in a way that suggests he had a higher level of education than is often recognised, and he had access to texts which permitted him to engage with Christian metaphysical debates from his own time period.

These three pieces, scripture, philosophy, and contemporary debates, come together in Irenaeus's definition of divine simplicity. One of the most well-recognised tropes in Irenaeus is his mosaic of the King, where he claims that the stones of scripture were shuffled by his opponents to make the image of a fox, but he requires the right organisation of scripture for

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have been trained by Justin, either in Rome or near Ephesus. According to *M. Just.* 3.3, Justin taught twice in Rome, but based on Eusebius, *HE* 4.18.6, most of his time would have been spent near Ephesus. See Pierre Nautin, *Lettres et écrivains Chrétiens* (Paris: Du Cerf, 1961), 93; Michael Slusser, "How Much Did Irenaeus Learn from Justin?," *Studia Patristica* 40 (2006): 520; Secord, "The Cultural Geography of a Greek Christian: Irenaeus from Smyrna to Lyons," 25.

[36] *haer.* 2.14.1-6. The list includes literary and philosophical authors, founders of movements and movements themselves: Antiphanes, Athenaeus, Thales of Miletus, Homer, Anaximander, Anaxagoras, Democritus, Plato, Epicurus, Empedocles, Hesiod, Aristotle, Stoics, Cynics, and Pythagoreans. Irenaeus also engages with Middle Platonic discussions on fate and necessity in relation to God (see Chapter 3, section 4) and language of eternity or sempiternity in relation to time (see Chapter 6, section 2.2), and fire as a material substance (see Chapter 4, section 2). Each of these were debated topics in philosophical circles of the second century.

the correct image of God.[37] For divine simplicity, he is concerned with the right ordering of philosophy, in addition to scripture. In the way that his opponents shuffled the stones of scripture, they also form a cento out of classical literature and philosophy (*haer.* 2.14.1) in order to defend their view of the creator and the activity of creation. Irenaeus is concerned with the proper image of God, so his theology starts from the Rule of Truth and the language of scripture, and he explains their meaning through the principle of divine simplicity.

3. Dissertation Structure

This dissertation will be divided into two parts. In Part 1, I first show the place of divine simplicity within the larger argument of Book 2, and then focus on *haer.* 2.13, where divine simplicity is introduced. In Chapter 1, I challenge the scholarly view that Book 2 is purely negative polemic and argue that theological principles can be gleaned from its constructive claims. In its literary context, divine simplicity is a theological principle central to the argument of Book 2. In Chapter 2, I focus on *haer.* 2.13, where the claim that God is simple is introduced, and I argue that this claim helps Irenaeus navigate the tension between the Scriptural language of the one and the many: of God as the one creator alongside the many activities, names and powers of God. He explains the principle of divine simplicity in two ways that remain prevalent in the rest of *Against Heresies.* First, he explains it through particular theological terminology. For example, he states that God is "all mind, all word, etc.," God creates and reveals "himself in/through himself," and God's will entails his activity. This means that God's powers and God's activity are not separated from God, because God is simple. Second, he explains what this terminology can mean by adhering to

[37] In this argument against the shuffling of scripture, Irenaeus also uses technical rhetorical terms. For recent discussion, see Behr, *Irenaeus of Lyons*, 105-06; Briggman, "Literary and Rhetorical Theory in Irenaeus Part 1." For a helpful resource on the terms used, see R. Meijering, *Literary and Rhetorical Theories in Greek Scholia* (Groningen: Egbert Forsten, 1987).

parameters on language about God: language about God is not like language about humans, and so the many Scriptural names and powers of God should not be understood as separated from one another but in light of one another, which I label as mutually entailing.

In Part 2, I argue that divine simplicity remains central to the rest of Irenaeus's theology, since he uses the same terminology and parameters in the same kind of theological arguments elsewhere in *Against Heresies*. In these chapters I provide examples where the implications of divine simplicity are explored in other parts of Irenaeus's theology. In Chapter 3 I focus on the divine will, and I argue that the phrase, "containing, not contained" is applied to God's will for creation. When he claims that God's will, thought, and action are simultaneous and cannot be separated, he depends on the principle of divine simplicity. In Chapter 4 I focus on divine generation, where God's generated powers are described as (1) united; (2) contemporaneous; (3) of the same substance; and (4) simple, uniform, and altogether equal and similar, and I argue that God's powers remain distinct, though simple and one. His account of divine generation depends on simplicity, but distinguishes between God's powers. In Chapter 5 I focus on divine activity in the "Hands of God" metaphor. In this metaphor, (1) God's creation of the world and God's revealing of himself are described as one activity; (2) God's will and activity for creation are described as one; and, (3) the activity of Father, Son and Spirit are described as God *ipse ab/in/per semetipso*. I argue that this unity of activity is best understood as the activity of a simple God. Lastly, in Chapter 6, I argue that because of divine simplicity, God's names and powers are mutually entailing, so in Irenaeus's description of creation, God's power entails his wisdom and goodness, and the titles "Lord" and "God" entail both Father and Son. Divine simplicity is not an anomaly of *haer.* 2.13, but it remains central to the descriptions of God and God's interaction with creation in Irenaeus's theology.

PART 1: Divine Simplicity in *haer.* 2.13

Chapter 1: Theological Claims in Book 2 of *Against Heresies*

When studying Irenaeus's theology, scholars generally avoid Book 2. Some see it as "purely negative polemic," and others simply avoid the earlier, more deconstructive sections of *Against Heresies* (Books 1-2), and prefer the later, more constructive and developed arguments (Books 3-5).[1] This chapter has two interwoven purposes: to argue that theological claims can be gleaned from Book 2, and to argue that divine simplicity is central to the larger argument of Book 2. First, I use Book 1 as a comparative test case to argue that key principles for Irenaeus's theology are similarly introduced in the constructive claims of Book 2. Scholars have identified the Rule of Truth as one of Irenaeus's key theological principles, and it first appears in the constructive claims of Book 1, a book which is otherwise mostly negative polemic. Then, I suggest that Book 2 can be read in the same way, and I walk through each of its three larger constructive claims, outlining the contours of his theological argument. In Book 2, Irenaeus argues that the one God is creator (*haer.* 2.1-2), that God is simple (*haer.* 2.13), and that the one God is revealed in the harmony of scripture (*haer.* 2.27-28). I bring together the work of scholars who have examined the different parts of Book 2 and argue that divine simplicity is central to each of these other claims about God in the argument of Book 2. This general discussion lays the groundwork for a more detailed focus

[1] The polemical nature is clear from the title, *Refutation and Overthrowal of Knowledge falsely so-called* (*haer.* 4.pref.1; see also *HE* 5.7.1). Scholars like Richard Norris have claimed that Book 2 is, "a piece of purely negative polemic" that is meant to "establish the pointlessness" of his opponents' system without any apparent scriptural exegesis." Richard Norris, "Who Is the Demiurge? Irenaeus' Picture of God in *Adversus Haereses* 2," in *God in Early Christian Thought: Essays in Memory of Lloyd G. Patterson*, ed. Timothy Gaden Brian Daley, and Andrew McGowan (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 10-11. According to Anthony Briggman, Norris's initial statement about Book 2 is misleading, for Norris later says of *haer.* 2.1, "For once… Irenaeus is not arguing in a purely negative spirit. He is not dismantling a Gnostic position so much as he is back-handedly asserting or commending his own view of what a real 'Demiurge' must be and how such a being must be related to the created order." Briggman, *God and Christ in Irenaeus*, 74 n. 19. He is citing Norris, "Who Is the Demiurge?," 15. Even if Norris allows for this constructive statement, this chapter's criticism still holds, since I argue that constructive claims can be found beyond *haer.* 2.1. Most studies of Irenaeus's theology rarely cite from Book 2.

on Irenaeus's claim that God is simple (in Chapter 2 of this thesis), and it introduces the ways in which this concept of divine simplicity is then used in the rest of Irenaeus's theology (in Part 2).

1. Beyond "purely negative polemic": Theological Claims in Books 1-2

One interpretive challenge for readers of Book 2 is its highly polemical and deconstructive tone. This can make it difficult to ascertain Irenaeus's own theological position. Generally, he uses a series of "if P, then Q" arguments. Sometimes, he momentarily grants P of his opponents in order to demonstrate that, whether holding to his or his opponents' position, Q remains true. On these occasions, his argument is more like "even if P, nonetheless Q," and so important theological principles (Q) are recognisable even in negative polemic.[2] However, within this negative polemic, sometimes Irenaeus provides constructive claims with his own view, which was a rhetorical strategy used in forensic speeches. Scott Moringiello demonstrates how Irenaeus's writing reflects the rhetorical conventions of the Second Sophistic. Irenaeus follows the structure of a forensic speech with moments of epideictic oratory, as described in Aristotle's *Rhetoric* and Quintilian's *Institutes of Oratory*.[3] In Aristotle, when two speeches present two sides of an argument, if the

[2] A focus on constructive claims within the negative polemic of Irenaeus is not an entirely novel approach. Bruno Reynders, whose lexicon on Irenaeus's text is still the definitive work, argued this long ago. See B. Reynders, "La polémique de saint Irénée: Méthodes et principes," *Recherches de théologie et médiévale* 7 (1935). While this chapter is not representative of the negative tone in Book 2, I maintain that this polemical material yields theological content.

[3] Of the many studies on Irenaeus's usage of rhetorical tools, the 2008 dissertation by Scott Moringiello is particularly helpful. In particular, he focuses on the five steps of a rhetor (*prooimium, narratio, probatio, refutatio,* and *recapitulation.* For a methodological summary of his paralleling Irenaeus with rhetoric handbooks, see Scott D. Moringiello, "Irenaeus Rhetor" (PhD, University of Notre Dame, 2008), 7-15. Studies of Irenaeus's rhetoric can be traced back to Schoedel, "Philosophy and Rhetoric in the *Adversus Haereses* of Irenaeus." Recently, Irenaeus's use of rhetorical tools and terms has again come under scholarly scrutiny. See, for example, Dale L. Sullivan, "Identification and Dissociation in Rhetorical Exposé: An Analysis of St. Irenaeus' 'Against Heresies'," *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 29, no. 1 (1999); Lewis Ayres, "Irenaeus Vs. The Valentinians: Toward a Rethinking of Patristic Exegetical Origins," *JECS* 23, no. 2 (2015); Briggman, "Literary and Rhetorical Theory in Irenaeus Part 1."; "Literary and Rhetorical Theory in Irenaeus Part 2."; *God and Christ in Irenaeus*.

opponent has spoken well, one must first refute their points before arguing one's own position.[4] Generally, Irenaeus follows this model: first refuting his opponents' position (*haer.* 1-2) and then arguing for his own (*haer.* 3-5). However, when he gives a constructive claim within otherwise negative polemic, he echoes the strategy of forensic speeches in Book III of Aristotle's *Rhetoric.* The response to one's opponent should not occur in an entirely separate section of the speech, but arguments of an opponent should be presented alongside a counter-argument, since opposites are more recognisable when side-by side.[5] Books 1 and 2 of *Against Heresies* exemplify this latter rhetorical strategy, with constructive claims presenting Irenaeus's position within mostly negative polemic.

A second challenge is a lack of consensus on the structure of Book 2, or *Against Heresies* as a whole for that matter.[6] Irenaeus's purpose seems to grow with each book he

[4] *rhet.* 1418b16-18 (LCL 193.458). Translation from J. H. Freese, ed. *Aristotle: Art of Rhetoric*, LCL 193 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1926). "It is only after having combated all the arguments, or the most important, or those which are plausible, or most easy to refute, that you should substantiate your own case."

[5] *rhet.* 1418a-b (LCL 193.456-59). "Refutative enthymemes are more popular than demonstrative, because, in all cases of refutation, it is clearer that a logical conclusion has been reached; for opposites are more noticeable when placed in juxtaposition. The refutation of the opponent is not a particular kind of proof; his arguments should be refuted partly by objection, partly by counter-syllogism." ἔχοντα μὲν οὖν ἀποδείξεις καὶ ἠθικῶς λεκτέον καὶ ἀποδεικτικῶς, ἐὰν δὲ μὴ ἔχῃς ἐνθυμήματα, ἠθικῶς· καὶ μᾶλλον τῷ ἐπιεικεῖ ἁρμόττει χρηστὸν φαίνεσθαι ἢ τὸν λόγον ἀκριβῆ. τῶν δὲ ἐνθυμημάτων τὰ ἐλεγκτικὰ μᾶλλον εὐδοκιμεῖ τῶν δεικτικῶν, ὅτι ὅσα ἔλεγχον ποιεῖ, μᾶλλον δῆλον ὅτι συλλελόγισται· παρ' ἄλληλα γὰρ μᾶλλον τἀναντία γνωρίζεται.

[6] For a summary on the lack of consensus regard the structure of Book 2, see Rowan Greer, "The Dog and the Mushrooms: Irenaeus's View of the Valentinians Assessed," in *The Rediscovery of Gnosticism*, ed. Bentley Layton (Leiden: Brill, 1980), 151-56; D. J. Unger, rev J. J. Dillon, ed. *St. Irenaeus of Lyons Against Heresies, Book 2*, ACW 65 (New York: Paulist Press, 2012), 4-8. For a summary of arguments on whether Books 3-5 were part of Irenaeus's original plan, see ibid., 2-9. There are two main perspectives: (1) that Irenaeus conceived of Books 1-5 from the beginning, and (2) that Irenaeus realised that his task was incomplete at the end of each section. For view (1), Norris believes that Books 1-5 were all part of the original plan. This view seems to be applied in Scott Moringiello's thesis, which divides Books 1-5 into *prooimium, narratio, probatio, refutatio,* and *recapitulatio.* View (2) is the majority view, followed by Unger (in the introduction to Book 1), Sesboüé, Minns and Behr. Minns believes that the first two books were intended to fulfill the title, and that Books 3-5 were written after the first were sent off. This seems to be followed by Behr, who uses the prefaces and conclusions to argue that Books 1 and 2 were meant to cover the "refutation" and "overturning" (ἔλεγχος and ἀνατροπή) promised in the title, but progressively at the end of Books 2, 3, and 4, he became aware that the task, initially conceived, was incomplete. Briggman adapted this to substantiate his view regarding the influence of Theophilus. Norris, "The Insufficiency of Scripture," 66; Moringiello, "Irenaeus Rhetor."; Unger, ACW 55; Bernard Sesboüé, *Tout Récapituler dans le Christ: Christologie et Sotériologie d'Irénée de Lyon* (Paris: Desclée, 2000); Denis Minns, *Irenaeus: An Introduction* (New York: T&T Clark, 2010), 7-9; Anthony Briggman, *Irenaeus of Lyons and the Theology of the Holy Spirit* (Oxford: OUP, 2012); Behr, *Irenaeus of Lyons*, 74-77. My argument does not stand or fall on either of these views, since I read Books 3-5 as depending on and developing the claims about God in Book 2, but I do read *Against Heresies* as coherent. For a time, many influential works on Irenaeus's saw a lack of coherence and original thought in his work. See H. H. Wendt, *Die*

writes, since the intentions in each preface do not match their conclusion, and instead, he repeatedly promises more in a following book. Scholars have concluded that as he wrote, Irenaeus realised the need for Books 4 and 5, implying that they contain his more developed theology. This chapter has a different tack. I agree that Irenaeus's theology develops, but I will highlight the continuity of theological themes from Book 2 in these later books. [7] Some theological principles remained important to *Against Heresies* from its inception, and their presence and development in Books 3-5 suggests that their importance persisted.[8] The concept of divine simplicity has this kind of trajectory.

2. The Rule of Truth (*haer.* 1.10 and 1.22)

Book 1 can serve as a test case to my approach, for although it is mostly negative polemic, its two main constructive claims (*haer.* 1.10 and 1.22) introduce the Rule of Truth, which scholars agree is one of Irenaeus's key theological principles.[9] In these two sections

christliche Lehre von der menschlichen Vollkommenheit (Göttingen1882); Loofs, *Theophilus von Antiochen Adversus Marcionem und die anderen theologischen Quellen bei Irenaeus*. For early rebuttals of these views, see Reynders, "La polémique de saint Irénée: Méthodes et principes."; F. R. Montgomery Hitchcock, "Loof's Theory of Theophilus of Antioch as a Source of Irenaeus Part 1," *JTS* 38 (1937); "Loof's Theory of Theophilus of Antioch as a Source of Irenaeus Part 2," *JTS* 38 (1937); Bacq, *De l'ancienne à la nouvelle alliance selon S. Irénée*.

[7] The Latin manuscripts also present a challenge of organisation, but the argument in this chapter does not depend on a particular ordering. Each of the Latin manuscript families have different omissions and order, but in the last two centuries, significant progress has been made in this organisation. For a full discussion, see A. and Doutreleau Rousseau, L., ed. *Irénée de Lyon: Contre les Hérésies, Livre II: introduction, notes justificatives, et tables*, SC 293 (Paris: du Cerf, 1982; reprint, 2006, 2013), 17-82., particularly the table on pp. 69-80.

[8] This view of continuity between Book 2 and the rest of *Against Heresies* challenges Norris, who describes Book 2 as "something of an oddity if not an anomaly," and "much of what he says in Book 2 is seldom echoed, much less explicitly resumed, in the later books of *Adversus haereses*. Book 2 appears, then, to be largely if not entirely self-contained—an enterprise separable and indeed separate from that of Books 3-5." Norris, "The Insufficiency of Scripture," 63.

[9] Jeffrey Bingham provides an exhaustive historiographical assessment regarding the structure of Book 1, and applies Bacq's methodology of reading Irenaeus as Biblical weaving. D. Jeffrey Bingham, "The Bishop in the Mirror: Scripture and Irenaeus's Self-Understanding in *Adversus Haereses* Book One," in *Tradition and the Rule of Faith in the Early Church*, ed. Ronnie J. Rombs and Alexander Y. Hwang (Washington D. C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2010), 48-53. Cf. Bacq, *De l'ancienne à la nouvelle alliance selon S. Irénée*. The organisational structures of Rousseau, Behr, Donovan and Norris each point to these two portions as either introducing or concluding the main sections, with Donovan's usage of 1.22 as the only exception, which she has introducing a subsection. A. and Doutreleau Rousseau, L., ed. *Irénée de Lyon: Contre les Hérésies, Livre I: introduction, notes justificatives, et tables*, SC 263 (Paris: du Cerf, 1979; reprint, 2008); Mary Ann Donovan, *One Right Reading?* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1997); Richard Norris, "Irenaeus of Lyons," in *The*

Irenaeus briefly contrasts his own claim for unity alongside his opponents' plurality. Scholars who have outlined the argument of Book 1 disagree on the how the different parts fit together, but they agree that these two sections are the only two constructive sections of Book 1.[10] Furthermore, despite their disagreements on the primary purpose of Book 1, scholars agree on the central theological significance of this rule in *Against Heresies*, which Thomas Ferguson calls "the centerpiece of Irenaeus's entire argument," and John Behr calls the "fullest description given by Irenaeus of the faith received by the apostles."[11] Elsewhere, Irenaeus describes scriptural interpretation in the context of the Rule of Truth (in *haer.* 2.27-28), the four Gospels establishing the Rule of Truth (in *haer.* 3.11.1), the words of Christ as the Rule of Truth (in *haer.* 4.35.4), and the three articles of faith (Father, Son, and Spirit) as the Rule of Faith (in *Dem.* 3 and 6),[12] so the importance of the rule for Irenaeus's entire

Cambridge History of Early Christian Literature, ed. Frances Young Lewis Ayres, and Andrew Louth (Cambridge: CUP, 2004), 45-52; Behr, *Irenaeus of Lyons*, 85.

[10] In their organization of the structure of Book 1, Rousseau has *haer.* 1.10 and 1.22 as the bookends to an *inclusio*, Behr has them as the introductions to two different sections, and Donovan has them both as subsections. A. and Doutreleau Rousseau, L., ed. *Irénée de Lyon: Contre les Hérésies, Livre I*, SC 264 (Paris: du Cerf, 1979), 394; Behr, *Irenaeus of Lyons*, 85; Donovan, *One Right Reading?*, 43, 46.

[11] In the most recent summary, Devin White shows just how many different opinions there are of this rule. Frances Young calls it a theological abstract on key doctrine, Eric Osborn first calls it a theological argument and then clarifies that it joins Bible with tradition and faith with life, John Behr calls it the hypothesis of faith found in the symphony of scripture, Paul Blowers calls it the early Christian metanarrative of communal faith and practice, and Lewis Ayres calls it a collection of ways for speaking about the content of the Gospel. Valdemar Ammundsen, "The Rule of Truth in Irenaeus," *JTS* 13, no. 52 (1912); J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds*, 3rd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2014), 76-88; Alfred Bengsch, *Heilsgeschichte und Heilswissen: Eine Untersuchung zur Struktur und Entfaltung des theologischen Denkens im Werk 'Adversus Haereses' del Hl. Irenäus von Lyon* (Leipzig: St. Benno-Verlag, 1957), 51ff; Bengt Hägglund, "Die Bedeutung der 'Regula Fidei' als Grundlage theologischer Aussagen," *Studia Theologica* 12 (1958); Norbert Brox, *Offenbarung, Gnosis, un Gnosticher Mythos bei Irenäus von Lyon: Zur Charakteristik der Systeme* (Salzburg und München: Verlag Anton Pustet, 1966), 105-16; Roch Kereszty, "The Unity of the Church in the Theology of Irenaeus," *The Second Century* 4 (1984); Eric Osborn, "Reason and the Rule of Faith in the Second Century AD," in *The Making of Orthodoxy: Essays in Honor of Henry Chadwick*, ed. Rowan Williams (Cambridge: CUP, 1989); *Irenaeus of Lyons* (Cambridge: CUP, 2001), 143-49; Paul Blowers, "The *Regula Fidei* and the Narrative Character of Early Christian Faith," *Pro Ecclesia* 6 (1997); Thomas Ferguson, "The Rule of Truth and Irenaean Rhetoric in Book 1 of 'Against Heresies'," *VC* 55, no. 4 (2001): 356, 58; Behr, *Irenaeus of Lyons*, 14, 111; Lewis Ayres, "Irenaeus and the 'Rule of Truth': A Reconsideration," in *The Rise of the Christian Intellectual*, ed. Lewis Ayres and H. Clifton Ward (Berlin: DeGruyter, 2020); Devin White, "Losing the Plot: Irenaeus, Biblical Narrative, and the Rule of Truth," in *Telling the Christian Story Differently: Counter-Narratives from Nag Hammadi and Beyond*, ed. Francis Watson and Sarah Parkhouse (London: T&T Clark, 2020).

[12] Rule of Faith in Հաւատոյն քանուն in *Dem.* 3 and կարգի Հաւատոյն in *Dem.* 6. Behr back-translated the first of these to κανών. Articles of faith գլուխ Հաւատոյս in *Dem.* 6. Behr back-translates this to κεφάλαιον. Karapet ter-Mekerttschian, ed. *Des heiligen Irenäus Schrift zum Erweise der apostolischen Verkündigung*, TU 31 (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1907), 3, 5; Karapet and the Reverend S. G. Wilson ter-Mekerttschian, ed. *S. Irenaeus Εἰς Ἐπίδεξιν τοῦ Ἀποστλικῶ Κηρύγματος, the Proof of the Apostolic Preaching with Seven fragments*, PO 12.5 (Paris: 1919), 661, 64; John Behr, ed. *St. Irenaeus: On Apostolic Preaching* (Crestwood, NY: St.

theology throughout *Against Heresies* is not doubted, even though it is introduced in a book that is otherwise negative polemic and it is not mentioned in Book 5.[13] This constructive claim of Book 1 introduces a theological principle that is central to the rest of Irenaeus's theology.

The constructive claims of the one God as creator in the Rule of Truth (*haer.* 1.10 and 1.22.1-2) are developed and given more precision in Book 2 and its claim that God is simple. As in Book 1, Book 2 continues to make constructive claims by expanding and clarifying the earlier claims about God from the rule within otherwise negative polemic. In Book 1, Irenaeus introduces his view of God in this rule:

> The Church… received from the apostles and their disciples the faith in one God the Father Almighty, the "Maker of heaven and earth and the seas and everything in them" and in the one Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who became flesh for our salvation; and in the Holy Spirit…
>
> Ἡ μὲν γὰρ Ἐκκλησία… παρὰ δὲ τῶν Ἀποστόλων, καὶ τῶν ἐκείνων μαθητῶν παραλαβοῦσα τὴν εἰς ἕνα Θεὸν Πατέρα παντοκράτορα, τὸν πεποιηκότα τὸν οὐρανὸν, καὶ τὴν γῆν, καὶ τὰς θαλάσσας, καὶ πάντα τὰ ἐν αὐτοῖς, πίστιν καὶ εἰς ἕνα Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν, τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ, τὸν σαρκωθέντα ὑπὲρ τῆς ἡμετέρας σωτηρίας· καὶ εἰς Πνεῦμα ἅγιον,
>
> Ecclesia… et ab apostolis et discipulis eorum accepit eam fidem quae est in unum Deum Patrem omnipotentem, *qui fecit caelum et terram et mare et omnia quae in eis sunt*, et in unum Christum Iesum Filium Dei, incarnatum pro nostra salute, et in Spiritum Sanctum,[14]

In this passage, Irenaeus goes on to describe the activity of God, particularly the economies of God: Christ's life, death, resurrection, and immanent return. He clarifies that this activity of creating and of recapitulating humanity, was not done by another creator apart from God nor by another Christ. Rather, one and the same God created and revealed himself. These claims about God are reiterated when the "Rule of Truth" is referenced explicitly:

Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1997), 41, 43. See also B. Reynders, *Vocabulaire de la 'demonstration' et des fragments de saint Irénée* (Éditions de Chevetogne, 1958), 33, 16.

[13] I highlight this because "simple" (*simplex*) in relation to God is not explicitly used outside Book 2 or in the *Demonstration*.

[14] *haer.* 1.10.1 (SC 264.154). Unless otherwise noted, translations are my own.

> The Rule of the Truth that we hold is this: There is one God Almighty, who created all things through His Word; He both prepared and made all things out of nothing, just as Scripture says: "For by the Word of the Lord the heavens were made, and all their host by the breath of his mouth" (Ps 32[33]:6). And again: "All things were made through Him and without Him was made not a thing" (Jn 1:3).… These He did not make through Angels or some Powers that were separated from His thought. For the God of all things needs nothing. No, He made all things by His Word and Spirit, disposing and governing and giving all of them existence. This is the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, above whom there is no other God, nor a Beginning, nor a Power, nor a Pleroma. This is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, as we shall demonstrate. If, therefore, we hold fast this rule, we shall easily prove that they have strayed from the Truth, even though their statements are quite varied and numerous. It is true, nearly all the heretical sects, many as they are, speak of one God; but they alter Him by their evil-mindedness.[15]
>
> Cum teneamus autem nos regulam ueritatis, id est quia sit unus Deus omnipotens qui omnia condidit per Verbum suum et aptauit et fecit ex eo quod non erat ad hoc ut sint omniaa, quemadmodum Scriptura dicit : *Verbo enim Domini caeli firmati sunt, et Spirituoris eius omnis uirlus eorum*b, *et* iterum : *Omnia per ipsum facta sunt, et sine ipso facium est nihil*…. non per Angelos neque per Virtutes aliquas abscissas ab eius sententia, nihil enim indiget omnium Deus, sed et per Verbum et Spiritum suum omnia faciens et disponens et gubernans et omnibus esse praestans ; hic qui mundum fecit, etenim mundus ex omnibus; hic qui hominem plasmauit; hic Deus Abraham et Deus Isaac et Deus Iacobs, super quem alius Deus non est neque Initium neque Virtus neque Pleroma; hic Pater Domini nostri Iesu Christih, quemadmodum ostendemus —, hanc ergo tenentes regulam, licet ualde uaria et multa dicant, facile eos deuiasse a ueritate arguimus. Omnes enim fere quotquot sunt haereses Deum quidem unum dicunt, sed per sententiam malam immutant.[16]

Once again, he claims that the one God is creator, but this time, he provides more detail. God did not create through another angel or power separated from his thought, but rather he created through the Word and Spirit. This is especially important for my argument, because he later introduces the claim that God is simple to specify how the oneness of God is preserved in relation to the descriptions of God's thought and word (*haer.* 2.13). In the rule, Irenaeus also recognises that his opponents call God "one," and he recognises that they use the scriptural language of God's Word, but by separating God's thought and word and by separating God from the activity of creation they are describing God as composite. Divine

[15] Translation from Unger, ACW 55, 80-81.
[16] *haer.* 1.22.1 (SC 264.308-310).

simplicity enables Irenaeus to manoeuvre between language of the *one* God as creator and the *many* scriptural descriptions of God's activity.

So, what exactly is the relationship between the Rule of Truth and divine simplicity? If the Rule of Truth is merely a text, a pre-credal summary of the Christian faith and/or scripture, then Irenaeus's definition of divine simplicity describes God in a way similar to the rule through philosophical terminology. On the other hand, if Irenaeus's reference to a rule is rather, as recently argued by Ayres, a reference to "a supple and complex language for identifying the standard for thought that the Church's faith provided,"[17] then the principle of divine simplicity can be understood as a particular expression of the rule itself. Ayres has convincingly argued that the rule is a complex set of relationships between terms and concepts. It is a reference point between the scriptures and faith received by the community, and that community's interpretation and theological speculation. Based on this reading, divine simplicity expresses, more precisely, what is meant by the claim that God is one, that God is creator, that God did not create through another power, and that God created through his Word and Spirit. In particular, it is one way in which Irenaeus argues that his opponent's claim that God is "one" and their descriptions of God's power do not align with scripture or the rule.[18] The notion of divine simplicity is congruent with Irenaeus's account of the rule, and it adds conceptual clarity to several claims within the rule.

3. The One God is Creator (*haer.* 2.1-2)

In first half of Book 2 (*haer.* 2.1-19), Irenaeus focuses on the theme of creator and creation. He argues that his opponents' system is founded on the view that God himself did not create but was separated from the activity of creation, and he calls this the *primo et*

[17] Ayres, "Irenaeus and the 'Rule of Truth': A Reconsideration," 163.
[18] For a specific argument on how Irenaeus uses divine simplicity to develop the claims of the rule, see Chapter 6, section 2.1.

maximo capitulo of his opponents' *regula*.[19] While refuting his opponents' rule, he clarifies his own. For Irenaeus, the one God is the creator who is "containing, not contained," a claim he supports with exegesis that remains central to the rest of *Against Heresies.*

Irenaeus challenges the way his opponents characterise God as "containing, not contained" (terminology from *Mand.* 1.1), but he retains it within his own argument (see Chapter 3). However, unlike his opponents, he uses it to claim that God himself created:[20]

> Therefore, it is good for us to have to begin with the first and greatest heading, with the Demiurge God, who made heaven and earth and all that is in them (cf. Ex 20:11; Ps 145:6; Jn 1:3; Acts 4:24; 14:15), whom these blasphemers say is the fruit of degeneracy,[21] and to show that there is not another either above him nor after him, nor did he make everything through any other operation except by his own purpose and pleasure, since he is the only God and only Lord and only Author and only Father and the only one who contains all things, so that he himself would be revealed in all things.
>
> Bene igitur habet a primo et maximo capitulo inchoare nos, a Demiurgo Deo, qui fecit caelum et terram et omnia quae in eis sunta, quem hi blasphemantes extremitatis fructum dicunt, et ostendere quoniam neque super eum neque post eum est aliquid, neque ab aliquo motus sed sua sententia et libere fecit omnia, cum sit solus Deus et solus Dominus et solus Conditor et solus Pater et solus continens omnia et omnibus ut sint ipse praestans.[22]

According to Irenaeus, the goal of his opponents was to distance the First Cause from the corruption of the material world, so although they described God as "containing, not contained," they also argued that creation occurred beyond his realm, power, and knowledge. Irenaeus uses the metaphor of containment to argue that God himself must be the creator, and

[19] He argues that, by invalidating this single principle, he has invalidated their entire argument. Just as a sip of the ocean proves its saltiness or a small scratch on a "golden" statue exposes layers of clay to prove its real worth, so too this single part of their theology will expose their entire system as false (*haer.* 2.19.6). In the comparative lexicon, Reynders does not show any Greek word being translated as *capitula*, but Rousseau suggests it might have been κεφάλαια. See B. Reynders, *Lexique comparé du texte grec et des versiones latine, arménienne et syriaque de L'Adversus Haereses de saint Irénée*, 2 vols. (Louvain: L. Durbecq, 1954), 2:47; A. and Doutreleau Rousseau, L., ed. *Irénée de Lyon: Contre les Hérésies, Livre III: introduction, notes justificatives, et tables*, SC 210 (Paris: du Cerf, 1974), 202. *Regula* is sometimes translated as ὑπόθεσις or in relation the "rule of truth," as κανών. See Reynders, *Lexique comparé*, 2:278. For a discussion showing the importance of ὑπόθεσις, κεφάλαια, and ἀρχαί for understanding the work of Book 1 and 2, and Irenaeus's larger understanding of the rule, see Behr, *Irenaeus of Lyons*, 103-20.

[20] The description of a God who is "containing, but not contained" was prominent by the second century, in both Irenaeus's predecessors and opponents. For discussion, see Chapter 3, n. 6.

[21] *Extremitatis*, which is the circumference or outer boundary, is translated by Unger as "degeneracy," based on the rest of Irenaeus's description of the creation myth. See Unger (ACW 65.17).

[22] *haer.* 2.1.1 (SC 294.26).

that creation happened within God's power and knowledge.[23] This containment metaphor builds on the claim that God "made heaven and earth and everything in them," (also in the Rule of Faith of *haer.* 1.10), which he repeats near the beginning and end of Book 2 (summarized here and in *haer.* 2.30.9).[24] The God who contains all must have made all. Scholars have noted that the theme of one God as the creator who is "containing, not contained" is the key for understanding Book 2 and remains central to *Against Heresies*.[25] For example, in *haer.* 4.20, he will describe God's Hands, the Son and Spirit, through whom he himself "established, made, adorned and contains (*continet*) everything."[26] The one God, the creator who contains and is not contained, as introduced in this constructive claim of Book 2, is fundamental to Irenaeus's theology.[27]

In the opening of Book 2, Irenaeus summarises the exegetical foundation for his claim that God himself caused creation. First, he illustrates his claim. When a king plans a battle, when an architect plans a public works, or when a craftsman cuts and mills some wood, although other people do the building or tools do the cutting, the king, architect and craftsman are each the cause for the different activities.[28] In this same way, God is the cause

[23] He uses "containing, not contained": (1) spatially to argue that matter is not beyond God's power but he is not confined to space, (2) temporally to argue that God acts in time but is not bound by time, (3) cognitively to argue that God knew about creation but remains incomprehensible, and (4) providentially to argue that God created of his own purpose and freely and not by fate and necessity. See Chapter 3, section 4.

[24] The "demiurge" alongside the creation of heaven, earth, and all that is in them only appears in *haer.* 2.1.1, and 2.30.1. However, the argument of God creating heaven, earth, and all that is in them appears fifty-eight times. For a later example in a larger argument, see *haer.* 3.3-12, and for an example that includes a description of God's hands, see *haer.* 4.20.2.

[25] Greer sees this metaphor as the concise definition of Irenaeus's theological premise in Book 2. See Greer, "The Dog and the Mushrooms: Irenaeus's View of the Valentinians Assessed," 156. Though many scholars have examined this metaphor, William Schoedel's initial article is still the best place to start. William Schoedel, "Enclosing, Not Enclosed: The Early Doctrine of God," in *Early Christian Literature and the Classical Intellectual Tradition: In Honorem Robert M. Grant*, ed. William R. Schoedel and Robert Wilken (Paris: Editiones Beauchesne, 1979).

[26] *haer.* 4.20.1 (SC 100.624). For examples of scholarship that traces this metaphor from Book 2 into *haer.* 4.20, see Norris, "Who Is the Demiurge?," 34; Bacq, *De l'ancienne à la nouvelle alliance selon S. Irénée*, 165-66; Briggman, *God and Christ in Irenaeus*, 71-84.

[27] For further discussion on the metaphor of containment, see Chapter 3 of this dissertation, and for further discussion of this metaphor in *haer.* 4.20, see Chapter 5, section 2.

[28] This metaphor of the king is the prominent political metaphor for describing God's sovereignty. He uses the metaphor of an emperor only once. Just as those within the Roman Empire know of the existence of the emperor and enjoy his sovereignty through the *pax Romana* though they have never seen him, so too people under God's sovereignty know of him (*haer.* 2.6.2). It is possible that these references to a king are based on Biblical texts

of creation (*haer.* 2.2.3). Irenaeus begins his exegetical defence by alluding to, "the God of all, who established and made everything by the Word" (cf. Hermas, *Mand.* 1.1).[29] He argues that the different natures in creation do not require a corrupt or inferior creator, like his opponents' intermediary demiurge between the Pleroma and the material world, but instead God himself planned different natures and so he is their cause:

> Rather, himself in himself, he made everything just as he wants, predetermining everything in a way that is indescribable and incomprehensible to us, giving to all things their harmony and order and beginning of creation, [giving] to the spiritual [beings] spirituality and invisibility, to the supercelestial [beings] celestiality, to the Angels an angelic [nature], to the aerial [beings] an aerial [nature], to the aquatic [beings] an aquatic [nature], and to the earthly [beings] an earthly [nature], to everything the perfect substance of qualities (cf. Gen 1:21, 24-25), and everything that was made, he made by his untiring Word.
>
> sed ipse in semetipso secundum id quod est inenarrabile et inexcogitabile nobis omnia praedestinans fecit quemadmodum uoluit, omnibus consonantiam et ordinem suum et initium creationis donans, spiritalibus quidem spiritalem et inuisibilem, et supercaelestibus caelestem, et Angelis angelicam, et animalibus animalem, et natantibus aquatilem, et terrigenis terrigenam, omnibus aptam qualitatis substantiam: omnia autem quae facta sunt infatigabili Verbo fecit.[30]

This section introduces important terminology for Irenaeus's theology of creation that will be more closely examined elsewhere, including God creating various kinds of nature in harmony

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referring to God as king, or opponents who referred to themselves as part of the "kingless" generation. In their article on the term and concept of "kingless" (ἀβασίλευτος; ἀβασίλεθτον γένος) within Nag Hammadi texts, Painchaud and Janz date the emergence of this term to c. 225 C.E. because of its presence in Hippolytus and because "Irenaeus does not mention it." Louis and Timothy Janz Panchaud, "The 'Kingless Generation,' and the Polemical Rewriting of certain Nag Hammadi Texts," in *The Nag Hammadi Library after Fifty Years: Proceedings of the 1995 Society of Biblical Literature Commemoration*, ed. John Turner and Anne McGuire (Leiden: Brill, 1997).

[29] *haer.* 2.2.4 (SC 294.38). omnium Deus Verbo condidit omnia et fecit. In *haer.* 4.20.2 Irenaeus cites the entire verse (SC 100.628): *Primo omnium crede quoniam unus est Deus, qui omnia constituit et consummavit et fecit ex eo quod non erat ut essent omnia: omnium capax et qui a nemine capiatur.* A. Rousseau, ed. *Irénée de Lyon: Contre les Hérésies, Livre IV*, 2 vols., SC 100 (Paris: du Cerf, 1965). While I admit that this is not a perfect citation of *Mand.* 1.1, we know that it is the foundation of Irenaeus's description of the God who is "containing, not contained," and both *haer.* 2.2.3 and *Mand.* 1.1 use similar verbs to describe the creative work of the Word (*condidit et fecit* in *haer.* 2.2.3) *ex nihilo*, so it stands to reason that this is the scripture behind his argument. For studies on Irenaeus's usage of the Shepherd of Hermas, see Matthew Steenberg, "Irenaeus on Scripture, *Graphe*, and the Status of Hermas," *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 53, no. 1 (2009): see especially pp. 35-45; D. Jeffrey Bingham, "Senses of Scripture in the Second Century: Irenaeus, Scripture, and Noncanonical Christian Texts," *Journal of Religion* 97, no. 1 (2017).

[30] *haer.* 2.2.4 (SC 294.38). Rousseau is particularly confident in his retroversion, particularly since there are many supporting Greek fragments with similar arguments. In particular, he notes the relationship with each kind of nature, and the translation of *aptus* which is elsewhere translated from ἁρμόζουσαν (in *haer.* 5.28.1 and 5.36.2), linking creation to glorification in the harmony of worthy dwelling places prepared by the Word (from Jn 14:2). See Rousseau, SC 293, 210-12.

(*consonantiam,* see section 5 of this chapter),[31] and God "himself in himself" (*ipse in semetipso*) creating through His Word (see Chapter 5, section 2). For now, I want to highlight how his scriptural exegesis bolters his larger argument regarding the creator. After alluding to Genesis 1 and *Mandate* 1.1, he explicitly cites the rest of the passages that are central to his theology of creation:

> As John the disciple of the Lord said of him, "Everything was made through him, and without him nothing was made" (Jn 1:3). In "everything" is the world, according to us. Therefore, it was made by his Word, since scripture in Genesis says all things which exist for us, God made through his Word (cf. Gen 1:3-26). David describes it similarly, "For he spoke and it was made, he commanded and it was created" (Ps 32[33]:9; 148:5). Therefore, what will we believe regarding the construction of the world: in what is preached by the heretics, this foolish and inconsistent babble, or in the disciples of the Lord and in Moses, the faithful servant and prophet of the Lord (cf. Num 12:7; Heb 3:5)?[32] It is he who first narrates the beginning of the world saying, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," (Gen 1:1) and so on, but neither gods nor angels [created].
> Indeed, this God is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the apostle Paul said this, "One God the Father, who is over all, and through all, and in all of us" (Eph 4:6). Already, we have shown that there is one God. We will show even more from the Apostles and the teachings of the Lord. How is it, then, that one could abandon the words of the prophets, the Lord, and the apostles to listen to those who say nothing sound?
>
> quemadmodum et Iohannes Domini discipulus ait de eo : *Omnia per ipsum facta sunt, et sine ipso factum est nihil.* In omnibus autem est et hic qui est secundum nos mundus. Et hic ergo a Verbo eius factus est, sicut Scriptura Geneseos dicit omnia quae sunt secundum nos fecisse Deum per Verbum suum Similiter autem et Dauid

[31] While Irenaeus's opponents affirm that there is a direct correlation between the nature of the creator and the nature of what is created (a spiritual demiurge could not create material natures), Irenaeus argues that God could create different kinds of nature, and that these different natures can coexist, (especially a soul in a material body). I have not found anyone that links this passage with Genesis 1:21-25, even though Irenaeus then uses the familiar exegetical grouping of Genesis 1, Ps 32[33]:9 and Eph 4:6. Neither Pressley nor Holsinger-Friesen note this as a reference to the Genesis account or the *Timaeus*. Presley, *The Intertextual Reception of Genesis 1-3 in Irenaeus of Lyons*, 88. Steenberg does note *haer.* 2.2.5 using these three passages together, but does not reference this passage in *haer.* 2.2.4, but he specifically states that Irenaeus never utilises Genesis 1:6-25 apart from a single usage in *haer.* 1.18. See Matthew Steenberg, *Irenaeus on Creation: The Cosmic Christ and the Saga of Redemption* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 88. This view of different natures becomes foundational to his views on the resurrection in *haer.* 5.16.11, where a soul and body are shown to be able to coexist in eternity because they were made by the hands of God in the same substance as they will be resurrected. For discussion on this text, see Fantino, *La théologie d'Irénée*, 318. This passage also parallels the Platonic description of a good demiurge creating different natures. *Timaeus* 40A (LCL 234.39). εἰσὶ δὴ τέτταρες, μία μὲν οὐράνιον θεῶν γένος, ἄλλη δὲ πτηνὸν καὶ ἀεροπόρον, τρίτη δὲ ἔνυδρον εἶδος, πεζὸν δὲ καὶ χερσαῖον τέταρτον. "Now there are four of these kinds: first, the heavenly race of gods; next, the kind that has wings and travels through the air; third, the kind that lives in water; and fourth, the kind that has feet and lives on land." Translation from Donald J. Zeyl, ed. *Plato: Timaeus* (Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 2000), 26.

[32] Hebrews reference noted in D. Jeffrey Bingham, "Irenaeus and Hebrews," in *Irenaeus: Life, Scripture, Legacy*, ed. Sara Parvis and Paul Foster (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress 2012), 71-72.

> exsequitur: *Quoniam ipse dixit , et facta sunt; ipse mandauit, et creata sunt.* Cui igitur magis credemus de mundi fabricatione, hisne qui praedicti sunt haereticis sic fatua et inconstantia garrientibus, an discipulis Domini et fideli famulo Deid Moysi et prophetae ? Qui et primo genesim mundi enarrauit, dicens : *In principio Deus fecit caelum ei terrame,* et deinceps reliqua omnia, sed non Dii neque Angeli.
> 2,6. Quoniam autem hic Deus est Pater Domini nostri Iesu Christi, et de hoc Paulus apostolus dixit: *Vnus Deus Pater, qui super omnes et per omnia et in omnibus nobis.* Iam quidem ostendimus unum esse Deum ; ex ipsis autem apostolis et ex Domini sermonibus adhuc ostendemus. Quale est enim, prophetarum et Domini et apostolorum relinquentes nos uoces, adtendere his nihil sani dicentibus?[33]

The importance of these verses challenge Norris' claim that in Book 2, Irenaeus steps outside scriptural language as though scripture was insufficient for his argument.[34] Scholars have noted that these six scriptural passages (Genesis 1, Psalm 32[33], John 1, Matt 11:27, Ephesians 4:6, and *Mand.* 1.1) provide the basis for Irenaeus's theology of creation, whether examining Irenaeus's theology of creation (Steenberg), his exegesis in later books (Bacq and Fantino), or his usage of particular passages of scripture (Bingham and Presley).[35] In fact, this is the only instance where they all appear together, suggesting that this is one of the most complete summaries of his theology of creation.[36] These passages continue to appear in the

[33] *haer.* 2.2.5-6 (SC 294.40-42).
[34] Norris, "The Insufficiency of Scripture," see especially 74-76. Norris makes three claims that cannot be supported. The first is that the key scriptural passage of Matthew 11:27 is not used by Irenaeus until *haer.* 4.6.1, but Irenaeus does reference it, at bare minimum in *haer.* 1.2.5; 1.20.3; 2.6.1; 2.14.7; 2.30.9; and 3.11.6. See *Biblia Patristica: Index de citations et allusions bibliques dans la littérature patristique*. (Paris: Éditions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1986), 1.256-57; R. Luckhart, "Matthew 11,27 in the 'Contra Haereses' of St. Irenaeus," *Revue de I'Universite d'Ottawa* 23 (1953): 67. The second claim is that in Book 2, the only strictly exegetical discussion is on the Valentinian use of numbers. While the category of "strictly exegetical discussions" might be reduced to be defensible, there remain countless examples in Book 2 where Irenaeus walks through scriptural passages to present and defend his theological position or his own reading of scripture, beyond this discussion on the exegesis grounding his theology of creation. Lastly, Norris claims that Irenaeus does not use scripture to oppose the Valentinian eschatology of three substances in Book 2, but as discussed at the opening of this paragraph, he addresses different substances in *haer.* 2.2.4, which have implications for the resurrection, since the end is read through the beginning.
[35] For studies on the intersection of these passages, see Fantino, *La théologie d'Irénée*, 233-34; Bacq, *De l'ancienne à la nouvelle alliance selon S. Irénée*, 323-25; Steenberg, *Irenaeus on Creation*, 65-67. Bingham's focus is on Ephesians 4:6. For studies on particular passages, see D. Jeffrey Bingham, "Himself within Himself: The Father and His Hands in Early Christianity," *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 47 (2005): 139-42; Presley, *The Intertextual Reception of Genesis 1-3 in Irenaeus of Lyons*, 74-77.
[36] This table shows where these passages are used together.

Gen 1-2	Jn 1	Ps 32(33)	Eph 4:6	*Mand* 1.1
1.9.3	1.9.3			
1.22.1	1.22.1	1.22.1		1.22.1
1.30.1-3			1.30.1-3	
2.2.5	2.2.5	2.2.2, 5	2.2.6	2.2.4
2.30.9				2.30.9

rest of *Against Heresies* in different groupings and sequences, and through standard and composite citations, to support particular points about creation.[37] In addition to citing these verses, Irenaeus supports his claim by appealing to the harmony found in different kinds of scripture by explicitly appealing to John, David, Moses, and Paul. This appeal to different kinds of scripture is repeated through his reference to the prophets, Lord and Apostles, a summary statements that often appears alongside his key theological claims.[38] Here it is used

2.34.3-4		2.34.3-4		
		3.8.3 (v.6, 9)		
3.11.5	3.11.5			
3.18.1	3.18.1			
3.21.10	3.21.10			
3.24.2		3.24.2		
4.20.1-4	4.20.1-4		4.20.2	4.20.1-4
4.32.1	4.32.1		4.32.1	
5.1.1-3	5.1.1-3			
5.2.1	5.2.1			
5.16.2	5.16.2			

I was initially tempted to describe the connection between these passages as "intertextual," but its usage in Classical or New Testament studies suggests that this term is a minefield. Most discussions on the term, within the disciplines of New Testament of Classics, seem to start with Hinds and Hays as their reference points. See Stephen Hinds, *Allusion and Intertext: Dynamics of Appropriation in Roman Poetry* (Cambridge: CUP, 1988); Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989). Presley uses "intertextuality" in reference to Irenaeus, though he admits a personal preference to "interscriptural," and others have sought to examine several works of the second century through this lens, including Irenaeus. See Presley, *The Intertextual Reception of Genesis 1-3 in Irenaeus of Lyons*, 3, n. 9; Jeffrey Bingham and Clayton Jefford, ed. *Intertextuality in the Second Century* (Leiden: Brill, 2016). This thesis will describe this phenomenon rather than label it. There are times that, though Irenaeus does not cite a line directly, it seems likely that he has it in mind. For example, sometimes he only cites a few lines of a verse, but includes the rest of it in his argument. Other times, he cites one verse, but includes its surrounding verses within his argument. Thus, I have included Genesis 1-2 and John 1 as one kind of reference, relying on the many available studies on Irenaeus's usage of these texts to inform these connections. For Genesis 1-3, I compare with Charles Kannengiesser, "The 'Speaking God' and Irenaeus's Interpretive Pattern: The Reception of Genesis," *Abhandlungen Zur Socialethik* 15 (1998); Anders-Christian Jacobsen, "The Importance of Genesis 1-3 in the Theology of Irenaeus," *ZAC* 8, no. 299-316 (2005); Thomas Holsinger-Friesen, *Irenaeus and Genesis: A Study of Competition in Early Christian Hermeneutics* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2009); Presley, *The Intertextual Reception of Genesis 1-3 in Irenaeus of Lyons*. For John 1, I compare with Mutschler, *Das Corpus Johanneum bei Irenäus von Lyon*; D. Jeffrey Bingham, "Christianizing Divine Aseity: Irenaeus Reads John," in *The Gospel of John and Chrisitan Theology*, ed. Richard Bauckham and Carl Mosser (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008); Brendan Harris, "Irenaeus's Engagement with Rhetorical Theory in his Exegesis of the Johannine Prologue in Adversus Haereses 1.8.5-1.9.3," *VC* 72, no. 4 (2018).

[37] As defined by Adams and Ehorn, "a text may be considered a composite citation when literary borrowing occurs in a manner that includes two or more passages (from the same or different authors) fused together and conveyed as though they are only one." See Sean Adams and Seth M. Ehorn, ed. *Composite Citations in Antiquity*, 2 vols., The Library of New Testament Studies (London: Bloomsbury), 1.4. In this collected volume, chapter 9 pulls comparisons from Justin Martyr that are comparable Irenaeus, though I've not seen this definition applied to the work of Irenaeus. See Chapter 9, Philippe Bibichon, "Composite Features and Citations in Justin Martyr's Textual Composition," in *Composite Citations in Antiquity: Jewish, Graeco-Roman, and Early Christian Uses*, ed. Sean Adams and Seth M. Ehorn (London: Bloomsbury, 2016).

[38] For example, just before the Rule of Truth (*haer.* 1.8), Irenaeus states that their (probably Valentinian) system is one that neither the prophets, nor the Lord, nor the apostles taught (the three being repeated three times in

to argue that scriptural harmony supports the claim that the one God is the creator who is "containing, not contained," who is the cause of creation, and who created by his Word. This constructive claim in Book 2 introduces terminology and exegesis that explain the language about the creator from the Rule of Truth in a way that remains central to his theology of creation. This argument establishes claims that lead to his argument for the concept of divine simplicity, since a separated power or angel did not create, but the one God himself created through his power.

4. God is Simple (*haer.* 2.12-13)

In the next large theological claim, Irenaeus further clarifies this language about the one God as creator by claiming that God is simple (*haer.* 2.12-13).[39] Irenaeus's opponents also describe God as one but they separate God from the activity of creation, so by claiming

three different ways). This set of three remains a literary marker for understanding the "mosaics" of scripture whose proper arrangement produces the image of the king. This division into sayings of the prophets, Lord, and apostles (that includes all three) are found in 1.8.1; 2.2.6; 2.35.4; 3.5.3; 3.8.1; 3.17.4; 4.6.1; 4.28.3; 4.34.1; 4.36.5; 4.36.6; 4.41.4; 5.praef.1. For discussion on the words of the Lord and the apostles as authority, see Brox, *Offenbarung, Gnosis, un Gnosticher Mythos bei Irenäus von Lyon: Zur Charakteristik der Systeme*, 120-26. Denis Farkasfalvy speculates that this kind of description emerged as a reaction to Marcion. Denis Farkasfalvy, "'Prophets and Apostles': The Conjunction of the Two Terms before Irenaeus," in *Texts and Testaments*, ed. Eugene W. March (San Antonio: Trinity University Press, 1980).

[39] Between *haer.* 2.1-2 and *haer.* 2.12-13, there are several shorter constructive claims. For example, *haer.* 2.6.1-2 and 2.9.1 provide two short affirmations that God is knowable to all. In *haer.* 2.6.1, after citing Matthew 11:27, which affirms that no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son reveals Him, he claims that, nonetheless, "all know that there is one God, the Lord of all." For the importance of this scriptural reference, see Luckhart, "Matthew 11,27 in the 'Contra Haereses' of St. Irenaeus." Before and after this affirmation are references to Romans 1 and 9 respectively, supporting his claim that God is known, to some extent, through creation, further exemplified by the metaphor of an emperor who is known by those within the Roman Empire even if they never see him (*haer.* 2.6.2). This is reinforced in *haer.* 2.9.1, where Irenaeus asserts that the Lord teaches that "the Father who is in heaven" (from Matt 5:16, 45; 6:1, 9) is the Creator, and this is unanimously followed, both by the prophets and apostles, which in turn is followed by "the whole church around the world," and by those who hold to contrary doctrines in other areas, for this teaching is taught to the pagans by creation itself (*haer.* 2.9.1). In *haer.* 2.10, Irenaeus twice affirms *creatio ex nihilo*, particularly in the context of creation occurring according to the will and power of God. Twice (*haer.* 2.10.2 and 2.10.4) he asserts that God made what is from that which was not, according to his power and will (*virtus* and *voluntas*). This theme of the will and power of God continues in *haer.* 2.11.1, where Irenaeus argues that according to the law, prophets, and Lord's own words, the Father is the maker of the world and that there is no other maker. This leads into an argument that follows the same sequence found in *haer.* 4.20. John Behr calls this affirmation, "a short statement of the true faith—the one God who by his Word created all that is," and he views *haer.* 2.11 as a summary of the forthcoming argument, promising to (1) question their opinions (in *haer.* 2.12-19) and (2) bring forward the discourses of the Lord (in *haer.* 2.20-28). See Behr, *Irenaeus of Lyons*, 85-86. In each of these, Irenaeus asserts the central theme of God as creator alongside other supporting theological claims and short references to scriptural support.

that God is simple, Irenaeus specifies the extent to which God is one and how this can be understood in conjunction with the claim that God creates through his Word. He explains his claim that God is simple with theological terminology, that God is "all mind, all word, etc.," and he adheres to linguistic parameters for understanding what this terminology can mean, so the meaning certain words, such as God as "mind," "word," or "light" cannot have the same meaning for God as they do for creatures, but can only be understood in relation to God himself, so they are mutually entailing. While scholars have recognised the importance of Irenaeus's argument for God as creator (*haer.* 2.1-2) and for the unity of scripture (*haer.* 2.26-28), with the exception of Eric Osborn, scholars had not noted the importance of this claim of divine simplicity, that is until recently.[40] For now I will summarise how this claim develops the argument of Book 2, but I will focus more closely on this particular passage in the next chapter.

In the flow of the argument, God's simplicity contrasts with the ways his opponents have described God, so although the theme of creation remains central (*haer.* 2.1-19), in *haer.* 2.12, the argument shifts slightly, focusing on ways to speak about God as creator.[41] In the course of this passage, Irenaeus claims that there are religious, pious, sinful, insufficient, appropriate, possible, and right ways to speak about God, suggesting he has a gradient scale

[40] Since 2019, two chapters and one article have been published which focus on this section and the principle of divine simplicity in Irenaeus. See Briggman, *God and Christ in Irenaeus*, especially 90-99; Behr, "Synchronic and Diachronic Harmony: St. Irenaeus on Divine Simplicity."; Ip, *Origen of Alexandria and the Emergence of Divine Simplicity before Nicaea*, chapter 4. Prior to these, Eric Osborn had a short discussion on divine intellect, and Jackson Lashier had a few footnotes on divine simplicity, but otherwise, scholarship had been mostly silent. Osborn, *Irenaeus of Lyons*, 38-43; *The Beginning of Christian Philosophy* (Cambridge: CUP, 1981), 38; Lashier, *Irenaeus on the Trinity*, 87-90. For a more complete summary of scholarship, see Chapter 2, n. 1. In works that have methodically walked through *Against Heresies*, neither Rousseau, Donovan, nor Behr note *haer.* 2.12-13 as having any positive affirmation. A. and Doutreleau Rousseau, L., ed. *Irénée de Lyon: Contre les Hérésies, Livre II*, SC 294 (Paris: du Cerf, 1982), 370; Donovan, *One Right Reading?*, 51-52; Behr, *Irenaeus of Lyons*, 87.

[41] He never clearly distinguishes parameters or rules for speaking about God, but the argument generally follows the definition of divine grammar used by Lewis Ayres in his discussion on the fourth century, where divine grammar is "a set of rules or principles intrinsic to theological discourse, whether or not they are formally articulated." Lewis Ayres, *Nicaea and its Legacy: An Approach to Fourth-Century Trinitarian Theology* (Oxford: OUP, 2004), 14-15.

for discourse about God.[42] I have noted two linguistic parameters to which he adheres in his explanation of his definition of divine simplicity (for discussion, see Chapter 2, section 2). In the first parameter he differentiates between creator and creature, describing two opposite kinds of language. The Father should not be reckoned (*enumerari non debet*) with descriptions of creatures. In the second, he opposes descriptions of God's powers that are mutually exclusive and cannot exist together. In the system of Irenaeus's opponents, Word, Silence, Light and Darkness were powers emitted from God, but Irenaeus argues that neither Word and Silence nor Light and Darkness can exist together, for they are dissimilar (*dissimilis*), and so mutually exclusive (*haer.* 2.12.5). Instead, Irenaeus claims that God is similar to himself, so His powers, such as Mind and Thought, are always united and understood in terms of each other. In this second parameter, God's names, power and activities cannot be mutually exclusive (and are *coobaudiuntur*, or "mutually entailing," in *haer.* 2.13.9). These two parameters are intertwined. God should not be described through language that is contrary to his nature or through terms that are mutually exclusive, but instead, language about God should be mutually entailing, as he now states, because God is simple, and entirely has or is his powers.

The claim that God is simple contrasts with language about humans. First, Irenaeus opposes Stoic psychological language being applied to God (see Chapter 2, section 2.1.2). In theory, humans have a process of thought before they speak. According to Irenaeus, his opponents are applying (*applicant*) this process to God, and thereby assigning (*describentes*) and giving (*donantes*) human affection and passions to God. However, this is not appropriate since there is an absolute differentiation between creator and creature. Scriptural language about God, like spirit, thought, word, etc., should not be understood as a series of divine powers generated one after another (like thoughts leading to words), because God is simple:

[42] For discussion on each of these different kinds of discourse about God, see Chapter 2, n. 76.

> However, if they knew the Scriptures and were taught by the truth, they certainly would understand that God is not at all like humans, and "his thoughts are not at all like the thoughts of humans" (Is. 55:8). For the Father of All differs greatly from these things which arise from human affect and passions, and [he] is simple, and non-composite, and with similar members, and himself altogether similar and equal to himself, since he is all mind, all spirit, all understanding, all thought, all reason, all hearing, all sight, all light and the entire source of all that is good, in whatever way it is [right] for a religious and pious person to speak about God.
>
> Si autem Scripturas cognouissent et a ueritate docti essent, scirent utique quoniam non sic Deus quemadmodum homines, et *non sic cogitationes eius quomodo cogitationes hominum* (Is 55 :8). Multum enim distat omnium Pater ab his quae proueniunt hominibus adfectionibus et passionibus, et simplex et non compositus et similimembrius et totus ipse sibimetipsi similis et aequalis est, totus cum sit sensus et totus spiritus et totus sensuabilitas et totus ennoia et totus ratio et totus auditus et totus oculus et totus lumen et totus fons omnium bonorum, quemadmodum adest religiosis ac piis dicere de Deo.[43]

While this theological claim is not entirely devoid of scriptural support, it leans more heavily on philosophical theology.[44] Divine simplicity is, in itself, philosophical terminology, and Irenaeus explains it with even more philosophical language from Xenophanes, where God is described as all mind, all thought, etc. This way of describing God continues to appear throughout *Against Heresies* (*haer.* 1.12.2; 2.28.4-5, and 4.11.2).[45] As the argument of Book 2 develops, he continues to intertwine philosophical terms and scriptural language about God. He also introduces particular terminology that expresses his concept of oneness. For example, he often repeats that God is and acts "himself in/through himself" to argue that God is not separated from powers, but rather God is similar and equal. This same terminology is later applied to the activity of God's Hands, that is the Word and Wisdom or the Son and Spirit (*haer.* 4.20.1).[46] Although the term *simplex* does not regularly reappear in *Against Heresies,* the terminology used to explain it is further developed in later descriptions of God.

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[43] *haer.* 2.13.3 (SC 294.114-16).
[44] Cf. Briggman, *God and Christ in Irenaeus*, 91-92. For further discussion, see Chapter 2, section 1.
[45] For discussion and scholarship on Irenaeus's adaptation of Xenophanes, see Chapter 2, section 1.2.
[46] Irenaeus's Latin translation is the first usage of this phrasing, but it becomes prominent after him. For discussion, see Chapter 5, n. 34. Another example of recurring terminology is his claim that God cannot be known through his greatness but only through his love, a phrasing that appears regularly throughout *Against Heresies,* and which has been called the "heart of Irenaeus's theology." This theme first appears in describing the cosmology of his opponents in *haer.* 1.2.2, but is applied to Irenaeus's theology first here, then in *haer.* 2.17.11, 3.24.2-3, and finally in *haer.* 4.19.20. For discussion, see Chapter 5, section 3.1.

After introducing the simple God, Irenaeus returns to his parameters for language about God to guide possible meanings of God as "all mind" or "all thought." First, and in keeping with his argument thusfar, language about God cannot ascribe features of composite humans to God. There is a creator/creature differentiation:

> He is both beyond these [*sensus, spiritus, sensuabilitas, ennoia, lumen* etc.] and on account of this indescribable. It will be appropriate and right that he be called Mind who contains all things, but not similar to the thinking of humans. He will be most appropriately called Light, but nothing like light according to us. Indeed, in all remaining ways the Father of all will not be at all similar to the insignificance of humans.
>
> Est autem et super haec, et propter hoc inenarrabilis. Sensus enim capax omnium bene ac recte dicetur, sed non similis hominum sensui; et lumen rectissime dicetur, sed nihil simile ei quod est secundum nos lumini. Sic autem et in reliquis omnibus nulli similis erit omnium Pater hominum pusillitati.[47]

scriptural terms, such as "word" and "light," cannot mean the same thing for God that they mean for humans. Furthermore, Irenaeus even qualifies the possible meanings descriptions of God as all word and all light.

God cannot be compared with anything external, instead, God can only be compared to himself, so in line with his second linguistic parameter, each description of God must be mutually entailing. First off, each activity, such as seeing or hearing, or each of God's powers, such as Word and Mind, entail the other:

> Everyone knows this naturally, since it may be logically said about people, but in him who is God over all, since he is all Thought and all Word, in the way we have said above, not having in himself something older, nor younger, nor something other, but remaining all equal and similar and one.[48] Therefore, the emission of this kind of arrangement will not [logically] follow. Just as a person would not sin if he says he [God is] "all sight and all hearing," so that, in the way he sees he also hears, and in the way he hears he also sees, so too for the person who said, "all Thought and all Word," so that in the way he is Thought, in this same way he is Word, and that his Word is this Mind.
>
> Quod quidem omnes uidelicet sciunt, quoniam in hominibus quidem consequenter dicatur; in eo autem qui sit super omnes Deus, totus Nus et totus Logos cum sit, quemadmodum praediximus, et neque aliud antiquius, neque posterius aut aliud

[47] *haer.* 2.13.4 (SC 294.116).
[48] For a similar translation, see Unger (SC 65.45) and page 131-32, n. 20.

> alterius habente in se, sed toto aequali et simili et uno perseuerante, iam non talis huius ordinationis sequetur emissio. Quemadmodum qui dicit eum— totum uisionem et totum auditum— in quo autem uidet, in ipso et audit, et in quo audit, in ipso et uidet—non peccat: sic et qui ait, illum totum Sensum et totum Verbum, et in quo Sensus est in hoc et Verbum esse, et Verbum esse eius hunc Nun.[49]

Irenaeus further clarifies the "all Thought and all Word" terminology, arguing that each description should be understood in light of the other. The words describing God can only be understood only in relation to God himself. This parameter is labelled in the next paragraph:

> …but the names of their powers are always with God, in whatever way it is possible and worthy for humans to hear and speak about God. For Thought, Word, Life, Incorruption, Truth, Wisdom, Good, and all others [powers] are heard together with the name of God.
>
> …sed earum virtutum quae semper sunt cum Deo appellationes sunt, quemadmodum possibile est et dignum hominibus audire et dicere de Deo. Appellationi enim Dei coobaudiuntur sensus et uerbum et uita et incorruptela et ueritas et sapientia et bonitas et omnia talia.[50]

Because God is simple, the names of God and the descriptions of God's powers are "heard together" (*coobaudiuntur*). This means that God's names and powers entail each other (as I argue in more detail in Chapter 2, section 2.2.2). This explanation of the conceot of divine simplicity clarifies and develops his argument that the one God is the creator and that the many scriptural names and powers refer to this one God. As Book 2 develops, Irenaeus returns to this theme of God's powers and to the terminology used to explain divine simplicity in order to explain his view on the unity of scripture.

5. God is Revealed in the Harmony of Scripture (*haer.* 2.25-28)

In the final section examined in this chapter, Irenaeus claims that both creation (*haer.* 2.25.2) and scripture (*haer.* 2.28) are harmonious because God is their source.[51] These build

[49] *haer.* 2.13.8 (SC 294.124).
[50] *haer.* 2.13.9 (SC 294.126).
[51] Again, there are various shorter theological claims between *haer.* 2.12-13 and 2.25-8, though there seem to be fewer explicit positive claims and they seem to be more closely intertwined with his negative polemic. One example can be found in *haer.* 2.22.3, where Irenaeus walks through Johannine passages chronologically to argue that the Lord's ministry was more than one year.

on the previous claims of Book 2. God is the one creator (*haer.* 2.1-2), and God cannot be separated from his powers or activity attributed to them because he is simple (*haer.* 2.13), so the result of this activity, harmony in creation and in scripture, point to the one God as their source (*haer.* 2.27-28). In this last constructive claim, he again uses the terminology of divine simplicity, citing Xenophanes to explain the relationship between God and his powers, and he against adheres to his parameters for language, differentiating between the kinds of knowledge accessible to the creator and to his creatures. Irenaeus's view on the unity of scripture is reaffirmed in this passage, but in addition, I note that his claim regarding the harmony of creation and scripture depends on the view that the simple God, as their source is not separated from his powers.

Irenaeus applies the aesthetic of harmony to various philosophical divisions of knowledge (mathematics, physics, metaphysics) to argue for the unity of creation and scripture. Harmony in creation, seen in the various divisions of knowledge, point to their source. First, Irenaeus challenges his opponents' use of numerology as an organising principle for scripture (*haer.* 2.24), since the way they employ mathematical principles results in a lack of harmony in physics and metaphysics (*haer.* 2.25). In contrast, he claims that created things should be harmonised (*aptare debent*) with the established system of truth (*subjacenti veritatis argumento*), for just as numbers come from a rule (*numeri ex regula*), so too created things come from God (*ea quae facta sunt ex Deo*).[52] Irenaeus uses the aesthetic of harmony to claim that "all things were made by God harmonious and beautiful, clearly with great wisdom and care."[53] Despite the many strings of a lyre or notes in a song, and although there is a difference between notes and intervals, there is one harmonious melody

[52] *haer.* 2.25.1 (SC 294.248-50).
[53] *haer.* 2.25.1 (SC 294.250). cum magna sapientia et diligentia ad liquidium apta et ornate omnia a Deo facta sunt.

because there is one author. So too, despite differences in creation, it is harmonious, demonstrating a single creator:

> There are many and varied things in creation, and they are well ordered and harmonious in relation to the whole creation, though considered individually they are opposed to each other and discordant. By way of illustration, the sound of the harp, though it consists of many and opposite notes, forms one harmonious melody by the intervals between the notes. So, the lover of truth should not be deceived by the interval between the notes; nor should a person suspect one artist and author for the one, another for the other; nor that one arranged the high notes, another the low, and still another those in the middle. No, there is one and the same [author] for displaying the wisdom, the justice, the goodness, and the artistry of the total work. Rather, those who listen to the melody ought to praise and extol the artist; and admire the high pitch of some notes; and pay attention to the low pitch of others; and listen to the middle pitch of still others; and consider the type of some notes and to what each one is related; and find out the reason for each one. But they should never change the rule, or stray from the Artist, or reject the faith in the one God who made all things, or blaspheme our Creator.[54]
>
> Quia autem uaria et multa sunt quae facta sunt, et ad omnem quidem facturam bene aptata et bene consonantia, quantum autem spectat ad unumquodque eorum sunt sibi inuicem contraria et non conuenientia, sicut citharae sonus per uniuscuiusque distantiam consonantem unam melodiam operantur ex multis et contrariis sonis subsistentem. Debet ergo amator ueri non traduci distantia uniuscuiusque soni, neque alium quidem huius, alium autem illius Artificem suspicari et Factorem, neque alium quidem acutiores, alium autem uastiores, alium uero medietates aptasse, sed unum et ipsum, ad totius operis et sapientiae demonstrationem et iustitiae et bonitatis et muneris. Hi uero qui audiunt melodiam debent laudare et glorificare Artificem, et aliorum quidem extensionem mirari, aliorum autem laxamentum intendere, aliorum uero inter utrumque temperamentum exaudire, aliorum autem typum considerare et ad quid unumquidque referat, et eorum causam inquirere, nusquam transferentes regulam neque errantes ab Artifice neque abicientes fidem quae est in unum Deum qui fecit omnia neque blasphemantes nostrum Conditorem.[55]

Here Irenaeus borrows language that is well known in literature and philosophy. Briggman notes parallels with Homer's *Odyssey*, Pythagorean reasoning on the principle of agreement, Plato's usage of Heraclitus in the *Symposium,* and Philo's *De Cherubim*.[56] Irenaeus uses this

[54] Translation adjusted from Unger, ACW 65, 82-83.
[55] *haer.* 2.25.2 (SC 294.252-54).
[56] Briggman ends by suggesting that Irenaeus had some source containing the writings of Heraclitus due to parallel passages in Hippolytus. See Briggman, *Irenaeus of Lyons and the Theology of the Holy Spirit*, 142-45. These selections from both Plato and Philo have several parallels with Irenaeus, particularly since their usage of metaphor seeks to illustrate harmony in the cosmos, with love or the god of love as the binding agent. See *Symp.* 187A-B; *Cher.* 109-112. One could also add ps-Aristotle's description of planetary movement. *Mund.* 399a (LCL 400.394-7). This work seems to have been known by Apuleius and Maximus of Tyre, so it was probably written before 140-180 CE. See E. S. and D. J. Furley Forster, ed. *Aristotle: On Sophistical Refutations. On Coming-to-Be and Passing-Away. On the Cosmos*, LCL 400 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1955),

language of harmony to describe the way God creates, arguing that one and the same God is creator. As a result, the harmony of creation reflects the will of God in the plan for creation. This, again, develops the language in the Rule of Truth where the one God is described as creating different natures (*haer.* 1.10.3 and 1.22.1), and already, Irenaeus has affirmed that God planned different kinds of natures (*haer.* 2.2.4). Variation in creation does not require a composite creator, just as variations in music do not require different authors. Rather, the harmony in creation depends on its source being the one creator God, from the rule, whose act of creation did not occur through a separated power, since God is simple.

Second, Irenaeus challenges the relationship between metaphysics and physics in his opponents' system (*haer.* 2.28). According to Irenaeus, his opponents argued that only an intermediary demiurge could create the lower two regions (in a system with material, middle, and spiritual regions), so a composite creation had to come from a composite creator. However, Irenaeus claims that their view of creation assumes disharmony, and affects both their physics and metaphysics. The causes for the flooding of the Nile, for the migration of birds, for the tides of the ocean, for storms, or for the waning and waxing of the moon, all remain unknown. While some have speculated on their causes, only God knows the truth (*haer.* 2.28.2). So, Irenaeus delineates two kinds of knowledge: that which remains with God (*adiacent Deo*) and must be commended to God, and that which is revealed by God and comes to be part of human knowledge (*nostram scientiam*). The difference between these two kinds of knowledge depends on the difference between creator and creatures:

> *Therefore, if as we have described some of the questions we have devoted to God, then we will protect our faith and we will remain free of danger, and all scripture given to us from God will be found by us to be harmonious, and the parables will be harmonious with the explicit writings, and clear writings will explain the parables, and through this polyphony of styles, one harmonious tune will be heard among

340-41. Osborn notes parallels with Plotinus. In *Enn.* 2.9.16, Plotinus argues for a musician who hears harmonious music or a mathematician who see right relation and proportion in numbers to describe the goodness of creation and the reflection of the forms in this world. Irenaeus's argument has this same consecutive arrangement, as he argues against his opponents' usage of numbers (*haer.* 2.24) alongside the metaphor of music (*haer.* 2.25). Osborn, *Irenaeus of Lyons*, 63-64.

> us*praising with hymns the God who made everything. So too [it is] impure if someone asks: "what did God do before he made the world?" since we would say that that response is subject to God. Scripture tells us that the world was completely (ἀποτελεστικῶς) made by God, taking a beginning in time. Scripture does not reveal what was before God's work. Therefore, this response is subject to God.
>
> *Si ergo, secundum hunc modum quem diximus, quaedam quidem quaestionum Deo commiserimus, et fidem nostram seruabimus, et sine periculo perseuerabimus, et omnis Scriptura a Deo nobis data consonans nobis inuenietur, et parabolae his quae manifeste dicta sunt consonabunt, et manifeste dicta absoluent parabolas, et per dictionum multas uoces unam consonantem melodiam in nobis sentiet,[57] laudantem hymnis Deum qui fecit omnia.* Vt puta, si quis interroget : Antequam mundum faceret Deus, quid agebat? dicemus quoniam ista responsio subiacet Deo. Quoniam autem mundus hic factus est άποτελεστικώς a Deo, temporale initium accipiens, Scripturae nos docent; quid autem ante hoc Deus sit operatus, nulla Scriptura manifestat. Subiacet ergo haec responsio Deo…
>
> *Εἰ οὖν καθ' ὃν εἰρήκαμεν τρόπον, ἔνια τῶν ζητημάτων ἀναθήσωμεν τῷ Θεῷ, καὶ τὴν πίστιν ἡμῶν διαφυλάξομεν, καὶ ἀκίνδυνοι διαμενοῦμεν, καὶ πᾶσα γραφὴ δεδομένη ἡμῖν ἀπὸ Θεοῦ σύμφωνος ἡμῖν εὑρεθήσεται, καὶ αἱ παραβολαὶ τοῖς διαῤῥήδην εἰρημένοις συμφωνήσουσι, καὶ τὰ φανερῶς εἰρημένα ἐπιλύσει τὰς παραβολὰς, καὶ διὰ τῆς τῶν λέξεων πολυφωνίας ἓν σύμφωνον μέλος ἐν ἡμῖν αἰσθήσεται*…[58]

Irenaeus requires harmony in mathematics, physics and metaphysics, and also in the interpretation of scripture, because God is their source. God is the source of knowledge because God is the source of scripture and creation. God is the one eternally teaching (*doceat*) and humans eternally learning (*discat*) through faith, hope, and love (1 Cor 13:9-13). Unclear passages of scripture or unanswered questions in creation only highlight the creator/creature differentiation, and not an absence of harmony.

The metaphor of harmony is intertwined with the claim that God is the source of all and rooted in the Rule of Truth. Twice in these passages, Irenaeus refers to the Rule of Truth as the means for understanding the harmony in creation (*haer.* 2.25) and scripture (*haer* 2.28).[59] While some knowledge is revealed by God, other questions remain unanswered and

[57] Harvey argues that the Latin should not be changed to *sentietur* because αἰσθήσεται (FMI 3s) from αἰσθάνομαι (to perceive, understand) "does not admit this passive signification," but rather, one should read the Greek as ᾄσθήσεται (FPI 3s) from ἄδομαι (to sing). See Hv 2.41.4 (1.352), n. 2.
[58] *haer.* 2.28.3 (293.276). * marks the beginning and end of Greek fragment 5, from the *Sacra Parallela*.
[59] In *haer.* 2.25.1 (SC 294.250-52), Irenaeus refers to *subjacenti… argumento*, which Rousseau suggests should be read as τῇ ὑποκειμένῃ... ὑποθέσει τῆς ἀληθείας. For discussion, see Rousseau, SC 293, 296-99; Unger, ACW

are commended to God. What is unclear should be examined through the lens of what is clear, like the rule. As argued by Briggman, this theme of harmony remains important for Irenaeus's description of creation in the rest of *Against Heresies*, both with harmonising verbs and their cognates to describe the creative work of Wisdom (from *aptare* and *consonare*), and also when deploying *consonantia* and *contrarium* to oppose or defend a particular cosmology.[60] The unity of the activity of the simple God upholds his view of harmony. This God is the source of creation and, therefore, the source of all knowledge, whether revealed in the world or through scripture. According to Irenaeus, the clear parts of scripture describe the one God as the source of creation. Thus, first and foremost, Irenaeus seeks to refute the hidden knowledge of his opponents with the clarity and public truth of scripture.[61] However, he admits that there are unclear parts of scripture just as there are unknown parts in the physical world. According to Irenaeus, his opponents use the unknown parts of the physical world and the unclear parts of scripture to support their cosmology and suggests separation and division in God. Irenaeus argues for a method of scriptural exegesis and natural knowledge that is not disproven by a variety of natures or levels of clarity, but one that depends on and is proven by the harmony and clarity of truth.[62] Scripture is to be read through scripture, with the clear passages explaining the passages that are unclear. Irenaeus's logic may be circular, but for him, scripture is harmonious because of its source, and it cannot be read in a way that introduces disharmony.[63] Thus, all of scripture (prophets

65, 82 and 150 n. 2-3. The Latin of *haer.* 2.28.1 (SC 294.268) demonstrates this more clearly, referring to the *regulam… veritatem.* Behr describes this section (*haer.* 2.25-28) as devoted to the Rule of Truth. See Behr, *Irenaeus of Lyons*, 86.

[60] Briggman, *Irenaeus of Lyons and the Theology of the Holy Spirit*, 136-39.

[61] For a discussion on the importance of clarity in the argument of Irenaeus, see Ayres, "Irenaeus Vs. The Valentinians: Toward a Rethinking of Patristic Exegetical Origins," especially 178-80.

[62] Morlet labels this as the first of two rules introduced for reading scripture. See Sébastien Morlet, *Symphonia: La concorde des textes et des doctrines dans la littérature greque jusqu'à Origène* (Paris: Las Belles Lettres, 2019), 218.

[63] Morlet outlines three principles in Irenaeus's methods of exegesis, and this is the second. In it, the criterion for right exegesis is the harmony of scripture, and at the same time, right exegesis preserves this harmony, allowing it to be understood. Ibid., 220.

and apostles) teaches one creator (*haer.* 2.27.2), and no part of scripture, not even the unclear parables, teach a different creator. Unclear parables do not convey disharmony in scripture, just as unknown aspects of physics do not convey disharmony in the world. For Irenaeus, the harmony of scripture and creation affirm God as their source: economy informs "theology proper." This, however, raises questions regarding theological speculation on what is unknown or unclear.

In this passage Irenaeus introduces four unanswered questions: (1) what was God doing before creation (*haer.* 2.28.3); (2) how was the Son emitted by the Father (*haer.* 2.28.6); (3) from what source and how did God produce matter (*haer.* 2.28.7); and (4) what is the cause of the nature of sinners (*haer.* 2.28.7)? Many scholars have come to vastly different conclusions on whether Irenaeus rejects or condones theological speculation,[64] and studies on divine simplicity vary based on scholars' readings of this passage. For example, John Behr argues that these unanswered questions (particularly one and two) mean that, for Irenaeus, "God is not subject to our scrutiny," so when examining divine simplicity, whatever else it may mean, it does not reveal knowledge about God that is absent from the cross of Christ.[65] Knowledge of God is limited to what is revealed by the Son. On the other hand, Briggman argues that some things are revealed by God through natural revelation, so "causal inquiries into spiritual matters" will sometimes result in knowledge about God, and as a result, speculative knowledge about God approaches certainty.[66] For him, divine simplicity fits in this category. I agree with Briggman that Irenaeus permits theological speculation, though I would add that this speculation is not through a natural revelation that is separate from

[64] R. M. Grant, "Irenaeus and Hellenistic Culture," *HTR* 42, no. 1 (1949); W. C. Van Unnik, "Theological Speculation and its Limits," in *Early Christian Literature and the Classical Intellectual Tradition: In Honorem Robert Grant*, ed. William Schoedel and Robert Wilken (Paris: Beauchesne, 1979); Schoedel, "Theological Method in Irenaeus ("Adversus Haeresus" 2.25-28)."; Briggman, *Irenaeus of Lyons and the Theology of the Holy Spirit*, 134ff; Behr, *Irenaeus of Lyons*, 116-20; Anthony Briggman, "Theological Speculation in Irenaeus: Perils and Possibilities," *VC* 71, no. 2 (2017).
[65] Behr, *Irenaeus of Lyons*, 119; "Synchronic and Diachronic Harmony: St. Irenaeus on Divine Simplicity."
[66] Briggman, "Theological Speculation in Irenaeus: Perils and Possibilities," 193; *God and Christ in Irenaeus*, 102-03.

scripture. Irenaeus does not answer these questions entirely, but certain answers cease to be options because of the clear portions of scripture and the harmony of scripture.[67] Irenaeus does not reject theological speculation entirely, but it is guarded by the clarity of scripture. When describing God's powers, he removes certain options for descriptions about God because God is simple, which clarifies the description of the one God of scripture and the rule. He rejects separating God from his powers in the activity of creating, he rejects applying language about humans to language about God, and he affirms that God's names and powers are mutually entailing, all because the clear parts of scripture teach one God as the creator who created through his Word. He interweaves scriptural and philosophical language, and he is willing to use extra-biblical language, such as "simple," because it harmonises with the language of rule and his reading of (what he identifies as) clear scriptures.

Reading *haer.* 2.28 through the lens of divine simplicity is further justified because this passage uses the same theological terminology and focus on God's powers as *haer.* 2.13:

> However, since God is all Mind, all Thought, all active Spirit, and all Light, and always the same and existing similarly, and since it is useful for us to know about God, and since we learn from the Scriptures, then surely affections and divisions of this kind will not properly apply to him. The tongue, since it is material, is not sufficiently swift to serve the human mind since it is spiritual. Thus, our speech is stifled within and is not produced the same as it was conceived in the mind, but [comes out] in parts, and this is how the tongue performs.
> But God being all Mind and being all *Logos*, understands what he says, and says what he understands. For Understanding is his *Logos*, and *Logos* is Mind, and the Mind containing all things is himself, Father. Therefore, the person who says "the Mind of God," and gives the Mind its own origin, he declares him [God] to be composite, as if

[67] With question two, for example, while scripture does not explain just how the Son was emitted, Irenaeus prohibits certain kinds of descriptions of his generation (applying human metaphors to the generation of God's powers in *haer.* 2.13.3-4; or describing the generation of God's powers as "of a different substance" in *haer.* 2.17-18). For question four, while scripture does not explain the cause for the nature of sinners, later in the text, Irenaeus describes humanity's infancy leading to their inability and unwillingness to resist temptation and receive discipline (*haer.* 4.38.1-3). Many thanks to Paul Saieg for bringing this latter passage to my attention. In the text, while a mother is able (μήτηρ δύναται) to give the infant more solid food, the infant is not able (ἀδυνατεῖ) to retain it. Likewise, at the beginning, humanity was unable to receive perfection, being an infant (οὕτως καὶ ὁ Θεὸς αὐτὸς μὲν οἷός τε ἦν παρασχεῖν ἀπ' ἀρχῆς τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ τὸ τέλειον). This is due to the creator/creature differentiation of God as perfect and humanity always attaining toward perfection. However, there is also an element to where humans were unaccustomed and untrained in perfect discipline (ἀγύμναστα πρὸς τὴν τελείαν ἀγωγήν), and this implies that humanity was not yet willing. (SC 100.944-46).

> God were one thing and the First Mind[68] something else. It is like going backward from the *Logos,* giving to him the third place of origin from the Father, ignoring his greatness. This person has separated the *Logos* from the Father with a great distance. Indeed, the prophet affirms about him, "His generation, who can describe it." (Is. 53:8) By conjecturing his generation from the Father and applying the origin of human words to the Word of God through the language of what was made, you actually know neither human nor divine [things] and are rightly exposed by your own selves.
>
> Deus autem cum sit totus Mens, totus Ratio et totus Spiritus operans et totus Lux et semper idem et similiter exsistens, sicut et utile est nobis sapere de Deo et sicut ex Scripturis discimus, non iam huiusmodi adfectus et divisiones decenter erga eum subsequentur. Velocitati enim sensus hominum propter spiritale eius non sufficit lingua deseruire, quippe carnalis exsistens: unde et intus suffocatur uerbum nostrum et profertur non de semel, sicut conceptum est a sensu, sed per partes, secundum quod lingua subministrare praeualet.
> Deus autem totus exsistens Mens et totus exsistens Logos, quod cogitat, hoc et loquitur, et quod loquitur, hoc et cogitat : Cogitatio enim eius Logos, et Logos Mens, et omnia concludens Mens, ipse est Pater. Qui ergo dicit Mentem Dei et prolationem propriam Menti donat compositum eum pronuntiat, tamquam aliud quidem sit Deus, aliud autem principalis Mens exsistens. Similiter autem rursus et de Logo, tertiam prolationem ei a Patre donans, unde et ignorat magnitudinem eius, porro et longe Logon a Deo separauit. Et propheta quidem ait de eo : *Generationem eius quis enarrabit** ? Vos autem generationem eius ex Patre diuinantes et uerbi hominum per linguam factam prolationem transferentes in Verbum Dei, iuste detegimini a uobis ipsis quod neque humana neque diuina noueritis.[69]

This section echoes the terminology of divine simplicity in four ways: (1) it refers back to the Xenophanes citation of God as "God is all Mind, all Thought, and all active Spirit, and all Light"; (2) it warns against inappropriately applying "affections and divisions" (*adfectus et divisiones*) to God; (3) it opposes descriptions of God as composite, and instead claims God's Mind entails God's Word; and (4) it contrasts the process of human thought and speech with God's powers, which are always the same and existing similarly (*semper idem et similiter exsistens*)[70] and containing all (*omnia concludens*). In particular, Irenaeus addresses the

[68] *principalis* is here an adjective, singular, nominative, since *Mens* is feminine. Unger believes this does not apply to the context, but the discussion becomes one of order of origin, so I have retained *principalis.* See Unger, ACW 65, 156, n. 21.
[69] *haer.* 2.28.4-5 (SC 294.280-82).
[70] This is a puzzling usage, for Irenaeus often refers to God existing "one and the same" (*unum et eundem*), though in the definition for divine simplicity he does have the refences to God as *similimembrius*, so this may be an echo of that kind of usage, which I argue, allows for distinction despite simplicity. However, this particular usage requires more thought.

second unanswered question regarding divine generation. Although much remains unknown, it cannot be compared to the inefficiency of human speech. This follows one of his parameters for language about God. Furthermore, when someone describes God as "all Thought," if that person means a Mind with a different origin, then that person declares (*pronuntiat*) that God is composite, and they are separating the Word from the Father by using language about humans (*uerbi hominum*) and describing the Word's begetting through language of matter (*per linguam factam*). Irenaeus again clarifies that the Xenophanes quotation cannot imply a separation that makes God composite. The terminology and argument from his definition of divine simplicity uphold this argument of *haer.* 2.17-28.

On the one hand, Irenaeus's concept of harmony depends on the unity of activity of the one and only simple God,[71] but on the other hand, the harmony of creation and scripture substantiates his claim for the one and only God. Irenaeus does not address any issues of logical circularity. Instead, he continues to build on his earlier claims about God from earlier in Book 2, weaving them into this argument for the harmony of creation and scripture. Because God is simple, God's powers are mutually entailing, so the unified activity of creation through these powers is reflected through the harmony of creation. A composite God would create disharmony. God is not separated from his powers or the activity of creation, so the harmony of creation reflects the unity of divine activity. Harmony in physics reflects unity in metaphysics.

6. Conclusion

I have argued that Irenaeus introduces theological principles in the constructive claims of Book 2 that further specify the language about God in the Rule of Truth, and these claims develop an argument that depends on divine simplicity. In *haer.* 2.1-2, Irenaeus claims

[71] This line of argument is used in the first part of Morlet's chapter on Irenaeus. See Morlet, *Symphonia*, 212-15.

that the one "containing, not contained" God is the creator, and he supports his claim through the key scriptures of his theology of creation. In *haer.* 2.12-13, Irenaeus claims that God is simple, and he argues that the names and powers of God are not separated, but are mutually entailing. Lastly, in *haer.* 2.27-28, Irenaeus claims that the harmony in creation and scripture reflect God as their source, and therefore as the source of knowledge. The terminology of divine simplicity is used to describe the unity of God's activity in creation and scripture, which results in their respective harmony. Together, these constructive claims provide further specificity to the rule's language, that God is the one creator, that God created through his powers, and that God created different kinds of natures. While Book 2 is largely negative polemic, these claims develop theological principles that remains prominent in the rest of *Against Heresies*. The concept of divine simplicity can be read as a clarification of the description of God in the Rule of Truth, and it remains central in the development of the argument of Book 2, regulating language about God throughout. Having established that Book 2 can yield constructive theological claims, the following chapters focus on Irenaeus's account of divine simplicity, first in its definition (Chapter 2), and then in its use in the rest of *Against Heresies* (Part 2: Chapters 3-6).

Chapter 2: Definition and Explanation of Divine Simplicity in *haer.* 2.13

In this chapter I focus on *haer.* 2.13, the passage in which Irenaeus introduces and explains the claim that God is simple. Both he and his opponents share scriptural language of the many names, powers, and activities of God, but through this definition of divine simplicity, he challenges a use of this language that separates God from his power, and he specifies his own view of the one God as creator. I argue that in his definition of divine simplicity, Irenaeus introduces terminology and parameters for more appropriate uses of scriptural language about God. In section 1, I focus on the terminology of the definition itself. In his definition of divine simplicity, God is simple, non-composite, similar and equal to himself, and he is entirely possessing or being each of his powers and names. He uses philosophical terminology, particularly from pre-Socratic and Middle-Platonic metaphysics, to specify his intended meaning of the claim that God is simple. In many ways, portions of his definition are similar to arguments made by authors of various kinds of groups that identified as Christians, which suggest that his definition was part of a larger Christian appropriation. In section 2, I argue that the concept of divine simplicity results in parameters for appropriate language about God. Such parameters preclude speaking of separation within God (and so it rules out ascribing to God qualities that are proper to humans, such as the mental motions that lead to passion from Stoic psychology). Positively, the concept of divine simplicity leads to the assertion that the many scriptural descriptions of God (particularly his names and powers) are "heard together." These names and powers are not separable individual realities, but they are distinct from one another. I describe them as "mutually entailing," which means that each of God's names and powers imply one another without

being "identical," as some scholars claim.[1] In Part 2 of this thesis, I will go on to argue that Irenaeus develops this terminology and these parameters in the rest of *Against Heresies*.

As noted in the introduction, my argument engages scholarly questions from two recent studies, however, an exclusive examination of this principle in Irenaeus has yet to be made. Eric Osborn was the only scholar to explore the absolute oneness of the divine intellect before 2019, but he did not proceed to the implications of simplicity for the theology of Irenaeus.[2] In 2019, two experts on Irenaeus, John Behr and Anthony Briggman, both wrote on divine simplicity, but they came to divergent conclusions.[3] Behr identifies three possible reasons for introducing divine simplicity, and each has a different logical priority: (1) divine simplicity as a result of human speculation apart from biblical revelation, (2) divine simplicity as a grammatical rule for language about God, and (3) divine simplicity as

[1] Christopher Stead, *Divine Substance* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), 188-89; Briggman, *God and Christ in Irenaeus*, 96-97. For further discussion, see section 2.2.2 below.

[2] Osborn, *Irenaeus of Lyons*, see especially chapter 2, pp 21-48. Rousseau repeatedly refers to God as "absolue simplicité" in the notes for his translation, first in his summaries of *haer.* 2.13, 2.15-16 and 2.28 then in specific notes to the relevant sections of *haer.* 2.13.4, 8 and 2.17.2. Rousseau, SC 293, 142, 48, 77, 242-43, 50, 67. Fantino mentions God's simplicity, once in reference to the emission of the Word (tying together the discussion in *haer.* 2.13, 2.17, and 2.28) and once in reference to work of the Holy Spirit (*haer.* 5.12.2), arguing that for Irenaeus, however one spoke of the Word and Spirit, it could not be in such a way that included parts or separation. See Fantino, *La théologie d'Irénée*, 371-73, 79. Denis Minns shows that Irenaeus's argument against anthropomorphizing God resulted from the claim that, "God is entirely simple." For him, this emphasizes simultaneity in God. Minns, *Irenaeus*, 41. Bingham studies Eph 4:6, and notes its prevalence in *haer.* 2.13, and he studies Irenaeus's view of God's aseity. but he never examines the topic of simplicity. Bingham, "Himself within Himself: The Father and His Hands in Early Christianity."; "Christianizing Divine Aseity: Irenaeus Reads John." Jackson Lashier examines the Trinity in Irenaeus, with several paragraphs and footnotes on divine simplicity, particularly to support his argument regarding Irenaeus's view on the nature of God and the emission of the Word. See Lashier, *Irenaeus on the Trinity*, 86-90, 132-47. To say Orbe does not discuss something is not without its dangers. See the 37 pages of bibliography from his 38 years of writing in Eugenio Romero-Pose, "Bibliografia del P. Antonio Orbe," in *Pleroma: Salus Carne, Homenaje a Antonio Orbe S. J.* , ed. Eugenio Romero-Pose (Santiago de Compostela: Aldecoa, 1990). I was only able to find simplicity mentioned in passing, but its implications were not explored further. See Antonio Orbe, *Hacia la Primera Teologia de la Procesion del Verbo*, 2 vols. (Rome: Universitatis Gregorianae, 1958), 1: 127-28; 2:638, 64-66; ; "San Ireneo y el conocimiento natural de Dios, Parte II," *Gregorianum* 47, no. 4 (1966): 737-38. The implications of *haer.* 2.13 in Irenaeus's doctrine of God are explored in the dated work, Johannes Kunze, *Die Gotteslehre de Irenaeus* (Leipzig: Dörffling & Franke, 1891), 36-39. The only reference to ein einfacher Gott or göttliche Einfachneit that I could find in German scholarship was one brief mention in Yoshifumi Torisu, *Gott und Welt: Eine Untersuchung zur Gotteslehre des Irenäus von Lyon* (Nettetal: Styler Verlag, 1991), 129-30.

[3] In addition, an excellent book published by Pui Ip dedicated an entire chapter to Irenaeus, but he mostly follows Briggman. Ip, *Origen of Alexandria and the Emergence of Divine Simplicity before Nicaea*. For a close engagement with his argument, see Chapter 4.

inseparable from the way God is revealed.[4] He prefers the third option, which he calls a synchronic reading of scripture, since otherwise, theology would be logically prior to God's economy, through which God is revealed, or put differently, a "refined theism" would be developed prior to Christology.[5] In contrast, Anthony Briggman organizes his most recent book, *God and Christ*, by first examining Irenaeus's "theology proper" and then his "Christology."[6] He concludes that Irenaeus's argument for divine simplicity is without explicit scriptural support, and traces the philosophical background instead.[7]

One the one hand, I argue that Behr's three reasons for divine simplicity, particularly two and three, are not mutually exclusive. Divine simplicity places parameters on language (like a grammar) by clarifying what is meant in the Rule of Truth, but it reflects the language about God in scripture. Thus, this thesis also parts ways with Briggman's claim that the concept of divine simplicity lacks scriptural support, for though Irenaeus does not give a biblical citation as validation in *haer.* 2.13, he does claim that a knowledge of scripture and the truth leads to divine simplicity, and he uses the concept of divine simplicity alongside exegesis in the rest of *Against Heresies*. That is to say, scripture and divine simplicity are interrelated for Irenaeus in much the say way as the Scriptures and the Rule of Truth are interrelated. While Irenaeus gives preference to the language of scripture, he does not separate his reading of scripture from his knowledge of philosophy, but uses the language of philosophy to specify the meaning of scripture and the rule.[8]

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[4] Behr, "Synchronic and Diachronic Harmony: St. Irenaeus on Divine Simplicity." Behr first notes Irenaeus's concept of divine simplicity in *Asceticism and Anthropology in Irenaeus and Clement* (Oxford: OUP, 2000), 55.
[5] Behr argues against a theology proper that is developed logically prior to Christology, in dialogue with Osborn, *Irenaeus of Lyons*, 37-43. Osborn concludes, "Irenaeus develops an intricate argument, the influence of which cannot be exaggerated. For, without a refined theism, Christology is a keystone without an arch." That is, where Behr sees a problem of logical priority, Osborn sees a theological necessity.
[6] Briggman, *God and Christ in Irenaeus*, see especially pp. 90-99.
[7] He does, however, claim that the philosophical theology of Book 2 agrees with his scriptural hypothesis and the rule from *haer.* 1.10. Ibid., 103.
[8] Apart from Briggman's Chapter 3, on divine generation, *God and Christ* does not trace the influence of divine simplicity on the rest of Irenaeus's theology, though Chapter 5 does build on the basis that, for Irenaeus, Christ is truly God (building on the argument of theology proper in Chapter 2). Ibid., 127-37.

1. *haer.* 2.13.3-4a: Irenaeus's definition of Divine Simplicity

In *haer.* 2.13.3, Irenaeus provides his definition of divine simplicity, and it engages questions raised by contemporary philosophical and Christian descriptions of God.[9] After providing the text of the definition and summarising its scriptural and philosophical background, I will closely examine the two major parts of Irenaeus's definition (God is simple, non-composite, etc. and God is all Mind, all sight, etc.).

Irenaeus opposes the application of Stoic psychological language to God because God is not composite like humans (see section 2.1.2). He argues that they are, inappropriately, applying (*applicant*) to God what is said about humans (*in hominibus capit dici*).[10] This kind of language cannot be used of God, because God is simple:

> Indeed, they apply [the process] that leads humans to speak to the Father of All, who they say is unknowable by all, denying that he himself made the world, lest he be considered insignificant, and giving [him] the affections and passions of humans. However, if they knew the Scriptures and were taught by the truth, they would certainly understand that since God is in no way like humans, "his thoughts are not in any way like the thoughts of humans" (Is. 55:8). For the Father of All differs greatly from these things from which human affections and passions arise, and [he] is simple, and non-composite, and equally-limbed/self-proportionate,[11] and himself altogether similar and equal to himself, since he is all mind, all spirit, all understanding, all thought, all reason, all hearing, all eye/sight, all light and the entire source of all that is good, in whatever way it is [right] for a religious and pious person to speak about God.
>
> quidem ea quae obueniunt hominibus ad loquendum eos applicant omnium Patri, quem etiam ignotum omnibus dicunt, negantes quidem ipsum mundum fecisse, ut ne quidem pusillus putetur, hominum autem adfectiones et passiones donantes. Si autem Scripturas cognouissent et a ueritate docti essent, scirent utique quoniam non sic Deus quemadmodum homines, et *non sic cogitationes eius quomodo cogitationes hominum* (Is 55 :8). Multum enim distat omnium Pater ab his quae proueniunt hominibus adfectionibus et passionibus, et simplex et non compositus et similimembrius et totus ipse sibimetipsi similis et aequalis est, totus cum sit sensus et totus spiritus et totus sensuabilitas et totus ennoia et totus ratio et totus auditus et totus oculus et totus

[9] Here I introduce the ways it fits within Irenaeus's larger theological system, but will examine that more closely in Part 2 of this thesis.
[10] *haer,* 2.13.3 (SC 294.114).
[11] See Rousseau's discussion on ὁμοιομελής, particularly relating to Epiphanius's record of Irenaeus's usage of the word δωδεκαμελήςin 1.14.9, which allows him to suggest ἀνομοιομελεῖς in 2.17.2. (SC 293.240-42).

> lumen et totus fons omnium bonorum, quemadmodum adest religiosis ac piis dicere de Deo.[12]

First of all, this definition of divine simplicity is notably without the kind of scriptural support that characterizes the style of Books 3-5. Briggman argues that "this definition is not supported by an appeal to scripture," but instead, "Irenaeus grounds this one on philosophical theology," which leads him to argue that divine simplicity is a consequence of a natural knowledge of God.[13] Yet, Irenaeus introduces this claim by arguing that the errant systems of his opponents stem from a lack of knowledge of the scriptures and the truth, which suggests that Irenaeus, at least rhetorically, founds this claim on scripture and received teaching.[14] Furthermore, I believe that, for Irenaeus, divine simplicity expresses the harmony of scripture, and is not constructed absent from it. As argued above, Irenaeus defended his position on creation through explicit scriptural support (*haer.* 2.1-2 in Chapter 1, section 3) and he defends his claim that God is the one creator by pointing to the harmony of scripture (*haer.* 2.27-27 in Chapter 1, section 5). Sandwiched between these is the claim that God is simple, so in the flow of the constructive statements about God in Book 2, divine simplicity emerges from a scriptural argument for the one God as creator. In the general argument of Book 2, divine simplicity is not developed apart from scripture.

For example, he has already challenged his opponents' exegesis of Johannine language, which applied the human mental motions for word production onto God. According to Irenaeus (in *haer.* 1.1-2), the Valentinians used the language of mental motions (Idea, Mind, Word, Understanding, Will, Wisdom), and labelled each of God's powers as one of the thirty Aeons within the Pleroma. These were placed into three different layers proximate to or distanced from the Father (the Ogdoad, the Decad, and the Duodecad). One

[12] *haer.* 2.13.3 (SC 294.114-16).
[13] Briggman, *God and Christ in Irenaeus*, 91-92.
[14] Lewis Ayres calls the Rule of Truth the result of inherited faith and scripture, so in some senses, Irenaeus is describing divine simplicity in a way similar to his introduction of the Rule of Truth. See Ayres, "Irenaeus and the 'Rule of Truth': A Reconsideration," 163.

Aeon (Wisdom) departed the Pleroma, and her passion led to the creation of matter outside the power and will of the Pleroma. Irenaeus argued that these scriptural terms neither list the sequential generation of God's powers in the Ogdoad (the highest level of the Pleroma), nor describe a rogue power creating the world. Rather, in Irenaeus's view, John teaches that there is one Father who made the world through the Word (see *haer.* 1.8.5-1.9.3; 2.2.5; 3.11 for examples).[15] While his claim that God is simple, opposing powers such as Mind or Word being separated from God, does not directly cite scriptural evidence (in *haer.* 2.12-13.2), his argument is steeped in this prior exegesis.

On the other hand, there is not specific citation used to support the principle of divine simplicity.[16] The citation of Isaiah 55:8 provides a scriptural reference point for his contrast between God and human psychology when differentiating God from creatures, but this is not a proof-text for the principle of divine simplicity. Robert Grant has suggested that this section may be founded upon 1 Corinthians 12:17 and the body of Christ with many members, but I agree with Briggman that this is inconclusive.[17] Instead of a particular proof-text, the different scriptural passages which are summarised by and which ground the notion of divine simplicity become more apparent as Irenaeus applies this principle to the rest of his theology

[15] See Harris, "Irenaeus's Engagement with Rhetorical Theory in his Exegesis of the Johannine Prologue in Adversus Haereses 1.8.5-1.9.3." The logic of Irenaeus's opponents is understandable in the context of the *logos* in John 1, but Irenaeus argues that the application of anthropomorphic language results in anthropopathism. The link between Wisdom and Word which becomes so central for the entirety of *Against Heresies*, though formal usage of "wisdom" from Proverbs 8:22ff is not found until *haer.* 4.20.3 For discussion, see Briggman, *Irenaeus of Lyons and the Theology of the Holy Spirit*, 130-31. In *haer.*1.8.5, Irenaeus praises his opponents for beginning their study of the origin of the universe from John 1, but, as shown by Ayres, he opposes an interpretation that depends on hidden knowledge that contradicts other parts of scripture. Ayres, "Irenaeus Vs. The Valentinians: Toward a Rethinking of Patristic Exegetical Origins," 153-87. Once again, as introduced in Chapter 1, section 3, Irenaeus bases his argument, not on a single text, but a synthesis of texts.

[16] For possible scriptural support for the doctrine itself, see Michel Barnes, "'Shining in the Light of Your Glory': Finding the Simple Reading of Scripture," *Modern Theology* 35, no. 3 (2019); Jonathan Platter, "Divine Simplicity and Reading Scripture: Exodus 3:14 and God as Being-Itself," *Scottish Journal of Theology* (2020).

[17] Briggman, *God and Christ in Irenaeus*, 92, n. 108; R. M. Grant, "Early Christianity and Pre-Socratic Philosophy," in *Harry Austryn Wolfson Jubilee Volume*, ed. S. Lieberman (Jerusalem: American Academy for Jewish Research, 1965), 22. This same reference to 1 Cor 12 can be seen in Rousseau, and Grant makes this same assertion in 1995. See "Place de Basilide dans la théologie chrétienne ancienne," *Revue d'Etudes Augustiniennes et Patristiques* 25, no. 3 (1995): 212; Rousseau, SC 293, 243-44.

(see Part 2 of this thesis).[18] Furthermore, the concept of divine simplicity provides a corrective for his opponent's interpretation of scripture, since Irenaeus uses many of the same scriptural passages that were central to the theology of his opponents.[19] Thus, even if they are not always explicitly referenced, I agree with John Behr, that the synchronic reading of scripture, with the different parts of scripture, "provide the basis and framework for understanding divine simplicity in all its dimensions."[20] However, Irenaeus derives the terminology of divine simplicity from philosophy and literature, not from scripture. Irenaeus was handling the intersection between a scriptural network and philosophical language.

By the time of Irenaeus, describing God as simple was common in philosophy, particularly within Platonism. Plato employs the term ἁπλῶς in the context of creation in the *Timaeus,* he joins "simple" and "without parts" in *Parmenides,* and he employs simplicity in contrast to the gods of Homer and Aeschylus in the *Republic.*[21] Similarly, Irenaeus uses both *simplex* and *non-compositus,* and he argues that the simple God is unlike the God of his opponents, whose multiplicity is derived from the Greek myths (*haer.* 1.9.4; 1.12.2; 2.14.2;

[18] For example, the activity of the God who *ipse ab/in/per semetipso* creates and reveals, based on the Law and the Gospel (*haer.* 2.30.9 and *haer.* 4.20), is the same divine activity that entails divine power, namely God's Word and Wisdom (see Chapter 5 section 2, or Chapter 6, section 2.1). The titles "Lord" and "God" from the Septuagint entail both Father and Son, which develops Irenaeus's claim that because God is simple, his titles are mutually entailing (*haer.* 2.13.9), and his scriptural basis is revealed in *haer.* 3.6 (see Chapter 6, section 3). In his discussion on the generation of the *Logos* (*haer.* 2.28.4-7), which elsewhere he calls simple (*haer.* 2.17.2), he first does a literary throwing up of hands, asking "who can know it?" from Isaiah 53:8, but then refers to knowledge of God in terms of heights and depths (Eph 3:19; Rom 11:33; 1 Cor 2:10) and challenges the Valentinian concept of their exclusive knowledge by claiming that if there are things that even the Son does not know (Matt 24:36; Jn 14:28), but everyone else will certainly only know in part (1 Cor 13:9).

[19] Stephen Presly argues that, though a scriptural passage may be at work in the background of Irenaeus's argument, sometimes he does not cite it because it is being misinterpreted by his opponents. See Stephen Presley, "Irenaeus and the Exegetical Roots of Trinitarian Theology," in *Irenaeus: Life, Scripture, and Legacy*, ed. Paul Foster and Sara Parvis (2012). He builds upon Slusser's work. Michael Slusser, "The Exegetical Roots of Trinitarian Theology," *Theological Studies* 49 (1988).

[20] Behr, "Synchronic and Diachronic Harmony: St. Irenaeus on Divine Simplicity," 10. Rather than a single scriptural passage to support his doctrine of Simplicity, it is supported by all the stones of scripture, with, as Behr states, "all the diachronic and synchronic diversity that this entails." *Irenaeus of Lyons*, 10.

[21] *Tim.* 30B-69C; *Parm.* 137c-138a; *Rep.* II.380d-383c. Ip argues that the usage of ἁπλῶς in the Republic is the real starting point for discussions on divine simplicity. See Chapter 1 in Ip, *Origen of Alexandria and the Emergence of Divine Simplicity before Nicaea*. Gavrilyuk points a farther back, to Anaxagoras as cited by Aristotle. Paul Gavrilyuk, "Plotinus on Divine Simplicity," *Modern Theology* 35, no. 3 (2019): 443-44.

2.22.6).[22] He also explains his definition of divine simplicity with a citation from the pre-Socratic philosopher, Xenophanes. Irenaeus engages with this pre-Socratic and Socratic terminology in a way that is similar to Middle Platonic handbooks and doxographies, which may have been what Irenaeus actually used.[23] It is clear that Irenaeus is using and referencing philosophy here, because he even claims that philosophers are more "religious (*religiosis*) and pious" in their speech about God than his opponents (*haer.* 2.13.3), the same adjectives used to describe Plato's description of God's goodness alongside a citation of *Laws* and the *Timaeus.*[24] Immediately after his definition of simplicity, he claims that his opponents shuffle classical and philosophical texts to support their views, and he lists fifteen different poets and philosophers they used (*haer.* 2.14).[25] This suggests that he was consciously engaging with terminology and debates in philosophy in developing his notion of divine simplicity.

Within the philosophical tradition, approaches to divine simplicity varied significantly. After the Socratic dialogues, Aristotle's famous descriptions of simplicity as actuality rather than potentiality (*Met.* 12.7; 1072b) or Mind thinking itself (*Met.* 12.9; 1074b) undergird his description of his Prime Mover.[26] In those who engaged Stoicism, such

[22] For a close examination of Plato's *Republic* and *Parmenides* and its influence on the discussion of divine simplicity for later generations, see Chapter 1 in Ip, *Origen of Alexandria and the Emergence of Divine Simplicity before Nicaea*.

[23] For a summary of the debate on Irenaeus's philosophical knowledge, ranging from access to a doxography to rhetorical or philosophical training, see Briggman, "Revisiting Irenaeus' Philosophical Acumen."; "Literary and Rhetorical Theory in Irenaeus Part 1," 10-32; *God and Christ in Irenaeus*.

[24] *haer.* 3.25.5 (SC 211.484). *Quibus religiosior Plato ostenditur, qui eundem Deum et iustum et bonum confessus est, habentem potestatem omnium, ipsum facientem iudicium,* followed by citations from *Laws.* 4.717E and *Tim.* 3.29E. Osborn argues that this is a claim of popular piety. See Osborn, *Irenaeus of Lyons*, 37. Ip calls this preservation of divine goodness as the first of two laws of theological speech in Plato. See Ip, *Origen of Alexandria and the Emergence of Divine Simplicity before Nicaea*, 22.

[25] *haer.* 2.14.1-6. The list includes literary and philosophical authors, founders of movements and the movements themselves: Antiphanes, Athenaeus, Thales of Miletus, Homer, Anaximander, Anaxagoras, Democritus, Plato, Epicurus, Empedocles, Hesiod, Aristotle, Stoics, Cynics, and Pythagoreans.

[26] In the context of thought, "substance stands first, and of substance that which is simple and exists actually. (The one and the simple are not the same; for one signifies a measure, whereas "simple" means that the subject itself is in a certain state.)" καὶ ταύτης ἡ οὐσία πρώτη, καὶ ταύτης ἡ ἁπλῆ καὶ κατ᾽ ἐνέργειαν (ἔστι δὲ τὸ ἓν καὶ τὸ ἁπλοῦν οὐ τὸ αὐτό· τὸ μὲν γὰρ ἓν μέτρον σημαίνει, τὸ δὲ ἁπλοῦν πὼς ἔχον αὐτό), *Met.* 12.7; 1072b (LCL 287.146-47). Translation from Hugh and G. Cyril Armstrong Tredennick, ed. *Aristotle: Metaphysis. Oeconomica. Magna Moralia*, LCL 287 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1935). For the influence of Aristotle upon Christian discourse about God, see David Bradshaw, *Aristotle East and West: Metahysics and the Division of Christendom* (Cambridge: CUP, 2004).

as Cicero and Seneca, language of the simple and uncompounded is applied to the soul, as Irenaeus does in Book 5.[27] Philo refers to a God as uncompounded and One whose nature is simple (ὁ θεὸς οὐ σύγκριμα, φύσις ὢν ἁπλῆ) when discussing the harmony of the mixture in the compound nature of humans.[28] In his summary of Plato's teaching, Alcinous does not use the term ἁπλῶς of God, but he employs a string of terms about God, as "eternal, ineffable, self-perfect, ever-perfect and all-perfect*;* divinity, essentiality, truth, commensurability, good," and claims that these terms are not parts of who God is but rather a single thing that describes God.[29] In his study of divine simplicity, Pui Ip notes that, in Alcinous and Philo, there is a development from the Socratic usage of simplicity, for they specifically describe the simple God as the First Principle, and Philo applies this language to a monotheistic description of God in the Septuagint and to the generation of the *Logos.*[30] Apuleius, also summarising Plato, argues that the three principles are God, Matter, and the Forms, and while God is described as One (*unus*), the Forms are described as primary and simple (*simplices*). The Latin of Apuleius provides helpful parallels for the Latin of Irenaeus's text, for he too seemed to struggle when translating the concept of the Form as always equal and similar to

[27] Seneca describes First Principles as simple in *ep.* 65.12. This is within an argument that emphasizes that form and matter are primary causes, just as matter is, but causes are necessarily simple. Within the structure of argument for Seneca and Cicero, the emphasis is mostly on the soul as without parts and simple. See, for example, Cicero, *Disp. Tusc.*, 1.25-29 and Seneca, *ep.* 66.12. In *haer.* 5.7.1, Irenaeus describes the incorporeal soul and the simple spirit. For a discussion of this passage, see Briggman, *God and Christ in Irenaeus*, 159-62.
[28] Philo, *Mut.* 1.XXXIV, 184 (LCL 275.236-37). F. H. and G. H. Whitaker Colson, ed. *Philo: On Flight and Finding. On the Change of Names. On Dreams.*, LCL 275 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1934). Many thanks to Dr. David Litwa for pointing this out to me.
[29] He uses the term ἁπλῶς (6.10, 25.4; 32.7), but not as a description of divine. 32.7 might be the exception, as the term is used in the context of the Good. For the string of terms describing God, see *Didask,* 10.3. English translation from John Dillon, ed. *Alcinous: The Handbook of Platonism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 18. According to Dillon, this is the first case where these three references to God's perfection are strung together. "The primary god, then, is eternal, ineffable, '*self-perfect,' 'ever-perfect*' and '*all-perfect'* [italics added]*;* divinity, essentiality, truth, commensurability, good. I am not listing these terms as being distinct from one another, but on the assumption that one single thing is being denoted by all of them. He is Good because he benefits all things according to their capacities, being the cause of all good." Καὶ μὴν ὁ πρῶτος θεὸς ἀίδιός ἐστιν, ἄρρητος, αὐτοτελὴς τουτέστιν ἀπροσδεής, ἀειτελὴς τουτέστιν ἀεὶ τέλειος, παντελὴς τουτέστι πάντη τέλειος· θειότης, οὐσιότης, ἀλήθεια, συμμετρία, ἀγαθόν. Λέγω δὲ οὐχ ὡς χωρίζων ταῦτα, ἀλλ' ὡς κατὰ πάντα ἑνὸς νοουμένου. Καὶ ἀγαθὸν μέν ἐστι, διότι πάντα εἰς δύναμιν εὐεργετεῖ, παντὸς ἀγαθοῦ αἴτιος ὤν.
[30] See Chapter 2 in Ip, *Origen of Alexandria and the Emergence of Divine Simplicity before Nicaea*, 32-49.

itself (*semper et eodem modo et sui par ac similis invenitur, ut quae vere si*).[31] Irenaeus uses language central to these philosophical debates, but he also intertwines the terminology from philosophy and scripture in his argument of divine simplicity.

1.1 *simplex, non compositus, similimembrius*

Three terms form the foundation of Irenaeus's definition for a simple God: *simplex*, *non compositus*, and *similimembrius*. The term *simplex* in relation to God appears only twice in *Against Heresies*: first in this definition (*haer.* 2.13.3), where it describes God in himself, and second to describe the simple generation of the *Logos* (*haer.* 2.17.2). The term itself, and the wider context of the definition in *haer.* 2.13.3, suggest Irenaeus has a single and simple unity in mind, rather than a complex unity. God is *simplex*, so he is not composed of parts and cannot be separated or divided. This concept persists, even if the term *simplex* is not deployed. For example, though he does not refer to the term *simplex* in *haer.* 1.12.2, God's will is not separate from what God does, which is explained with the same citation of Xenophanes used to explain divine simplicity, "as soon as he willed he completed what he willed… since he is all thought, all will, all mind…"[32] Thus, while the term *simplex* is not present in that passage, because the secondary language of *totus* thought, will, mind, etc. from his definition appears in *haer.* 1.12, and because he is claiming that God is not separated

[31] Apuleius, *De dog. Plat.* 1.5-6 (Fowler, 246-48). Ryan C. Fowler, ed. *Imperial Plato: Albinus, Maximus, Apuleius* (Zurich: Parmenides Publishing, 2016), 151-60, 246-48.

[32] *haer.* 1.12.2 (SC 264.182-84). Rousseau, SC 264. For discussion, see Chapter 3, section 4. "He is the God of the universe: who, as soon as he thought he completed what he thought, and as soon as he willed he completed what he willed; and as soon as he wills, he thinks that which he has willed; thus thinking when he wills, and willing when he thinks, since he is all thought, all will, all mind, all light, all eye, all ear, and the entire font of all good."
ἢ περὶ τοῦ τῶν ὅλων δεσπότου· ὃς ἅμα τῷ ἐννοηθῆναι καὶ ἐπιτετέλεκε τοῦθ' ὅπερ ἐνενοήθη, καὶ ἅμα τῷ θελῆσαι καὶ ἐννοεῖται τοῦθ' ὅπερ [καὶ] ἠθέλησεν, τότε ἐννοούμενος ὅτε θέλει, καὶ τότε θέλων, ὅτε ἐννοεῖται, ὅλος ἔννοια ὢν, ὅλος θέλημα [ὤν], ὅλος νοῦς, [ὅλος φῶς Epiphan.] ὅλος ὀφθαλμὸς, ὅλος ἀκοὴ, ὅλος πηγὴ πάντων τῶν ἀγαθῶν.
eius qui est uniuersorum Dominus: qui simul ut cogitauit perfecit id quod cogitauit, et simul ac uoluit et cogitat hoc quod uoluit, tunc cogitans cum uult et tunc uolens cum cogitat, cum sit totus cogitatus et totus sensus et totus oculus et totus auditus et totus fons omnium bonorum.

from his powers, I argue that the principle of divine simplicity is operating. The other parts of his definition and explanation (i.e. God as equal and similar, or God as all Mind, all Reason, etc.) continue to appear regularly in the rest of *Against Heresies* and they depend on and develop the claim that God is simple.

Irenaeus is not alone within diverse "Christian" groups in the appropriation of this term. Basilides, a named opponent of Irenaeus in Book 2, describes Aristotle's "thinking of thinking" One existing before anything simple or uncompounded, and claims that language cannot be ascribed to God, which would seem to include the language of simplicity.[33] In a creed-like fragment from Irenaeus's home region of Asia Minor, attributed to Melito of Sardis, the divinity and humanity of Christ in the Incarnation is described as, "clothed in flesh while not constraining the simplicity (ἁπλότητα) of his divinity."[34] Furthermore, Ptolemy, Tatian, and Clement provide particularly helpful parallels to Irenaeus's use. In the *Letter to Flora,* Ptolemy (who was opposed by Irenaeus and described as a follower of Valentinus, refers to the simple Father. Ptolemy) describes the unbegotten Father as "incorruption and self-existent light, simple (ἁπλοῦν) and singular" and of a different substance from the creator.[35] Though both Irenaeus and Ptolemy challenge the separation in a Marcionite

[33] *Ref.* 7.21.1. "So when there was nothing—not matter, not substance, not nonsubstance, not anything simple or uncompounded (οὐχ ἁπλοῦν, οὐκ ἀσύνθετον,), or inconceivable, or imperceptible, neither human, nor angel, nor god, nor anything at all of phenomena named or perceived or thought, a nothingness still more subtle than anything simple described by language (ἀλλ' οὕτω καὶ ἔτι λεπτομερ<εστέρ>ως πάντων ἁπλῶς περιγεγραμμένων)—then the nonexistent God (whom Aristotle calls "thinking of thinking," and what these people call "Nonexistent") wanted to make the world without conception, without perception, without will, without volition, without emotion, and without desire." I have adapted the translation, and used the Greek, from M. David Litwa, ed. *Refutation of All Heresies* (Williston, VT: Society of Biblical Literature, 2016), 508-09. For discussion, see Orbe, *Hacia la Primera Teologia de la Procesion del Verbo*, 9-11.

[34] *fr.* 14. Hall, *Melito of Sardis: On Pasca and Fragments*, 81-82. Syriac and reconstructed Greek from Rucker, *Florilegium Edessenum Anonumum*, 14-15.

> βρέφος ὁρώμενος (?ὀφθείς) καὶ τὴν ἀϊδιότητα τῆς αὐτοῦ φύσεως οὐ ψευσάμενος--
> σῶμα (σάρκα) περιβληθεὶς καὶ τὴν ἁπλότητα τῆς αὐτοῦ θε(ι)ότητος οὐκ ἐγκλείσας
> …appearing as a child, whilst not falsifying the eternity of his nature,
> clothed in flesh whilst not constraining the simplicity of his divinity....

For a discussion on the authorship, see Jordan, Armenische Irenaeusfragmente mit deutscher Übersetzung nach Dr. W. Lüdtke, 56-60. For more recent discussion on the source of these references, see Stewart, Melito of Sardis: *On Pasca, with the Fragments of Melito and Other Material Related to the Quartodecimans*, 96-98.

[35] *ep.* 7.7-8 (SC 24.72). ἀφθαρσία τε καὶ φῶς αὐτοόν, ἁπλοῦν τε καὶ μονοειδές. In opposing a Marcionite dualism, Ptolemy appears to a tripartite view of the Law (lower law of the elders, middle law of Moses, and higher law of God in Matthew 5 and Paul) that stems from a tripartite view of metaphysics (the lower adversary,

conception of the law alongside descriptions of a simple God, they part ways when it comes to creation, since, for Ptolemy, "the act of creating is discordant with the nature of the first God," while, for Irenaeus, the act of creating must be attributed to God himself, which is precisely the reason he introduces divine simplicity.[36] Similarly, in the *Oration*, Tatian, another named opponent of Irenaeus, describes the Word as springing forth from God's will of simplicity (ἁπλότητος) like light or fire that is not diminished, which in corruption is similar to Irenaeus's discussion of the emission of the Word as a simple and singular and comparable to a light or a torch (*haer.* 2.17).[37] Irenaeus engages the language of both of these authors in his argument for divine simplicity (for further discussion, see Chapter 4, section 1), but he develops beyond them by explaining his version of simplicity. Furthermore, while, as Andrew Radde-Gallwitz has noted, Ptolemy used divine simplicity to argue that there is no contradiction among divine attributes and activities, Irenaeus also opposes contraries in his view of simplicity but he is not willing to separate the simple Father from the concept of the creator.[38] After Irenaeus, in the third century, Clement of Alexandria used the principle of divine simplicity in a radical apophaticism where little, if anything, could be known about God.[39] Unlike Clement, Irenaeus remains committed to a knowable God against his opponent's claim that God is unknown.

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the middle demiurge, and the higher Father). In his argument for a simple God who is "containing, not contained," Irenaeus addresses the specific verses raised by Ptolemy in *Letter to Flora*, particularly in defence of the Mosaic Law. In the *Letter to Flora*, Ptolemy walks through the words of the Lord from various Gospels, the preface to the Gospel of John, and the words of Paul. In Irenaeus's argument for his God who is creator in *haer.* 2.2.5, Irenaeus defends his view explicitly referring to the words of John and Paul, he references the words of the Lord, and he cites the same Jn 1:3 verse found in *ep.* 3.6. Furthermore, in *haer.* 4.2.3, 6-7, he cites Jn 5:46-47 to argue that those who reject Moses also reject the Son of God.

[36] Andrew Radde-Gallwitz, *Transformation of Divine Simplicity* (Oxford: OUP, 2009), 35.

[37] *orat.* 5. Both Tatian and Irenaeus seem to be drawing from Justin in *dial.* 128.2-5. Tatian denies a *logos* with an independent existence, but in Chapter 4 I argue that this position that is not adopted by Irenaeus. See Matthew Crawford, "The *Problemata* of Tatian: Recovering the fragments of a Second-Century Christian Intellectual," *JECS* 67 (2016): 553-54. Tatian's *orat.* 5.1 states, θελήματι δὲ τῆς ἁπλότητος αὐτοῦ προπηδᾷ λόγος. See Whittaker, Tatian: *Oratio ad Graecos* and fragments, 10-11.

[38] Radde-Gallwitz, *Transformation of Divine Simplicity*, 19-37.

[39] Ibid., 38-58. Clement differentiates between knowledge and faith, the latter being required to understand what is indemonstrable, namely, that which is simple (ἁπλοῦν). *str.* 2.4.14 (GSC 2.120). Otto Stählin, ed. *Clemens Alexandrinus: Stromata Buch I-VI*, GSC 2 (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1906). In *str.* 8.3.7.1 (GSC:17.83) he states, "In point of fact, the philosophers admit that the first principles of all things are indemonstrable. So that if there is

Because Irenaeus's explanation of *simplex* is so different from these other appropriations, I am not arguing for a source or a particular lineage in his usage, but rather, for his involvement in a general thought-world. In the context of second-century debates, his usage of the term *simplex* reflects a knowledge of contemporary Christian debates in descriptions of God in regards to generation, will, activity, names, and powers. Irenaeus addresses the second-century question of non-contradiction as it relates to creation which was raised by Ptolemy, but he does not settle into the apophaticism that characterised his reader, Clement of Alexandria. His appropriation of divine simplicity primarily opposes a God who is seen as separated from the powers that caused creation, but it also retains distinction in the many scriptural names of God and in descriptions of activity through His powers.

A God who is *simplex* is therefore *non compositus.* Both of these terms preclude division, parts, or separate beings within God.[40] Language of unmixed unity is found in the writings of the apologist Athenagoras, who also opposes the concept of a creator apart from God, or of a God who is made up of various gods or parts, since God is without parts (οὐκ ἄρα συνεστὼς ἐκ μερῶν).[41] However, Irenaeus develops this "God without parts" language by including the term *simplex* and explaining both with language of "all" or "whole." Philosophers in the Platonic tradition also rejected the notion that the divine could be partial: in this line of thinking, wholeness and perfection are associated. Philosophers, however, were

demonstration at all, there is an absolute necessity that there be something that is self-evident, which is called primary and indemonstrable. Consequently, all demonstration is traced up to indemonstrable faith." αὐτίκα οἱ φιλόσοφοι ἀναποδείκτους ὁμολογοῦσι τὰς τῶν ὅλων ἀρχάς. ὥστ' εἴπερ ἐστὶν ἀπόδειξις, ἀνάγκη πᾶσα πρότερον εἶναί τι πιστὸν ἐξ ἑαυτοῦ, ὃ δὴ πρῶτον καὶ ἀναπόδεικτον λέγεται. ἐπὶ τὴν ἀναπόδεικτον ἄρα πίστιν ἡ πᾶσα ἀπόδειξις ἀνάγεται. English translation from ANF (12.494). Osborn suggests that *str.* 8 should be considered Clement's "logic notebook," where he blends Aristotle and Stoicism to present his philosophical optimism. Thus, while what is simple is, in some senses indemonstrable, nonetheless, logic should be used to find the meaning of scripture to receive knowledge of God. For further discussion on *str.* 8, see Eric Osborn, *Clement of Alexandria* (Cambridge: CUP, 2005), 206-07 and n. 15.

[40] The Greek parallel could perhaps be οὐ μέρος, ἀμερῶς, and/or οὐ σύνθετος. It must be noted that while the Latin only has *non compositus* a single time in Irenaeus's text (and only appears four times before the 6th century), *incompositus/a/um* (as ἀναρίθμητον in *haer.* 1.18.1; 4.4.2; and 5.7.1), appears in key places, as does a contrast between the God of Irenaeus and that of his opponents, the latter which are invariably described as *compositum* throughout Book 2 (*haer.* 2.2.4; 2.13.3; 2.17.7; 2.28.4-5).

[41] *leg.* 8.3 (SC 379.94).

also often careful not to identify God with wholeness, since that would limit God to one pole of a human dichotomy or limit him to a particular attribute (e.g. Plato, *Parmenides* 137c, 138a; Alcinous *Did.* 10.4).[42] This aligns with a form of apophaticism, like that of Clement of Alexandria, who appropriates this rejection of the category of "whole" in his description of simplicity, speaking of a God who is neither whole (ὅλον) nor with parts (μέρη), for if God is the Father of the "whole" or "entire" then he cannot be described by the quality "whole."[43] This move in Clement guarantees God's absolute distinction from creation.

Irenaeus has a similar concern to preserve God's control of and distinction from creation, and it is in that context that we should understand his claim that God is 'whole' mind and without parts. Indeed, in appropriating Xenophanes, where God is described as 'whole' or 'entire' in relation to several different categories, Irenaeus is following the logic of the Platonic tradition, in that divine 'wholeness' overflows rather than being a constraint. The claims about 'wholeness' should not be understood as a preference for one pole of a dichotomy over another. Rather, they set God beyond human categories while displaying absolute, and absolutely effective, powers. By describing God as "non-composite" or "without parts," Irenaeus rejects the possibility that contraries coexist in God (he explicitly rejects contrary powers in God in *haer.* 2.12; for discussion see section 2.2.1 below).

Jaap Mansfeld has traced this language of contraries in the philosophical tradition. Pythagorean dualism arranged a lists of contraries for God, in contrast to Xenophanes who described God as beyond these polar qualities, and most philosophers followed the

[42] Dillon argues that, for Plato and Middle Platonic thought, this contrast between God being neither "part" nor "whole" belongs in the context of three epithets (neither part-whole, same-different, motive-mobile), and they are seeking to show that God is beyond attributes. Dillon, *Alcinous: The Handbook of Platonism*, 108. In Plato's *Parmenides*, the simple God is not with parts (οὔτε μέρος) nor without parts (οὔτε ἀμεροῦς), and the *Didaskalos* states that "he is not a part (μέρος) of anything, nor is he in the position of being a whole (ὅλον) which has parts (μέρη)." See *Parm* 137c, 138a (LCL 167.236, 38); *Didask* 10.4 (Whittaker, 22-25). J. Whittaker, ed. *Alcinoos Enseignements des Doctrines de Platon* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1990). English translation from Dillon, *Alcinous: The Handbook of Platonism*, 18. See also G. R. Boys-Stones, *Platonist Philosophy: 80 BC to AD 250* (Cambridge: CUP, 2017), 6A, 169-71.

[43] *str*. 5.12.81 (GSC 2.380).

Pythagorean system until Eudorus of Alexandria, who once again described the One as beyond these contraries.[44] Irenaeus similarly rejects the language of contraries in the one God by adopting the Xenophanean language of "all" or "whole" (for further discussion on Irenaeus's usage of "all" language, see section 1.2 below). For Irenaeus, in whatever way one understandings God as "all" in relation to his powers, it cannot be as a composite unity.

The term *similimembrius*[45] is further explained with the following phrase, "and himself altogether similar and equal to himself."[46] The terminology conveys a sense that there is distinction in unity, which may seem in tension with describing God as *simplex* in the sense of a point rather than a net. However, it seems better to understand Irenaeus as standing within a philosophical tradition that denied that God is subject to external measurement of categories or comparison with the contraries found in creation.[47] As argued by Schoedel,

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[44] He points to the citation of Eudorus in Simplicius, *Phys.* 181. See Jaap Mansfeld, "Compatible Alternatives: Middle Platonist Theology and the Xenophanes Reception," in *Knowledge of God in the Graeco-Roman World*, ed. T. Baarda R. van den Broek, and J. Mansfeld (Leiden: Brill, 1988). Mansfeld argues that he was attempting to manoeuvre these pairs of opposites much like later Christians used the *viae netationies, analogiae,* and *eminentiae,* including Irenaeus. I am grateful to Pui Ip for bringing this chapter to my attention.

[45] The term *similimembrius* has caused some difficulty, as it does not exist elsewhere. Harvey concludes that Grabe's backtranslation of ὁμοιομερὴς is much more likely that Feuardent's ὁμοιόλωλος. As evidence, he references Aristotle's usage of ὁμοιομερὴς in *de Part. An.* and *de Caelo.*, and shows that the translator of Anaxagoras, Lucretius, could not translate ὁμοιομερὴς into a single Latin term. Harvey connects Irenaeus' usage of *similimembrius* in "He is a simple, uncompounded Being, *without diverse members"* with "ὁμοιοκωλος/ὁμοιομερης, a term coined by Anaxagoras to express the one Supreme Intellect, the only simple, unmixed substance. Another option is ὁμοιομελής, a Greek term not found apart from the fourth century writings of ps-Macarius. Rousseau notes the usage by Macarius, in his homilies, but in both cases (1 and 32), it is in reference to the soul (SC 293.241). Harvey also notes the similarity between Irenaeus and Cyril of Jerusalem in *cat.* 6.7, where he states, ὅμοιον ἀεὶ ἑαυτῷ ὄντα…· Οὐκ ἐν μέρει πλέον ἔχων, καὶ ἐν μέρει ἐλαττούμενος· ἀλλ' ἐν πᾶσιν ὅμοιος ὢν αὐτὸς ἑαυτῷ. See note 2 in Hv 2.15.3 (1.282). In the context of the of *cat.* 6.7, it seems undoubtable that Cyril is here citing Irenaeus. Rousseau notes that in *haer.* 2.17.2, where "simple" is used again to describe the generation of the creative powers, the translation for *dissimiles membris suis* is ἀναμοιομελεῖς. See Rousseau for discussion on Greek reconstruction. Connections to Plato's *Parm.* 137, Aristotle's *Met* 14.1, and the Middle Platonic *Didask.* 10.7 are, in my opinion, inconclusive. Harvey, *Santi Irenaei Episcopi Lugdunensis Libros Quinque Adversus Haereses*, 1:282 n. 2, 1:90-91 n. 2; Rousseau, SC 293, 241-42. Schoedel also points to *Orac Sib* 8.284-85 as a parallel in Schoedel, "Enclosing, Not Enclosed: The Early Doctrine of God," 78, n. 19. Regardless of the precise Greek term or its source, the theme of similarity remains central to Irenaeus's discussion of God's powers.

[46] *haer.* 2.13.3 (SC 294.114) *et simplex et non compositus et similimembrius et totus ipse sibimetipsi similis et aequalis est.*

[47] For an early and influential statement of this concern, see *Parm.* 140d (LCL 167.246). "The [One] will partake neither of one measure, nor of many, nor of few; nor will it partake at all of the same, nor will it ever, apparently, be equal to itself or to anything else; nor will it be greater or less than itself or another." Οὔτε ἄρα ἑνὸς μέτρου μετέχον οὔτε πολλῶν οὔτε ὀλίγων, οὔτε τὸ παράπαν τοῦ αὐτοῦ μετέχον, οὔτε ἑαυτῷ ποτε, ὡς ἔοικεν, ἔσται ἴσον οὔτε ἄλλῳ· οὔτε αὖ μεῖζον οὐδὲ ἔλαττον οὔτε ἑαυτοῦ οὔτε ἑτέρου. As noted above, the One transcended the categories of "part-whole," "same-different," and "motive-mobile" in Middle Platonism. Dillon, *Alcinous: The Handbook of Platonism*, 108.

Irenaeus is reflecting Eleatic theology, rather than Middle Platonism, in his usage of *totus ipse sibimet similis*, particularly Xenophanes and his student Parmenides, who described the One as similar to himself.[48] Yet this claim that God is similar to himself retains distinction in unity, as his ongoing use the terms *similis* and *aequalis* suggests (see *haer.* 1.1.1; 2.7.3; 2.13.8; 2.17.2; 2.25.3; 3.25.4; 4.11.2).[49] Whether Irenaeus describes God as "himself totally similar and equal to himself" or God's powers as existing similarly, language of similarity allows for distinction within a unified activity of God. For Irenaeus, God is simple and non-composite, but he also entirely is or has his powers, so while God cannot be understood by measurement or through contrary categories, humans can know certain things about God in terms of God himself because God is equal and similar to himself. God's revelation of himself is consistent with who God is, because God is simple.

1.2 *totus*

The final part of this definition describes God as all mind, spirit, understanding, thought, reason, hearing, sight, light, and source of all good (*sensus, spiritus, sensuabilitas, ennoia, ratio, auditus, oculus, lumen, fons omnium bonorum*), which is one of the most distinctive markers of this doctrine of simplicity in the rest of *Against Heresies*. Irenaeus first uses a similar string of terms in this manner in Book 1:

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[48] Schoedel, "Enclosing, Not Enclosed: The Early Doctrine of God," 79, n. 21. He cites a number of texts that describe God as "altogether like himself." For example, ps-Aristotle, *De Melisso* 1.974a 13 and 1.974a 15 describe the One as ἓν δὲ ὂν ὅμοιον εἶναι πάντη and ὅμοιον πάντη ἀκίνητον εἶναι τὸ ἕν (LCL 307.462), or ps-Aristotle, *De Xenophanes* 3.397a 38, ἕνα δ᾽ ὄντα ὅμοιον εἶναι πάντῃ (LCL 307.484), or Diogenes Laertius 9.24 who describes the One as ἓν ὅμοιον ἑαυτῷ (LCL 185.432). See W. S. Hett, ed. *Aristotle: Minor Works: On Colours. On Things Heard. Physiognomics. On Plants. On Marvellous Things Heard. Mechanical Problems. On Indivisible Lines. The Situations and Names of Winds. On Melissus, Xenophanes, Gorgias*, LCL 307 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1936); R. D. Hicks, ed. *Diogenes Laertius: Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, vol. 2, LCL 185 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1925).

[49] Bastit claims that *sibimetipsi similis et aequalis est* parallels the ἶσον ἀπάντῃ which Timon of Phlius attributed to Xenophanes, in which God was shown to be different from humans. See Agnès Bastit, "Simplicité de L'intellect et perception divine ches Pline L'ancien et Irénée de Lyon: aperçu de la réception D'une sentence de Xénophane à L'époque impériale," in *Divina Studia: Mélanges de religion et de philosophie anciennes offerts à François Guillaumont*, ed. Elisabeth Gavoille and Sophie Roesch (Bordeaux: Ausonius éditions, 2018), 146.

> [God] is all thought, all desire, all mind, all light, all sight, all hearing, [and] the entire source of all that is good.
>
> ὅλος ἔννοια ὢν, ὅλος θέλημα, ὅλος νοῦς, ὅλος φῶς, ὅλος ὀφθαλμὸς, ὅλος ἀκοὴ, ὅλος πηγὴ πάντων τῶν ἀγαθῶν.
>
> cum sit totus cogitatus et totus sensus et totus oculus et totus auditus et totus fons omnium bonorum.[50]

In *haer.* 2.13.3 he says that God is *totus sensus, spiritus, sensuabilitas, ennoia, ratio, auditus, oculus, lumen, fons omnium bonorum,* and in *haer.* 2.13.8 he says that God is *totus Nous* and *Logos.* In *haer.* 2.28.4-5 he will say that God is *totus mens, ratio, Spiritus operans, lux.* In *haer.* 4.11.2 he will say that God is *totus lumen, mens, substantia, fons omnium bonorum*. While this string is only explicitly linked to divine simplicity in *haer.* 2.13.3, the arguments elsewhere are consistent with and develop this definition of divine simplicity.

This citation is originally from a pre-Socratic source that argues against anthropomorphic deities, and it was developed in philosophical and Christian usage. Xenophanes (5th century BCE) states in *Frag.* 24 "[God] is all Seeing, all Thinking, and all Hearing" (οὖλος ὁρᾷ, οὖλος δὲ νοεῖ, οὖλος δέ τ'ἀκούει).[51] These verbs come from classical literature's description of deities: the first two verbs come from Homer and the third comes from Hesiod.[52] Christopher Stead has noted that Irenaeus adjusts the material, shifting verb to noun, and so he argues that there must have been some intermediate source.[53] However,

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[50] *haer.* 1.12.2 (SC 264.184). According to Rousseau, (SC 264.183) this line is also found in Epiphanius, *Pan. haer.* 33.2; cf. John of Cyprus X.9 and *Intro* p. 90. Also, in Irenaeus' text, this comes right after an allusion to Homer's *Iliad* (*haer.* 2.1-4), and according to Rousseau (SC 263.237-38), this section belongs (in disagreement to Harvey), for one cannot make sense of this section without the key terms from Xenophanes, and there are parallel passages in 2.12.2; 2.28.4; 4.11.2). Although Harvey makes a systematic substitution of the substantive auxiliary verbs, Rousseau does not doubt that Xenophanes is the source. Note the difference: οὖλος ὁρᾷ, οὖλος δὲ νοεῖ, οὖλος δέ τ'ἀκούει; Herman Diels, ed. *Xenophanes: Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker* (Berlin: Druckerei Hildebrand, 1952), 135. According to Rousseau he is "highlighting with much vigor the absolute simplicity of God." Rousseau, SC 263, 238.

[51] *Frag.* 24. Diels, *Xenophanes: Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, 135; J. H. Lesher, ed. *Xenophanes: Fragments* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), 31. The fragment is pulled from Sextus Empiricus, *Against the Professors,* 9.144.

[52] *Il.* II.3.276-277 and *Op.* 267. See Bastit, "Simplicité de l'intellect et perception divine ches Pline l'Ancien et Irénée de Lyon," 142.

[53] See Stead, *Divine Substance*, 189. *str.* 7.5.5; 7.37.6; *Trin.* 6. Schoedel suggests that in *Orac. Sib.* 8.282-85, this is applied to God as Creator, while *str.* 7.2, 5.5; *Eug.* 73.6-11; Hilary *Trin.* 2.6; *Tract. super psalm.* 118.19.8; 129.3; Ambrose *de fide* 1.16.106 include both this language and that of God as "containing, not

Irenaeus's argument parallels Xenophanes' larger theological effort in several ways, and his use the nominal form of this citation may have been part of a larger appropriation. Further, other theological fragments from Xenophanes parallel Irenaeus's definition of divine simplicity, particularly *fragment* 23, "One God, greatest among gods and men, not at all like mortals in body or thought" and *fragment* 25 "…but completely without toil he shakes/accomplishes all things by the thought of his mind."[54]

contained", Justin's *dial.* 127.2 and Theophilus's *Autol.* 2.3 simply states that God sees all and hears all. *Orph. hymn.* 64.8 can be paralleled with the Sibylline Oracles, while Pliny's *Nat. hist.* 2.5.14 uses the formula for pagan interests. Clement also cites Xenophanes *frag.* 23, 14, and 15 (see *str.* 5.109.1; 7.22.1), so it seems very likely that he had more of Xenophanes available. See Schoedel, "Enclosing, Not Enclosed: The Early Doctrine of God," 78, n. 19; Grant, "Early Christianity and Pre-Socratic Philosophy," 357-84; Stead, *Divine Substance*, 190, n. 72; R. M. Grant, *Gods and the One God: Christian Theology in the Graeco-Roman World* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1986), 77.

[54] J. E. Raven, G. S. Kirk, and M. Schofield, ed. *The Presocratic Philosophers: A Critical History with a Selection of Texts*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: CUP, 2007), 168-76. In his commentary on *Fragment* 24, Lesher suggests that to properly understand what Xenophanes means by "all sight, all thought, and all hearing," one needs to read this alongside the kind of thought described in *Fragment* 23, and the kind of thought in *Fragment* 25. Lesher, Xenophanes: Fragments, 102.

Text of Xenophanes		Parallel in Irenaeus	
Frag. 23	One God greatest among gods and men, not at all like mortals in body or thought εἷς θεὸς ἔν τε θεοῖσι καὶ ἀνθρώποισι μέγιστος, οὔ τι δέμας θνητοῖσιν ὁμοίιος οὐδὲ νόημα.	*non sic cogitationes eius quomodo cogitationes hominum*	2.13.3
Frag. 24	He is all sight, all thought, and all hearing… οὖλος ὁρᾶι, οὖλος δὲ νοεῖ, οὖλος δέ τ' ἀκούει.	ὅλος ἔννοια ὢν, ὅλος θέλημα, ὅλος νοῦς, ὅλος ὀφθαλμὸς, ὅλος ἀκοὴ *totus cogitatus et totus sensus et totus oculus et totus auditus*	1.12.2
		totus ipse sibimetipsi similis et aequalis est, totus cum sit sensus et totus spiritus et totus sensuabilitas et totus ennoia et totus ratio et totus auditus et totus oculus	2.13.3
		totus Nus et totus Logos… toto aequali et simili et uno perseuerante… totum uisionem et totum auditum …totum Sensum et totum Verbum	2.13.8
		totus Mens, totus Ratio et totus Spiritus operans et totus Lux et semper idem et similiter exsistens	2.28.4
		totus exsistens Mens et totus exsistens Logos	2.28.5
		ipse sibi aequalis et similis, totus lumen, mens, substantia, fons omnium bonorum	4.11.2
Frag. 25	…but completely without toil he accomplishes all things by the thought of his mind. ἀλλ' ἀπάνευθε πόνοιο νόου φρενὶ πάντα κραδαίνει.	ὃς ἅμα τῷ ἐννοηθῆναι καὶ ἐπιτετέλεκε τοῦθ' ὅπερ ἐνενοήθη *qui simul ut cogitauit perfecit id quod cogitauit,*	1.12.2
Frag 26	… always he abides in the same place, not moving at all, nor is it seemly for him to travel to different places at different times		

Irenaeus emulates much in Xenophanes. For example, like Xenophanes, Irenaeus argues against a comparison between God's Thought and human thought, and argues that God's Thought and activity are not separated. In his list, Irenaeus only adds references to God as all light, the source of all good, and spirit.[55] Furthermore, he echoes Xenophanes' reaction against Homeric and Hesiodic deities. Later in *haer.* 2.14, Irenaeus will specifically align the deity of his opponents with the deities from Homer, Hesiod, and Aristophanes.

In his use of Xenophanes, Irenaeus may have been part of a reception of Xenophanes that preferred the nominal usage of this citation. In her study of this particular citation, Agnès Bastit focuses on the usage in Irenaeus's *Against Heresies* and Pliny's *Natural History,* but she also references other authors (including Theophilus of Antioch and Clement of Alexandria's *str.* 7.2.5; 7.37).[56] Pliny is citing the doxographical references of Xenophanes in Aristotle and Theophrastus, and he too uses this citation with six nouns, in contrast to the verbal usage of Sextus Empiricus within a century (*Math.* 1.144), so Bastit argues that this citation circulated in both verbal and nominal forms: the verbal emphasising activity and the nominal emphasising substance.[57] She supports this by examples from doxographies like Diogenes Laertius, who accounts for the theology of Xenophanes in both the verbal and nominal form.[58] She shows that while the original verbal form was never forgotten (as seen in Pliny, Theophilus, and Clement), the nominal form took over because it was better suited to express the tension between multiplicity of divine activity while strongly affirming unity.[59]

	αἰεὶ δ' ἐν ταὐτῶι μίμνει κινεύμενος οὐδέν, οὐδὲ μετέρχεσθαί μιν ἐπιπρέπει ἄλλοτε ἄλλη.		

[55] Bastit, "Simplicité de l'intellect et perception divine ches Pline l'Ancien et Irénée de Lyon," 46.
[56] Ibid.
[57] As a further example of this, Bastit points to Seneca's *QNat.* 1.praef.13-14, where God is fist designated substantively as *mens,* and then nominally as *ratio,* and she labels this shift as a displacement of action.
[58] The three verbs are explained with three nouns, though the last one is actually an adjective. Diog. Laert. 9.2.19. Οὐσίαν θεοῦ σφαιροειδῆ, μηδὲν ὅμοιον ἔχουσαν ἀνθρώπῳ· ὅλον δὲ ὁρᾶν καὶ ὅλον ἀκούειν, μὴ μέντοι ἀναπνεῖν· σύμπαντά τε εἶναι νοῦν καὶ φρόνησιν καὶ ἀίδιον
[59] Bastit, "Simplicité de l'intellect et perception divine ches Pline l'Ancien et Irénée de Lyon," 50.

Irenaeus belongs with this latter set of texts, which sought to retain a tension between distinction and unity in divine activity. Stead argues that Irenaeus develops the language of Xenophanes so "God is wholly engaged in each of his operations; but he does not suggest that operations themselves are identical with each other, or with himself," but Irenaeus goes further, asserting that "the divine operations are identical with one another."[60] Furthermore, Irenaeus adds a Christian adaptation of God as all spirit, and he retains God as the entire source of all that is good, and the latter was a prominent Platonic and Middle Platonist descriptions.[61] I disagree with Stead's claim that Irenaeus viewed divine operations as "identical." Using the nominal form of this citation retains a sense of distinction between divine operations.[62] Though the language of a simple God was prevalent in Middle Platonism, Irenaeus reached back to pre-Socratic philosophy for his explanation of it.

His usage parallels other contemporary texts, such as *Eugnostos the Blessed* and Clement's *Stromata,* which suggests that this description of God was becoming part of a particularly Christian descriptions of God.[63] In its introduction, *Eugnostos* communicates a desire to provide an alternative cosmological view beyond the pre-Socratic, Platonic, or Stoic options that claim that "the universe governs itself… divine forethought has governed it, [or]

[60] Stead, *Divine Substance*, 188-89.
[61] For the former, see Bastit, and for the latter, see Grant. Bastit, "Simplicité de l'intellect et perception divine ches Pline l'Ancien et Irénée de Lyon," 146; R. M. Grant, *Jesus after the Gospels: The Christ of the Second Century* (London: SCM Press, 1990), 97.
[62] Stead's reading is followed by Briggman. See Stead, *Divine Substance*, 188-89; Briggman, *God and Christ in Irenaeus*, 96-97. For further discussion, see section 2.2.2 below.
[63] Bastit argues that this citation, as found in Irenaeus, continues much the same in the texts of Cyril of Jerusalem, Hilary of Poitiers, and Victor of Rouen. Bastit, "Simplicité de l'intellect et perception divine ches Pline l'Ancien et Irénée de Lyon," 51. Cyril of Jerusalem also retains Xenophanes's "sense organs" within their quotations. Lesher, Xenophanes: Fragments, 103 n. 1. Cyril of Jerusalem uses the same string of ὅλος ὢν ὀφθαλμὸς καὶ ὅλος ἀκοὴ καὶ ὅλος νοῦς. *catech.* 6.7. Grant also traces the usage of this text through the patristic age. He suggests that this passage depends on 1 Cor 12:17, 18-20, which contains ὀφθαλμός, and ἕν μέλος/πολλὰ μέλη. Furthermore, he points to Hippolytus of Rome's *Commentary on Daniel* 1:33 which has ὅλος ὀφθαλμός, and Pseudo-Macarius' *50 spiritual homilies* 1.2, which have ὅλη ὀφθαλμός, ὅλη φῶς, ὅλη πρόσωπον, ὅλη δόξα, ὅλη Πνεῦμα, and the *Apophtegmata Patrum, Bessarion* 11, which has ὅλος ὀφθαλμός. Grant, "Place de Basilide dans la théologie chrétienne ancienne," 201-06, 12-14. Based on a Greek backtranslation from the Armenian of the thought movements, Rousseau argues that Maximus the Confessor and John of Damascus, and their descriptions of simplicity, should be traced back to Irenaeus through this particular string of descriptors. Rousseau, SC 263, 366-70.

… that fate has been in charge."[64] First, the author introduces the One as immortal and without birth (because whoever is born will die, whoever has a beginning will end, and whoever has a name was fashioned by another), which also echoes the Eleatics' effort to oppose anthropomorphic deities. Then, the One is described as all Mind (*nous*), Thought (*ennoia*), Reflection (*enthymesis*), Consideration (*thronesis*), Reason (*logismos*), and Power (*dynamis*), which are, according to Meyer's translation, "the sources of all that is, and the entire generation from first to last."[65] For this thesis, the most relevant overlap between *Eugnostos the Blessed* and Irenaeus is in their pairing of God as "all" Mind, Thought, etc.[66] Parrot has argued that while *Eugnostos* is not a "Gnostic" text, it was used in the writing of the Gnostic text of *Sophia of Jesus Christ,* and in his presentation of the two side-by-side translations, the description of God as "all mind, thought" etc. appears in both texts.[67] While not arguing that Irenaeus read *Eugnostos* or *Sophia,* these Nag Hammadi texts provide evidence of a phrasing that remains part of this stream of "Gnostic" descriptions of God and in Irenaeus, though it was appropriated differently. In both *haer.* 2.13 and in *haer.* 2.28.4, he is careful to assert that this list does not entail a sequential production of separated or hierarchical Aeons. Irenaeus used the same term, but he explains his own use by differentiating it from a version that would suggest separation or parts in God.

Another parallel can be found in Clement's *Stromata* 5, in which he too describes divine simplicity (first introduced in *str.* 2.4.14) similarly, though in an apophatic system.

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[64] *Eugnostos the Blessed* is a "Gnostic" text dated to have circulated in Egypt and Syria by the third century. Madeleine Scopello, introduction to "*Eugnostos the Blessed*," in Marvin Meyer, ed. *The Nag Hammadi Scriptures* (San Francisco: HarperOne, 2010), 274-75. See also *Eug.* NHC III.73.3-14 (NHC 3.48-56).
[65] *Eug.* NHC III.73.3-14 (NHC 3.58); Meyer, 276-7.
[66] Two additional parallels are (1) in their references to a God that is unnameable and without a name (*Eug.* 71.3-73.3), which Irenaeus reveals as a position of his opponents (*haer.* 1.1.1; 1.11.3; 1.15.5), and (2) in their view of kingship, for while in *Eugnostos the Blessed* 75.15-23 the Pleroma is described as kingless (ἀβασίλευτος), Irenaeus repeatedly utilises metaphors of a king for God (*haer.* 1.8.1; 2.2.3; 4.17.6). For discussion on this latter parallel, see Panchaud, "The 'Kingless Generation,' and the Polemical Rewriting of certain Nag Hammadi Texts," 439-60.
[67] Douglas Parrot, "Introduction and Translation of Eugnostos the Blessed and the Sophia of Jesus Christ " in *The Nag Hammadi Library*, ed. J. A. Robinson (San Francisco, CA: HarperCollins, 1990), 221.For the parallel text, see *Soph.* III.96.

Clement starts his argument by challenging the view of the creator in the systems of Valentinus, Basilides, and Marcion (each of which figures prominently in Book 2 of *Against Heresies*).[68] Clement examines the insufficiency of language for a God who is beyond speech, conception, thought or writing of him (*str.* 5.10). When acknowledging the failures of language, Clement claims that God cannot be compared to creation because God is without participation, without birth, without need, without death, and without age, nor should one image that he has, "hands, and feet, and mouth, and eyes, and going in and coming out, and resentments and threats," but these Old Testament appellations (ὀνομάτων) should be understood allegorically, which again follows the Eleatic avoidance of an anthropological deity.[69] After claiming that God cannot be contained or circumscribed (as results from Basilides),[70] he again admits that it is impossible (ἀδύνατον) to speak about the Maker of the universe,[71] "Nor should one rightly call him All (ὅλον), for 'the All' is regarding magnitude and he is Father of All. Nor should it be spoken of him so that he has parts."[72] This follows the Middle Platonic rejection of "parts" and "whole" in a simple God, particularly as it relates to categories ("genus," "difference," "species," or "number" in *str.* 5.12.81). However, Clement is not rejecting positive statements about God entirely, for in the following paragraph he shows that even if one were to use terms like Good or Mind, or titles such as Father or Creator, these are not to be taken individually (ἕκαστον μηνυτικὸν), but collectively (ἅπαντα ἐνδεικτικὰ) as the power of God.[73] Thus, while he rejects the usage of ὅλος as a term for God, at least inasmuch as it could be taken to circumscribe God by a single category, Clement does use the collective meaning of these terms and titles to describe the power of the

[68] *str.* 5.1.
[69] *str.* 5.11.68.2-3 (SC 278.138). ἀμέτοχος… ἀγένητος… ἀνενδεὴς… ἀθάνατός… ἀγήρως … καὶ χεῖρας καὶ πόδας καὶ στόμα καὶ ὀφθαλμοὺς καὶ εἰσόδους καὶ ἐξόδους καὶ ὀργὰς καὶ ἀπειλὰς.
[70] See *haer.* 2.2 for parallel in Irenaeus.
[71] *str.* 5.12.78; 5.12.79.
[72] *str.* 5.12.81.5-6 (SC 278.158-60). οὐκ ἂν δὲ ὅλον εἴποι τις αὐτὸν ὀρθῶς· ἐπὶ μεγέθει γὰρ τάττεται τὸ ὅλον καὶ ἔστι τῶν ὅλων πατήρ. οὐδὲ μὴν μέρη τινὰ αὐτοῦ λεκτέον
[73] *str.* 5.12.82.1 (SC 278.160). ἓν ἢ τἀγαθὸν ἢ νοῦν ἢ αὐτὸ τὸ ὂν ἢ πατέρα ἢ θεὸν ἢ δημιουργὸν ἢ κύριον

Almighty in a way which is congruent with Irenaeus's argument. Thus, even with Radde-Gallwitz's view that Clement's version of divine simplicity results in radical apophaticism, or as Osborn describes it, the *via negativa,* it is precisely in his usage of ὅλος that Clement comes close to affirming something about God in a way similar to Irenaeus.[74]

In his definition of divine simplicity, Irenaeus claims that God is simple, non-composite, similar and equal to himself, and entirely being or having his names and powers. He uses this definition to specify that God is simple and non-composite, that human language and categories cannot capture the perfection of divinity so God is not subject to external measurement or definition but only comparable to God himself, and God's powers and activities cannot be separated. The prominence of this same terminology in other authors suggests that he was participating in a larger Christian debate that was exploring this philosophical language about God. Scripture required that Irenaeus use particular titles and terms to describe God, but the concept of divine simplicity allows him to specify what these titles and terms can mean, because the meaning of these words for humans cannot be univocally applied to God, since God is simple.

2. *haer*. 2.13.4b-10: Parameters for Language about God

In his discussion on divine simplicity, Irenaeus adheres to parameters for more appropriate ways to speak about God. In part, I am challenging the view, held by Widdicombe, that Irenaeus "does not discuss the question of whether and how language applies to God."[75] Irenaeus has a gradient scale of right and wrong ways to speak about God, and these parameters on language about God guide a more appropriate use of language.[76]

[74] Osborn, *Clement of Alexandria*, 111-31; Radde-Gallwitz, *Transformation of Divine Simplicity*, 38-59. See also the brief discussion in Osborn, *The Beginning of Christian Philosophy*, 49.
[75] Peter Widdicombe, "Irenaeus and the Knowledge of God as Father," in *Irenaeus: Life, Scripture, and Legacy*, ed. Sara Parvis and Paul Foster (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012), 142.
[76] Throughout *haer*. 2.13, Irenaeus describes a gradient scale of language about God. He says that his opponents have sinned (*peccauerunt*) in what they are saying about God's Wisdom, that they have lied (*mentiti sunt*)

Because God is simple, language about God must be used in a particular way and have a particular meaning. I have noted two parameters. First, discourse about God cannot apply human process, affection or division to God. Second, in discourse about God, God's titles and powers should be mutually entailing, so God's names and powers imply one another without them being identical, since they are distinct in unity. These parameters specify what terminology about God can mean by restricting how it can be used, given that God is simple and without separation or parts. In my reading, the Rule of Truth and the Scriptures provide the terminology for speaking of God (creator, containing but not contained, One, Word, Light), and the notion of divine simplicity further clarifies how the scriptural language can be used and what it can mean.[77] After all, Irenaeus and his opponents shared much of the same vocabulary. Irenaeus's concept of divine simplicity depends on scripture and then generates parameters that guide what can be said in its interpretation.

against God, and their discourse only sounds appropriate (*apta*) to those who are ignorant of God. *haer.* 2.13.9 (SC 294.124-28). However, this section is not purely negative polemic. Irenaeus also affirms the way "the religious and pious (*religiosis ac piis*) speak about God." *haer.* 2.13.3 (SC 294.114). He admits that God is indescribable (*inenarrabilis*), but affirms that He is "appropriately and rightly (*bene ac recte*) called Mind," though not similar to human thinking, and "most appropriately (*rectissime*) called Light," though not at all similar to our light. *haer.* 2.13.4 (294.116). He claims that someone with his view does not sin (*non peccat*), and while this person still perceiving God insufficiently (*minus*), her view is more appropriate (*decentiora… magis*) than that of his opponents. *haer.* 2.13.8 (SC 294.122-24). He concludes his discussion on the relationship between God's powers and titles with, "in whatever way it is possible and right (*possibile et dignum*) for humans to hear and speak about God." *haer.* 2.13.9 (SC 294.126). In *haer.* 2.13, Irenaeus provides a gradient scale that points to principles for more appropriate ways to speak about God.

[77] Cf. Behr, "Synchronic and Diachronic Harmony: St. Irenaeus on Divine Simplicity," 2. Behr provides three possible reasons for Irenaeus's divine simplicity, and he rejects two of them. He rejects that "the doctrine of divine simplicity functions as a kind of grammar, to make sure that when we speak of the revealed God, we do so coherently" and opts that instead, "the doctrine of divine simplicity is bound up with the way in which that revelation is made, forcing us to reconsider both the nature of revelation and what the teaching about divine simplicity is in fact about." While I agree that Irenaeus did not promote a metaphysical system that was logically prior to God's revelation of himself, if grammar is a set of rules governing the relationship between words, sometimes intrinsic and other times explicit, which allow vocabulary to be meaningfully deployed, then this relationship does not require a logical priority. Grammar does not exist logically prior to vocabulary, but instead, they have a dynamic relationship. These parameters exist intrinsically in the vocabulary of scripture and the rule. Divine simplicity functions as an operational doctrine that prohibits certain uses of vocabulary about God.

2.1 Parameter 1: The Creator/Creature Differentiation

In this first parameter, discourse about God cannot attribute human process, affection, and division to God. The creator/creature differentiation, as a general category, is not new to the study of Irenaeus,[78] but I would like to suggest that key components of this differentiation depend on the concept of divine simplicity. In the text around the definition of divine simplicity, Irenaeus regularly claims that language about humans should be used differently when describing God. Irenaeus's adherence to a strong differentiation between creator and creator further echoes his larger dependence on the pre-Socratic philosopher Xenophanes, who was also famous for his anti-anthropomorphic descriptions of the gods (*haer.* 2.13.3b).[79] Irenaeus outlines reasons and ways language about composite humans can still carry meaning, but language about God must carry a different meaning because God is simple.

2.1.1 *haer.* 2.12.1: "To Reckon" (*numerare*) God

In *haer.* 2.12, prior to introducing divine simplicity, Irenaeus begins to outline this creator/creature differentiation. Scholars have noted that the concept of excess and defect provides the bookends for Irenaeus's argument in *haer.* 2.12, where he argues that his opponents' system could be viewed as having more or less than thirty emissions.[80] However, the verb *numerare* guides this entire discussion, used to argue that the Father should not be

[78] This is a common trope in studies of Irenaeus. For example, his *creatio ex nihilo* depends on the creator/creature differentiation, since God has no beginning while matter must have one. Similarly, the creator/creature differentiation is the reason his view of deification is so striking. For respective discussions, see Gerhard May, *Creatio Ex Nihilo: The Doctrine of 'Creation out of Nothing' in Early Christian Thought*, trans. A. S. Worrall (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 164-78; Ysabel de Andia, *Homo Vivens: Incorruptibilité et Divinisation de l'homme selon Irénée de Lyon* (Paris: Etudes Augustiniennes, 1986), 53-90.

[79] Lesher, Xenophanes: Fragments, 102. In *Fragment* 23, Xenophanes states, "One God greatest among gods and men, not at all like mortals in body or thought." εἷς θεὸς ἔν τε θεοῖσι καὶ ἀνθρώποισι μέγιστος, οὔ τι δέμας θνητοῖσιν ὁμοίιος οὐδὲ νόημα. For Xenophanes's opposition to anthropomorphic deities, see James Warren, *Presocratics* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 42-50.

[80] Rousseau, SC 293, 139-40; Unger, ACW 65, 128, n. 3. For defect, Irenaeus counts through their emissions to show that they have only provided twenty-nine emissions because many of these powers (like Mind and Truth) cannot be understood separately (*haer.* 2.12.1-2). For excess, he points to the final emission, which resulted in Only-begotten, Christ, Holy Spirit, and Savior (each of which are individual Aeons), and argues that this demonstrates thirty-four emissions.

counted or reckoned (*enumerari, adnumerari*) with the same language that describes the emissions, begetting, and passions of created things, nor can God's powers be numbered or reckoned as separated from one another or from the Father. He argues that the Father should not be counted/reckoned (*enumerari non debet; non debet cum eis adnumerari*) with other emissions, nor he who was not emitted with what was emitted, nor the unbegotten with what was begotten, nor the incomprehensible with what is comprehended, nor what is unformed with the formed.[81] Prior to the claim about the simple God, Irenaeus differentiates between language about the Father, and language about creatures.

2.1.2 *haer.* 2.13.1-3a: Stoic Psychology and Divine Intellect

Immediately prior to the definition of divine simplicity, Irenaeus opposes attributing human mental motions to God because this process results in ascribing affect and passion to God. Some language is necessarily anthropomorphic and anthropopathic, but challenges the way his opponents have ascribed human processes of thought and speech to God, and as a result have ascribed human affect and passion to God in their effort to try to separate God from the divine powers that experienced passion. Irenaeus adheres to his differentiation between creator and creature, depending on the philosophical concept of divine simplicity rather than Stoic psychology to understand scriptural language about God's powers and God's activity.

Irenaeus opposes the way his opponents have attributed the human processes of thought and speech to God by referring to Stoic language in three ways.[82] As is often the

[81] *haer.* 2.12.1 (SC 294.96). Pater enim omnium enumerari non debet cum reliqua emissione, qui non est emissus cum ea quae emissa est, et innatus cum ea quae nata est, et quem nemo capit cum ea quae ab eo capitur, et propter hoc incapabilis, qui infiguratus est cum ea quae figurata est. Secundum enim id quod melior quam reliqui, non debet cum eis adnumerari, et hoc cum Aeone passibili et in errore constituto, qui est impassibilis et non errans.

[82] Many authors have noted Irenaeus's debts to Stoicism in other discussions. For example, Fantino notes that Irenaeus's idea of *oikonomia* and interpretation of Eph 4:6 has Stoic roots. Fantino, *La théologie d'Irénée*, 106-26; 295-99. Houssiau and Ochogavía have noted how Irenaeus's concept of the *Logos* is indebted to Stoicism, as

case, Irenaeus does not use these concepts of mental motion in exactly the same way as they appear in Stoic debates about emotions, and because these sections of Irenaeus do not exist in Greek (only in Latin and some Armenian), my argument is primarily based on conceptual similarity rather than terminological identity. First, and without explanation, Irenaeus notes that his opponents refer to their Ogdoad as the *principale et summum* and *principalem et primum*, which is a double translation for τὸ ἡγεμονικόν (*haer.* 2.13.1).[83] However, without referencing this technical term, he also notes that in their order of emissions, his opponents have placed Thought before Mind. He argues that Mind, as the source of mental motions, must come first, so presumably, the ἡγεμονικόν, as the ruling faculty, is also the accountable for any resulting thought, word or passion in a person. If Stoic psychology is used to understand as the source of all, God cannot be separated from the result. However, Irenaeus opposes deploying such Stoic psychology to explain the divine Mind because, as he sees it, this would result in impious claims about God.[84]

noted by Briggman. Albert Houssiau, "L'Exégèse de Matthieu XI, 27b selon Saint Irénée," *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* 29 (1953): 335-37; Juan Ochogavía, *Visibile Patris Filius: A Study of Irenaeus's Teaching on Revelation and Tradition* (Rome: Pontificium Institutum Oriengalium Sudiorum, 1964), 77-79; Briggman, *God and Christ in Irenaeus*, 66-67. Only Eric Osborn mentions the Stoic influence in *haer.* 2.12, but he does not examine its implications. He has shown the ways in which the Stoic conception of a cosmic Mind, which pervades creation but precludes evil, is paralleled in the Irenaean text. See Osborn, *Irenaeus of Lyons*, 35-6. Osborn cites Diogenes Laertius and his description of how God's powers and creation give rise to the many names of God (Diogenes Laertius 7.147; LS, 54A) and he cites Cleanthes and his description of how God turns chaos into order by bringing together "all things, good and bad" (Cleanthes, *Hymn to Zeus*; LS, 541), along with citations from Cicero's *De Natura Deorum*, Plutarch's *De communibus notitiis* and *De Stoicorum repugnantiis*, and Sextus Empiricus' *adversus matematicos.* There is a parallel discussion in Orbe, when considers the Stoic influence on Basil when considering God's Thought from Seneca, *ep.* 65.7. See Antonio Orbe, *En los Albores de la Exegesis Johannea* (Rome: Universitas Gregoriana, 1955), 190, n. 94.

[83] (SC 293.234-35). In this section, Rousseau also shows that this adjective appears in Ps 49 [50]:14, a note which is followed in Unger's translation (ACW 65.130) n. 4. A similar pairing, *primam et pricipalem Ogdoadam* appears in *haer.* 2.12.6 (SC 294.104), alongside a discussion on the eminent/interior Word. In *haer.* 2.12, Irenaeus introduced the interior Word, which suggests that the philosophical concept of mental motions in the context of interior and exterior Word is also being considered here. For a similar pairing of the motions of the *hegemonikon* followed by a distinction between immanent and expressed reason, see Nemesius, *nat. hom.* 12 and 14, where both discussions refer to the Stoicism of Sextus Empiricus.

[84] Both the Stoics and their readers regularly linked the *hegemonikon* to the cosmos. See Rist, *Stoic Philosophy*, 259, where he shows that the ἡγεμονικόν was usually identified with heaven itself, but Cleanthes preferred the image of the sun (SVF I 499, II 644), which has an immediate parallel here. In Galen's exploration of the source of thought and discourse, the brain and its reason are compared to heaven and the gods. The brain is the ruling part of the soul (ἐξ ἀνάγκης ἡ τῆς ψυχῆς ἀρχὴ) just as the gods in heaven rule the whole universe. Similarly, the brain is home to the rational faculty (λογισμοῦ) just as heaven is the home to the gods. Galen, *De plac. Hipp. et Plat.* 2.4.17-18 (De Lacy, 120-121). Phillip de Lacy, ed. *Galen: On the Doctrines of Hippocrates and Plato* (Berlin Akademie-Verlag, 1981).

Second, Irenaeus describes the five motions of the mind that lead to speech in a way that closely resembles Stoic descriptions of thought and speech—his rejection of Stoic psychology is not a wholesale rejection of philosophical argument. Irenaeus notes that in the human process of thought, using terms like *Ennoia* (knowledge), *Nous* (mind), or *Sensus* (logic), thought starts with the mind and remains within (*manente intus*), and these mental motions are only given different names (*uocabula*) because of continuance and development (*perseuerationem et augmentum*), not because of physical change in a person (*immutationem*).[85] In other words, thinking does not create living beings:

> By way of explanation, the first motion of the mind on some object is called thought. But when it continues and develops and takes possession of the soul, it is styled intention. This intention, when it dwells on the same object for a long time and is, as it were approved, is called understanding. This understanding, when it has been continued for a long time, becomes counsel. When the development and activity of counsel have been very extensive, it becomes thought. This, even while remaining in the mind, is rightly called word, from which the uttered word is emitted. Now all these activities mentioned are one and the same thing: they have their origin in the mind and get their names because of development, but not because of a change in substance or because of the loss of the body.[86]

> Prima enim motio eius de aliquo ennoia appellatur; perseuerans autem et aucta et uniuersam apprehendens animam, enthymesis uocatur; haec autem enthymesis, multum temporis faciens in eodem et uelut probata, sensatio nominatur; haec autem sensatio, in multum dilatata, consilium facta est; augmentum autem et motus in multum dilatatus consilii, cogitatio nominatur, quae etiam in mente perseuerans uerbum rectissime appellabitur, ex quo emissibilis emittitur uerbum. Vnum autem et idem est omnia quae praedicta sunt, a no initium accipientia et secundum augmentum adsumentia appellationes. Quemadmodum et corpus hominis aliquando quidem nouellum, aliquando quidem uirile, aliquando autem senile, secundum augmentum et perseuerantiam accepit appellationes, sed non secundum substantiae demutationem neque secundum corporis amissionem[87]

In the next section Irenaeus gives a different list of five mental motions:

> The person who is actually contemplating X, thinks about it;

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[85] *haer.* 2.13.1 (SC 294.110). Qui principalem et primum eius quae est intus absconditae et inuisibilis adfectionis locum continet, a qua sensus generatur et ennoia et enthymesis et talia quae non alia sunt praeter nun, sed illius ipsius, quemadmodum praediximus, de aliquo in cogitatu dispositae qualeslibet motiones, secundum perseuerationem et augmentum, non secundum immutationem, uocabula accipientes, et in cogitationem conterminatae, et in uerbum coemissae, sensu manente intus et condente et administrante et gubernante libere et ex sua potestate, quemadmodum et uult, quae praedicta sunt.

[86] Translation adapted from Unger, ACW 65, 42-3.

[87] *haer.* 2.13.2 (SC 294.110-112).

and he who is thinking, knows X;
Indeed, he who actually knows X, considers X;
and because he is considering, he is drawing X to his soul;
and because he is drawing X to his soul, he says X.[88]

de quo enim quis contemplatur, de eo et cogitat;et de quo cogitat, de hoc et sapit; de quo autem et sapit, de hoc et consiliatur;et quod consiliatur, hoc et animo tractat; et quod animo tractat, hoc et loquitur.[89]

In these two sections, the five mental movements (*ennoia, enthymesis, sensus, consilium, cogitatio* in the first and *contemplo, cogito, sapio, consililior, tracto* in the second) that lead to speech (*uerbum* in the first, and *loquor* in the second) display a human process, but they do not lead to separated beings.

Though scholars disagree on the source of this list, I argue that it is being drawn from Stoicism in order to argue that this kind of language ascribes affect and passion to God. The extant transliterated Greek (*ennoia, enthymesis, sensus*) provide a good idea of words Irenaeus or his opponents may have used, but there is no definitive source for this list.[90] Some have suggested possible parallels with Qumran texts, Hermetic texts, and later Manichean writings, but these are inconclusive.[91] Irenaeus could be drawing from the creative activity of

[88] The lines are not divided in this way in either the manuscript or the critical edition, but I have divided the propositions by line in order to facilitate comprehension of Irenaeus's logical progression.
[89] *haer.* 2.13.3 (SC 294.112). In the notes on the text, Rosseau dedicates the entirety of Appendix 2 to the question of these five movements of the soul, speculating on whether they are quoted by Maximus the Confessor and John of Damascus. See Rousseau, SC 293, 236-40, 366-70.
[90] Rousseau examines the 5 movements as nouns and then verbs in Latin, Armenian, and Greek. This back-translation shows that in Greek, the noun and verb through this passage were linked in the five movements, as mostly occurs in the Armenian (the exception, it seems occurs with ἔννοια/ἐννοέομαι, as the Armenian noun/verb are not the same). (SC 293.237-38)

Latin	**Armenian**	**Greek**
ennoia	մտածոթիւն	ἔννοια
enthymesis	խոհեյութիւն	ἐνθύμησις
sensatio	խոհականութիւն	φρόνησις
consilium	խորհուրդ	βουλή
cogitatio	խոհաբանութիւն	διαλογισμός
contemplor	ընդ միտ ածեմ	ἐννοέομαι
cogito	խոհեյութիւն առնեմ	ἐνθυμέομαι
sapio	խոհական լինիմ	φρονέω
consilior	խորհիմ	βουλεὐομαι
animo tracto	խոհաբանեմ	διαλογίζομαι

[91] Orbe opens his examination of this passage with these three possibilities. See Orbe, *Hacia la Primera Teologia de la Procesion del Verbo*, 365, n. 13. For Qumran texts, he suggests Qumran 1 QH 11,28. At the end

Wisdom in Proverbs 3 and 8, but again, there are missing terms (ἐνθύμησις) and there is no clear progression of mental motion.[92] *Apocryphon of John* has five of these mental powers as Aeons, but they are in a larger list of twelve.[93] The evidence is not conclusive.

If this list, and its variety, is examined through the lens of Stoic language of mental motions leading to speech, then Irenaeus and his opponents could be part of an ongoing philosophical debate in a Christian setting that explored the place of psychology in metaphysics.[94] In Diogenes Laertius, the human motion of the mind is a process that is entirely prior and without speech, from presentation (φαντασία), to a thought which is capable of expressing itself, to a proposition of what the person received (as a seal stamps an image), which is then issued from the mind through speech as *pneuma* under tension.[95] In his summary of Stoic moral psychology, Brenan argues that normally, "this logos is a persistent state of the soul, persisting as long as the impression does,"[96] however he admits that, though rare, in

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of *Asclepius* 41, there is a prayer that thanks God for these (*sensu, ratione, intellegentia… cognitione*), which is a close parallel. In *Asclepius* 11 there is also a list of the four faculties of thought (*animi, sensus, memoriae, providentiae*), but this list of human faculties could just as easily have come from philosophical discourse. Orbe does not specify which Manichean text he is referring to, but the list of these five appear in the names of the soul in the Manichean description of reincarnation. See Epiphanius, *Pan.* 66.28.1 (3.2).

[92] Gregory of Nyssa uses ἔννοια, φρόνησις and βουλή in the context of mental motions, based on Proverbs 3 and 8 in *Against Eunomius* 3.1-2.

[93] See *Apocryphon of John* 8.1-25. One could add the *Acts of Thomas*, 27, though the terms appear in the context of several other incantations being evoked, and not mental motions.

[94] Studies on Valentinianism have argued that there were various strains of Valentinianism, one which viewed the generated Aeons as individuals and another which viewed the generated Aeons as somehow expressing a kind of unity. For a distinction between these two types of Valentinians, including their different views of generation and the individuality of Aeons, see chapter 20 of Thomassen, *The Spiritual Seed*, 193-247. For a discussion on whether they should be characterized as "Eastern" and "Western," see Joel Kalvesmaki, "Italian Versus Eastern Valentinianism?," *VC* 62, no. 1 (2008). Within the discussion for divine simplicity, both in *haer.* 2.13.5-6 and later in the "generation" section of *haer.* 2.17.4-5, he argues primarily against those who divide the Aeons but he also argues against those opponents who describe the generation in their cosmology as similar to the generation of light, which is simple. He states that "even if" the generation of the Aeons is like light, the problem with their view is in the difference between the Aeon and its generator: (1) they are not united, (2) they are not contemporaneous, and (3) they are of a different substance. For discussion, see Chapter 4. While some parts of Irenaeus's criticisms apply to opponents who hold to a view of separated Aeons, he also addresses criticisms toward those who prefer the metaphor of light generation.

[95] Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 7.49-50, 54-55 (LCL 185.158-59, 164). Translation from Hicks, LCL 185. προηγεῖται γὰρ ἡ φαντασία, εἶθ᾽ ἡ διάνοια ἐκλαλητικὴ ὑπάρχουσα, ὃ πάσχει ὑπὸ τῆς φαντασίας, τοῦτο ἐκφέρει λόγῳ and λόγος δέ ἐστι φωνὴ σημαντικὴ ἀπὸ διανοίας ἐκπεμπομένη. This same progression of impression to spoken word illustrated with the seal on a coin can be found in Epictetus, *Discourses* 1.20.

[96] Tad Brennan, "Stoic Moral Psychology," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Stoics*, ed. Brad Inwood (Cambridge: CUP, 2003), 261-62, n. 8. This footnote provides a succinct and clear summary of the Stoic doctrine on the expression of a proposition.

some Stoic texts this process sounds like a quasi-deliberative or discursive process, particularly in Epictetus.[97]

This description of a process continues in later philosophical writings.[98] Aetius claims that the *hegemonikon* produces impressions, assents, perceptions, and impulses (φαντασίας, συγκαταθέσις, αἰσθήσεις, ὀρμάς), finalizing in an utterance (λογισμὸν).[99] Nemesius describes movement toward avoidance or assent (ἀποφυγή and συγκατάθεσις), and this thought and judgement (διανοητικός and κρίσις) includes impulse, conception, deliberation, and choice (ὁρμή, νοέω, βουλευτικόν, and προαιρετικός).[100] In general, Irenaeus reflects these philosophical readers of Stoic texts who did not follow a set language for describing the mind's process of thought toward developed expression. Furthermore, the Latin of Irenaeus's translator echoes Latin writers who explored the Stoic descriptions of the process of thought that led to human emotion. In Irenaeus, the *animo tractat* before the word is spoken (*haer.* 2.13.1) has a parallel with Cicero and Seneca, who describe the soul as carried away (*efferri* and its past participle *elatum*) toward one of the two Stoic reactions (assent or avoidance).[101] In describing the human process of thought, Irenaeus includes the object or impression which the thought-speech process comes to express twice (first with *ab hoc* in *haer.* 2.13.1 and then with *de aliquo… in eodem* in *haer.* 2.13.2),[102] which, in Stoic thought, distinguished

[97] Ibid., 262. He points to *Ench.* 1 and *Diss.* 3.12.15.
[98] For Philo a living animal has both imagination and appetite, and he describes the mind's interaction as stretching the perception, touching it through sensation, reaching it, and comprehending it. ἡ δὲ ὁρμή, τὸ ἀδελφὸν τῆς φαντασίας, κατὰ τὴν τοῦ νοῦ τονικὴν δύναμιν, ἣν τείνας δι᾽ αἰσθήσεως ἅπτεται τοῦ ὑποκειμένου καὶ πρὸς αὐτὸ χωρεῖ γλιχόμενος ἐφικέσθαι καὶ συλλαβεῖν αὐτό. Philo, *Leg.* 1.30 (LCL 226.166). Elsewhere, Philo lists the seven portions of the soul, which include the five senses, the organ of speech, and the power of generation (*Leg.* 1.11), he describes the activities of the mind alongside the sleep and dreams (*Leg.* 2.31), and he describes the vision of the soul in terms of counsel, understanding, reason, and opinion. These are all elements present in Stoic descriptions of the movements of the mind and later summaries of their positions.
[99] Aetius, 4.21.1-5. A. A. and D. N. Sedley Long, ed. *The Hellenistic Philosophers*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: CUP, 1987), 2.314-15.
[100] Nemesius, *Nat.* 12.5-10. M. Morani, ed. *Nemesii Emeseni de Natura Hominis* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1987), 68. For discussion on the immanent reason and expressed reason in relation to the *hegemonikon*, see *Nat.* 14.
[101] See Sorabji's discussion in Richard Sorabji, *Emotion and the Peace of Mind: From Stoic Agitation to Christian Temptation* (Oxford: OUP, 2000), 36-37. This concept can be seen in Plato, who describes the drawing of the soul in *Rep.* IV, 437b-c.
[102] This is argued by Rousseau (SC 293.234) n. 1, section 3. Thus, in *haer.* 2.13.1, *quae ab hoc est* goes with *motio*, and not with *ennoia*: Nus enim est ipsum quod est principale et summum et uelut principium et fons

cognitive adults from a child or animal.[103] A child or animal simply reacts to the impression (e.g. fleeing from danger), but adult cognition has a process that leads to assent or avoidance. This entire discussion starts from an external impression, which leads to the mental process, and results in speech or emotion, however the language of an impression is problematic when applied to God. Irenaeus has already argued that nothing outside God caused creation, including fate (*haer.* 2.5.4). This parallels Cicero's argument, that every thought, utterance, and action begins and ends with the same person, stemming from their will and judgment (*voluntas atque iudicium*), and cannot be blamed on something outside the person, not even fate.[104] Based on Irenaeus's text, both he and his opponents deny that God can be acted upon, so he does not challenge the idea of an external impression. Instead, Irenaeus uses these two lengthy Stoic descriptions, in part to show that mental processes cannot be separated from a human thinker (and therefore, cannot imply separation in God), and also to oppose the application of affection and passion to God.

This is the third way this argument uses Stoic language: to oppose ascribing emotions, specifically *adfectiones* and *passiones,* that are logically entailed by mental motions, to God.[105] Early Stoics agreed that emotion is cognition, and because mental motions result in

uniuersi sensus, ennoia autem, quae ab hoc est qualislibet et de quolibet facta motio (SC 294.110). Rousseau also argues that this would follow a standard philosophical definition of βούλησις. This interpretive move is followed in Unger, ACW 65, 42, 103 n. 2.

[103] See discussion in Sorabji, *Emotion and the Peace of Mind: From Stoic Agitation to Christian Temptation*, 125-29.

[104] Cicero, *Parad.* 5.34 (LCL 349.284-87). For a further discussion on the Stoic language of fate and the Middle Platonic development of Providence, see Chapter 3, section 4.2. This debate between Irenaeus and his opponents also parallels the debate between Aristo and Zeno, the former arguing for the absolute unity in the virtues, and the latter allowing plurality, just as Irenaeus argues for unity of God while his opponents argue for a multiplicity of Aeons. Malcom Schoffield, "Stoic Ethics," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Stoics*, ed. Brad Inwood (Cambridge: CUP, 2003), esp. 247-53. For a parallel between discussions of virtue ethics and divine simplicity, see Andrew Radde-Gallwitz, "Gregory of Nyssa on the Reciprocity of the Virtues," *JTS* 58, no. 2 (2007).

[105] For a summary of the terms *affectio* and *passio* in ancient discussions on emotion, particularly Cicero, see Michael W. Champion, Raphële Garrod, Yasmin Haskell, and Juanita Feros Ruys, "But Were They Talking About Emotions? *Affectus, Affectio* and the History of Emotions," *Revista storica italiana* 128 (2016); Rita Copeland, "*Affectio-Affectus* in Latin Rhetoric up to c. 1200," in *Before Emotion : The Language of Feeling, 400-1800*, ed. Juanita Feros Ruys, Michael W. Champion, and Kirk Essary (New York: Routledge, 2019).

passion, this passion could not be separated from the original mind.[106] For Chrysippus, all emotion was mistaken judgement, but later readers of Stoicism, like Seneca, argued that emotion is mistaken judgment that still seeks reason.[107] In this later philosophical development, mental movements were distinguished into three movements, and while the first two movements are involuntary reactions, including pre-emotions (προπάθειαι), the third movement is the will's decision to abandon reason in favour of a mistaken judgment and passion.[108] In theory, this would separate the Mind and certain mental movements from passion. In his system, neither pre-emotions (1st movements)[109] nor movements that are born or eradicated by deliberation (*judicium*: 2nd movements) should be labelled as *adfectus*, but movements that arise out of the will and ignored reason (3rd movements) should be.[110] As Seneca argues: "[first movements] are not passion but the first preludes to passion…. The term 'passion' should be applied to none of these responses that merely chance to move the mind: the mind doesn't so much cause them as suffer them…"[111] The second movement,

[106] According to Richard Sorabji, in antiquity as a whole, emotion was cognition, so this Stoic terminology became the foundation of ensuing doxographical summaries and medical and philosophical debates, often linking thought with affect. Sorabji, *Emotion and the Peace of Mind: From Stoic Agitation to Christian Temptation*, 17-28. For a study that starts from the mind, rather than emotion, see Christopher Shields, "Theories of Mind in the Hellenistic Period," in *A History of the Mind and Body in Late Antiquity*, ed. Anna Marmodoro and Sophie Cartwright (Cambridge: CUP, 2018).

[107] Richard Sorabji, "What Is New on Emotion in Stoicism after 100 BC?," in *Greek and Roman Phiosophy 100 BC-200 AD*, ed. Richard Sorabji and Robert Sharples (Institute of Classical Studies: University of London, 2007), 168-69.

[108] See Rist, *Stoic Philosophy*, 33-36 for a discussion on the relationship between thought and speech, particularly in Chrysippus and Zeno, who argue that one cannot have activity without πάθη. For distinguishing movements, see *Emotion and the Peace of Mind: From Stoic Agitation to Christian Temptation*, 55-75.

[109] These first movements were called a first shock (*ictus*), a first agitation (*agitatio*), and a first movement (*primus motus*). See Seneca, *On Anger*, 2.2.2; 2.2.4; 2.3.1; 2.3.4; 2.3.5; 2.4.1; 2.4.2. For these references, and a helpful discussion, see ibid., 66-75. The "first-movements" of the soul may have first been referenced by Cicero. See Cicero, *Tusc.* 3.82-83. See "What Is New on Emotion in Stoicism after 100 BC?," 1:168.

[110] For a description of Seneca's third movements, see *Emotion and the Peace of Mind: From Stoic Agitation to Christian Temptation*, 61-3. On the other hand, characters like Galen or Aristotle would point to psychological examples where first movement sometimes occur involuntarily and without the intellect (*Nous*). See Aristotle, *On the Movements of Animals*, 11.703b; ibid., 71-2.

[111] Seneca, *De Ira* 2.2.5, 2.3.1 (LCL 214.170). John W. Basore, ed. *Seneca: De Providentia. De Constantia. De Ira. De Clementia*, 3 vols., LCL 214 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1928). Translation from Robert A. Kaster and Martha Craven Nussbaum, ed. *Seneca: Anger, Mercy, Revenge* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 35. sed omnia ista motus sunt animorum moveri nolentium nec adfectus sed principia proludentia adfectibus….Nihil ex his, quae animum fortuito impellunt, adfectus vocari debet; ista, ut ita dicam, patitur magis animus quam facit…

judicium, is the movement immediately prior to passion, and it parallels Irenaeus's *consilium*.[112] These two movements would characterise the Stoic Sage who had achieved *eupatheia* or *apatheia*, and would differentiate them from a person with mental motions that reponds with passion. Cognition and emotion remained linked, but this philosophical development made it possible for the mind and the first movements of the mind to avoid or be separated from affect.[113]

Irenaeus's list describes motions of the mind of a person before *adfectus* and *passiones*, similar to Seneca's first and second movements, but he rejects ascribing this process to God. Irenaeus argues that Stoic psychological language cannot be applied to metaphysics because within that framework (as he sees it), the end result cannot be separated from the initial cause. Irenaeus's opponents were trying to describe a passion that caused material creation without reflecting back on the Mind of God, thereby separating God's Mind from the creation. Based on Seneca's organisation and Irenaeus's list of mental motions, Irenaeus's opponents attributed something like the third movement to only one of God's powers (Wisdom), but not to God's Mind. Irenaeus argues that the human mind is the source of all mental motions, so any passion in the third movement reflects that mind. Even if Irenaeus's opponents depended on the kind of philosophical development found in Seneca, when applied to God, these separate mental movements imply separation and division in God. While Irenaeus and his opponents agree that human passion should not be ascribed to

[112] *Consilium*, which appears in both of Irenaeus's lists of mental motions, can be paralleled with Seneca's account, where, rather than being ruled by affect (*adfectus*) through philosophy, the reader can be ruled by reason (*ratio*), so that, precisely through forethought (*consilium*) the reader can avoid impulse (*impetus*) and being carried away (*fero*). See Seneca, *Ep.* 37 (LCL 75.252-57). Richard M. Gummere, ed. *Seneca: Epistles*, vol. 1, LCL 75 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1917). Rousseau's retroverted Greek equates *consilium* with βουλή, which would place it closer to the 3rd movement. This second movement is similar to Cicero's description of grief, which includes a reference to the first bites of the first movement and which occur independent of judgement (introduced as *judicium* or *opinio*, or described with *decernere*) which then leads to distress. Cicero, *Tusc. Disp.* 3.83 (LCL 141.322). Jeffrey Henderson, ed. *Cicero: Tusculan Disputations*, LCL 141 (Harvard University Press, 1945). For the paralleling of Cicero and Seneca on this point, see Sorabji, "What Is New on Emotion in Stoicism after 100 BC?," 167-68.

[113] See Ch 1 in *Emotion and the Peace of Mind: From Stoic Agitation to Christian Temptation*, 17-28.

God's mind, Irenaeus opposes using the Stoic language of mental movements because of the creator/creature differentiation undergirded by the notion of divine simplicity. God cannot be compared to a composite human with a mental process that has parts, since, as he goes on to state, God is simple, and this process of mental motions still results in affect and passion.

Sorabji has argued Seneca's argument was adopted by Origen for instruction on resisting temptation.[114] Based on *haer.* 2.13.1-3a, I suggest that this Stoic language had already been adopted by various groups for metaphysics, rather than ethics, by the time of Irenaeus. However, he rejects using Stoic language to describe God because he holds to a Middle Platonist concept of simplicity that requires a differentiation between creator and creatures.

2.1.3 *haer.* 2.13.8: Metaphors for God

After his definition of divine simplicity, Irenaeus argues that metaphors, including the spoken word, cannot be univocally applied to God, again adhering to the creator/creature differentiation. In scripture, God is described through metaphors from creation, such as a spoken word and emitted light, but Irenaeus insists that God is not similar to what is created, thus revealing a tension in language about God:

> He is both beyond these [*sensus*, *spiritus*, *sensuabilitas*, *ennoia*, *lumen* etc.] and on account of this indescribable. It will be appropriate and right that he be called Mind who contains all things, but not similar to the thinking of humans. He will be most appropriately called Light, but nothing like light according to us.[115] Indeed, in this regard, in all remaining ways the Father of all will not be at all similar to the insignificance of humans.
>
> Est autem et super haec, et propter hoc inenarrabilis. Sensus enim capax omnium bene ac recte dicetur, sed non similis hominum sensui; et lumen rectissime dicetur, sed

[114] See "Stoic First Movements in Christianity," in *Stoicism: Traditions and Transformations*, ed. Steven Strange and Jack Zupko (Cambridge: CUP, 2004), 95-107. Stoicism described the mental process primarily in relation to the four general emotions (distress, pleasure, fear, and appetite). See especially chapter 2 in *Emotion and the Peace of Mind: From Stoic Agitation to Christian Temptation*, 29-54.
[115] Lit: "nothing similar to the light which is according to us"

> nihil simile ei quod est secundum nos lumini. Sic autem et in reliquis omnibus nulli similis erit omnium Pater hominum pusillitati[116]

God is not similar to the smallness experience by humans, and human process, passion and division cannot be applied to language about God. To apply human language to God in the same way as it is applied to humans is to apply to God the nature of what is created. Irenaeus goes further, arguing that discourse about God's powers cannot have the kind of generation or activity as a human, and he reveals that the reason for this is divine simplicity:

> They say that Word and Life, which they say are the ones who create in this Pleroma, were emitted, and as to the *Logos*, i.e. the Word, indeed they are taking the emission from human affection and divinising it against God, as if they were discovering something great when they say that Word was sent by Thought. Everyone know this naturally, since it may be logically said about people, but in him who is God over all, since he is all Thought and all Word, in the way we have said above, not having in himself something older, nor younger, nor something other, but remaining all equal and similar and one.[117]
>
> Ab hoc enim Logon et Zoen fabricatores huius Pleromatis dicunt emissos, et Logi, id est Verbi, quidem emissionem ab hominum adfectione accipientes et addiuinantes aduersus Deum, quasi aliquid magnum adinuenientes in eo quod dicunt a Nu esse emissum Logon. Quod quidem omnes uidelicet sciunt, quoniam in hominibus quidem consequenter dicatur; in eo autem qui sit super omnes Deus, totus Nus et totus Logos cum sit, quemadmodum praediximus, et neque aliud antiquius, neque posterius aut aliud alterius habente in se, sed toto aequali et simili et uno perseuerante.[118]

Irenaeus admits that his opponents' usage of the terminology *Nous* and *Logos* might work if speaking about composite humans, but these terms have a different meaning for God. After stating that the Stoic description of mental motions cannot be ascribed to God *because* God is simple, he returns to the language of God as "all Thought and all Word" and God as "equal and similar and one" from his definition of divine simplicity. Because God is simple, the meaning that these words have for human descriptions of generation and activity cannot be ascribed to God. He has already argued that the process of human thinking and speaking cannot be applied to God (in *haer.* 2.13.1-3a), and he will argue that the process of human

[116] *haer.* 2.13.4 (SC 294.116).
[117] Ablatives *habente* and *perseuerante* cannot be inserted into the English sense of this translation. For a similar translation, see Unger (SC 65.45) and page 131-32, n. 20.
[118] *haer.* 2.13.8 (SC 294.122-24).

generation cannot be applied to God (in *haer.* 2.17).[119] Normal rules of language do not apply because this language, albeit scriptural, is describing God. Instead, as argued in the second parameter on language about God, while God is not *similar* to processes of word and light experienced by humans, God is *similar* and *equal* to himself (see *haer.* 2.13.3 and 2.13.8). Language about God must only be understood in comparison to God himself.

2.2 Parameter 2: God's Mutually Entailing Names and Powers

In the second parameter, discourse regarding God's names and powers should be mutually entailing. First, Irenaeus argues that God's powers cannot be contrary or mutually exclusive (*haer.* 2.12). Then, Irenaeus explains that God as "all sight, all thought, all hearing" means that God's seeing and hearing or God as Thought and Word must be understood in terms of one another, and he labels "Life, Incorruption, and Truth" as powers and titles of God that are heard together (*coobaudiuntur* in *haer.* 2.13.8-9). Scholars have explored this language in Irenaeus, but I argue that their view, that these powers are "identical," underemphasises the distinction retained in Irenaeus's argument. The terminology "mutually entailing" is based on Irenaeus's statement that God's powers are always "with God" and "heard together" with God's titles.

2.2.1 *haer*. 2.12: Mutually Exclusive or United Powers of God

Irenaeus challenges the view of powers in his opponents' system, since their thirty Aeons consist of various contrary powers that are separated. Instead, he argues that the powers of God should be understood as united and mutually entailing. As mentioned above, in philosophy, some had begun moving away from the standard procedure of describing God

[119] For discussion on divine generation and its dependence on divine simplicity, see Chapter 4 below, and Briggman, *God and Christ in Irenaeus*, 121-35.

in polar contraries, and they based their arguments on Xenophanes and the quotation used in Irenaeus's definition of divine simplicity.[120] After setting out his four definitions of oneness and simplicity in the *Metaphysics,* Aristotle defines things that are similar and things that are contrary, and while most things are a composite of two extremes (i.e. hot and cold; light and dark), first principles are not contraries for they are simple.[121] Similarly, Irenaeus argues that contrary powers, like light and darkness, are mutually exclusive and both cannot exist in God. If an Aeon is unified (*adunatam*), and from a conjugal couple that was united and inseparable and one (*ab unita coniugatione et inseparabili et una*), and the emission was indistinguishable and united (*indiscretam et unitam*), then this Aeon could not be dissimilar (*dissimilis*) to the source that sent it out (*haer.* 2.12.2). When describing Aeons like Mind and Truth, one cannot understand one without the other (*non possit alterum sine altero intellegi*), which he illustrates by showing that water cannot be understood without moisture, fire without heat, or a stone without hardness, "because they are united (*unita sunt*), one with another, and cannot be separated, but always coexist (*semper coexsistere*) with them."[122] Aeons must be united and always exist together, so they are distinct in unity. This same kind of language of unity is repeated in *haer.* 2.12.4, specifically in reference to Thought, Mind, Truth, and Word. God's powers cannot be conceived separately, so God's powers cannot be described through the language of mutually exclusive or contrary powers. In his opponents' system, Word, Silence, Light, and Darkness were all emitted Aeons, but Irenaeus argues that Silence and Darkness would be destroyed (*consumptibilia*) and dispelled (*solutae sunt; soluetur*) with Word and Light, and so, because mutually exclusive Aeons do not entail one another, they cannot both be powers of God.[123] Furthermore, he challenges their claim that

[120] For discussion, see discussion in Chapter 2, section 1.1, especially footnote 44.
[121] For examples, see *met.* X.4-5, 1055a-1056b and XI.1, 1059a.
[122] *haer.* 2.12.2 (SC 294.98-100). Quemadmodum neque aqua sine humectatione, neque ignis sine calore, neque lapis sine duritia—unita sunt enim inuicem haec et alterum ab altero separari non potest, sed semper coexsistere ei.
[123] *haer.* 2.12.5 (SC 294.102-104).

Silence is in the highest level of the Pleroma since they claim there is an interior and exterior Word (*Logos endiathetos* and *Logos proforikos*), and an emitted Word would destroy Silence and their first and principle Ogdoad.[124] Irenaeus adheres to linguistic parameters that requires that God's powers be mutually entailing.

2.2.2 *haer*. 2.13.8-9 Labelling God's Mutually Entailing Names and Powers

After the definition of divine simplicity, Irenaeus explains the meaning of God as "all" Thought and Word, arguing that God's names and powers are not separated by time, since nothing in God is older or younger, and they cannot be understood apart from each other, since God is "equal and similar and one":

> Just as a person would not sin if he says he [God is] "all sight and all hearing," so that, in the way he sees he also hears, and in the way he hears he also sees, so too for the person who said, "all Thought and all Word," so that in the way he is Thought, in this same way he is Word, and that his Word is this Mind. This person will know just a little bit of the Father of All, but still much more appropriately than those who are transferring the generation of an uttered human word to the Eternal Word of God, giving [him] a beginning and origin of utterance as with one's own word.
>
> Quod quidem omnes uidelicet sciunt, quoniam in hominibus quidem consequenter dicatur; in eo autem qui sit super omnes Deus, totus Nus et totus Logos cum sit, quemadmodum praediximus, et neque aliud antiquius, neque posterius aut aliud anterius habente in se, sed toto aequali et simili et uno perseuerante, iam non talis huius ordinationis sequetur emissio. Quemadmodum qui dicit eum— totum uisionem et totum auditum— in quo autem uidet, in ipso et audit, et in quo audit, in ipso et uidet—non peccat: sic et qui ait, illum totum Sensum et totum Verbum, et in quo Sensus est in hoc et Verbum esse, et Verbum esse eius hunc Nun, minus quidem adhuc de Patre omnium sentiet, decentiora autem magis quam hi qui generationem prolatiui hominum uerbi transferunt in Dei aeternum Verbum, et prolationis initium donantes et genesim, quemadmodum et suo uerbo. [125]

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[124] *Logos endiathetos* remains a central part of his discussion, and is contrasted with *Logos proforikos* in 2.13.2 (*emisibilis*), 2.13.8 (*prolativus*), and *haer.* 2.28.6 (*verbum emisionis*). See Unger, ACW 65, 128-29, n. 10. According to Harvey, this is the earliest Patristic use of the term *Logos endiathetos*. See Harvey, *Santi Irenaei Episcopi Lugdunensis Libros Quinque Adversus Haereses*, 1.278, n. 2. For a summary on the Stoic and Aristotelian background, see Elisabetta Matelli, "Ενδιαθετοσ Ε Προφορικοσ Λογοσ: Note sulla origine della Formula e della Nozione," *Aevum* 66, no. 1 (1992). For a summary of the usage in Philo, see the introduction in Adam Kamesar, "The *Logos Endiathetos* and the *Logos Prophorikos* in Allegorical Interpretation: Philo and the D-Scholia to the *Iliad*," *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 44, no. 2 (2004). Secondly, the pairing of the First and Principle Ogdoad, which is *primam et principalem Ogdoad* (*haer.* 2.12.6) was a doubling for the Stoic *hegemonikon* in section 2.1.2 above.

[125] *haer.* 2.13.8. (SC 294.124).

Irenaeus explains his citation of Xenophanes by interweaving refutation and affirmation. Irenaeus primarily opposes (1) chronological hierarchy in God, for there was never a time when God was without his Thought (Life in *haer.* 2.13.9), and (2) hierarchy of action, for in the way God sees, he also hears.[126] This means that language about God cannot describe a time or an activity of God without these powers and titles. This opposes the kind of order found in *Eugnostos the Blessed,* which also describes God as all Mind, Thought, Reflection, Consideration, Reason, and Power, but each Aeon is generated in order "from first to last."[127] Irenaeus's explanation of "all Word" opposes the kind of use that results in hierarchy. For Irenaeus, not only is the terminology important, it must be used in such a way that God's activity of hearing and seeing and God's powers of Thought and Word each entail the others.

After regularly stating that his opponents speak wrongly of God, he provides a more appropriate way for a person to speak about God: a person should not only use the phrasing of God as "all" sight, hearing, thought and word, but that person should also mean that these names and powers are mutually entailing. This person still knows insufficiently, but more appropriately. Irenaeus is concerned with right terminology *and* how this terminology is used. Beyond just refutation, he argues that God's activity of sight entails hearing and God's power of Thought entails his Word, for God is all Thought and Word.

This relationship between God's names and power, and Irenaeus's labelling, has been examined, and while scholars have described Irenaeus's view of God's powers and titles as either identical or homogenous, I prefer a term that acknowledges distinction, such that God's Thought informs our understanding of God's Word. This nuance is supported by the rest of

[126] See Plato's *Protagoras,* and the discussion hearing and seeing in Michel Barnes, *The Power of God: Dynamis in Gregory of Nyssa's Trinitarian Theology* (Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1999), 68.
[127] *Eug.* NHC III.73.3-16 (NHC 3.58-60); Meyer, The Nag Hammadi Scriptures, 277.

Irenaeus's explanation, where these titles and powers are labelled and described as always with God and heard together:[128]

> God is Life and Incorruption and Truth. Not according to growth/decrease[129] of the kind they sent with the emissions, but the titles of their powers are those who are always with God, in whatever way it is possible and right for humans to speak and hear about God. For Thought, Word, Life, Incorruption, Truth, Wisdom, Good, and all other [powers] are heard together[130] with the titles of God. For neither is it possible to say that Life is older than Thought, for Life is itself Thought; nor that Life was after Thought, since he who is all Thought, that is God, is not at any time made to be without Life.
>
> Deus uita est et incorruptela et ueritas. Et non secundum descensionem ea quae sunt talia acceperunt emissiones, sed earum virtutum quae semper sunt cum Deo appellationes sunt, quemadmodum possibile est et dignum hominibus audire et dicere de Deo. Appellationi enim Dei coobaudiuntur sensus et uerbum et uita et incorruptela et ueritas et sapientia et bonitas et omnia talia. Et neque sensum uita antiquiorem aliquis potest dicere, ipse enim sensus uita est; neque uitam posteriorem a sensu, uti non fiat aliquando sine uita is qui est omnium sensus, hoc est Deus.[131]

Once again Irenaeus opposes the hierarchy of his opponents, but he does so by claiming that God's titles and powers are heard together so that any understanding of God based on one of these titles or powers depends on the others. They cannot be understood apart from each other (with one power creating apart from the rest) nor are they mutually exclusive (with both light and darkness as divine powers). The terminology "mutually entailing" is inferred from his statement that God's powers are always "with God" and "heard together" (*coobaudiuntur*)

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[128] Rousseau back-translates this to be δύναμις (SC 293.251). For the Armenian, titled Fr. Arm. 2 in Rousseau, see Fragment 8 in Charles Renoux, ed. *Irénée de Lyon: Nouveaux fragments arméniens de l'Adversus Haereses et de L'epidexis*, PO 178 (39.1) (Turnhout: Brepols, 1978), 38-39.

[129] Rousseau compares *secundum descensionem* with ըստ ածման լինելութեանն (SC 293.251) to argue that the Latin translator interpolated the original from "growth" to "descension". It should be noted that there seems to be an error in the text of Rousseau, for the Armenian is actually ըստ աճման լինելութեանն. See ibid. The terms he seems to have means, աճումն, does indeed mean growth or increase, and in Reynders, the definition is "augmentum" or "incrementum", but no Greek parallel is given (the erroneous term Rousseau has in his text, ածեմ, means "accingo, aduco, adtraho, cingo, deduco, duco, immitto, produco"). See Reynders, *Lexique comparé*, 1.105-06. According to Rousseau, the translator read ἐπογονή, and could not believe this should be growth or development, so he used κατ' ἐπογονήν, and changed increase in the Greek for decrease in the Latin, which is supported by the Armenian. Unger follows this same phrasing (ACW 65.46) and page 132 n. 24. *Descensionem* is found throughout the text, so to change this to "increase" (following the Armenian) here would have implications on the other six times this word is used in Latin (*haer.* 1.30.13, 14; 2.6.1; 2.13.6; 3.10.4; 3.34.4). For the Armenian, titled Fr. Arm. 2 in Rousseau, see Fragment 8 in Renoux, PO 178 (39.1), 38-39.

[130] *coobaudiuntur* in S and followed in Rousseau (SC 294.126), *coobaudientur* in CVAQ and followed by Hv 2.16.5 (1.285). *eo obaudient* is in ε, but compliments by the Armenian միանգամ, which seems to just carry the sense of "at once" or "in one blow."

[131] *haer.* 2.13.9 (SC 294.126).

with God's titles. This Latin term *coobaudiuntur* does not appear elsewhere in extant Latin literature, and it is used by the translator to convey the meaning of a Greek compound, probably συνακούω as Rousseau back-translates it.[132] In the Armenian, the preposition is linked to a noun, stating that "*with* God's title/name" (ընդ անուանն Աստուծոյ) is heard Life, Incorruption and Truth, the same structure used to say that *with* God are his titles (ընդ Աստուծոյն են անուանք).[133] The translators of the Armenian and Latin were careful to carry the distinction from the preposition in the Greek compound.

My reading pushes against Christopher Stead and Anthony Briggman, who interpret this section to mean that God's powers and names are *identical* with God,[134] and the reading of Eric Osborn, who describe God's titles and powers as homogenous.[135] "Identical" rightly emphasises Irenaeus's opposition to hierarchy in God, while "homogenous" rightly emphasises God as all Thought and Word, but they lack distinction. In this argument on language about God, the many scriptural powers and names of God are not the same thing, but they say different things about the same God, so they should be understood in light of each other. These names and powers do not carry a meaning that is similar to humans, but only similar to God himself. Instead of a strict apophaticism (as in Clement), Irenaeus opts for an approach that allows something to be said about God based on scriptural language.

[132] As early at 1890, scholars have argued against Harvey's adjustment of the Latin to *consentient* in order to support the presence of the Greek term συμφωνέω, though it must be admitted that the theme of "harmonizing" (*consonans*) is prominent in Irenaeus's text. Rousseau, SC 293, 251; Harvey, *Santi Irenaei Episcopi Lugdunensis Libros Quinque Adversus Haereses*, 1.285, n. 7. In his theological summary of this section, Kunze argues against Harvey's adjustment. Unger's translation also argues that the context of this passage does not support this change. Briggman follows Unger. Kunze, *Die Gotteslehre de Irenaeus*, 37, n. 3; Unger, ACW 65, 132-33; Briggman, *God and Christ in Irenaeus*, 96, n. 131. According to the TLG, there is not use of συνακούω in extant Greek fragments of Irenaeus, while συμφωνέω appears once (2.28.3).
[133] See Fragment 8 in Renoux, PO 178 (39.1), 38-39.
[134] Stead, *Divine Substance*, 188-89; Briggman, *God and Christ in Irenaeus*, 96-97.
[135] Osborn, *Irenaeus of Lyons*, 39-41.

3. Conclusion

In this chapter I examined Irenaeus's definition of divine simplicity and argued that he uses the concept of divine simplicity to guide the use of scripture in talking about God. I explored philosophical and scriptural contexts for thinking about divine simplicity, and analysed how Irenaeus's thought related to streams of contemporary thought among different Christian groups and authors. Previous use of key terms, such as *simplex, non compositus, similis,* and *totus* were found to be congruent with a range of themes in Irenaeus' thought, even though the term *simplex* rarely appears in the rest of *Against Heresies*. The terminology used to explain it, such as his citation of Xenophanes' concept of God as "all mind and all thought," do reappear, and Xenophanes' anti-anthropomorphic concept of God as "all mind and all thought" was remains key for Irenaeus's description of God. His definition and explanation in *haer.* 2.13 emphasised that God's powers could not be separated from God, so he insists (alongside earlier thinkers) that God is simple, without parts, unable to be measured, and without contraries or change. Thinkers like Tatian, Ptolemy, Clement, and the author of *Eugnostos the Blessed* were also engaging in language of God as simple or God as entirely mind, thought, but Irenaeus' account of simplicity has very distinctive contours. Because they shared this terminology, Irenaeus was not just interested in the terminology itself, but also in a particular meaning.

The second part of this chapter specified two parameters on language about God that result from divine simplicity, namely, because God is simple, what is said about God cannot be understood in relation to humans (Parameter 1), but rather, in relation to God himself, so God's names and powers are mutually entailing (Parameter 2). In adhering to the creator/creature differentiation, Irenaeus rejects the possibility of transferring Stoic psychological mental motions for human speech and cognition across to God. Even though the metaphors "thought" and "word" are scriptural, and so are part of Irenaeus' lexicon in

understanding God, he opposes ways this language could lead to separation as in his opponents' theology. Irenaeus claims that metaphors from creation, such as thought, cannot be ascribed to God, and his thought, because God is simple. His arguments against ascribing affects or passions to God sits within this framework. According to the second parameter, language of God as "all" mind and word means that God is only comparable to himself, and so, God's names and powers are mutually entailing. For Irenaeus, divine simplicity does not allow God to be separated from powers or activities of creation (cf. Ptolemy), but used language for a knowable God (cf. Clement of Alexandria).

As we come to the end of Part 1, it may be helpful to provide some initial conclusions. First, though Book 2 is primarily negative polemic, it is not entirely negative polemic, and theological principles can be gleaned from it. In particular, Irenaeus's argument regarding God as the one creator, starting in the Rule of Truth and developed in Book 2, is given further clarity by the claim that God is simple. Secondly, though Irenaeus may not be labelled as a philosopher, he engaged with pre-Socratic and Stoic arguments and their development in Middle Platonism. He cares about a right reading of philosophy as it applies to scriptural language. Instead of ascribing to God the composite process of human mental motions and affect from Stoicism, Irenaeus depends on the Middle Platonist description of God as simple through the pre-Socratic language of God as "all" thought and word. His usage of a pre-Socratic language in an argument about divine simplicity (a concept more at home in Middle Platonism) presents a reading of the scriptural God that engages second-century debates. Rather than discarding his opponents' use of philosophy, he appropriated many of the same terms and concepts to argue for a particular way these terms and concepts should be used.

It remains to be seen how the terminology and arguments used to explain divine simplicity work out in the rest of Irenaeus' work. That is the key aim of Part 2. My argument touched upon important strands of Irenaeus's theology, without which this definition cannot be correctly understood and which bolster my claim that Irenaeus's principle of divine simplicity interwove scripture, philosophy, and contemporary Christian debates. References were made to Irenaeus' description of the creator who is "containing, not contained," to God's Word and Wisdom (which elsewhere is described as the "Hands of God," the Son and Spirit), and to God's names and powers. While Part 1 progressively focused on the particulars of Irenaeus's definition of divine simplicity, Part 2 will zoom out and demonstrate how the terminology and arguments from this definition influence Irenaeus's wider theological efforts in the rest of *Against Heresies.*

PART 2: Theological Implications of Divine Simplicity

Chapter 3: Divine Will for Creation in the Containment Metaphor of *haer*. 2.1-6

In Part 2 I explore the implications of divine simplicity on Irenaeus' wider theology, and start with divine will in the activity of creating. The recurring metaphor of containment, sometimes summarised in the formula "containing, not contained," is prominent throughout Irenaeus's theology of creation.[1] William Schoedel has argued that the metaphor is primarily spatial and temporal, which implies that God is both everywhere and nowhere, and God is beyond time but acting in time.[2] More recently, Briggman has also emphasized the cognitive meaning for this metaphor, implying God knows all things, but is incomprehensible.[3] I argue that, in addition to these helpful readings, the metaphor of containment has providential implications for God's power, implying that God is sovereign over creation and not restricted by something else. He uses the metaphor of containment, guided by the concept of divine simplicity, to describe the divine will as inseparable from and simultaneous with the activity of creation. This chapter will first summarise the spatial, temporal, and cognitive associations of this metaphor, and then focus on how it is used to characterise divine providence. Irenaeus's argument for God's providential will in creation depends on his account of divine simplicity.

In the first half of Book 2 (*haer.* 2.1-2.19), Irenaeus rejects his opponents' creation account, including their demiurge, which he calls the chief topic (*capitulum*) on which their entire system rests. Then he summarises his own view of the creator:

> Therefore, it is good for us to have to begin from the first and greatest chapter, from the Demiurge [Creator] God, who made heaven and earth and all that is in them (cf.

[1] Greer sees this metaphor as the concise definition of Irenaeus's theological premise in Book 2. See Greer, "The Dog and the Mushrooms: Irenaeus's View of the Valentinians Assessed," 156.
[2] Schoedel, "Enclosing, Not Enclosed: The Early Doctrine of God," 78-79. See also, Norris, "Who Is the Demiurge?," 28.
[3] See Briggman, *God and Christ in Irenaeus*, especially pp. 72-89.

> Ex 20:11; Ps 145:6; Jn 1:3; Acts 4:24; 14:15), whom these blasphemers say is the fruit of the outer boundary,[4] and to show that there is not another either above him nor after him, nor was he moved by another but made everything freely and by his own will, since he is the only God and only Lord and only Maker and only Father and the only one who contains all things, and he himself giving existence to all things.
>
> Bene igitur habet a primo et maximo capitulo inchoare nos, a Demiurgo Deo, qui fecit caelum et terram et omnia quae in eis sunt, quem hi blasphemantes extremitatis fructum dicunt, et ostendere quoniam neque super eum neque post eum est aliquid, neque ab aliquo motus sed sua sententia et libere fecit omnia, cum sit solus Deus et solus Dominus et solus Conditor et solus Pater et solus continens omnia et omnibus ut sint ipse praestans.[5]

The terminology of a "containing, not contained" God had become common in second-century Christian discourse.[6] In fact, Irenaeus knew that his opponents described God in this way (see *haer.* 1.1.1), and though he eventually acknowledges their distinctive views, here he claims that they all have the same weakness: in an effort to preserve God from the stain of corruption, they unsuccessfully attempt to describe the activity of creation beyond God.[7]

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[4] Unger (ACW 65.17) translates this as, "degeneracy". Unger, ACW 65, 17.

[5] *haer.* 2.1.1 (SC 294.26). For a discussion on the relationship between this passage and terminology of the rule, see Chapter 1, section 3, especially footnote 19.

[6] The Shepherd of Hermas starts his mandate with the single creator, "who contains all things, and is Himself contained by no one." Hermas, *mand* 1.1. Πρῶτον πάντων πίστευσον ὅτι εἷς ἐστιν ὁ θεός ὁ τὰ πάντα κτίσας καὶ καταρτίσας καὶ ποιήσας ἐκ τοῦ μὴ ὄντος εἰς τὸ εἶναι τὰ πάντα καὶ πάντα χωρῶν μόνος δὲ ἀχώρητος ὤν. The idea of a God who encloses (ἐμπειεχόμενος) and contains (χωροῦν) all is also found in Theophilus's *ad Autolycum* 1.5 and 2.3. Athenagoras asks if the God without parts is in (ἐν) around (περί) or beyond (ἀνωτέρω) the world, arguing that these things would contain (περιοριζω and κατεχω) God in the world (see *leg.* 8). The metaphor of containment is also used in the *Teachings of Silvanus* with a spatial and cognitive sense, and in *A Valentinian Exposition,* which repeatedly refers to the uncontainable God. The Hermetic corpus also has language of containment in relation to God. Different parts describe God as capable of containing, but not as place (see 2.6), Mind containing all things (2.12), and the Monad containing all number but contained by none (4.10). There are also creed-like statements referring to God, maker and father as container of the universe (16.3). See Brian P. Copenhaver, ed. *Hermetica: The Greek Corpus Hermeticum and the Latin Asclepius* (Cambridge: CUP, 1995).

[7] In *haer.* 2.1.4 and 2.3.1, Irenaeus discusses the good God of Marcion, in *haer.* 2.2.3 he opposes Basilides and his system of angel-creators in the 365 layers of heaven; and in *haer.* 2.4.1 he names both Ptolemy and Heracleon as followers of Valentinus to challenge their system with a *Pleroma* and its 30 Aeons. For the Valentinian school, see Markschies, "Valentinian Gnosticism: Toward the Anatomy of a School." This joint reference to Ptolemy and Heracleon comes just after a citation of John 1:3, which is present in Ptolemy's *Letter to Flora* and clearly present in Heracleon's commentary on John. Lastly, it has been shown that Irenaeus had some kind of a version of the *Apocryphon of John* at the end of Book 1. While in his systematic summary of it (in *haer.* 1.29-30) he excludes references to the Sethian god who is "containing, not contained," I do not believe that it is because "[Irenaeus] would be only too anxious to omit any Gnostic negative theology which echoed such a theme" as Logan claims, but rather, by the start of Book 2, he views this formula as a weakness common to the various systems of many of his opponents. Logan, *Gnostic Truth and Christian Heresy*, 75. Because of the different named positions, and because of the relevance of the *Apocryphon of John,* I argue that Book 2 should be read with an "inlay technique" of these different systems, for Irenaeus believes that the "containing, not contained" God in creation is the weakest point in the systems of many (if not all) of his opponents, and so he alternates between them and applies his criticisms corporately to their different systems. See further Giuliano

Irenaeus himself uses this formula to explore the tension between God's transcendence and immanence.[8] He depends on various meanings of the containment metaphor, associated with a variety of Latin terms (*continere, finire, includere, capere, circumcontinere, circumscribere, circumfinire,* and *circumdare*) that describe this one God as the creator who contains everything, including creation.[9]

1. Spatial Meaning of "containing, not contained"

The metaphor of containment is itself spatial. Irenaeus claims that the primary cause of everything, in the system of his opponents, is spatially contained because they argue for a creation outside or beyond God (with *deorsum, superiora, praeter,* or *extra*). The spatial implications of this metaphor had a philosophical precedent. William Schoedel, shows that while pre-Socratic Eleatics like Xenophanes or ps-Aristotle's *De Melisso, Xenophane, Gorgia* applied spatial and temporal limitations to the One (see in Melissus fr. 2-6), the best comparison for Irenaeus comes from Philo, for he is the first to apply the actual formula "containing, not contained" to descriptions of God,[10] illustrating that God is immaterial and not in a place.[11] Philo argues that when Adam hides from God in Genesis 3:8, he confines God to space, imagining that "God is in a place, not enclosing but enclosed."[12] This

Chiapparini, "Irenaeus and the Gnostic Valentinus: Orthodoxy and Heresy in the Church of Rome around the Middle of the Second Century," *ZAC* 18, no. 1 (2013): 103-05. Chiaparrini uses the terminology "inlay technique" to describe the way Irenaeus interweaves different systems, in his argument, the Ptolemean literature with oral sources in the "Grand Notice," particularly in *haer.* 1.6. I suggest that, once again, he is interweaving different systems, to argue that they all have the same weakness.

[8] As far back as Schoedel, but also in more recent readings, such as that of Briggman, scholars have read this passage as exploring the tension of God's transcendence and immanence. Schoedel, "Enclosing, Not Enclosed: The Early Doctrine of God."; Briggman, *God and Christ in Irenaeus*, 72-79, 87-90.

[9] Creation accounts in antiquity often used a variety of verbs to describe containment in creation. Plato uses περιλαμβάνω, συνίστημι, and περίεχω together to argue that the Living Thing (ζῶα) and the universe contain the best form of everything. See *Tim.* 30D-31B.

[10] Schoedel, "Enclosing, Not Enclosed: The Early Doctrine of God," 76. For Irenaeus's wider reliance on Xenophanes, see Chapter 2, section 1.

[11] See *Migr Abr.* 182; 192-93; *Somn.* 1.63; 1.185; *Sobr.* 83; *Post. Cain.* 15; 18. In Philo, God has no "where" and transcends the idea of space. See Norris, "Who Is the Demiurge?," 17-19.

[12] *leg* 3.2 (LCL 226.304) ὁ φαῦλος δοκεῖ εἶναι τὸν θεὸν ἐν τόπῳ, μὴ περιέχοντα, ἀλλὰ περιεχόμενον. See F. H. and G. H. Whitaker Colson, ed. *Philo: On the Creation. Allegorical Interpretation of Genesis 2 and 3*, LCL 226 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1929).

background has led scholars to read the following section of Irenaeus's text as a refutation of the application of spatiality to God.[13]

> For likewise, according to them, they say that something is outside the Pleroma descended, which they believe is a higher wandering Power. It is necessary that either, [Option 1] what is outside contains, and [therefore] the Pleroma is contained, since otherwise [the power] would not be outside the Pleroma. For if anything is outside the Pleroma, the Pleroma will be inside the thing which they are saying was outside the Pleroma, and the Pleroma would be contained by what is outside. [Option 2] Or on the contrary, if the first God should be understood as the Pleroma, with the Pleroma and what is outside of it separated from each other by an immeasurable distance. If it is indeed as they said, then there was a third thing which endlessly separated the Pleroma from that which was outside it, and this third encloses and will hold the other two together, and this third thing will be greater than the Pleroma and that which is outside, since it is containing both in its bosom.
>
> Cum enim sit secundum eos et aliud quid quod quidem extra Pleroma esse dicunt, in quod et superiorem erraticam Virtutem descendisse opinantur, necesse est omni modo, aut continere id quod extra est, contineri autem Pleroma — alioquin non erit extra Pleroma : si enim extra Pleroma est aliquid, intra hoc ipsum quod extra Pleroma dicunt erit Pleroma, et continebitur Pleroma ab eo quod est extra; cum Pleromate autem subaudiatur et primus Deus—aut rursus in immensum distare et separata esse ab inuicem, id est et Pleroma et quod est extra illud. Si autem hoc dixerint, tertium quid erit, quod in immensum separat Pleroma et hoc quod est extra illud; et hoc tertium circumfinit[14] et continebit utraque, et erit maius tertium hoc et Pleromate et eo quod est extra illud, sicut in suo sinu continens utraque.[15]

This is but one of the many times that Irenaeus hypothetically grants the position of his opponents in order to challenge their logic. In this case, Irenaeus claims that one cannot describe God as "containing, not contained," and claim creation occurred outside God. Norris argues for a spatial reading of this metaphor, challenging a creation outside the "territory" of the power of God (from *haer.* 2.1.5), by insisting that, "the categories of finite existence—spatial location, for example—do not fit God."[16] Thus, Irenaeus is opposing the use of spatial language that implies a creation outside the *power* of God, because such a view descends into

[13] Schoedel, "Enclosing, Not Enclosed: The Early Doctrine of God."; Greer, "The Dog and the Mushrooms: Irenaeus's View of the Valentinians Assessed."; Osborn, *Irenaeus of Lyons*, 55-61; Norris, "Who Is the Demiurge?," 9-36; Briggman, *God and Christ in Irenaeus*, 71-89.
[14] *circumfinit* from CV ε, and followed by Hv 1.1.2 (Hv 1.252), *circumdefinit* in A, *circumdiffinit* in Q, and *circumdiffiniet* in S.
[15] *haer.* 2.1.3 (SC 294.28-30)
[16] Norris, "Who Is the Demiurge?," 17-19.

a polytheism that places the work of creation under the territory or power of a distinct god or Aeon. This spatial sense supports his claim that God himself created, and not another god, angel, or power.

2. Temporal Meaning of "containing, not contained"

In *haer.* 2.1.2, Irenaeus questions the logic of the Valentinian myth by highlighting the temporal implications of containment:

> If there is something else outside this [God], then the Pleroma is not all nor does it contain all, for they say [either] that he will be outside the Pleroma or he who is above the God of All is outside him. However, this one who is absent and diminished by another, this is one not the Pleroma of all. [The genealogy] will have limits and a middle and an end, with regard to that which is outside him, if the end is in regard to those who are below and the beginning is in regard to those who are above him.
>
> Si autem extra illum est aliquid, iam non omnium est Pleroma, neque continet omnia: deerit enim Pleromati aut ei qui sit super omnia Deo hoc quod extra eum dicunt. Quod autem deest et delibatum est ab aliquo, hoc non est omnium Pleroma. Et terminum autem et medietatem et finem habebit ad eos qui sunt extra eum. Si autem finis est in ea quae sunt deorsum, initium est et in ea quae sunt sursum.[17]

Irenaeus also applies these spatial prepositions to time, and he argues against the idea that God, or the Pleroma, has a beginning, middle, and end (*terminum et medietatem et finem*; and *finis… initium*). This can be read spatially (beginning, middle, and end of a line), but in the rest of *Against Heresies,* this progression is consistently used to describe time.[18] He uses this language to differentiate creatures from the creator, since humanity is limited by time, but God is without beginning or change. Thus, when Irenaeus's opponents describe their Pleroma with stages of time, Irenaeus suggests that they have constrained God within time and only the containing (or first) god will have a chronological hierarchy. The titles of the Aeons in his

[17] *haer.* 2.1.2 (SC 294.26-28)
[18] In *haer.* 3.24.1 it shows the ages of revelation, and in *haer.* 4.11.2, while distinguishing between humanity and God, Irenaeus shows that humanity has a beginning, middle, and increase, but God remains the same because "he is all light, all mind, all substance, and the fount of all good." See *haer.* 3.24.1 (SC 211.470) and *haer.* 4.11.2 (SC 100.500).

opponent's system have this temporal meaning, since his opponents enclose and surround (*circumscribit et circumdat*) the Father with a first-Father, whom they call "*before* all things" and "*before* the beginning" (*Proonta et Proarchen* in *haer.* 2.1.2). The God that contains should have chronological priority to whatever is contained, and therefore what is contained cannot be considered atemporal. Both Schoedel and Briggman argue that these stages of time also retain spatial significance in ps-Aristotle's *Melissus*, so this overlap has a precedent in the philosophical tradition.[19] Irenaeus's *creatio ex nihilo*, which is recognised as central to his theology, demonstrates the importance of time in relation to God, for God's priority depends on matter having a beginning while God does not. [20] For Irenaeus, while God is not contained by time, nevertheless, God's activity contains and affects the activity of humanity within time.

3. Cognitive Meaning of "containing, not contained"

Knowledge and ignorance play a key role in the creation myth of Irenaeus's opponents, so Irenaeus argues that God's knowledge must contain everything (know everything), including creation, while God remains incomprehensible (though revealed). For some of Irenaeus's opponents, creation was a result of divine ignorance, (1) since a rogue Aeon wanted to know the unknown Pleroma (ἀγνώστου; *incognita* in *haer.* 1.19.1), which inadvertently caused creation, (*haer.* 2.2.4), and (2) the Pleroma was ignorant of this creation (*haer.* 2.3.1). This sought to distance God from the stain of creation. For Irenaeus, this only proves that their God is ignorant of something, and therefore does not contain all knowledge:

> Indeed, it is unfounded to say that although he contains everything under him, [nevertheless] creation was made by another. For one would need to confess that

[19] For Norris, this means God is unlimited. Norris, "Who Is the Demiurge?," 17; Briggman, *God and Christ in Irenaeus*, 74-79, and n. 22 and n. 34; Schoedel, "Enclosing, Not Enclosed: The Early Doctrine of God," 79. For Briggman, although the temporal categories of beginning, middle and end acquire spatial significance in ps-Aristotle, he nonetheless emphasises the temporal significance in his argument for divine infinity.
[20] May, *Creatio Ex Nihilo*, 168-74.

> something empty and unformed below the spiritual Pleroma made everything, and either the Propator, foreknowing the future, abandoned this unformed thing intentionally, or he was ignorant of them. And if, on the one hand, he was ignorant, then he will no longer be the God who foreknows all things, nor will they have a reason for why he left that place empty for such a long time.[21] If, on the other hand, he has foreknowledge and contemplated with his mind the creation which would exist in the future in that place, then he who pre-formed in himself also made it.
>
> Instabile est autem et hoc dicere, infra se omnia continente eo, ab altero quodam fabricatam esse conditionem. Oportet enim illos necessarie uacuum aliquid et informe confiteri, in quo fabricatum est hoc quod est uniuersum, infra spiritale Pleroma; et informe hoc, utrum praesciente Propatore quae in eo futura erant, ex studio sic reliquisse, an ignorante? Et si quidem ignorante, iam non omnium erit praescius Deus. Sed ne quidem causam reddere habebunt, propter quam rem locum hunc temporibus tantis otiosum sic reliquit. Si autem praescius et mente contemplatus est eam conditionem quae in eo loco futura esset, ipse fecit eam qui etiam praeformauit eam in semetipso.[22]

As it relates to cognition, on the positive side of this formula ("containing"), Irenaeus argues that his opponents cannot hold to a God who contains everything, and also argue that creation occurred outside his knowledge. Though not as prominent in this passage, the negative side of this formula ("not contained") in its cognitive sense is present throughout the opening of Book 2, especially in relation to divine simplicity. Because God is simple, God is beyond human comprehension, whose knowing, willing, and acting cannot be compared to humans.[23] However, for Irenaeus, the negative half of this formula does not preclude knowledge about God, for though God is beyond human comprehension, Irenaeus emphasises that God is revealed, often describing God as known through his love, [24] through scripture (in *haer.* 2.28), through the Son (in *haer.* 2.30.9), and Instable through the Son and Spirit (in *haer.* 4.20.4).

[21] This sentence follows Unger's translation (ACW 65.22).
[22] *haer.* 2.3.1 (SC 294.42).
[23] Both Osborn and Briggman link the divine intellect that contains all with divine simplicity. Briggman connects the theme of "containing, not contained" in *haer.* 2.1.2 with the description of God in *haer.* 4.19.2-3, where God is incomprehensible but revealed. Briggman, *God and Christ in Irenaeus*, 82. For further discussion, see Chapter 5, section 2. Osborn connects this description of God's knowledge directly with the description of divine simplicity in *haer.* 2.13, where God's knowledge is described as joined with every other description of God's action (mind, thought, etc.). See Osborn, *Irenaeus of Lyons*, 38-41. Norris compares this description of God containing all knowledge with Philo and Alcinous, who both show God to be incomprehensible so that, "This infinite and unfathomable God, since he encloses and grounds everything, has nothing prior to him, whether logically or chronologically." Norris, "Who Is the Demiurge?," 22.
[24] Michael Slusser, "The Heart of Irenaeus's Theology," in *Irenaeus: Life, Scripture, Legacy*, ed. Sara Parvis and Paul Foster (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2012).

For Irenaeus, "not contained" by human comprehension does not ignore that God is revealed, so he distinguishes between incomprehensible and unknown.[25] God contains all knowledge, including knowledge of creation, but God is not contained by human knowledge, though God is not unknown.

4. Providential Meaning of "containing, not contained"

While scholars have noted the spatial, temporal, and cognitive meanings of the metaphor of containment, its providential meaning has not been explored: that God's will and purpose contain the plan for creation. In the opening of Book 2, Irenaeus argues that the will of God cannot be separated from the activity of creation, for what God wills occurs just as it is willed, and without separation of power, time, or knowledge.[26] The role of divine power has already been introduced, but here Irenaeus clarifies that this power cannot be separated from the divine will, for God himself planned creation. In *haer.* 2.1.2, containment is applied to God's power, for "whichever is the greater and stronger and better Lord (*maius... et firmius et magis*), this one will be God," and the greater, stronger and better will contain the lesser.[27] This creates a problem for Irenaeus's opponents. If they claim that a wandering Aeon/power went outside the Pleroma to create, this would mean that the Pleroma does not contain all, and both the Pleroma and the Aeon would be "surrounded (*continebuntur*) and enclosed (*circumfinientur*) by a third thing or boundary. This, in turn, leads to an infinite regress on

[25] For some of Irenaeus's opponents, God is beyond thought (προανεννόητος translated *proanennoetos* in *haer.* 1.11.3), beyond conception (ἀνεννόητος translated *incognoscibile* in *haer.* 1.15.5, 2.2.4 and *inexcogitabilis* in *haer.* 1.14.1), beyond expression (ἄρρητός translated *inenarrabilis* in *haer.* 1.11.3; 1.14.1; 1.15.5; 2.2.4; 2.13.4), or beyond name (ἀνονόμαστος translated *innominabilis* in *haer.* 1.11.3; 1.15.5; and ἀκατονόμαστος translated *inenarrabilis* in *haer.* 1.1.1). Irenaeus himself sometimes calls God beyond comprehension or beyond description (ἄρρητός translated *inenarrabilis* in *haer.* 4.6.3 and ἀνεξήγητος translated as *inenarrabilis* in *haer.* 4.20.5), but he also regularly insists that God is revealed.

[26] Meijering examines the role of God's will twice, and in both he briefly alludes to the opening of Book 2. See R. Meijering, "Irenaeus' Relation to Philosophy in the Light of His Concept of Free Will," in *Romanitas et Christianitas*, ed. W. den Boer (Amsterdam: 1973); "Some Observations on Irenaeus' Polemic Against the Gnostics," in *God Being History: Studies in Patristic Philosophy*, ed. R. Meijering (Amsterdam: North-Holland Publishing Company, 1975).

[27] *haer.* 2.1.2 (SC 294.28).

who is containing what, and innumerable worlds and gods and polytheism (*haer.* 2.1.4).[28] However, according to Irenaeus, his opponents add this vast distance (*immensa separatione distantes*) between God and the creator because they want a separation of purpose (*sententia*).[29] They are seeking to separate God's will from the activity of creation. Irenaeus pauses his negative polemic and provides a constructive theological assertion that differentiates his God from the polytheistic system of his opponents, with a series of envious and necessarily inferior gods (cf. *Tim.* 29E):

> It is necessary either for there to be one [God] who contains all and is himself the one and only [who] made each and every thing that was made in whatever way he himself wished, or many different and undetermined makers and gods, starting one after another and stopping one after another through every part.
>
> Oportet enim aut unum esse qui omnia continet et in suis fecit unumquodque eorum quae facta sunt quemadmodum ipse uoluit, aut multos rursus et indeterminatos Factores et Deos, ab inuicem quidem incipientes, ad inuicem autem desinentes per omnem partem.[30]

For Irenaeus, the providential will of God must contain creation, and creation must occur just as was willed, otherwise, this would not be the containing God. As seen below, he uses

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[28] Norris quotes *haer.* 2.1.2 alongside *haer.* 2.1.5, and argues that this argument for the power of God should be paralleled with Philo's spatial argument that God is at once "everywhere and nowhere". Philo, *conf* 136; Norris, "Who Is the Demiurge?," 17-19. However, any philosophical text engaging with the *Timaeus* could provide another parallel. In the *Timaeus,* Plato (1) wants to avoid an infinite number of worlds and (2) he uses containment to demonstrate that separating the creator from certain parts of creation results in a third "container" which encircles everything. Though not speaking of the demiurge, Plato uses the idea of "containing" or "enclosing" through three different Greek verbs to describe the cause of creation. He states that this "Living Thing" (ζῶα) is best and most complete in every way because it has (περιλαμβάνω) within itself every living creature, just as the universe has (συνίστημι) within itself all visible living creatures that have been made (*Tim.* 30D). He goes on to state that there can only be one "Living Thing" that has (περίεχω) all living creatures because if there were two, some other "Living Thing" would need to contain (περίεχω) those two, and then the universe would not be modelled after those two "Living Things" but a third (*Tim.* 31A-B). Plato argues for a single universe that contains all living things and a single "Living Thing" which contains the best and most complete nature of each, in order to affirm a single universe (and precludes an infinite number of universes).

[29] Apuleius uses the Latin *sententia* in the same kind of discussion on providence, and he uses it to replace Ps-Plutarch's divine *nomos* to describe primary providence. Apuleius of Madaura (c. 150 AD), in *On Plato and His Doctrine* 1.12 differentiates between Fate and Providence in much the same way as ps-Plutarch's *On Fate.* Dillon has shown that while one could associate the divine *logos* and *nomos* from Ps-Plutarch with the divine *sententia* and *lex* from Apuleius, he gives a different definition to both, since he argues that what is done by Providence should be understood as having been done by Fate. John Dillon, *The Middle Platonists: 80 B.C. To A.D. 220* (Ithica, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996), 321. See also Fowler, Imperial Plato: Albinus, Maximus, Apuleius, 172-73, n. 30. It seems appropriate to translate "purpose" or "will" for *sententiam* in the context of a discussion on providence.

[30] *haer.* 2.1.5 (SC 294.32).

Middle Platonist arguments against Stoic conceptions of fate to argue that the will and providence of God must have caused creation. Furthermore, the language from the definition of simplicity is used to argue that God's will is inseparable from and simultaneous to the activity of creating.

4.1 God's Will, Thought, and Act Together

This passage and its view of the divine will overlap with his definition of divine simplicity (*haer.* 2.13), where descriptions of God's activity must be understood without the kinds of separation found in humans. Prior to this definition, after arguing that God foreknows (*praesciente* and *praescius*) all things, he uses the language of divine simplicity to affirm simultaneity and unity between God's thought and God's action.

> Therefore, may they stop saying that the world was made by another, for as soon as God's mind conceived something in his mind, what he conceived was made. It was impossible for someone to conceive in his/her mind, and for another to actually make what had been conceived by the former in his/her mind. But according to these heretics, God's mind conceived either the eternal or temporal world, and either is unbelievable. For if indeed his mind conceived what is eternal, spiritual and invisible, it would have been made in that way. If, however, it was made such as it is, it was made just as his mind conceived it, or he wanted it to be such according to his mind's conception in the presence of the Father: composite, changeable, and moveable. Therefore, since it is just as the Father had planned it in himself, it is a creation worthy of the Father.
>
> Quiescant igitur dicere ab alio factum esse mundum : simul enim ac mente concepit Deus, et factum est hoc quod mente conceperat. Nec enim possibile erat alium quidem mente concipere, alium uero facere quae ab illo mente concepta fuerant. Sed aut aeternum mundum mente concepit secundum eos haereticos Deus, aut temporalem: quae utraque incredibilia. Sed si quidem aeternum eum mente concepit et spiritalem et inuisibilem, talis et factus fuisset. Si autem talis qualis est, et ipse fecit eum talem, qui talem quidem mente conceperat ; aut in praesentia Patris uoluit esse eum secundum mentis conceptionem talem, et compositum et mutabilem et transeuntem. Cum autem sit talis, qualem Pater deformauerat apud semetipsum, dignam esse Patris fabricationem.[31]

[31] *haer.* 2.3.2 (SC 294.42-44).

First, Irenaeus denies any temporal separation in divine activity. While his opponents use chronological separation for the unfolding of divine action, Irenaeus opposes temporal separation between God's thought, will or action. Secondly, he opposes the claim that only a composite God could make a composite world. Irenaeus argues that, by describing the act of creation with parts, they are actually describing God as composite. In place of this inappropriate argument, he argues that creation occurred just as God planned, and not as a result of ignorance.[32] Rather than creation having the exact nature of its creator, it has a composite, changeable, and transient nature because it is created, and thus it has the potential to mature and increase.[33] What is created cannot have an uncreated nature. Irenaeus ends the section by repeating, "For whatever [God's] mind had conceived (*mente conceperat*), this was made," driving home his point that God's thought, will and act cannot be separated: they entail each other.

This simultaneity between God's will, thought and action is further linked to divine simplicity earlier in *Against Heresies.* In Book 1, Irenaeus states:

> He is the God of the universe: who, as soon as he thought he completed what he thought, and as soon as he willed he completed what he willed; and as soon as he wills, he thinks that which he has willed; thus thinking when he wills, and willing when he thinks, since he is all thought, [all will, all mind, all light,] all eye, all ear, and the entire font of all good.
>
> ἢ περὶ τοῦ τῶν ὅλων δεσπότου· ὃς ἅμα τῷ ἐννοηθῆναι καὶ ἐπιτετέλεκε τοῦθ' ὅπερ ἐνενοήθη, καὶ ἅμα τῷ θελῆσαι καὶ ἐννοεῖται τοῦθ' ὅπερ [καὶ] ἠθέλησεν, τότε ἐννοούμενος ὅτε θέλει, καὶ τότε θέλων, ὅτε ἐννοεῖται, ὅλος ἔννοια ὢν, ὅλος θέλημα [ὤν], ὅλος νοῦς, [ὅλος φῶς Epiphan.] ὅλος ὀφθαλμὸς, ὅλος ἀκοὴ, ὅλος πηγὴ πάντων τῶν ἀγαθῶν.
>
> eius qui est uniuersorum Dominus: qui simul ut cogitauit perfecit id quod cogitauit, et simul ac uoluit et cogitat hoc quod uoluit, tunc cogitans cum uult et tunc uolens cum cogitat, cum sit totus cogitatus et totus sensus et totus oculus et totus auditus et totus fons omnium bonorum.[34]

[32] As Irenaeus will argue in *haer.* 4.11.2, creation is transient because it has a beginning, middle, and increase, but God remains the same because "he is all light, all mind, all substance, and the fount of all good."
[33] See *haer.* 4.38.3.
[34] *haer.* 1.12.2 (SC 264.182-84).

This cites the same line of Xenophanes used in definition of the simple God in *haer.* 2.13.3, which ends by saying that God is, "totally similar and equal to himself, since he is all Mind, all Spirit, all Understanding, all Thought, all Reason, all Hearing, all Sight, all Light and the entire source of all that is good."[35] Although the term "will" is not in *haer.* 2.13 as it is in *haer.* 1.12, the unity of powers makes the same point. One cannot describe God's will as separate from God's activity because God is simple.

When Irenaeus claims that God conceives just what he thinks (in *haer.* 2.3) for creation, I suggest that this also implies God's revealing of himself. Throughout *Against Heresies,* creation and revelation are described as a united activity, and they occur just as was always planned and willed by God. In *haer.* 2.10.2-4, Irenaeus describes creation in terms of the will and power of God. In *haer.* 2.30.9, the will of God is described as "the substance of all things" and as the source of creation, and the Word which creates also reveals the Father.[36] In Book 4, while differentiating the creatures from the creator, he argues that the Son and Spirit reveal the Father "to all to whom he wills, and when he wills, and as the Father wills" since the beginning of creation, which is the same language used later in Book 4 of the "containing, not contained" God being seen by whom, when, and as he wills. [37] Creation does result in predestined natures that determine redemption (as his opponents argue), but because of divine simplicity, the will of God contains all thing and is revealed in God's economy.[38]

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[35] *haer.* 2.13.3 (SC 294.114-16) totus ipse sibimetipsi similis et aequalis est, totus cum sit sensus et totus spiritus et totus sensuabilitas et totus ennoia et totus ratio et totus auditus et totus oculus et totus lumen et totus fons omnium bonorum. Later in *haer.* 2.13.8, he states, "Yet in the way the person who says of him, "all sight and all hearing—so that, in the way he sees he also hears, and in the way he hears he also sees," does not sin, so too this person is affirming both all Thought and all Word so that in the way he is Thought, in this same way he is also Word, and the Word is his *Nous.*"

[36] *haer.* 2.30.9 (SC 294.318): "he by himself freely made, ordered, and completed/perfected/finished everything, and his will is the substance of all things…" ipse a semetipso fecit libere et ex sua potestate et disposuit et perfecit omnia et est substantia omnium volutas eius.

[37] *haer.* 4.6.7 (SC 100.454) *quibus vult et quando vult et quemadmodum vult Pater ; haer.* 4.20.5 (SC 100.638) q*uibus… quando… quemadmodum vult*

[38] The tension between divine and human free will in *Against Heresies* is quickly visible, for though humans have freewill (*haer.* 4.37.4 and 4.39.3-4), nonetheless, all created things yield to the will of God (*haer.* 5.5.2). For a comparison of the divine will and human will, see Meijering, "Irenaeus' Relation to Philosophy in the Light of His Concept of Free Will."; Fantino, *La théologie d'Irénée,* 198-202.

4.2 Creation Caused by Angels and Powers or by the Will of God

Irenaeus's focus on the will and knowledge of God specifically opposes creation through instruments or servants because this would suggest parts. In *haer.* 2.2.1-3, he counters Basilides's system of Angel-creators to show that the creation was not made apart from the will (*voluntatem*) and purpose (*sententiam*) of God, since these angels-creators would either be contained (*continentur*) by God or be in a place outside of him (*in alienis et extra eum*; *extra eum*). Either way, the first cause would need to plan the creation in the future, or his will could not contain everything:

> Those who say that the world was made by Angels, or rather by another world-Maker aside from the purpose of him who is Father over all, first of all, are sinning by saying that angels made so great and large a creation apart from the will of the first God, as if the angels were more efficient than God, or as if he was neglectful, or of an inferior existence, or not caring whether those things he made for himself were well or poorly made, such that he would cast out and forbid one but praise and take joy in the other. If this is not even applied to a skilled human, how much less to God?
>
> Qui autem ab Angelis mundum dicunt fabricatum uel ab alio quodam mundi Fabricatore praeter sententiam eius qui super omnia Pater est, primo quidem ex hoc ipso peccant, praeter uoluntatem primi Dei talem et tantam conditionem Angelos fecisse dicentes, quasi efficaciores sint Angeli quam Deus, aut rursus quasi ille neglegens sit aut minor exsistens aut nullam curam habens eorum quae in propriis ipsius fiant, utrumnam male an bene fiant, ut illud quidem dissipet et prohibeat, alterum autem laudet et gaudeat : hoc autem ne homini quidem sollerti applicet quis, quanto magis Deo?[39]

As with the spatial, temporal, and cognitive meanings of this metaphor, it is vital for Irenaeus to show that creation was not unplanned by God, and thus, carried out by rogue powers or angels. Irenaeus repeats that "it would be useless to say that the world was made apart from his purpose (*sententiam eius*), in his realm (*in eius propriis*)," particularly because, even if this is the case, the God who knows all (containment with a cognitive meaning) would be

[39] *haer.* 2.2.1 (SC 294.34).

able to see into the future.[40] God must, therefore, be understood as the first cause (*prolator et primus causa*). Whether one talks about the desiring and knowing (*volunte et sciente*) that brought about creation, or the will (*voluntatem*) of God for creation, or of angels as a cause of creation (*causa creationis*), one would have to admit that the first cause prepared the other causes of creation (*causas fabricationis*), and therefore creation was done within the will of the first cause. This point is illustrated by his metaphor of the king, architect, and craftsman:

> It is like a king, who is brought for the guidance of war, who prepared those things that are the [actual] cause of victory, or in the construction of a city or a public works, the person who planned the causes to their completion [i.e. materials for building], of things made under him. Therefore, we would not say that the axe split the wood or the saw cut it, but one would most appropriately say that the person who made the axe and the saw is the one who cut and split it, and even more so, the one who made the original tools by which axe and saw were made.
>
> quemadmodum in regem correctio belli refertur, qui praeparauit ea quae sunt causa uictoriae, et conditio huius ciuitatis aut huius operis in eum qui praeparauit causas ad perfectionem eorum quae deorsum facta sunt. Quapropter non iam securim dicimus concidere ligna uel serram secare, sed hominem concidere et secare rectissime quis dicat eum qui ipsam securim et serram ad hoc fecit, et multo prius armamenta omnia per quae fabricata sunt securis et serra. [41]

The preparation and planning that comes before each outcome (in the battle, construction and millwork) distinguishes the first, and actual, cause.[42] The will and purpose of God are the first cause of creation. However, while the imagery of an axe or saw illustrate the priority of the first cause, he must explain his own view on the role of tools or instruments.

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[40] *haer.* 2.2.2 (SC 294.36) ualde uanum erit praeter sententiam eius in eius propriis ab Angelis et ipsis qui sunt in potestate eius aut ab alio quodam dicere fabricatum esse mundum, aut quasi non omnia perspiciat ipse quae sint in suis, aut non sciat quae ab Angelis futura sint.

[41] *haer.* 2.2.3 (SC 294.36).

[42] For a similar argument concerning God's power in the midrash, see the discussion in Schremer's response to Segal's book on the "Two powers in heaven heresy." Adiel Schremer, "Midrash, Theology, and History: Two Powers in Heaven Revisited," *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 39 (2008): 251. He cites the *Shirta,* where God's power does not change and is not diminished. "There may be a hero in a country who is fully equipped with all the implements of warfare, but possesses neither strength nor courage, nor the knowledge of the tactics and the order of warfare. He by whose word the world came into being, however, is not so, but He has strength, courage and knowledge of the tactics and the order of warfare, as it is said: "For the battle is the Lord's and He will give you into our hand" (1 Sam 17:47)."

He then refers to the scriptural passages central to his theology of creation, starting with Hermas, *Mandate* 1.1 and Genesis 1, to argue that God did not need angels or other powers to complete the creation He willed.

> Rather, predetermining himself in himself all things, he made everything just as he wanted, in a way that is indescribable and incomprehensible to us.
>
> sed ipse in semetipso secundum id quod est inenarrabile et inexcogitabile nobis omnia praedestinans fecit quemadmodum uoluit. [43]

Irenaeus rejects the view that God created by angels or instruments (*organis*). Instead, God's Word was ideal and sufficient (*idoneus et sufficiens*),[44] a claim supported by citing the key scriptural passages that undergird his theology of creation (Gen 1, John 1:3; Ps 32/3, and Eph 4:6) which are made up of different kinds of scripture (he names the books John and Genesis and the persons David and Paul).[45] In his account, these scriptural passages present a unified account, and support his later claim that there is not a division between Father, Son and Spirit in the work of God's Hands in creation (see Chapter 5). For Irenaeus, these different scriptures provide a unified testimony of creation, substantiating his assertion that the Word is not an instrument of God, but rather the Word fulfilled the will of God as determined "himself in himself" and created "himself, through himself."[46] In an argument that has been largely deconstructive, Irenaeus describes his own view of the activity of creation as contained by God's will, power, and knowledge, and occurring through his Word, not as an instrument, but God himself in himself.

Lastly, Irenaeus uses the metaphor of containment to reject language of fate and necessity in favour of providence, and he does it in a way that echoes a contemporary middle Platonic debate. In *haer.* 2.5.3, Irenaeus claims that his opponents are at a crossroads. Either

[43] *haer.* 2.2.4 (SC 294.38).
[44] I here disagree with Rousseau's emendation and Unger's adoption of it, that this is a doubling of the Greek ἱκανός. See Rousseau, SC 293, 212; Unger, ACW 65, 119.
[45] For discussion on this exegesis, see Chapter 1, section 3.
[46] *haer.* 4.20.1.

God permits and allows (*concedit et probat*) creation to occur in the womb of the Pleroma, or they must say that creation occurred without the permission and approval of the Father (*non concedente neque aprobante patre*), and therefore something stronger caused creation.[47] With this latter option, either (1) the demiurge is more powerful than the Father, or (2) the Father allowed creation out of necessity (*necessitatem*).[48] There is a Stoic background to the language of fate and necessity, and elsewhere Irenaeus has explicitly linked the doctrine of his opponents with the Stoic doctrine of Fate (*haer.* 2.14.4).[49] Within a century of Irenaeus, *On Fate*, which is attributed to ps-Plutarch, examined the intersection of providence and necessity.[50] The author differentiates between primary, secondary, and tertiary providence, and

[47] *haer.* 2.5.3 (SC 294.56). Unger translates this "bosom", which echoes the flow of the passage (ACW 65.26). Just prior, in *haer.* 2.4.2 and 2.4.3, Irenaeus twice refers to the *sinus* of the Pleroma, and then of the Father. This helps to link the argument to John 1:18. However, in an effort to reflect the extant Latin term (*ventre*), I retained "womb."

[48] *haer.* 2.5.3 (SC 294.56).

[49] Plato's *Timaeus* was often the starting point for these discussions on the role of providence in creation in Middle Platonism. Both intellect and necessity are described as causal influences to creation (for example, see *Tim.* 74E-75D), and Homeric literature provided the illustrations for this debate, since the gods are constantly under the constraints of fate. Stoicism also played prominently in this debate as seen in Cicero's *De Fato*, where he places Chrysippus and Epicurus in conversation, favouring the former because (1) he rejects necessity and (2) he places everything under fore-ordained causes (differentiating perfect and principle causes from auxiliary and proximate causes: *perfectis et principalibus, sed causis adiuvantibus et proximis*). *de fato* 18.41 (LCL 349.237-38). In the context of this discussion, Epicureans wanted to preserve human freewill, but Cicero shows that this cannot be done at the expense of fate or necessity because of the rules of logic. In *de fato* 44, Cicero talks about the containing causes (*continens causas*) in the context of assent, so that even assent is a cause contained by fate. Rackham translates it as "contiguous cause," but this carries the sense of something alongside, and not contained. H. Rackham, ed. *Cicero: De Oratore Book III, De Fato, Paradoxa Stoicorum, De Partitione Oratoria*, LCL 349 (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1942), 241. In this middle-Platonic, Stoic and Epicurean debate, metaphysics (causes, fate and necessity) informs ethics (freewill). Even when distinguishing causes, fate is still placed prominently in the order of the universe. In fact, as argued by Bobzien, in the Stoic view on the cosmos, Fate, God, Providence, Reason (*logos*), God's Will, and the Active Principle were, in many senses, the same. For others, such as Cleanthes (as seen in Calcidius's *Commentary on the Timaeus* 144), fate and providence were differentiated in an effort to avoid attributing evil to god (Cleanthes *Hymn to Zeus* 122.11-13). See Susanne Bobzien, *Determinism and Freedom in Stoic Philosophy* (Oxford: OUP, 2001), 46-47.

[50] This text was not written by Plutarch, but is probably by a 2nd century Platonist. However, while Plutarch is rejected as the author because it lacks the "intellectual excitement characteristic of Plutarch's writing" (see Sharples), based on his other writing, he would not have disagreed with its content. Dillon, *The Middle Platonists: 80 B.C. To A.D. 220*, 320-25; Robert W. Sharples, "The Stoic Background to the Middle Platonist Discussion of Fate," in *Platonic Stoicism, Stoic Platonism: The Dialogue between Platonism and Stoicism in Antiquity*, ed. M. Bonazzi and C. Helmig (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 169.

although primary providence contains all, it was not made responsible for evil.[51] Likewise,

Irenaeus argues that God's providence could not be contained by fate and necessity:[52]

> It is not proper to say that the God who is over all serves necessity since he is free and has his own powers, and his concession would be according to his purpose. Otherwise, they will make necessity greater and more powerful than God, since what is more powerful is also older than everything else. Right from the beginning, he would need to remove the cause of necessity and not bind himself to having necessity, removing anything outside of what is proper to him. It would be better, more consistent, and more godlike if, from the start of the beginning, he had removed this kind of necessity, than if afterward, as if sorry for what he had done, he tried to remove so large a fruit of necessity. And if the Father of the universe was a servant to necessity, he would fall under fate by tolerating all the troublesome things that occur without being able to do anything against necessity and fate, just like the Homeric Jupiter who of necessity says, "for I gave to you as if willing, but with an unwilling soul" (*Iliad* 4.43). Therefore, according to this reasoning, their Bythus would be found to be a slave of necessity and fate.
>
> Non decet autem eum qui super omnia sit Deus, cum sit liber et suae potestatis, necessitati seruisse dicere, ut sit aliquid secundum concessionem praeter sententiam eius: alioquin necessitatem maiorem et dominantiorem facient quam Deum, quando id quod magis potest antiquius sit omnibus. Et statim in principio causas abscidere necessitatis debuit et non concludere semetipsum ad habendam necessitatem, concedendo aliquid praeterquam deceat eum. Multo enim melius et consequentius et magis deificum erat ut in principio initium excideret huiusmodi necessitatis, quam postea quasi de paenitentia conaretur tantam fructificationem necessitatis eradicare. Et si necessitati seruiens erit Pater uniuersorum, et sub fatum cadet moleste ferens in his quae fiunt, praeter necessitatem autem et fatum nihil agere possit, similiter atque homericus Iupiter, qui per necessitatem dicit: *Et ego enim tibi dedi uelut uolens,*

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[51] According to Boys-Stone, Middle Platonists began to argue that providence should be understood as superior and prior to fate, and categorised this discussion as one of metaphysics. G. R. Boys-Stones, "'Middle' Platonists on Fate and Human Autonomy," in *Greek and Roman Philosophy 100 BC-200 AD*, ed. Robert Sharples and Richard Sorabji (London: Institute of Classical Studies, University of London, 2007), 431, 46. The author first compares fate to a circle containing everything (*de fato* 569A). This text marks a change from Cicero because while fate includes (περιέχει) every contingent possible choice of a human, fate is in turn contained (περιείληφε from περιλαμβάνω) by providence (*de fato* 572F). While fate conforms (ἐνδὲχομαι) to providence, providence does not conform to fate, so fate is understood to be younger (νεώτερον) or logically posterior to providence, which is, "eldest (πρεσβύτατον) of all, save the one whose will or intellection or both it is, and it is that, as has been previously stated, of the Father and Artisan of all things" (*de fato* 572B). In his argument, primary providence framed the souls of men and the cosmos, (supported by *Tim.* 29D-30A and 41D-E). Secondary providence gave the task of completing creation to the gods (citing *Tim.* 42D-E). Tertiary providence is understood as the laws given to humanity, thereby distancing providence from the author of evil (referring to *Tim.* 42D-E, and citing *Phaed.* 247A and *Laws* 875C-D). Other Middle Platonist examples exist. For example, Apuleius, *On Plato and His Doctrine* 1.12, says that evil cannot be ascribed to God because of providence. "All things that are conducted naturally—and for that reason, rightly—are governed by the guardianship of providence; we cannot ascribe the cause of any evil to God. For this reason, Plato believes that one cannot blame everything on the lot of fate." See Fowler, Imperial Plato: Albinus, Maximus, Apuleius, 172.

[52] Meijering's study provides helpful descriptions for the ways Irenaeus's argument echoes the language of Plato and Middle Platonic opposition to Epicureanism. See Meijering, "Some Observations on Irenaeus' Polemic Against the Gnostics." Irenaeus's text been compared to other ps-Plutarch texts. Schoedel claims *placita* and *Against Heresies* made use of the same doxography. See Schoedel, "Philosophy and Rhetoric in the *Adversus Haereses* of Irenaeus."

> *nolente animo.* Secundum igitur hanc rationem necessitatis et fati inuenietur seruus Bythus ipsorum.[53]

Since God is free, he is not a slave of necessity such that he would need or allow something that was against or outside his purpose (*praeter sententiam eius*) to create.[54] Just as ps-Plutarch (in *de fato* 572F) makes an argument for providence being above necessity because it is logically prior and older, here Irenaeus states that in the argument of his opponents, necessity would be more powerful and older than God. Furthermore, Irenaeus argues that if the Father of all is a slave of necessity, then he is also under fate, and if necessity and fate (*necessitatem… et fatum*) constrain him, he would be just like the Homeric Jupiter.[55] Thus, the Pleroma of Irenaeus's opponents would likewise be, "a slave of fate and necessity" (*necessitates et fati… servuus*) since it allows creation against its will.[56] Irenaeus goes on to argue that God's providence, though unseen, is still known, illustrated by an emperor who is known by those living under the Roman empire though they never see him.[57] For ps-Plutarch, primary providence in creation must not be a fake providence that is actually constrained by a deterministic fate or necessity, and this providence or purpose is the initial means whereby God is known. Because Irenaeus is arguing for a God who is "containing, not contained" with a providential meaning, he eliminates any external influences upon God, whether personal Aeons or impersonal fate. Rather, God's will "containing, not contained" provides a united picture of God's activity so that God's primary providence foreknew the results of creation.[58]

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[53] *haer.* 2.5.4 (SC 294.58-60).
[54] *Sententiam* is used to describe the purpose of God's creation starting in *haer.* 2. In *haer.* 2.1.1, God made all things by his own purpose and free will (*sua sententia et libere fecit omnia*). In *haer.* 2.2.1 and 2.2.2, against Basilides, creation would not occur outside of his purpose (*praeter sententiam eius*). (SC 294.26, 34, 36).
[55] In the *Iliad* 4.43, Zeus allows the sacking of Troy as if willing (*volens*), although unwilling (*nolente*).
[56] *haer.* 2.5.4 (SC 294.58-60).
[57] *haer.* 2.6.1-2. Irenaeus differentiates natural and special knowledge, stating that "one God, Lord of all" is the single fact that is known by all (natural knowledge), while the Father is revealed by the Son (special knowledge), supported by Matthew 11:27 ("no one knows the Father except the Son, and whoever the Son has willed to reveal him to"). See Unger's very helpful discussion on this differentiation through *Against Heresies.* Unger, ACW 65, 122-24, n. 5. See also Luckhart, "Matthew 11,27 in the 'Contra Haereses' of St. Irenaeus."
[58] A tertiary providence is not as clear in Irenaeus, but could be seen in *haer.* 3.25 and 4.38.1. First, after claiming that the God of Epicurus has no providence and claiming Plato is more religious than Marcion (and Valentinians), Irenaeus differentiates between God's providence and counsel (*providentiam* and *consilium*). While God exercises providence over all things, counsel applies to moral discipline (*qui morum providentiam*

God's will and activity cannot be separated, and there are no intermediaries that complete the serves activity of a creation planned beforehand. Instead, because God is simple, God's will entails God's activity, and any description of God's powers start from God himself creating.

5. Conclusion

The argument for a "containing, not contained" God in creation is used in different ways, but they all serve to argue that God is the cause of creation. In the providential meaning of this metaphor, the activity of creation is not separated from the will of God nor constrained by fate or necessity. Irenaeus also argues that God's powers, namely his Word, cannot be described as instruments, for God himself through himself created. The Word fulfills the will of the Father. Irenaeus uses language from Middle Platonic debates to criticise his opponent's language of fate as a cause for creation above the creator, and to argue that God's providence governs creation. Rather, divine will is fulfilled in divine activity. Throughout, the principle of divine simplicity helps guide what is said about God. The will of God cannot be separated from God's power and activity, and instead, God's will is united and simultaneous with the activity that fulfills it. God's will cannot be separated from God's thought, and God's thought cannot be separated from God's activity, because God is simple.

habent: literally, "those having providence/foresight of habits") in *haer.* 3.25.1 (SC 211.478). Irenaeus claims that gentiles (such as Plato) were able to recognize the Creator as the Father of the All and see that his providence arranged the world, with an overarching providence alongside a counsel providing regulative norms for humanity (hence his citations from *Laws* and *Timaeus*). The argument in *haer.* 4.38.1 is similar. When discussing the origin of corruption (*haer.* 2.5.3), Irenaeus argues that under his opponents' system, God was either unable or unwilling to disallow creation, and these are the same two explanations later given for human sin and imperfection (see *haer.* 4.38.1). In Book 4, while a mother is able (δύναται) to give the infant more solid food, the infant is not able (ἀδυνατεῖ) to retain it. Likewise, at the beginning, humanity was unable to receive, being an infant (οὕτως καὶ ὁ Θεὸς αὐτὸς μὲν οἷός τε ἦν παρασχεῖν ἀπ' ἀρχῆς τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ τὸ τέλειον). This is due to the creator/creature differentiation, one being perfect and the other always moving toward perfection. However, at the start, humans were unaccustomed and untrained in perfect discipline (ἀγύμναστα πρὸς τὴν τελείαν ἀγωγήν), which implies that humanity was not yet willing. (SC 100.944-46). Irenaeus's ethical arguments in Books 3-4 rest on his cosmological argument from Book 2, so that God's will "containing" creation provides counsel for human action. God's providence in creation is intricately involved with humanity.

Chapter 4: Divine Generation and a Simple God

In each chapter of Part 2, I am arguing that divine simplicity has implications for different areas of Irenaeus's theology, and while the other implications have not been examined in detail, scholars have noted that Irenaeus' view of divine generation depends on divine simplicity. This chapter therefore explores these arguments and makes the novel claim that God's names and powers are mutually entailing, which means they remain *distinct* in unity. Anthony Briggman and Pui Ip have both concluded that, in line with a concept of divine simplicity, God's powers are *identical*, and Ip's argument on *haer.* 2.17 provides the strongest evidence for this view.[1] Ip cautions against reading Irenaeus as proto-Trinitarian, arguing that Irenaeus lacks a clear distinction between the generator and generated that would differentiate his view from a kind of proto-Monarchianism. As he traces the Christian appropriation of divine simplicity, he starts with Irenaeus and Monarchians, and claims that Origen, who is conscious of both Valentinian and Monarchian positions, is the first to clearly distinguish between the generator and the generated without separating them.

By looking through a a second-century lens, I argue that a reading of Irenaeus's divine simplicity as unity in distinction should be preferred. Ip's argument remains helpful in a number of ways. While Irenaeus does not use third-century terms of distinction, this may not be the proper gauge for measuring his view. In section one I argue that the question regarding the relationship between generator-generated had already been outlined in the second-century. Prior to Irenaeus, these two opposite views of generation (God generating

[1] Briggman and Ip focus on *haer.* 2.17 and divine generation in chapter 3 of their respective books. Briggman first describes God's powers as identical in chapter 2, and while he retains that language in Chapter 3, he argues that the Father and Word are distinct. Briggman, *God and Christ in Irenaeus*; Ip, *Origen of Alexandria and the Emergence of Divine Simplicity before Nicaea*. Briggman provides an exhaustive answer to those who claim that Irenaeus says nothing on divine generation, based on *haer.* 2.28.5. See Briggman, *God and Christ in Irenaeus*, 121-22. I am grateful to Dr. Pui Ip for sharing an early version of his book with me, and his kind and collegial exchanges with me on the topic of divine generation, which allowed me to think through several inconsistencies in my own thinking.

powers separately and God generating powers without distinction) were explored by Tatian and Ptolemy in the context of divine simplicity. Irenaeus clearly rejects the kind of separation proposed by Ptolemy, but he does not go on to reject distinction in God, as Tatian does. In section two I examine the three metaphors that yield the four principles for divine generation that Briggman and Ip have found in Irenaeus's system. They argue that the fourth principle, that divine generation is simple and uniform and altogether equal and similar to itself, sums up the other three. I agree, and highlight that this principle consistently retains a sense of distinction. Lastly, I focus on the ways this fourth principle is applied to God's Mind, Word and Wisdom, and I argue that distinction is retained between these divine powers. Because in *haer.* 2.17, Irenaeus does not reject distinction, like Tatian, but instead argues for absolute unity alongside language that retains distinction, and because Irenaeus's arguments elsewhere depend on distinction of God's powers, I conclude that this passage should be read as exploring the tension of unity with distinction in divine generation.

1. Second-century Descriptions of the Simple God and Divine Generation

Before Irenaeus, divine simplicity was used in two opposing views of divine generation. Ptolemy, who was a student of Valentinus in Rome, authored the *Letter to Flora*, which differentiates between the substance of the generated demiurge and the simple Father.[2] Tatian, who was a student of Justin, completed his *Oration Against the Greeks* prior to

[2] In 2 *Apology* (ca. 152 CE), Justin describes a martyr, Ptolemy, who is "a lover of truth" and showed himself to be a "true Christian." Justin also condemns Valentinian schools in the later text, *Dialogue with Trypho* (ca. 155-166 CE), so it is unlikely that Justin knew that Ptolemy was a student of Valentinus in Rome. See Justin, 2 *Apol.* 2.11-14. φιλαλήθη ἀλλ' οὐκ ἀπατηλὸν οὐδὲ ψευδολόγον τὴν γνώμην ὄντα… τῷ ἀληθινῷ Χριστιανῷ. Translation and Greek from Denis and Paul Parvis Minns, ed. *Justin, Philospher and Martyr: Apologies*, Oxford Early Christian Texts (Oxford: OUP, 2014), 276-77. In the later text, *Dialogue with Trypho* 35 (ca. 155-166 CE), he calls Valentinians "sheep in wolves' clothing," "false prophets," and "those calling themselves Christians." Markschies argues that, "Ptolemy was closer to the consent of the theology of the city of Rome than his followers," because he was not condemned by Justin. Christopher Markschies, "New Research on Ptolemaeus Gnosticus," *ZAC* 4 (2000): 252. Scholars have noted that there are significant differences between Valentinus, Ptolemy, and their respective followers. See Thomassen, *The Spiritual Seed*; Christopher Markschies, "Individuality in Some Gnostic Authors: With a Few Remarks on the Interpretation of Ptolemaeus, Epistula ad Floram," *ZAC* 15 (2011).

leaving Rome (c. 177 CE).[3] Though he was accused of adherence to various variant positions, including Marcionite, Valentinian, and Encratite,[4] when it comes to his description of the Word's simple generation, his position echoes later descriptions of Monarchianism by eliminating any difference or distinction between the Father and his Word, a view that directly contrasts with the Valentinian view of separated emanations.[5] Irenaeus's argument on divine generation in *haer*. 2.17 engages the language and metaphors of these two opposing views, and because he spent time in Rome around the same time (before 175 CE), and because he directly opposes both Ptolemy and Tatian by name in *Against Heresies,* it seems likely that he was aware of some version of these two views of divine generation in the context of divine simplicity. However, in his complete opposition to Valentinian positions, he does not adopt Tatian's view.

Ptolemy's *Letter to Flora* describes divine generation in the context of the simple God by separating the generating Father from the generated demiurge. He mostly focuses on the law in scripture, but eventually, he imposes his tripartite view of the law onto his metaphysics. He argues that the tripartite contributors of the law are God, Moses, and the elders (superior, intermediary, and inferior), but the Law of God established by the Saviour abolished the others, which he defends on the basis of Matthew 5 and selections from Pauline epistles.[6] In this discussion, Ptolemy was engaging a Marcionite view of scripture and

[3] R. M. Grant, "The Date of Tatian's Oration," *HTR* 46, no. 2 (1953); William Petersen, *Tatian's Diatessaron: its Creation, Dissemination, Significance, and History in Scholarship* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 71.
[4] Crawford, "The *Problemata* of Tatian."
[5] Emily J. Hunt, *Christianity in the Second Century: The Case of Tatian* (London: Routledge, 2003), 20-51; Crawford, "The *Problemata* of Tatian," 552-55.
[6] *ep.* 5.1 (SC 24.60). For Ptolemy, the Law of Moses is corrupt (intermediary level) because the Saviour condemns divorce (*ep.* 4.3-10 from Matthew 19:6-8), and the tradition of the elders is corrupt (inferior level) because the Saviour condemns the neglecting of parents (*ep.* 4.11-13 with Matthew 15:4-9). He argues for a tripartite view of the Law of God (*ep.* 5.1-6.6) in which he twice alternates between Matthew 5 (*ep.* 5.1-7; 6.1-5) and Paul (*ep.* 5.8-15; 6.6), focusing all along on the Saviour's work of abolishing the corrupted Law (*lex talionis* in Mt 5:38) and fulfilling the pure Law (decalogue in Mt 5:21-26). In this argument, Paul is used to highlight the spiritual meaning of the figurative law (spiritual offerings from Eph 5:19 or Col 3:16; circumcision of the heart from Rom 2:29, and citations of 1 Cor 5:7, Eph 2:15 and Rom 7:12 in *ep.* 6.6). Ptolemy was using both the Gospels and Paul as mutual support for the same conclusion.

conception of God, but scholars disagree on whether his metaphysical system is an adaptation or rebuttal of Marcion.[7] Ptolemy supports his metaphysical system with language of simplicity, so I think Markschies is right to argue that Ptolemy was opposing Marcion's system. As Andrew Radde-Gallwitz has argued, Ptolemy sought to avoid the problems posed by a corrupted law by introducing an intermediary demiurge between the corrupted word and the simple Father.[8] The *Letter to Flora* moves from Law to First Principles, arguing that the tripartite givers of the law and the tripartite law of God proves a tripartite deity with distinct essences:

> The Adversary's essence is corruption and darkness (for it is material and variegated), but the unbegotten Father of the entirety's essence is incorruption and self-existing light, simple and singular. The Intermediary's essence, while presenting a certain double power, is an image of the better.[9]
>
> Τοῦ μὲν γὰρ ἀντικειμένου ἐστὶν ἡ οὐσία φθορά τε καὶ σκότος (ὑλικὸς γὰρ οὗτος καὶ πολυσχιδής), τοῦ δὲ πατρὸς τῶν ὅλων τοῦ ἀγεννήτου ἡ οὐσία ἐστὶν ἀφθαρσία τε καὶ φῶς αὐτοόν, ἁπλοῦν τε καὶ μονοειδές· ἡ δὲ τούτου οὐσία διττὴν μέν τινα δύναμιν προήγαγεν, αὐτὸς δὲ τοῦ κρείττονός ἐστιν εἰκών.[10]

The Intermediary Demiurge is described as the creator of the universe but different in essence and nature (ἕτερος … οὐσίας in *ep.* 7.4; ἑτέρας οὐσίας τε καὶ φύσεως in *ep.* 7.6) from both the Adversary and the Father, but an "image of the better."[11] Regardless of how one interprets the identity of the Demiurge and Saviour,[12] the differentiation of essence between

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[7] Winrich Löhr claims the *Letter to Flora* can be characterized as "moderately Marcionite with a hint of Platonism," while Christopher Markschies calls this work an "anti-Marcionite" polemic (for it rejects *lex talionis* and argues for three, instead of two, Principles). Winrich Löhr, "La doctrine de Dieu dans la lettre a Flora de Ptolémée," *Revue d'Histoire et de Philosophie Religieuses* 75, no. 2 (1995): 188. "d'un marcionitisme modéré par des touches platonisantes." Markschies, "New Research on Ptolemaeus Gnosticus," 232-34, 37, 48.

[8] Radde-Gallwitz, *Transformation of Divine Simplicity*, 21-36. See especially p. 26: "for Ptolemy, Marcion's gravest error is mistaking the moral status of the mediating second principle, or perhaps of overlooking the need for the second principle altogether. Ptolemy agrees with Marcion that divine activity in scripture cannot be attributed directly to the good God. But he takes his unnamed opponent, whom we can identify with Marcion or perhaps some of his followers, to imply that the second principle, who is active in scripture as creator and judge, is evil, whereas Ptolemy argues that he is just."

[9] Translation from Bradley Storin, K., "Ptolemy, *Letter to Flora*," in *God*, ed. Andrew Radde-Gallwitz (Cambridge: CUP, 2017), 9.

[10] *ep.* 7.7 (SC 24.70).

[11] *ep.* 7.4-7 (SC 24.68-70).

[12] This argument was first put forth by Quispel, but has recently been defended, particularly by Thomassen and Schmid. Quispel, SC 24, 77-79; Thomassen, *The Spiritual Seed*, 122-24; Herbert Schmid, "Ist der Soter in Ptolemäus' *Epistula ad Floram* der Demiurg? Zu einer These von Christoph Markschies," *ZAC* 15 (2011): 249-

Father and Intermediary is key. In the system of Ptolemy, the Father is simple and the source of all, but because what is made reflects the essence and nature of the maker (*ep.* 7.8),[13] and because corruption exists, therefore, the lower law and material creation must be attributed to a lower demiurge (thereby separating the simple Father from corruption and darkness). Löhr argues that the gap between the demiurge and the Father is not that great, because the demiurge reflects the justice of the Father at an inferior level.[14] However, the argument in Ptolemy is not a "glass half-empty or half-full" description of the demiurge's goodness or justice, but a logical move that separates the activity of creation from the Father by utilizing the philosophical language of simplicity. Ptolemy purposely leaves one specific question of divine generation unanswered. Although he claims that it is in the nature of the good to beget good, he encourages Flora not to be disturbed by the question of how an intermediate or corrupt essence came to exist from a simple, unbegotten, and good source (*ep.* 7.8-10). Ptolemy does not explain divine generation, but instead simply states that the simple God generates a being apart from himself that is of a different substance. Throughout Book 2, Irenaeus engages his opponents' attempts to distance God from creation, but precisely at *haer.* 2.17, Irenaeus focuses on this question of divine generation, asking how a simple God could generate powers or a demiurge of a different substance. Nine separate times he engages the language of same/different substance, directly opposing the kind of claim made about the

71. Markschies and Löhr both claim that the Saviour and the Demiurge are the same, with Markschies' 2011 article containing a direct response to Schmid. See Christopher Markschies, "New Research on Ptolemaeus Gnosticus," ibid.4 (2000): 240-44; "Individuality in Some Gnostic Authors: With a Few Remarks on the Interpretation of Ptolemaeus, Epistula ad Floram," 427-30; Löhr, "La doctrine de Dieu dans la lettre a Flora de Ptolémée."

[13] *ep.* 7.8 (SC 24.72), τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ φύσιν ἔχοντος τὰ ὅμοια ἑαυτῷ καὶ ὁμοούσια γεννᾶν τε καὶ προφέρειν

[14] Löhr, "La doctrine de Dieu dans la lettre a Flora de Ptolémée," 182. "D'un côté, il souligne qu'il faut distinguer entre la bonté du Père et la justice du créateur. D'un autre côté, pour Ptolémée, l'écart entre le premier Dieu et le second Dieu n'est pas si grand ; le démiurge représente la justice supérieure du Père à un niveau inférieur." His logic in this case does not hold however, because he claims that the Father was also bound by the "necessity" from *lex talionis* for he follows it by showing that Ptolemy only argues that the law is inconsistent with nature of the father because of "necessity" in the world. "Ainsi Ptolémée n'hésite pas à envisager la possibilité que la loi du talion corresponde à la nature du Père - mais, aussitôt, il se corrige avec la phrase suivante : Non, la loi du talion est le résultat de la nécessité qui règne dans le monde d'ici-bas." Ibid. Irenaeus argues that God would be bound to necessity precisely in this same way in *haer.* 2.5.4, as seen below.

simple Father in the *Letter to Flora*.[15] Ptolemy and Irenaeus attribute a change in nature (from a perfect cause to an imperfect result) in different conceptual places. Ptolemy inserts the change of nature into his metaphysics, because only a demiurge of a corrupted substance could create a corrupted material world. Irenaeus inserts it between metaphysics and physics, because the creator/creature differentiation means that the creator, who is uncaused, necessarily creates beings of a different nature, namely, something caused. They both agree that God is simple and acknowledge the existence of different natures, but Ptolemy depends on a divine generation of a different substance that separates the generator from the generated.

In direct opposition to this kind of view, Tatian's *Oration Against the Greeks* describes the Word as springing forth from God's will of simplicity (ἁπλότητος), but he rejects distinction between the generator and he generated:

> By the will of his simplicity, the Word sprang forth and did not come in vain, but the Word became the "firstborn" work of the Father. Him we know as the beginning of the universe. He came into being by partition, not by section, for what is severed is separated from its origin, but what has been partitioned takes on a distinctive function and does not diminish the source from which it has been taken.
>
> θελήματι δὲ τῆς ἁπλότητος αὐτοῦ προπηδᾷ λόγος· ὁ δὲ λόγος οὐ κατὰ κενοῦ χωρήσας ἔργον πρωτότοκον τοῦ πατρὸς γίνεται. τοῦτον ἴσμεν τοῦ κόσμου τὴν ἀρχήν. γέγονεν δὲ κατὰ μερισμόν, οὐ κατὰ ἀποκοπήν· τὸ γὰρ ἀποτμηθὲν τοῦ πρώτου κεχώρισται, τὸ δὲ μερισθὲν οἰκονομίας τὴν διαίρεσιν προσλαβὸν οὐκ ἐνδεᾶ τὸν ὅθεν εἴληπται πεποίηκεν.[16]

First, Tatian uses the language of partition (κατὰ μερισμόν) and rejects division (ἀποκοπήν). For Tatian, that which is generated remains unseparated and indistinguishable from the generator. In contrast, Irenaeus does not use the language of partition though he does regularly reject separation. Second, Tatian illustrates divine generation with the metaphors of a fire being kindled from torch to torch without being reduced and of a word being spoken

[15] Simons, "God and *eiusdem substantiae* in *Against Heresies* 2.17-18."
[16] *orat.* 5. Translation adapted from and text taken from Whittaker, Tatian: *Oratio ad Graecos* and fragments, 10-11.

without the speaker being reduced, metaphors which were prominent in his teacher, Justin, and later used by Irenaeus. However, as argued by Matthew Crawford, what is absent from this passage is equally as important as what is present.[17] While in some ways Tatian uses language that is similar to Justin, he omits any descriptions that retains a distinction between the Father and the Logos, instead using the language of Justin's opponents. In particular, Tatian rejects the view that the Logos was separated from God, and when explaining the metaphor of a torch being lit from fire, he omits Justin's clarification that the first fire appears to have its own existence.[18] Justin had argued that the fires of different torches are distinct (ἕτερα), but the original fire was not reduced and remained the same. Tatian refers to the many torches that do not reduce the original torches, but is silent about distinction. Irenaeus does not follow Justin exactly. He adopts and develops Justin's view of a distinct and subordinate Logos by affirming the "sameness and unity" between Father and Logos,[19] and by using the same scriptural references of the fire from the burning bush in Exodus 3 to do it.[20] However, as it relates to divine generation, Irenaeus notes that torches will differ (*distabunt*) in size though their light is the same, and fires do not differ in "age" or substance, but only in their lighting (*accessionem*).[21] Irenaeus does not deny a distinction between the torches, but rejects a difference of substance or age. Irenaeus develops Justin's metaphor of fire without adopting his view of the Logos, but he never follows Tatian's language of partition and his rejection of distinction. Lastly, Tatian's larger view removes any creative agency from the Logos, and he consistently attributes actions of the Incarnate Christ, such as healing, suffering, or final judgement, to God and never to Christ.[22] This view of the Logos is

[17] See Crawford, "The *Problemata* of Tatian," 553-55. Cf. Roman Hanig, "Tatian und Justin. Ein Vergleich," *VC* 53, no. 1 (1999).
[18] The relevant citations in Justin are from 1 *apol.* 63 and *dial.* 128.
[19] Jackson Lashier, "Irenaeus as Logos Theologian," *VC* 66, no. 4 (2012).
[20] See *dial.* 128; *haer.* 3.6.2.
[21] *haer.* 2.17.4 (SC 294.160-62).
[22] Crawford, "The *Problemata* of Tatian," 554-55.

incompatible with Irenaeus's descriptions of the Word-Son.[23] Tatian's use of the language of simplicity to describe divine generation results in a lack of distinction between the generator and the generated Logos, a description which cannot be paralleled in Irenaeus.

Two opposite views of the simple God generating existed in the second century. Irenaeus rejects separation between God and his powers, as held by Ptolemy, but he does not adopt Tatian's view, which rejects distinction in God. Irenaeus does not follow the extant extreme view that would most easily contrasts his opponents' view, but instead, he retains a sense of distinction in divine generation.

2. Metaphors for Divine Generation in Irenaeus (*haer.* 2.17.2)

In *haer.* 2.17, Irenaeus examines metaphors of divine generation, and divine simplicity is his operating principle.[24] Most of this passage is negative polemic, and therefore it functions primarily as a refutation of his opponents' position, though his own position can be discerned. Irenaeus introduces three different kinds of metaphors for understanding divine generation, and he explores the implications of each:

> It will be asked, therefore, how the remaining Aeons were emitted? Were they united to the one who sent them out, like a single ray of the sun; or [were they sent out] completely[25] and individually,[26] so that every single one of them might be separate and have its own form, like a person [coming] from another person or a bull from another bull, or according to germination, like a branch of a tree? Or did they emerge of the same substance with those who sent them, or having a substance from another kind of substance? And were they emitted at the same time, so they are the same age, or according to some kind of order, so that some would be older and others younger? And [was it] simple and uniform and altogether equal and similar to itself, like Spirit and Light were emitted, or [was it] composite and different, dissimilar in its members.[27]

[23] For a summary on scholarly debates and Markschies an argument that Irenaeus's Christology retains a distinction between Father and Son, see Chapter 3 in Briggman, *God and Christ in Irenaeus*, 104-38.
[24] Ibid., 119-20.
[25] Rousseau wants to back-translate this as ἀποτελέω (produce/render/complete/finish), and use it in its adverbial form ἀποτελεστικῶς. Rousseau also links this work with 2.28.3, where the Greek of this adverbial form is transliterated in the Latin text. (SC 294.158; 294.276; 293.266-67). The word reappears in *haer.* 2.17.3.
[26] Harvey here notes that while two editions understand this pairing as ποιητικῶς καὶ μεριστῶς, he prefers ἐνεργῶς καὶ χωριστὸς with "ἐνεργῶς being to δυνατῶς as *esse* is to *posse*" (Hv 1.307), n. 1.
[27] Rousseau here back-translated ἁπλοῖ and links the ὁμοιμελής from 2.13.3 with this last line using ἀναμοιομελεῖς, and suggests looking at Sagnard, *La Gnose valentinienne,* 97-8 (SC 293.267).

> Quaeretur igitur, quemadmodum emissi sunt reliqui Aeones ? Vtrum uniti ei qui emiserit, quemadmodum a sole radii, an efficabiliter et partiliter,[28] uti sit unusquisque eorum separatim et suam figurationem habens, quemadmodum ab homine homo et a pecude pecus, aut secundum germinationem, quemadmodum ab arbore rami ? Et utrum eiusdem substantiae exsistebant his qui se emiserunt, an ex altera quadam substantia substantiam habentes? Et utrum in eodem emissi sunt, ut eiusdem temporis essent sibi, an secundum ordinem quendam, ita ut antiquiores quidam ipsorum, alii uero iuueniores essent ? Et utrum simplices quidam et uniformes et undique sibi aequales et similes, quemadmodum spiritus et lumina emissa sunt, an compositi et differentes, dissimiles membris suis?[29]

He asks a series of questions, stemming from different metaphors for understanding generation. First, he asks if divine generation is more comparable to a ray of light, animal or human generation, or a branch from a tree. As his argument develops, he will explore the implications of each metaphor, (A) separated generation, like a human or an animal (*haer.* 2.17.3), (B) generation of light, like fire in a torch (*haer.* 2.17.4), stars (*haer.* 2.17.5) or the sun (*haer.* 2.17.7a), and (C) the generation of branches from a tree (*haer.* 2.17.6). Irenaeus does not entirely reject or accept any of the metaphors for divine generation, rather, he uses each metaphor to reiterate the same point: either God is all passible, or all impassible. There cannot be one part of God that is passible and responsible for creation while another part of God is impassible and separated from the activity of creation, as his opponents' argument (on his account) implies. However, within these metaphors there are four principles of divine generation to which Irenaeus continually returns, highlighted with four contrasts. These principles were first laid out by Briggman and were further clarified by Ip. The four pairs of opposites are: (1) either the generated remains united with the generator or is separated; (2) either the generated is of the same substance as the generator or is of a different substance; (3) either the generated is contemporaneous with the generator or has a temporal ordering; and (4) either the generated is simple, single, and singular with the generator, or it is

[28] Harvey here notes that while two editions understand this pairing as ποιητικῶς καὶ μεριστῶς, he prefers ἐνεργῶς καὶ χωριστὸς with "ἐνεργῶς being to δυνατῶς as *esse* is to *posse*" (Hv 1.307), n. 1.
[29] *haer.* 2.17.2 (SC 294.158).

composite, different, and dissimilar.[30] Ip argues, and I think rightly, that the first three principles are summed up in the fourth, so generation that is united, contemporaneous and of the same substance is summed up in generation that is simple, uniform equal and similar.

In my reading of *haer.* 2.17, Irenaeus does not reject one metaphor in favour of another, but rather each metaphor is used to reject the insertion of passion into descriptions of God's powers. In contrast, Ip (following Briggman) has argued that Irenaeus rejects the human metaphor and adopts the metaphor of light, which in turn allows him to argue that God's powers are identical to one another without distinction. In his reading, the metaphor of human generation negatively explains Principle 1 of divine generation (united generation), that God's powers are not generated completely and separately (*efficabiliter et partiliter*), and so he concludes that Irenaeus rejects the metaphor of human generation. Instead, he argues that Irenaeus prefers the metaphor of generated light since it is described alongside that which is simple (*haer.* 2.17.2). This metaphor of light is affirmed in the next two principles of divine generation, and positively illustrates that God's powers are generated contemporaneously and are of the same substance. Ip draws particular principles from particular metaphors, so Irenaeus illustrates Principle 1 (united generation) by rejecting the metaphor human generation and he illustrates Principle 2 (generation of the same substance) and Principle 3 (contemporaneous generation) by using the metaphor of the generation of light because the product is of the same substance and contemporaneous with its source. In the end, Ip concludes that God is identical with his divine powers because in Irenaeus's explanation of the metaphor of light, fire remains united to its source and two torches can be reunited, which suggests that there is not distinction between the generator and the generated

[30] Briggman argues that, in the context of divine simplicity, for Irenaeus, three principle of divine generation require that God and his generated powers are: (1) of the same substance; (2) contemporaneous; and (3), united. Ip adds divine simplicity as the fourth principle of this list, that God and his generated powers are (4) simple, single, and singular. I think Ip's organization is more straightforward, though they both make the same point. Briggman, *God and Christ in Irenaeus*, 130-36; Ip, *Origen of Alexandria and the Emergence of Divine Simplicity before Nicaea*, 56.

power.[31] If one reads these metaphors as Ip has done, then Irenaeus allows for the generated Word to be reunited with the Father in a way that makes the Father and Son indistinguishable. However, this is not the only plausible, or, perhaps, the most probable, reading.

First, in his definition of divine simplicity Irenaeus already argued that metaphors, specifically the metaphor of light, cannot be univocally used of God. He is bound to the scriptural terminology that uses metaphors from creation to describe God, but he rejects applying their created qualities to God, so he establishes parameters for what these metaphors can or cannot mean. Recall that Irenaeus argued that the human process of thinking and speaking in the metaphor of a spoken word cannot apply human affections and passions to God (*haer.* 2.13.1-3; see Chapter 2). He also briefly refers to the metaphor of light to describe God generating (*haer.* 2.13.4-5) and the metaphor of a circle to describe God containing (*haer.* 2.13.6). He concludes that the metaphors of word and light must be qualified:

> It will be appropriate and right that he be called mind who contains all things, but not similar to the thinking of humans. He will be most appropriately called light, but nothing like light according to us.
>
> Sensus enim capax omnium bene ac recte dicetur, sed non similis hominum sensui; et lumen rectissime dicetur, sed nihil simile ei quod est secundum nos lumini.[32]

God's word and light do not reflect the composite nature of what is created, particularly the smallness of humans. However, Irenaeus does use some human implications for his argument. God's mind is not emitted away or separated from God, just as the human mind does not have a separate existence away from the person (*haer.* 2.13.3, 5). For Irenaeus, the human metaphor of speech is useful for removing certain interpretive options when used of God. Similarly, though God is nothing like light experienced by humans, the ray of light from the sun "participates" (from *participare*) of the sun just as all who are in the Father

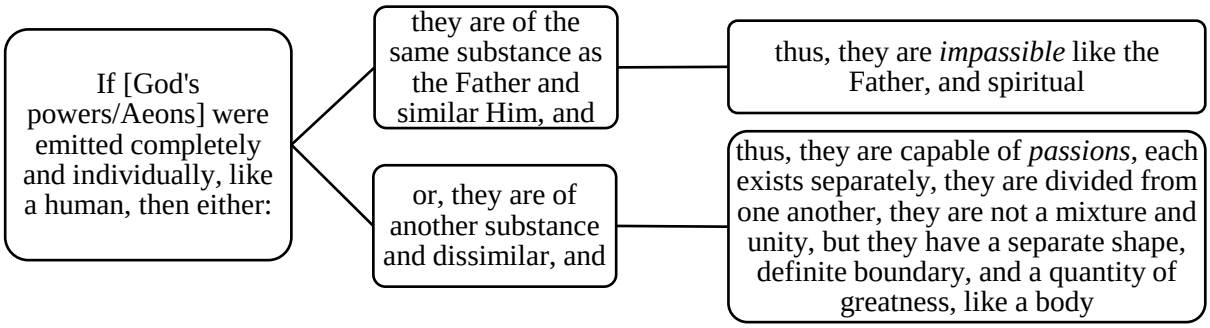
[31] *Origen of Alexandria and the Emergence of Divine Simplicity before Nicaea*, 66-68.
[32] *haer.* 2.13.4 (SC 294.136).

participate equally of the Father.[33] Because God is simple, whatever else these metaphors mean, they cannot ascribe separation, reduction or parts to God. Thus, although contrary powers, such as darkness/light or ignorance/knowledge, exist in creation, opposite powers cannot be attributed to a "part" of God, and they cannot coexist because they are mutually exclusive. Instead, Irenaeus claims that God's Mind, Word, and Life are "equal and similar and one" and God is all light, therefore God's powers and names are mutually entailing (*haer.* 2.13.8-9). Irenaeus uses metaphors to eliminate interpretations that separate or reduce God, and he insists that they cannot be applied univocally.

Second, Irenaeus does not reject human generation and accept the generation of light as appropriate metaphors for divine generation, but he uses the explanation of each metaphor to drive home his four principles of divine generation. Based on *haer.* 2.17.2, Briggman and Ip have argued that Irenaeus prefers the metaphor of light, since he aligns the metaphor of light, spiritual generation, and what is simple, equal, and similar. However, I suggest that Irenaeus's argument is more complex. While simple generation is illustrated by the metaphor of light, Irenaeus does not adopt it and reject the others. Whether exploring human generation, germination of a tree, or generation of different kinds of light, the one thing that remains consistent is his claim that God and his powers are either all passible or all impassible, particularly though language of "same" and "similar."

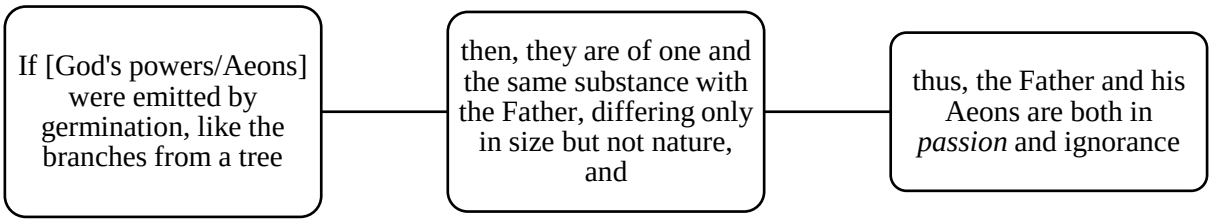
This is first seen in his explanation of the metaphor of human generation (*haer.* 2.17.3), and the logic of his argument shows the implications of the human metaphor of generation: either the Father and all his powers are impassible and spiritual, or they are passible and composite.[34]

[33] *haer.* 2.13.7 (SC 294.120-22). The verbal or nominal forms of *participare* appear four times in this passage.
[34] For the sake of clarity, I have opted to provide Irenaeus's argument in graph form. For the best translation of these passages, see Unger, ACW 65, 56-57.



Irenaeus notes that passion is the point of friction, and he acknowledges that this debate seeks the source of corruption (cf. *haer.* 2.17.9-11). If the Aeons are of a different substance and dissimilar, then they cannot be described in the spiritual language of a simple God, but they must be described with language of a composite human. With human generation, there is a possibility of "same substance" and similar generation. However, his opponents insert corruption after the Father but before the creation of the world, which means that corruption occurs in the realm of God's powers. Irenaeus asks how a dissimilar substance, which leads to corruption, entered the Pleroma (*haer.* 2.17.3). If the metaphor of human generation is used to defend a generation of a different substance and dissimilar nature of corruption, then this language, which is characteristic of bodies, cannot be employed to describe God.

Irenaeus retains his focus on same substance and similar nature when exploring the metaphor of germination (*haer.* 2.17.6):

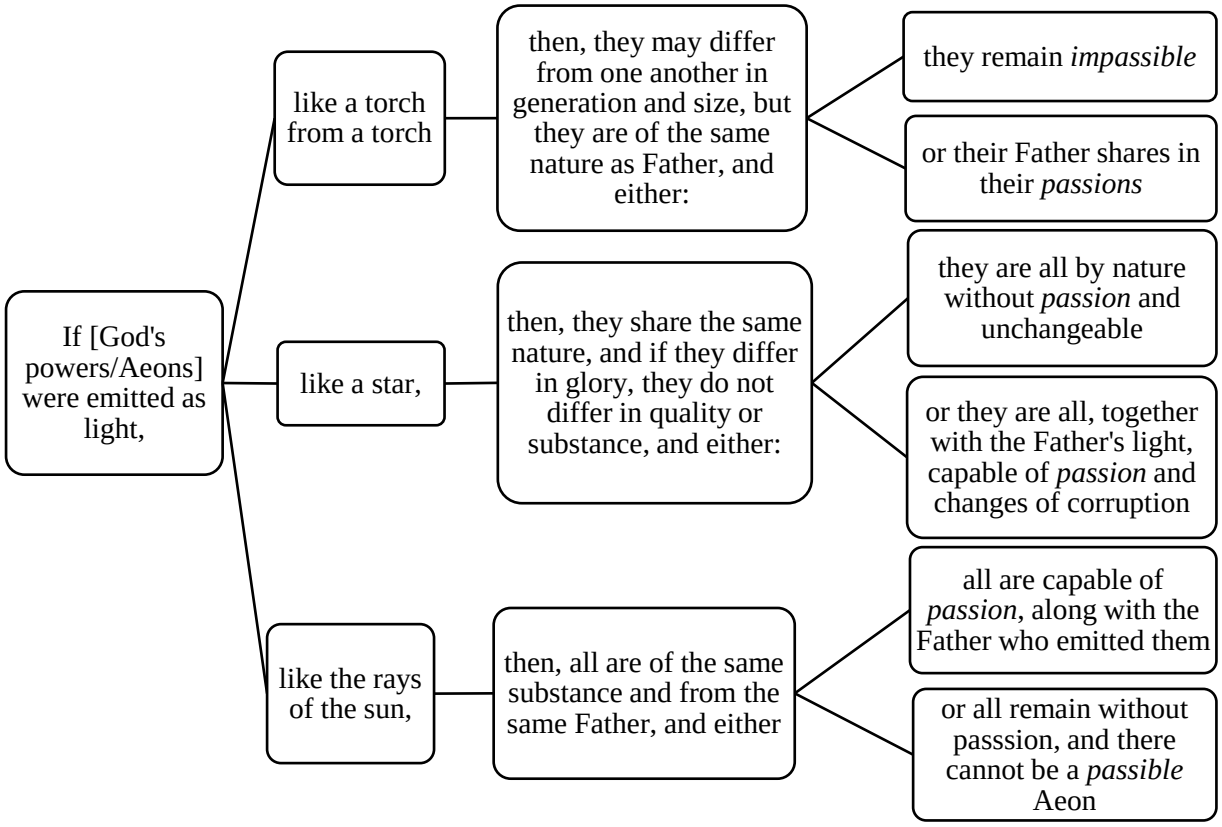


In this metaphor, once again, Irenaeus insists that God's powers are of the same substance as the Father, and while they might differ in size (*magnitudinem*), they will not differ in nature (*naturam*).[35] Rather, and he explains this metaphor with another metaphor, the Aeons would

[35] *haer.* 2.17.6 (SC 294.164).

complete the greatness of the Father (*magnitudinem complentes Patris*) like fingers complete the hand. Again, he focuses on the claim that if the Aeons share in passion and ignorance, then the Father does as well. Even in this metaphor of germination, God's powers have the same substance and nature as the Father.

Lastly, and in two separate sections, Irenaeus explores the metaphor of light. First, he describes light from a torch and from a star (*haer.* 2.17.4-5), and then as rays of the sun (*haer.* 2.17.7a). He first introduces the rays of the sun as a united generation that contrasts human generation, and light is described alongside what is spiritual, as simple, uniform, and equal and similar to itself (*simplices … et uniformes et undique sibi aequales et similes* (*haer.* 2.17.2). At first glance this would suggest that light is his chosen metaphor for divine generation, however, Irenaeus does not treat all light in the same way. Instead, he separates kinds of light to come to the same conclusion as with the other metaphors:



Once again, in each case, his argument concludes that, regardless of what kind of light one is using as a metaphor, the source must have a similar nature and the same substance to what is generated. The metaphor of light cannot be used to support the view that one of God's Aeons/powers is passible while the rest are impassible.

For the metaphor of light, Irenaeus echoes philosophical language on light. In Plato's *Timaeus,* fire and light were described as consistent from start to finish, alike in their source and as experienced by the eye or touch (*Tim* 45B-D), and he describes different kinds of light and fire (*Tim* 58D). Scholars have speculated that Irenaeus's description of light comes from a Stoic source, and there are some similarities with Philo, but a conclusive source has not been found.[36] It is very possible that Irenaeus cited some kind of philosophical source, because his language reflects the later commentary tradition, particularly when he differentiates between kinds of light,[37] for although he describes light as simple and united,[38] he also describes fire as a material substance (*substantiam materiae*).[39] Irenaeus insists that the fire of many torches are united and one light, so even if torches are lit in sequence or in different places, their light is contemporaneous and of the same substance. Irenaeus differentiates between different kinds of light (fire, stars, and the sun), but in all cases he argues that their generation remains consistent and similar with their source, and whether describing pure heavenly light (the sun or stars) or perishable fire that is mixed with air, they

[36] Stead suggests the Stoic source, and Briggman provides parallels with Philo. Stead, *Divine Substance*, 196; Briggman, *God and Christ in Irenaeus*, 128, n. 78.
[37] Proclus, for example, differentiates between light, flame, and ember and describes them as a scaling down of fire from heaven to earth (*In Ti.* 2.8), and while he calls fire material (*In Ti.* 2.43), he calls the light from the sun immaterial (according to *On Light* in Philoponus *contra Proclum* 18). While there are different kinds of light and fire, the source and generation remain consistent and similar, and whether describing pure heavenly light (the sun or stars) or perishable fire that is mixed with air, they both participate in fire (including the light of the sun, see Proclus, *In Ti.* 2.9.).
[38] Syrianus argues, "the light of each lamp is simple and immaterial and is not divided or parted, but is united with its source and so attached to it that it exists when the source is shining, and departs when the source leaves." *Met.* 85. For translation, see Richard Sorabji, *The Philosophy of the Commentators 200-600 AD*, 3 vols. (Ithica, New York: Cornell University Press, 2005), 2.276.
[39] *haer.* 2.17.4 (294.169). Commentaries on Plato and Aristotle differentiated kinds of light as a body, an immaterial body, or incorporeal, for though light has an effect on matter and fire is similar to matter, the same light of many lamps can occupy the same space, unlike matter. See ibid., 274-83.

both participate in their own same kind of light. Irenaeus explores the different categories and kinds of light and fire in order to support the same conclusion: the metaphors of light and fire do not allow for a different substance or dissimilar passion to be introduced into metaphysics because each kind of light substance remains the same from source to effect. He does not deny different kinds of fire or light, but he insists that fire is contemporaneous, even with sequential torches, and it retains a similar nature and is the same substance, whether it is heavenly light or a material torch.

Irenaeus does not entirely reject the metaphor of human generation, nor does he totally adopt the metaphor of light, but rather, he engages each to support his four principles of divine generation. Irenaeus's interaction with materiality and his concern with Principle 1 continue after the metaphor of human generation. Previously, he had criticised the metaphor of human generation because it used language of composite bodies, but light as a "material substance" would require a similar critique in relation to torches (2.17.4). Materiality is part of the generation of humans and light. Furthermore, with Principle 1, the generator must remain united to what is generated, and although in human generation the generating body is spatially separated from the generated body and is not united to it (*haer.* 2.17.3), this issue is complicated with light. In the generation of light, two spatially separate torches of corporeal light can occupy the same space, and they can also be brought together spatially to reflect their ontological unity (2.17.4). The lighting of different torches does not completely fulfill Principle 3 (contemporaneous generation) but it does fulfill Principle 1 (united generation). However, this unity does not mean that the metaphor of light rejects distinction between source and product for, as noted by Briggman, the distinction between the sun and its rays is not eliminated by their unity.[40] The metaphor of light also explores Principle 1 (united generation), so this principle cannot be relegated to a negative exploration of the metaphor of

[40] See p. 135 in Briggman, *God and Christ in Irenaeus*, n. 103.

human generation. Irenaeus highlights difficulties in the metaphor of light, so one cannot say that he simply accepts it. Rather, as stated in *haer.* 2.13, light in regard to God is nothing like light experienced by humans. The metaphor of light is useful insofar as it removes certain interpretations, since God's powers are either all impassible or all passible, and it illustrates the four principles of divine generation.

The consistent part of Irenaeus's argument is not his rejection or acceptance of a particular metaphor, but his adherence to his four principles of divine generation. These four principles provide Irenaeus's particular view of divine generation, and Ip agrees that Principle 4 sums up the other three. I suggest that it is also the one that most clearly retains language of distinction. Principles 1 and 2 primarily express unity, while Principles 3 and 4 retain language of distinction. In Principle 1 (united generation), unity is explored spatially and ontologically, while in Principle 2 (generation of the same substance), unity is emphasised with the language of "same." For Principle 3, (contemporaneous generation), unity is emphasised in regard to time and hierarchy (cf. *haer.* 2.1.2), but the question of sequence is raised in a way that does not reduce unity. Lastly, in Principle 4, God's powers are "simple and uniform and equal and similar to itself," (*simplices quidam et uniformes et undique sibi aequales et similes*), specifically rejecting composite descriptions.[41] This is clearly language of simplicity because of how closely it echoes the definition of divine simplicity, where God is "simple, and non-composite, and self-proportionate, and himself altogether similar and equal to himself" (*haer.* 2.13.3). The main thread in this argument of *haer.* 2.17, that God and his powers are either all passible or all impassible, depends on the concept of "similar," which is terminology from his definition of simplicity that retains distinction. In each metaphor Irenaeus returns to the claim that either God's powers are all

[41] He notes that the metaphor of human generation uses language that is characteristic of a body, which is composite (*haer.* 2.17.3), and he describes the light of torches as composite (*haer.* 2.17.4), and he rejects describing the Father in a way that is composite (*haer.* 2.17.7).

impassible and incorruptible, or they are all passible and corruptible. He uses the language of similarity comparatively, with the generated powers being similar to the generator (*similes generatori* in *haer.* 2.17.3) and similarly impassible (*similiter …impassibilia* in *haer.* 2.17.5). This language of "similar" often complements the language of same substance, for he explains "same substance" with things that are similar and dissimilar (2.17.3), and he explains language of same substance with language of similar nature (2.17.5-6), so what is "similar" retains a distinction that is unclear with "same."[42] Principle 4 is the most consistent part of Irenaeus's argument, and it retains distinction.

3. Distinction in a Simple, Uniform, Equal, and Similar Generation

Certain portions of *haer.* 2.17 lend themselves to the reading that God's powers are identical without distinction. The strongest evidence in favour of this reading comes from *haer.* 2.17.7b., where Irenaeus states that the Father *is* Mind, which would seem to suggest that the source and the powers are indeed identical. This is the precise passage used by scholars who read Irenaeus as Monarchian.[43] While Briggman claims that God's powers are identical in divine simplicity, when discussing the generated Word-Son, he argues for distinction between Father and Son, explicitly opposing scholars who claim that Irenaeus is Monarchian.[44] By contrast, Ip notes that one should be cautious of reading Irenaeus as proto-Trinitarian, because "by stressing the unity between the generator and the generated,

[42] This overlap between "same substance" and "similar nature" is philosophically cogent in light of Aristotle's *Categories,* and its discussion on "same, similar, and different" alongside "nature and substance," language which becomes important for Christian discourse of God. See Chapter 3 in Stead, *Divine Substance*.
[43] Scholars have used this line from *haer.* 2.17.7 as evidence for "the embarrassing truth" that Irenaeus sounds Monarchian. Even in light of passages like *haer.* 4.20, which explicitly show distinctions between Father, Son and Spirit, they have argued that this is insufficient to "clear" Irenaeus's name. R. Hübner, "Heis theos Jesous Christos. Zum christluchen Gottesglauben im 2. Jahrhundert - ein Versuch," *Müncher theo. Zeitschrift* 47 (1966): 343; Hermann Josepf Vogt, "Monarchianismus im 2. Jahrhundert," *Theologische Quartalschrift* 179, no. 4 (1999): 254. Wilhelm Bousset is the usual starting point for the scholarly lineage that suggests that Irenaeus's thought is Monarchian. W. Bousset, *Kyrios Christos: Geschichte des Christusglaubens von den Anfängen des Christentums bis Irenaeus* (Göttingen1926).
[44] Chapter 3 of Briggman, *God and Christ in Irenaeus.*

[Irenaeus] seems to leave unclarified the status of the distinction between the generated-generator."[45] To some extent, Ip is right, and the debate in scholarship is evidence that Irenaeus can be read as a precursor to Monarchianism, without a clear distinction between Father and Son. However, a strong challenge to this reading can be made based on the latter parts of *Against Heresies*, where the distinction between the Father and the generated Word is clearer.[46] However, I think that a plausible reading of *haer.* 2.17 can retain language of distinction in the exploration of divine generation, particularly in the usage of Principle 4 alongside descriptions of God's Mind, Word and Wisdom.

After exploring the different metaphors and regularly insisting on the four principles of divine generation, Irenaeus asks how Word and Wisdom came to be affected by passion without this same passion affecting the original generating Father:

> For the Father of All is not some kind of composite animal [being] apart from Mind, as we have shown, but Mind is Father and Father is Mind.
>
> Non enim, ut compositum animal quiddam, est omnium Pater praeter Nun, quemadmodum praeostendimus[47], sed Nus Pater et Pater Nus.[48]

Elsewhere, Irenaeus has used the citation from Xenophanes to describe God as all Mind, rejecting an emission of Mind that separated it from the Father, for instead, the Father is all mind.[49] In that passage, he refers also refers to Father, Mind, and Word, but he does not deny that word is emitted, as he does for mind, but instead, argues that one cannot comprehend the generation of the Word. These two passages seem to be doing the same work, and their

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[45] Ip, *Origen of Alexandria and the Emergence of Divine Simplicity before Nicaea*, 67.
[46] Briggman organizes his third chapter to challenge, among other things, Monarchian readings of Irenaeus's text, and he uses the terminology of "reciprocal immanence" to describe this unity and distinction. Briggman, *God and Christ in Irenaeus*, 104-38.
[47] Harvey suggests a comparison with what Empedocles, Aristotle, and Anaxagoras (Hv 1.309-10), n. 5.
[48] *haer.* 2.17.7 (SC 294.114-16).
[49] In *haer.* 2.28.5, Irenaeus emphasises the nominal and verbal implications of the citation of Xenophanes. "God thinks what he speaks and speaks what he things" and "[God's] thought is his Word, and what he speaks he thinks. For his thought is his Word and his Word is his Mind; and the Mind that contains all things is the Father himself." This is used to argue against Mind being emitted as a power, though in that passage Irenaeus does not deny that Word is emitted, as he does for mind, but instead, argues that one cannot comprehend the generation of the Word.

description of Father as Mind can be read in light of God entirely having or being his powers. As in the definition of divine simplicity, this citation of Xenophanes does not reject distinction; indeed, as I have argued above, the use of Xenophanes sits within a tradition that continues to highlight distinction. In my translation of the final sentence of this passage, I prioritise the two causal clauses and the emphasis on passion.[50] If the two causal clauses are placed side-by-side, it seems like the statement about Mind is appositional, and the force of the sentence is on the repetition that generated powers remain perfect and impassible:

> Therefore, it is necessary, that the Word that is from him, since he is the Word (and even more so Mind itself), be perfect and impassible, and that those emissions that are from him be of the same substance, since they are of him himself, and remain perfect and impassible and always similar with him who sent them.
>
> Necesse est itaque
> *et eum qui ex eo est Logos*, immo magis autem ipsum Nun,
> *cum sit Logos, perfectum et impassibilem esse;*
> *et eas quae ex eo sunt emissiones*, eiusdem substantiae
> *cum sint cuius et ipse, perfectas et impassibiles et semper similes cum eo perseuerare qui eas emisit*.

This sentence does not equate Mind with Word, but as has been in the case in the rest of *haer.* 2.17, Irenaeus reiterates that if God's powers have passion and corruption, then the Father does too. Irenaeus does not explicitly confirm or deny a distinction between God's powers or between generator and generated, but is explicitly rejecting a generation that would insert passion or corruption. Instead of powers with a different substance or a dissimilar nature, these emitted powers must "remain perfect and impassible and always similar with him who sent them," retaining a conceptual distinction for comparison between the generator and the generated because of the language of simplicity.

[50] In Unger's translation, Father, Mind, and Word seem to be equated, and he even translates the Word as "springs from him" (from *ex eo*) which echoes Tatian's language of the non-distinguishable Word springing forth. Unger's translation follows the word order and reads, "And so, the Word who springs from him, and much more so, Mind, since it is the Word, must necessarily be perfect and without passion." In his translation, *cum sit Logos* is left in the original order of the sentence, with forces a reading that Nous (which in this sentence is in the accusative, not the nominative) is the Logos. However, in both clauses, the "cum sit/sint" refers back to the subject of each clause, the Logos in the first, and the emissions in the second. Unger, ACW 65, 58.

This subtle language of distinction continues. The Word always remains like him who sent him (*semper similes cum eo perseuerare qui eas emisit* in *haer.* 2.17.7). The Word is not ignorant (*non ignorat* in *haer.* 2.17.8) of the generator. God's powers are always near him (which can be translated as "assist him"; *semper ei adsistentes* in *haer.* 2.17.8). These echo the other descriptions in Book 2 that oppose a Word who is ignorant of the Father, and argue that the Word, who is the Son, reveals the Father and is always with the Father.[51] While Irenaeus does not use specific language that would differentiate him from later Monarchians, there is a viable reading of *haer.* 2.17 that allows for a distinction between God and his powers which reflects their later usage in *Against Heresies.* If the focus of this passage is that God and his powers be all passible or all impassible, a reading of unity in distinction should be preferred.

My reading of God's powers as mutually entailing, rather than identical, is further bolstered by the conclusion of this passage. When engaging different metaphors in *haer.* 2.17, he had argued that even if stars differ in size, they are not different in nature. However, in *haer.* 2.18.5 Irenaeus specifies that reduction (*demutationem*) is prohibited in discourse about God, because things of a similar nature cause one another to increase, not decrease:

> What is similar will not be dissolved into nothing in something similar, nor will it be in danger of being destroyed, but rather will remain and increase, in the same manner as fire in fire and spirit in spirit and water in water, but things that are opposed suffer from their opposition and are altered and destroyed….
> If, therefore, this Aeon had been sent out from the collective Pleroma of its same substance, she would never have undergone demotion, since she would be abiding with what is similar and familiar to her, spiritual in spiritual….
>
> Quod enim simile est in simili non dissoluetur in nihilum neque perire periclitabitur, sed magis perseuerabit et augescet, quemadmodum ignis in igne, et spiritus in spiritu, et aqua in aqua; quae autem sunt contraria a contrariis patiuntur et uertuntur et exterminantur…

[51] For example, in *haer.* 2.30.9, Irenaeus returns to his regular citation of Matthew 11:27 to argue that the Word, the Son, reveals the Father (based on the beginning of the verse which claims that the Word alone knows the Father, cited previously) because the Word, who is the Son, is always coexisting with the Father (*Semper autem coexsistens Filius Patri*).

> Si igitur eiusdem substantiae cuius et uniuersum Pleroma ex eo emissus fuisset hic Aeon, numquam demutationem perciperet, cum esset in similibus et adsuetis conuersans, spiritalis in spiritalibus…
> Sed mihi uidentur eius passionem qui est apud comicum Menandrum ualde amans et odibilis Aeoni suo circumdedisse: magis enim infeliciter amantis cuiusdam hominis apprehensionem et mentis conceptiotionem habuerunt qui haec finxerunt, quam spiritalis et diuinae substantiae.[52]

Throughout this passage, Irenaeus argues that things of contrary nature endanger and destroy one another while things that are the same or similar will actually continue and increase (*perseuerabit et augescet*). He returns to metaphors of fire, air, water, the light from the sun, and animals of similar kind, to substantiate his claim that things which are the same or similar do not reduce or corrupt one another. This language of increase or decrease requires distinction. This argument echoes his earlier argument against mutually exclusive powers of God. He had argued that Word and Silence cannot exist together as God's powers, for they are dissimilar (*dissimilis*), and so they are mutually exclusive (*haer.* 2.12.5). Instead, God's powers, such as Mind and Thought, are always united and understood in terms of each other, just as water cannot exist without moisture, or fire without heat, so too God's Mind, Thought, Word, and Life, cannot be separated, should be united and always coexist (Chapter 2, section 2.1.2).[53] In *haer.* 2.13.7, Irenaeus develops this imagery of water and light to claim that God's powers participate equally of God, so they are mutually entailing because God is simple (Chapter 2, section 2.2.2). In *haer.* 2.18.5, Irenaeus again refers to characteristics of fire and water, this time to show that fire in fire or water in water increase, rather than reduce, each other, language that requires distinction and again reiterates the main point that God's powers would not develop a different substance and nature through divine generation, but they would remain of the same substance and of a similar nature. There is, again, a subtle language of distinction.

[52] *haer.* 2.18.5 (SC 294.178-180).
[53] *haer.* 2.12.2 (SC 294.98-100).

4. Conclusion

In these metaphors, Irenaeus does not oppose distinction between powers, but he does oppose the kind of separation that allows corruption, passion or reduction to be introduced into discourse about God. First, the two extreme positions (God's powers as separated or God's powers as indistinguishable), were already present in the works of authors who used language of divine simplicity by the time Irenaeus wrote, but he does not rejects distinction. Second, he does not univocally adopt the metaphor of light, so the implication that two torches can again be united does not necessarily follow from Irenaeus's argument. Because of divine simplicity, all metaphors, including the metaphor of light, cannot be directly applied to God. Rather, he uses each of the three metaphors to support his four principles of divine generation. In the rest of *Against Heresies,* while Irenaeus continues to use the metaphor of light to describe God, he also continues to use the metaphor of human generation (see discussion on the metaphor of the painting King and his son in Chapter 6, section 3.3), which prioritises distinction in unity. However, even without looking beyond *haer.* 2.17, the argument for Principle 4 most clearly retains language of distinction. In the third section, I showed that Irenaeus rejects language that implies God has anything composite or dissimilar, opposing co-existing contraries (*contrariis*) that would endanger, change, and destroy one another. Instead, he uses language of the same, similar and familiar things that preserve and increase one another and do not result in a change. These retain a sense of distinction, and once again, the main thrust of this passage opposes the claim that God's powers could be passible and could be the source of corruption and ignorance in the material world.[54] Because

[54] Irenaeus concludes that this passion of his opponent's cosmology is more like a character from a love story. "But they [Valentinians] seem to me to give his Aeon the passion [of a character] who is both very loving and full of hate from the writings of the comic Menander. They had more of an understanding and mental conception of someone who had misfortune in love, than of a spiritual and divine substance (*spiritalis et diuinae substantiae*)." *haer.* 2.18.5 (SC 294.178-180).

of Irenaeus's emphasis on unity, some parts of *haer.* 2.17 can seem to suggests that God's powers are identical without distinction, and he does not use the terms that would clearly distinguish his position as anti-Monarchian. However, he never rejects language of distinction, so an equally plausible reading of these sections is that God's powers are distinct in unity. If the doctrine of divine simplicity is traced from its definition to its usage in *haer.* 2.17, the preferred reading is that God's powers are generated as distinct in unity.

Chapter 5: Divine Activity in the Hands of God Metaphor of *haer.* 4.20

In this chapter I argue that implications of divine simplicity illumine the unity of activity expressed in the "Hands of God" metaphor, in a passage considered the climax of Irenaeus's theology. This chapter addresses a potential challenge to my claim that divine simplicity sets parameters on speech about God, since at first glance, the hands of God metaphor could suggest that God has parts, contradicting the claim that God is simple. Yet Irenaeus's account of divine simplicity does not, as I have argued, eliminate distinction in unity, and I argue that the hands of God metaphor and associated claims about divine activity are consistent with this version of the claim that God is simple.

In section 1, I focus on the scriptural exegesis Irenaeus provides to support the "Hands of God" metaphor in *haer.* 4.20 and argue that it depends on and develops lines of exegesis from the argument of Book 2, which depends on divine simplicity, thus connecting the exegesis for this theological metaphor to Irenaeus's concept of divine simplicity.[1] In section 2, I argue that the theological terminology used to explain divine simplicity from Book 2 supports his argument for this metaphor, particularly highlighting references to God's Will, God as "containing, not contained," and divine activity as *ipse a/per/in semetipso*. These concepts are central to the principle of divine simplicity in Book 2, and in *haer.* 4.20 they are used to describe the unity and distinction in the unseparated activity of creation and redemption of the Father, through the Son, and by the Spirit. Finally, I consider two modern readings in light of my argument about how the metaphor relates to Irenaeus's account of divine simplicity. First, Michael Slusser reads Irenaeus's contrast between God's greatness

[1] Other scholars have rooted theological arguments of Book 4 in Book 2. For the "trinitarian theology" of Irenaeus being rooted in Book 2, see Fantino, *La théologie d'Irénée*, 291-306; Lashier, *Irenaeus on the Trinity*, 205-27. For the "pneumatology" of Irenaeus being rooted in Book 2, see Briggman, *Irenaeus of Lyons and the Theology of the Holy Spirit*, 105-47. For the exegesis that undergirds his theology of creation, see Steenberg, *Irenaeus on Creation*, 65-100; Bingham, "Himself within Himself: The Father and His Hands in Early Christianity."

and love as a dichotomy between God's transcendence and immanence, but based on divine simplicity, I argue that God's greatness and love cannot be understood in terms of different parts of God. The contrast between love and greatness is, instead, a commitment to a differentiation between creator and creatures. Second, Anthony Briggman argues that Irenaeus adopted the metaphor of God's Hands from Theophilus after Book 2. I argue that Irenaeus's description of the concept of divine simplicity suggests that he adapted Theophilus' language in Book 2. In both Book 2 and Book 4, Irenaeus rejects language of God creating with instruments (*organis*; ὄργανον) or through assistants (ὑπουργός), since these would suggest parts, and instead he argues that God creates "himself in/through himself."

1. Scriptural Exegesis for the Hands of God Metaphor

Many scholars start their examination of the hands of God metaphor by looking for an external source, but I will focus on the way it depends on and develops Book 2. To some extent, this simply pushes the question of source back to Book 2, but this allows me to substantiate the first part of my argument, that *haer.* 4.20 relies on Book 2. Establishing an external source for Irenaeus's metaphor of the hands of God in creation has proven difficult. Mambrino and Lawson sought to establish a scriptural background for this metaphor, but Michel Barnes and Anthony Briggman have shown that the sheer number of possible passages results in unhelpful ambiguity.[2] Instead, Barnes focuses on 1 Clement 33:4 and

[2] Barnes's list, which uses Lebreton's list, notes passages where Irenaeus refers to creation by two hands (*haer.* 4.praef. 4; 4.20.1; 5.1, 3; 5.5.1; 5.6.1; 5.153–4; 5.16.1; and 5.28.3; and *Dem.* 11, which includes the Armenian variant of *haer.* 4.7.4). Robinson was the first to note that this metaphor is first used in Book 4, but plays a key role in the argument of scholars like Briggman, who mark Book 4 as a major turning point in Irenaeus's theology, though. J. A. Robinson, *St. Irenaeus: Demonstration of Apostolic Preaching* (London: SPCK, 1920), 51; Briggman, *Irenaeus of Lyons and the Theology of the Holy Spirit*, 106-08, 22-23; Michel Barnes, "Irenaeus's Trinitarian Theology," *Nova et Vetera* 7, no. 1 (2009): 101, n. 08. For the arguments for scriptural background to this metaphor, see Lawson and Mambrino, see Lawson, *The Biblical Theology of Saint Irenaeus*; J. Mambrino, "'Les deux mains de Dieu' chez S. Irénée," *Nouvelle Revue Théologique* 79 (1957). On p. 123, Lawson notes the theme in Num 32:11; Deut 5:15; 6:21; 7:8; 9:26; 11:2; 26:8; 34:12; 1 Ki 18:46; Ps 44:3;

Fourth Esdras 3:4-5 which describe the creation of humanity through God's Hands, and which use the metaphor of the potter and clay as in *Wisdom of Sirach* and Romans 9:21. Briggman follows Barnes, and claims that the tradition of the hands imagery is "best characterized as Jewish."[3] Other scholars have proposed a dependence on Philo or Theophilus of Antioch, and while this latter option is certainly promising, again, a direct correlation remains elusive.[4] Briggman differentiates between the singular hand and plural hands of God and their direct description as God's Word or Word and Wisdom to suggest that Irenaeus became aware of Theophilus after Book 2, but both Theophilus and Irenaeus regularly refer to both the "hand" and the "hands" of God, and in *haer.* 2.30 Irenaeus refers both to God's Hand and God creating through his Word and Wisdom.[5]

Rather than merely adopting Theophilus of Antioch's argument, it seems that, as early as Book 2 Irenaeus is adapting it in ways that are retained in Book 4 (for further discussion on Theophilus of Antioch, see section 3.2 God Creating Without Instruments). Instead of seeking an external source, I argue that the exegetical developments in *haer.* 4.20 are based on the exegesis of Book 2, which will then bolster my argument that the theology of Book 4 is based on Book 2 and divine simplicity. This does not exclude the other influences put forward by previous scholars, but it shows that *haer.* 4.20 depends exegetically on Book 2.

71:18; Is 40:10, 12; 51:5, 9; 52:10; 53:1; Ez 3:14, 16, 22; 8:1; 37:1; along with several "finger of God" references. Briggman rightly criticizes the ambiguity resulting from Mambrino and Lawson summary of Biblical texts. Briggman, *Irenaeus of Lyons and the Theology of the Holy Spirit*, 105-06. Barnes argues that, for examples, although many Psalms refer to God's hands (Ps 8:3–8; 103. 28–30; 110:6–7; 137:8; and 138:7–10), these do not refer to the creation of humanity and they are never referenced by Irenaeus, particularly Psalms 104 and 139 which both give reference to the Spirit. Barnes, "Irenaeus's Trinitarian Theology," 102-03. Cf. Is 45:11-12; 66:2, and Acts 7:50 (citing Is 66).

[3] "Irenaeus's Trinitarian Theology," 102-03. Cf. Jeremiah 18:4-6. Briggman follows Barnes' references and only the second-century citation of a Rabbi (linked to Psalms 119:73, and cited in Robert Grant's work on Theophilus). Briggman, *Irenaeus of Lyons and the Theology of the Holy Spirit*, 105-06.

[4] The *Teachings of Silvanus* has also been explored, but does not seem to be a source for Irenaeus. David Runia rejected possible correlations between Irenaeus and Philo. See his disagreement with Grant and Hanson in D. Runia, *Philo in Early Christian Literature* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1993), 112, n. 99. Since 1930, scholarship has recognised the influence of Theophilus of Antioch on Irenaeus, particularly in this metaphor. See Chapter 5 in both of their books, along with Briggman's excursus. Briggman, *Irenaeus of Lyons and the Theology of the Holy Spirit*; Lashier, *Irenaeus on the Trinity*.

[5] For Briggman, *haer.* 3.8.2 and *haer.* 3.16.4 are key passages for arguing that Irenaeus began to depend on Theophilus while writing Book 3. See Briggman, *Irenaeus of Lyons and the Theology of the Holy Spirit*, 107.

The scriptural citations surrounding the metaphor of God's Hands reflect a dependence on Book 2, and Irenaeus continues to emphasise language of unity even when he develops portions of this exegesis. Irenaeus first refers to the Hand of God measuring the heavens by citing Isaiah 40:12 (*haer.* 4.19.2-3). This is the same passage used in *haer.* 2.30 prior to his creation summary and alongside a description of the God who cannot be measured by height, depth, length, or breadth (from Eph 3:18, also citing Eph 1:21; Jer 23:23). In both places, the interweaving of passages emphasises the God who is "containing, not contained." Then he opens *haer.* 4.20 and his metaphor of God's Hands by citing many of the same biblical passages used to support his theology of creation and revelation in Book 2:

> For God did not need these things to make what he himself had predetermined to be made, as if he did not have his own hands. For the Word and Wisdom are always with him, Son and Spirit, through whom and in whom (cf. Eph 4:6) he made everything freely and of his own accord, to whom he spoke, saying, "Let us make human(s) according to our image and likeness" (Gen 1:26).
> Therefore, scripture says these things well, "First of all believe that there is one God, who established and completed and made everything from what did not exist (from nothing), who contains all and is contained by nothing/no one" (*Mand* 1.1.1). It is also well affirmed in the prophet Malachi, "Is there not one God who established us? Do we not all have one Father?" (Mal 2:10) Consequently the apostle says, "There is one God who is over all and in all of us" (Eph 4:6). In the same way the Lord said, "everything was given to me by my Father" (Matt 11:27), showing that everything was made by him, not by another, but he gave it to *him*. Nothing is missing/absent from "in everything."
>
> Neque enim indigebat horum Deus ad faciendum quae ipse apud se praefinierat fieri, quasi ipse suas non haberet manus. Adest enim ei semper Verbum et Sapientia, Filius et Spiritus, per quos et in quibus omnia libere et sponte fecit, ad quos et loquitur, dicens: *Faciamus hominem ad imaginem et similitudinem nostram*,
> *Bene igitur scriptura quae dicit: *Primo omnium crede quoniam unus est Deus, qui omnia constituit et consummavit* et fecit ex eo quod non erat ut essent omnia: omnium capax et qui a nemine capiatur*. Bene autem et in prophetis Malachias ait: *Nonne unus Deus qui constituit nos? Nonne Pater unus est omnium nostrum?* Consequenter autem et Apostolus : *Unus Deus, inquit, Pater, qui super omnes et in omnibus nobis*. Similiter autem et Dominus: *Omnia, inquit, mihi tradita sunt a Patre meo,* manifeste ab eo qui omnia fecit: non enim aliena, sed sua tradidit ei. In omnibus autem nihil subtractum est.
>
> * Καλώς οὖν ἡ γραφὴ ἡ λέγουσα «Πρῶτον πάντων πίστευσον ὅτι εἷς ἐστιν ὁ Θεὸς ὁ τὰ πάντα κτίσας καὶ καταρτίσας *[6]

[6] *haer.* 4.20.1-2 (SC 100.624-28).

The influence of the exegesis of Book 2 can be seen in two main ways. First, *haer.* 2.2.5-6 provided a summary of the key passages which Steenberg recognizes are the central passages to Irenaeus's theology of creation: Genesis 1-2, Ps 32/33, John 1, Ephesians 4:6, and *Mandate* 1.1 (see Chapter 1, section 3).[7] In *haer.* 4.20, only the Psalm is missing. Furthermore, Irenaeus's usage of Ephesians 4:6 and the God "above," "through," and "in" all shows the foundation for his language of the Father creating through the Word. Jeffrey Bingham focuses on Irenaeus's usage of Ephesians 4:6, and argues that this passage is the foundational piece to Irenaeus's theology of creation in Book 2.[8] The unity of divine activity between Father and Word is present in his foundational exegesis for creation. Fantino notes that in this passage about the Father and the Word, the first two prepositions ("above" and "through") are attributed to them respectively, and though not explicitly stated, the third ("in") would naturally be linked with Wisdom.[9] One cannot prove that Irenaeus fully worked out his pneumatology in Book 2, but the scriptural basis for creation as an activity of the Father through His Word was present in Book 2. This leads to the first main area of development, as highlighted by Briggman. In *haer.* 2.30.9 he again describes God creating through his Word, and includes God ordering by his Wisdom. However, he only claims that the Word is the Son, who was always existing with and revealing the Father. It is not until *haer.* 4.20.3 that Irenaeus describes God's Wisdom as the Spirit who always with God, supported by Proverbs 3:19-20 and 8:22-31 to describe the Spirit's creating and revealing.[10] Irenaeus's exegesis of creation (*haer.* 2.2) is linked to his description of God's Word and Wisdom (*haer.* 2.30.9), and then the exegesis regarding the Spirit is developed in *haer.* 4.20.

[7] Steenberg, *Irenaeus on Creation*, 65-67.
[8] Bingham, "Himself within Himself: The Father and His Hands in Early Christianity," esp. 139-42.
[9] Fantino, *La théologie d'Irénée*, 298-99.
[10] Briggman, *Irenaeus of Lyons and the Theology of the Holy Spirit*, 130-34. Orbe shows that while Irenaeus depends on Theophilus for these passages, Theophilus never refers to Prov 8:27-31. See Antonio Orbe, *Teologia de San Ireneo*, 4 vols. (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1996), 280-81, n. 21, and n. 23.

In the second exegetical link, between *haer.* 2.30.9 and 4.20, Irenaeus intertwines creation and revelation by citing Matthew 11:27 with *Mandate* 1.1. While the emphasis is on God's Word, the Son, he also mentions God's Wisdom. Matthew 11:27 has already been central to Irenaeus's description of the Son revealing the Father,[11] but here Matthew 11:27 (no one *knows* the Father except the Son) is then followed by John 1:18 (no one has *seen* God but the one and only Son).[12] Johannine exegesis about the *logos* courses through *haer.* 4.20, as John 1:14 will be cited within a few lines, and Ephesians 4:6 is read together with John 1:1-3. When he then cites John 1:18 alongside the references of the Word as the key and lamb from the book of Revelation (citing Rev 3:7; and 5:3, 8, 9, 12), he inextricably links the language of creation and revelation.[13] As noted by Steenberg, Irenaeus's use of the conqueror from Revelation (also citing Mt 28:18) and its recapitulative implications for humanity (citing Col 1:18) should be read in the context of his account of creation.[14] Irenaeus himself notes this scriptural relationship between the end and the beginning: "Thus, he could join together (*conjungeret*) the end with the beginning."[15] Even in areas of development, Irenaeus is clearly depending on the exegesis used to describe divine activity in Book 2.

The exegesis in *haer.* 4.20 also outlines the unity of divine activity of revelation throughout scripture and through time in prophecy, the incarnation, and paternal glory. Irenaeus again uses different parts of scripture (Law, Prophets, Gospel, Epistle) and he

[11] In *haer.* 4.20, he seems to assume that first half of the verse about only the Son knowing the Father (quoted nine times up to this point), and instead focuses on "everything," both the world and humans, being made by the hands of God. See Luckhart, "Matthew 11,27 in the 'Contra Haereses' of St. Irenaeus."
[12] John 1:18 is cited in *haer.* 4.20.6. To my knowledge, these two verses have not been studied in conjunction. However, in *haer.* 4.6, they are used alternately to show that knowledge and vision of God occur through the Son. Similarly, in *haer.* 4.20, both passages are referenced, though the weight falls on the Johannine version as the thrust of the argument is on vision of God.
[13] This interpretive dependence on an eschatological interpretation reappears near the end of *haer.* 4.20, through citations from the books of Ezekiel, Daniel and Revelation together, again emphasising God revealed through his Word. The same Word that created the world, was slain, and is King.
[14] Note that in *haer.* 5.18.2, he again uses Eph 4:6 and Col 1:18 in conjunction within a further elaboration of the creative work of the hands of God.
[15] *haer.* 4.20.4 (SC 100.634) ut finem conjungeret principio; ἵνα τὸ τέλος συνάψῃ τῇ ἀρχῇ. This becomes the lens for Steenberg's understanding of Irenaeus's exegesis for Creation. Steenberg, *Irenaeus on Creation*, 49-60.

merges the theme of knowing God (Matt 11:27) with seeing God (Jn 1:18) to argue that seeing God was always part of the plan of creation. To do this, first, Irenaeus cites the promise in Deuteronomy 5:24, that humanity would see God and live. Then, through the event of Pentecost, he shows that God was seen by the prophets who foresaw the advent, by those who saw the advent of the Word, and by those who saw the descent of the Spirit:

> For some of them saw the prophetic Spirit and his works pouring gifts upon all flesh (cf. Joel 2:28; Acts 2:17), others the advent of the Lord and the ministry which was from the beginning, and as much as possible he completed the will of the Father in heaven and on earth (cf. Lk 10:21); others the paternal glory at the right time and they saw and heard him and they were with the people who would eventually hear (cf. 2 Pt 1:16-21).[16] Therefore, God was manifested in this way: for this God the Father is revealed through everything, with the Spirit indeed working, with the Son actually ministering, with the Father actually approving, and with humankind actually being perfected for salvation.
>
> Quidam enim eorum videbant Spiritum propheticum et operationes ejus in omnia genera charismatum effusa; alii vero adventum Domini et eam quae est ab initio administrationem, per quam perfecit voluntatem Patris quae est in caelis et quae est in terris; alii vero et glorias paternas temporibus aptas, et ipsis qui videbant et qui tunc audiebant et hominibus qui deinceps audituri erant. Sic igitur manifestabatur Deus: per omnia enim haec Deus Pater ostenditur, Spiritu quidem operante, Filio vero administrante, Patre vero comprobante, homine vero consummato ad salutem.[17]

The different moments in history and the work of Father, Son and Spirit are joined together in these scriptural passages. Prophecy and visions in Hosea 12:11 are joined with the unified, but distinct, work of God from 1 Corinthians 12:

> As it was said through the prophet Hosea, "I multiplied visions and was represented by the hands of the prophets" (Hos 12:11). The apostle unveiled this saying, "There are various gifts, but the same Spirit, there are various ministries but one Lord, there are various operations/energies, but one God works all in all.[18] To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for usefulness" (1 Cor 12:4-7).

[16] *haer.* 4.20.5-6 may be feeding off of 2 Peter1:16-21. It contains the elements of prophecy from the Holy Spirit, and it seems to refer to the testimony of the author who claims to be an eyewitness that saw the Transfiguration, and it contains the glory from God the Father (θεοῦ πατρὸς … τῆς μεγαλοπρεποῦς δόξης). This, I think, makes some sense of *haer.* 4.20.5, where the term "prophet" is applied to the Gospels.
[17] *haer.* 4.20.6 (SC 100.642-44).
[18] 1 Corinthians 12 describes the energies of God and "all in all," which could further support the claim that this scripture supports Irenaeus's description of divine simplicity through. Grant has argued that Irenaeus's citation of Xenophanes in *haer* 2.13 and 2.28 is based on 1 Cor 12. See Grant, "Place de Basilide dans la théologie chrétienne ancienne," 201-06.

> Quemadmodum et per prophetam Osee ait: *Ego* [inquit] *visiones multiplicavi et in manibus prophetarum assimilatus sum.*[19] Apostolus autem idipsum exposuit , dicens : *Divisiones autem charismatum sunt, idem autem Spiritus ; et divisiones ministeriorum sunt , et idem Dominus; et divisiones operationum sunt , idem autem Deus, qui operatur omnia in omnibus. Unicuique autem datur manifestatio Spiritus ad utilitatem*.[20]

Irenaeus uses 1 Corinthians 12 to demonstrate unity in divine activity between Father, Son, and Spirit. Multiplicity in activity (many gifts, ministries, and operations) still requires unity of source (one Spirit, Lord, and God). Thus, Irenaeus can say that the God who is invisible and indescribable is "in no way undiscoverable (*incognitus*)." Rather,

> Everything someone learns is through his Word which is one God the Father, who contains all and reveals that he exists to all, as it is written in the Gospel, "no one has seen God except the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, who has revealed [him]" (Jn 1:18).
>
> omnia enim per Verbum ejus discunt quia est unus Deus Pater, qui continet omnia et omnibus esse praestat, quemadmodum in Evangelio scriptum est: *Deum nemo vidit unquam, nisi unigenitus Filius, qui est in sinu Patris, ipse enarravit*.[21]

He culminates with the human experience of *visio dei*, which has often been the focus of scholarship,[22] but the exegesis thus far highlights that while God reveals himself in each event of the human experience of history, these are united when examined through the lens of divine activity (*haer.* 4.20.7). Creation and revelation together reveal the invisible God.[23] In order to know (Matt 11:27) and see (Jn 1:18) God, it is only through the Word and Wisdom,

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[19] In the Septuagint, this is ὡμοιώθην.
[20] *haer.* 4.20.6 (SC 100.644)
[21] *haer.* 4.20.6 (SC 100.644-46).
[22] I am aware that most scholars read *haer.* 4.20 anthropocentrically. Whether one reads this description of *visio dei* as the beatific vision (Balthasar and Daley), as deification (Andia), or as the key to Irenaeus's anthropology (Behr and Steenberg), the focus is generally on the human life in its increase toward God. For beatific vision, see Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Glory of God: A Theological Aesthetics*, trans. Francis McDonagh Andrew Louth, and Brian McNiel, vol. 2 (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1984), 31-94; Brian Daley, *God Visible: Patristic Christology Reconsidered* (Oxford: OUP, 2018), 65-83. For deification see Andia, *Homo Vivens*. For anthropology see Behr, *Asceticism and Anthropology in Irenaeus and Clement*; Steenberg, *Irenaeus on Creation*; *Of God and Man: Theology as Anthropology from Irenaeus to Athanasius* (New York: T&T Clark, 2009), 16-54. Steenberg reads Irenaeus's cosmology anthropocentrically, and rightly so, for the purpose of the beginning is the end, the purpose of Genesis is found in Revelation, and the purpose of Irenaeus's theological system is the *visio dei*. *Irenaeus on Creation*, 6-8, 74, 147, 214.
[23] This continues to be the case in scriptural movements of *haer.* 4.20.9-10, where the God who cannot be seen (Ex 34:6-7), but was heard in a still, small voice in the cleft of the Rock (1 Reg 19:11-12), and then this Word and Rock made it possible for humanity to see God.

who are showing and presenting humans to God while still "preserving (*custodiens*) the invisibility of the Father."[24]

The exegesis of *haer.* 4.20 is rooted in Book 2, but the development of his exegesis further reveals a tension in Irenaeus's thought between unity and distinction. Creation and revelation are described as one activity. The book of Genesis is understood through Revelation. The activities of Word and Wisdom are described as one, but explained separately. While the human experience and understanding of divine activity requires a separated description of this activity, Irenaeus's argument regularly returns to language that emphasises no separation in divine activity. I suggest that this multi-layered description of unity and distinction in divine activity depends on the principle of divine simplicity, a claim that is further substantiated by his dependence on its terminology.

2. Terminology of Divine Simplicity in the Activity of Father, Son, and Spirit

Just as the exegetical developments in *haer.* 4.20 retain a dependence on Book 2, so too the theological tensions in the metaphor of God's Hands retain conceptual terminology from Book 2. This is seen in his use of the containment metaphor for creation and God's activity as "himself in/through himself." The first is applied to divine simplicity (see Chapter 3) and the other appears in the definition of divine simplicity. He develops this terminology by describing particular roles of Father, Son, and Spirit in the unified activity of creation and revelation. These different terms also highlight a tension between unity and distinction: (1) between God's will, thought and activity for creation; (2) between creation as a single activity of *creatio ex nihilo, creatio continua,* and revelation; and, (3) between the unified activity of the distinct roles of Father, Son and Spirit. Scholars have struggled with labelling

[24] *haer.* 4.20.7 (SC 100.646-48). hominibus quidem ostendens Deum, Deo autem exhibens hominem; et invisibilitatem quidem Patris custodiens,

this third description of divine activity, particularly because it is interwoven with the other two. It seems important to avoid the separation found in "communal" while preserving some distinction lost in "single act." I therefore return to the phrase "mutually entailing" adopted in Chapter 2 to describe this unity of God's powers, of God activity, and of the roles of Father, Son, and Spirit.[25]

In *haer.* 4.19-20 the metaphor of the hands of God is interwoven with the metaphor of containment from Book 2 to describe God's Word and Wisdom in creating the world and revealing the Father. God's Hands are described as God himself creating and containing the world, and once again, God's will and activity are described as mutually entailing. As argued in Chapter 3, as illustrated through the containment metaphor and in line with the concept of divine simplicity, God's will and activity in creation cannot be separated (*haer.* 2.1-6). In *haer.* 4.20, Irenaeus again uses terminology of containment, and the argument remains consistent with divine simplicity. First, in *haer.* 4.19.2-3, Irenaeus refers to the Hand of God measuring the heavens (citing Isaiah 40:12) alongside the God who cannot be measured by height, depth, length, or breadth (from Ephesians 3:18, also citing Eph 1:21; Jer 23:23), just as Irenaeus's definition of divine simplicity ruled out the possibility of the external measurement of God. Then, Irenaeus applies the metaphor of containment to God's Hands alongside citations from his exegesis for creation:

> And it was he himself who through himself established and made and adorned and contains everything. According to us 'in everything' includes us and this world….. For God did not need these things [angels, distant powers, or other gods] to make what he himself had predetermined to be made, as if he did not have his own hands.[26] For the Word and Wisdom are always with him, Son and Spirit, through whom and in whom (cf. Eph 4:6) he made everything freely and of his own accord,

[25] The phrase "communal act" and "triune act" are adopted by Steenberg in his study of Irenaeus's exegesis of Genesis. Fantino uses the phrase "a single act" (d'un seul agir). Bingham focuses on Irenaeus's usage of Ephesians 4:6, and describes the divine activity as "himself within himself." Bingham's usage focuses more on a "Trinitarian" description instead of divine activity in general. See Fantino, *La théologie d'Irénée*, 284; Steenberg, *Irenaeus on Creation*, 64; Bingham, "Himself within Himself: The Father and His Hands in Early Christianity," 151.

[26] In LSJ, II.O, manus can be used of power.

> et ipse est qui per semetipsum constituit et fecit et adornavit et continet omnia, in omnibus autem et nos[27] et hunc mundum qui est secundum nos… Neque enim indigebat horum Deus ad faciendum quae ipse apud se praefinierat fieri, quasi ipse suas non haberet manus. Adest enim ei semper Verbum et Sapientia, Filius et Spiritus, per quos et in quibus omnia libere et sponte fecit,[28]

This argument echoes the definition of divine simplicity in Book 2, arguing for the one God who creates and contains all, not through something separated from himself. The argument then develops the language of Book 2 by including the metaphor of God's Hands to illustrate that God creates and contains through his Word and Wisdom. This metaphor reappears in *haer.* 4.20.5, where the God who is "uncontained, incomprehensible, <and invisible> showed himself to humans as visible, comprehensible, and contained so that he would give life to those who grasp/perceive (*percipientes*) and see him,"[29] concluding that though God is indescribable, he is not unknown. He uses the language of containment to show that revelation is not separated from creation. Irenaeus presents the creating Word alongside the incarnate and sacrificed Word, through which humanity is contained by paternal light (*circumdatus paterno lumine*). Irenaeus again deploys the providential connotation of the metaphor of containment. God's will is united to the process of creation and revelation, since God "predetermined" creation *(praefinierat*) and God made everything "freely and of his own accord" (*omnia libere et sponte fecit*),[30] echoing the language from Book 2 against a creation that is bound by necessity or fate, or which is the result of separable divine thought, will, and action. Irenaeus further develops his description of revelation by describing the distinct roles of Father, Son and Spirit, for though "Humans cannot see God and live" (Ex 33:20), God willed it.

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[27] The Armenian omits *et nos*, and Hv 4.34.1 (2.213) claims that this is required to make sense of what follows, but in *haer.* 2.2.5, Irenaeus gives a similar explanation of what he means by everything, so it follows from elsewhere that this needs further clarification.
[28] *haer.* 4.20.1 (SC 100.624-6).
[29] *haer.* 4.20.5 (SC 100.640). Et propter hoc incapabilis et incomprehensibilis <et invisibilis > visibilem se et comprehensibilem et capacem hominibus praestat, ut vivificet percipientes et videntes se.
[30] *haer.* 4.20.1.

> A human by themselves will not see God, but if he wants, he will be seen by humans, by whomever he wants, and whenever he wants, and in whatever way he wants.
>
> Homo etenim a se non videbit[31] Deum; ille autem volens videbitur hominibus[32], quibus vult et quando vult et quemadmodum vult.[33]

This was always the providential plan. In both the process of creation and in the human experience of seeing God, God's will and activity cannot be divided into parts. While *haer.* 4.20 develops a more nuanced view of revelation through God's Word and Wisdom, just as God's will and activity in creation utilised divine simplicity in Book 2, here God's will and activity are mutually entailing in creation and revelation.

His description of the activity of God's Hands as "himself with/by/in himself" also seems to depend on divine simplicity. This terminology is very distinctive in both the Latin and Greek, but because there is more of Irenaeus's text in a Latin translation, it more easily allows for intra-textual comparison.[34] The exact phrase, "ipse a semetipso" only appears in *haer.* 2.13.4, 2.16.3, 2.30.9, and 4.20.1, first used in the context of divine simplicity. In *haer.* 2.30.9 and *haer.* 4.20.1 it is applied, not just to the powers of God generally, but specifically to the Word and Wisdom of God. This terminology describes God's will and activity as simultaneous and mutually entailing in *haer.* 1.12.2 and 2.13.3-4, which, as I argued in

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[31] *videbit… videbitur* in Rousseau (SC100.638) following CV, *videt…videtur* in Hv 4.34.5 (2.216) following AQSε, though ε is missing *videtur.* Based on the citation from Ex. 33:20, it seems advisable to follow CV.
[32] *ab* and *a* included with the ablatives of *hominibus* and *quibus* in Hv 4.34.5 (2.216).
[33] *haer.* 4.20.5 (SC 100.638).
[34] According to the LLT, (searching (1) "ips* in semetips*"; (2)"ips* a semetips*"; (3)"ips* semetips*"; (4) "ips* per semetips*" and (5) "semetips* ips*"), this formula appears in the first sense in *haer.* 2.2.4, in the second in *haer.* 2.13.4; 2.16.3; 2.30.9; and 4.20.1, in the third in *haer.* 3.25.7, 5.11.1; and 5.14.1; in the fourth in *haer.* 1.12.1; 3.6.1; 4.16.4; 4.22.1; 5.14.1; and 5.26.2 and in the fifth in *haer* 1.15.2 and 3.15.2. In the entire database, Irenaeus's translated text is the first to use this formula. Tertullian (*Praex.* 16) is the only other example close to the second century. Otherwise, there are four examples from the fourth century (Ambrose *de of.* 2.29.151, Augustine *trin* 3.10.1, Phoebadius *adv. arianos* 28, and ps-Clement of Rome *Recognitiones* 3.16*;* 5.18.3 translated by Rufinus) ten examples around the fifth and sixth century, and about -one hundred from the medieval era. If one allows for more complex sentences in Irenaeus (searching (%1 ips* semetips*)), there are ninety examples. With this search, Irenaeus's Latin translation is again the only second-century writer to use it. Tertullian has 36, but not until Augustine is there a number close to Irenaeus's. In *haer.* 1.12.2, the Greek is αὐτή καθ' ἑαυτήν, and in *haer.* 1.15.2 it is ἐν ἑαυτῷ αὐτὰ, showing some variety. A search in the TLG, which uses the Harvey numbering system, resulted in *haer.* 1.1.9, 1.1.15; 1.6.1; 1.6.1a; 1.6.2; 1.8.1; 1.8.3; 1.8.13; 1.9.2; 1.9.3; 1.10.1; 1.11.2; 1.14.4; frag 9 (from 5.3-13; *p. jena*); frag 14; and frag 28. For comparable usages in Greek before Irenaeus, see Athenagoras, *leg.* 7.2; 10.3; 14.2; 16.3; 22.4; and *res.* 12.6; Theophilus of Antioch, *Autol.* 2.6, 10, 21, 27; Justin in *dial.* 4.5; Tatian in *orat.* 5.2 and 17.2. For the link between this phrase and Eph 4:6, see Bingham, "Himself within Himself: The Father and His Hands in Early Christianity."

Chapter 2 above, implies the principle of divine simplicity. In the opening of *haer.* 4.20, he uses it twice:

> it was he himself who through himself established and made and adorned and contains everything…
>
> et ipse est qui per semetipsum constituit et fecit et adornavit et continet omnia… [35]
>
> For God did not need these things to make what he himself had predetermined to be made, as if he did not have his own hands. For the Word and Wisdom are always with him, Son and Spirit, through whom and in whom (cf. Eph 4:6) he made everything freely and of his own accord, to whom he spoke, saying, "Let us make human(s) according to our image and likeness" (Gen 1:26), taking himself from himself the substance of creatures and the example of creation and the form of ornamentation for the world.
>
> Neque enim indigebat horum Deus ad faciendum[36] quae ipse apud se praefinierat fieri, quasi ipse suas non haberet manus. Adest enim ei semper Verbum et Sapientia, Filius et Spiritus, per quos et in quibus omnia libere et sponte fecit, ad quos et loquitur, dicens: *Faciamus hominem ad imaginem et similitudinem nostram* (Gen 1:26), ipse a semetipso substantiam creaturarum et exemplum factorum et figuram in mundo ornamentorum accipiens.[37]

This terminology shows a lack of separation between God's thought and activity in Book 1 and between God's powers in Book 2. Here in Book 4 it is used to show a lack of separation between Father, Son and Spirit, both in creation and revelation. The various verbs of creation (make, establish, adorn, etc.) are used to argue that God himself created, and even took the substance and form for creation from himself. This fits with Irenaeus's view that matter is not coeternal with God, and creation did not come from a lower demiurge. As in Book 2, this phrase of God "himself in/through himself" retains absolute unity in the activity of creation.

Throughout *Against Heresies,* Irenaeus presents both creation and revelation as one act, done by God himself, through his Word and Wisdom, and different series of verbs are used to describe divine activity, but with this interweaving of unity and distinction. Sometimes these verbs are applied to God generally, and other times specifically to Father,

[35] *haer.* 4.20.1 (SC 100.624).
[36] Should be *facienda* since a gerund should not be used transitively.
[37] *haer.* 4.20.1 (SC 100.626).

Son, or Spirit. While Irenaeus is not consistent, this usage underscores the tension between describing creation as God "himself in/through himself," and describing the work of his Hands as "himself in/through himself." In *haer.* 2.30.9, for example, he states that the creator made, arranged, perfected, and is containing all things (*fecit, disposuit, perfecit, capiens*), but then distinguishes between the Word that founded and formed (*condens et faciens*) and the Wisdom that fitted and arranged (*aptauit et disposuit*). However, there is also a sense of a past act that carries into the present. In *haer.* 3.10.4, one should only worship the Creator who made and established (*fecerit et constituerit* in the perfect tense) and nourishes (*enutriat* in the present tense) us.[38] Similarly, in *haer.* 3.24.2, while God cannot be comprehended in regard to his greatness or essence, he can be known as the one who made, formed and breathed (*fecit, plasmavit,* and *insufflavit* in the perfect tense) humanity into life and who nourishes (*nutrit* in the present tense) all things by establishing and binding (*confirmans* and *compingens* as present participles) them by his Word and Wisdom.[39] These verbs for creation carry a sense of time while alternating between a description of God creating and the distinct roles between God's Word and Wisdom.

This same kind of verb series is used of God's revelation in *haer.* 4.20.5:

> A human by themselves will not see God, but if [God] wants he will be seen by humans, by whomever he wants, and whenever he wants, and in whatever way he wants. For God is able to do everything, at one time being seen prophetically through the Spirit, and then being seen adoptively though the Son, and will be seen Paternally in the kingdom of heaven, with the Spirit preparing humans in the Son of God, with the Son leading to the Father, and with the Father giving incorruption with eternal life, which only comes to those who see God. For in the same way they are seeing light within light they are perceiving his brightness. Thus, they are seeing God within God, and perceiving his brightness. The brightness of God gives them life, therefore those who see God are grasping life. And for this [reason] the uncontained, incomprehensible, <and invisible> showed himself to humans as visible, comprehensible, and contained, in order to give life to those who perceive and see him.

[38] *haer.* 3.10.4 (SC 211.130).
[39] *haer.* 3.24.2 (SC 211.476).

> Homo etenim a se non videbit Deum; ille autem volens videbitur hominibus, quibus vult et quando vult et quemadmodum vult: potens est enim in omnibus Deus, visus quidem tunc per Spiritum prophetice, visus autem et per Filium adoptive, videbitur autem et in regno caelorum paternaliter, Spiritu quidem praeparante hominem in Filium Dei, Filio autem adducente ad Patrem, Patre autem incorruptelam donante in aeternam vitam, quae unicuique evenit ex eo quod videat Deum. *Quemadmodum enim videntes lumen intra lumen sunt et claritatem ejus percipiunt, sic et qui vident Deum intra Deum sunt, percipientes ejus claritatem. Vivificat autem Dei claritas : percipiunt ergo vitam qui vident Deum. Et propter hoc incapabilis et incomprehensibilis <et invisibilis > visibilem se et comprehensibilem et capacem hominibus praestat, ut vivificet percipientes et videntes se.
>
> Ὥσπερ οἱ βλέποντες τὸ φῶς ἐντός εἰσι τοῦ φωτὸς καὶ τῆς λαμπρότητος αὐτοῦ μετέχουσιν, οὕτως οἱ βλέποντες τὸν Θεὸν ἐντός εἰσι[40] τοῦ Θεοῦ, μετέχοντες αὐτοῦ τῆς λαμπρότητος· ζωῆς οὖν μετέξουσιν οἱ ὁρῶντες Θεόν. Καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ὁ ἀχώρητος καὶ ἀκατάληπτος καὶ ἀόρατος ὁρώμενον ἑαυτὸν καὶ καταλαμβανόμενον καὶ χωρούμενον τοῖς πιστοῖς παρέσχεν, ἵνα ζωοποιήσῃ τοὺς χωροῦντας καὶ βλέποντας αὐτὸν διὰ πίστεως.[41]

Irenaeus builds upon the argument from *haer.* 2.30.9, where the Son was shown revealing the Father to the Angels from the beginning. Now, just as God's will resulted in the creation of the world, through the Word and by the Spirit, so too God desired to be seen, which occurs through the Spirit revealing through the prophets, the Son in the Incarnation, and the Father in paternal glory. Will and act are not separated in either creation or revelation, despite distinction between Father, Son and Spirit. This was always the providential plan. Each stage in the experience of a person seeing God (Spirit preparing… Son leading… and Father giving) is bound to the activity of Father, Son and Spirit, and the human experience of seeing God includes a distinction of Father, Son, and Spirit. Irenaeus supports this statement through extended exegesis, highlighting God's promise that humanity would see God (Deut 5:24) and shows that some saw God prophetically through the Spirit (cf. Joel 2:28; Acts 2:17), others saw God through the coming and ministry of the Son (cf. Lk 10:21), and others saw God through the paternal glory (which seems to be referencing the Mount of Transfiguration, cf. 2 Pt 1:16-21). These roles are seen throughout scripture. He follows this exegesis by stating:

[40] εἰσι in Halloix replaced with γίνονται in Gesner. Gesner does predate Halloix by 100 years, but both Rousseau (SC 100.640-41) and Hv (2.216) give preference to Halloix.
[41] *haer.* 4.20.5 (SC 100.638-42).

> Therefore, God was manifested: this God, the Father is revealed through everything, with the Spirit indeed working, with the Son actually ministering, with the Father actually approving, and with humankind actually being completed to salvation.
>
> Sic igitur manifestabatur Deus: per omnia enim haec Deus Pater ostenditur, Spiritu quidem operante, Filio vero administrante, Patre vero comprobante, homine vero consummato ad salutem.[42]

Irenaeus describes the distinct roles of the Father, Son and Spirit in the work of revelation. He also distinguishes stages of history, individual experiences, and particular events within history.

Behr has noted this layering of history, and calls it the "synchronic and diachronic harmony of scripture," and he also links it to divine simplicity, where the activity of the simple God is described at historical points and throughout (and outside of) history.[43] Distinction and unity are overlaid. This analysis aligns closely with my argument to this point, and the emphasis on time highlights yet another point at which Irenaeus alludes to contemporary philosophical questions.[44] This temporal lens overlays *creatio ex nihilo* and *creatio continua*, a sense that can also be seen in the Hand of God in Book 5. In *haer.* 5.16.1, while describing Jesus's healing of the blind man in John 9, Irenaeus writes that the same hand that healed the man was the hand that, from beginning to end, forms, prepares, is present with, and perfects (*format, coaptat, adest,* and *perficit*) humanity.[45] Throughout *Against Heresies,* God's activity is simultaneously diachronic, in that it has different implications in time for humans, and synchronic, in that it is a single activity for a simple God. While Behr's terminology is helpful, the tension between unity and distinction in divine

[42] *haer.* 4.20.6 (SC 100.644).
[43] Behr, "Synchronic and Diachronic Harmony: St. Irenaeus on Divine Simplicity."
[44] This temporal language differentiates creator and created, which Irenaeus regularly does, and while in 2.28 Irenaeus refuses to engage questions of what God was doing before creation, by the time one arrives at *haer.* 4.38, he describes God as eternal, but humanity's ascent as sempiternal (Irenaeus's translator reads τὴν εἰς ἀεὶ παραμονὴν as *sempiternam perseverationem*): *haer.* 4.38.3 (SC 100.952). For a good summary of the philosophical discussion at and after the time of Irenaeus, particularly those that examine creation through questions of time and divine will, see Sorabji, *The Philosophy of the Commentators 200-600 AD*, 175-85.
[45] *haer.* 5.16.1 (SC 153.212-14). A. Rousseau, Doutreleau, L. and Mercier, C., ed. *Irénée de Lyon: Contre les Hérésies, Livre V*, SC 153 (Paris: du Cerf, 1969).

activity demonstrates the problem with human language when trying to describe divine activity itself. Irenaeus must speak of God's activity separately, in terms of time or through scriptural names and powers as revealed to humanity through time and language. However, he opposes the separation that results from temporal or linguistic difference without denying this distinction, regularly returning to language that unifies distinct roles of planning, creating and perfecting of Father, Son and Spirit. In the metaphor of the hands of God, divine activity is not divided into parts, for God is simple, but he distinguishes between roles of Father, Son, and Spirit.

3. Potential Challenges to Other Readings of *haer.* 4.20

My reading of *haer.* 4.20 and my claim that it uses the principle of simplicity should be tested against two readings in recent scholarship. First, Michael Slusser's argument bifurcates Irenaeus's description of God's greatness and love, such that the former describes God's transcendence and the latter God's immanence, a reading that suggests parts in God. If this is the case, then my claim about the regulatory function of the concept of divine simplicity comes into question. Second, I will qualify a common scholarly claim, recently reiterated by Anthony Briggman, that Irenaeus adopted Theophilus of Antioch's hands of God metaphor, by arguing that Irenaeus's development of Theophilus' metaphor points to the regulatory function of his concept of divine simplicity.

3.1 God's Mutually Entailing Love and Greatness

Michael Slusser explores each time Irenaeus states that God "cannot be measured" and is "distant" because of his greatness, but God can be "known" and "felt as close" because of his love.[46] While I am sympathetic to his claim that the concept of a knowable God and

[46] Slusser, "The Heart of Irenaeus's Theology."

love of God (and for God) are central to Ireaeus's theology, his reading seems to understand God's greatness as transcendent and God's love as immanent.

This phrasing first appears in Irenaeus's retelling of the Valentinian creation story, where the Sophia's desire (*dilectionem*) to know the first cause resulted in a corrupt creation.[47] Irenaeus first uses it in his own theological system in *haer.* 2.13.4, after describing God as simple and all mind, all spirit, all understanding, etc.

> He is both beyond these [*sensus*, *spiritus*, *sensuabilitas*, *ennoia, lumen* etc.] and nearly indescribable. It is right and good to call him "thought" who contains all things, but not like the thinking of a human. It is most right to call him "light," but in no way similar to what is light according to us. Thus, in all that remains, there will be nothing similar between the Father of all and the smallness of humans. He is called proximate because of love, but he is sensed as being distant because of his greatness.
>
> Est autem et super haec, et propter hoc inenarrabilis. Sensus enim capax omnium bene ac recte dicetur, sed non similis hominum sensui; et lumen rectissime dicetur, sed nihil simile ei quod est secundum nos lumini. Sic autem et in reliquis omnibus nulli similis erit omnium Pater hominum pusillitati: et dicitur quidem secundum haec propter dilectionem, sentitur autem super haec secundum magnitudinem.[48]

While denying a description of God that separates him from creation and asserting that God is simple and without parts, Irenaeus places limits on the way scriptural terms like "word" and "light" can describe God, such that, in whatever way they are used, they must not refer to parts (see Chapter 2, section 2). Later, in *haer.* 2.17, he describes the generation of God's power, claiming that God would want to be known by these generated powers, so that, if the Father was not known because of his greatness (*immensam magnitudinem*) then because of his love (*immensam dilectionem*) they would know the Father, or they would at least know of Him and that He was without limit and incomprehensible.[49] Again in *haer.* 3.24.2-3, God comes within the reach of human knowledge because of his love and immense kindness (*propter dilectionem suam et immensam benignitatem*), but not according to his greatness or

[47] *haer.* 1.2.2 (SC 264.38-40).
[48] *haer.* 2.13.4 (SC 294.116).
[49] *haer.* 2.17.11 (SC 294.174).

substance (*non secundum magnitudinem nec secundum substantiam*), although humans can know that he creates and sustains through his Word and Wisdom.[50]

This phrasing appears one last time in the context of the metaphor of the hands of God (*haer.* 4.19-20), and it calls into question the seeming bifurcation between God's greatness and love. First, Irenaeus describes the incomprehensible and invisible as comprehensible and revealed, and second, he claims that God's goodness, a description that could be linked with God's immanence, is as incomprehensible as God's greatness. Starting in *haer.* 4.19.2, Irenaeus acknowledges that God cannot be measured in the heart or comprehended in the mind, so if someone thinks correctly about God (*digne Deo sapit*), that person cannot fully declare his greatness (*magnitudinem*) from creation.

> Therefore, God is not to be comprehended according to his greatness [for] it is impossible to measure the Father, [rather] he leads us to God through his Word according to his love, [which is how] they learn to always listen to him since he is so great a God.
>
> Igitur secundum magnitudinem non est cognoscere Deum: impossibile est enim mensurari Patrem; secundum autem dilectionem ejus — haec est enim quae nos per Verbum ejus perducit ad Deum — obaudientes ei semper discunt quoniam est tantus Deus,[51]

In this first example, there is a tension between what is impossible yet made possible through the Word. Despite the human incapacity to measure God in the heart, the Father is measured in the Son. Previously he stated that the Son is the measure of the Father (*haer.* 4.4.2) and later in this passage he will state that the Son makes the incomprehensible, comprehensible (*haer.* 4.20.5). Aspects of the transcendence of the Father are made proximate through the Son. After exegesis on God's Word (*haer.* 4.20.2) and Wisdom (*haer.* 4.20.3), Irenaeus returns to the language of greatness and love:

> Therefore, there is one God who by his Word and Wisdom made and adjusted everything. This is the creator, who gave the world for the race of humans, who

[50] *haer.* 3.24.11 (SC 211.476) : *qui fecit et plasmauit et insufflationem uitae insufflauit in eis et per conditionem nutrit nos, Verbo suo confirmans et Sapientia compingens omnia.* In the ensuing section, Irenaeus refers to the goodness of the demiurge from Plato's *Timaeus.*
[51] *haer.* 4.20.1 (SC 100.624).

> according to his greatness is unknown by all that was made by him—no one understood his greatness neither the ancients/elders nor those who live today—but according to his love he can always be known through him through whom everything was founded. This is his Word, our Lord Jesus Christ, who in the most recent age of humanity was made human, so that he could join together the end with the beginning, that is humanity with God.
>
> Unus igitur Deus, qui Verbo et Sapientia fecit et aptavit omnia. Hic est autem Demiurgus, qui et mundum hunc attribuit humano generi, qui secundum magnitudinem quidem ignotus est omnibus his qui ab eo facti sunt — nemo enim investigavit altitudinem ejus, neque veterum neque eorum qui nunc sunt —, secundum autem dilectionem cognoscitur semper per eum per quem constituit omnia. *Est autem hic Verbum ejus, Dominus noster Jesus Christus, qui in novissimis temporibus homo in hominibus factus est, ut finem conjungeret principio, hoc est hominem Deo.
>
> Ἔστι δὲ οὗτος ὁ Λόγος αὐτοῦ ὁ Κύριος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦς Χριστός, ὁ ἐν ἐσχάτοις καιροῖς Θεὸς ἐν ἀνθρώποις γενόμενος, ἵνα τὸ τέλος συνάψῃ τῇ ἀρχῇ, τουτέστιν ἄνθρωπον Θεῷ.[52]

Because the incarnation was foretold by the prophets, Irenaeus focuses on language of walking with God and seeing God, and both Son and Spirit are involved in making God known and visible to humanity from the beginning. Irenaeus transitions from the impossible to the possible by weaving together three passages about seeing God ("no one will see God and live" from Exodus 33:20, but "Blessed are the clean in heart, for they will see God" from Matthew 5:8, because "those things which are impossible for humans are possible with God" from Luke 18:27), and he argues that the original meaning (*praesignificatio*) of this prophecy was always that the invisible Father would be seen by humans. Though it seemed impossible, it was always part of God's purpose that the Father be made proximate through the Son.

> According to his greatness and indescribable glory, "no one will see God and live" (Ex 33:20), for the Father is beyond comprehension, but indeed according to his love and philanthropy he can do everything, and it is granted for those who love him to see God, as the prophets prophesied, that "those things which are impossible for humans are possible with God" (Lk 18:27)…
> And because of this he shows the uncontained, incomprehensible, <and invisible> in himself visible, comprehensible, and contained to the faithful,[53] to give life to those who share/contain and who see him through faith[54]. In whatever way his greatness is

[52] *haer*. 4.20.4 (SC 100.634).
[53] The Latin has "to humans."
[54] "Through faith" is absent in the Latin.

> unsearchable,[55] his goodness is indescribable, through which once he is seen he gives life to those who see him, since it is impossible to live without life, and the substance of life comes from sharing God, and sharing God is to see God and to enjoy his goodness.
>
> Sed secundum magnitudinem quidem ejus et inenarrabilem gloriam *nemo videbit Deum et vivet*, incapabilis enim Pater, secundum autem dilectionem et humanitatem et quod omnia possit, etiam hoc concedit his qui se diligunt, id est videre Deum, quod et prophetabant prophetae: quoniam *quae impossibilia sunt apud homines possibilia apud Deum…*
> *Et propter hoc incapabilis et incomprehensibilis <et invisibilis > visibilem se et comprehensibilem et capacem hominibus praestat, ut vivificet percipientes et videntes se. Quemadmodum enim magnitudo ejus investigabilis, sic et benignitas ejus inenarrabilis, per quam visus vitam praestat his qui vident eum : quoniam vivere sine vita impossibile est, subsistentia autem vitae de Dei participatione evenit, participatio autem Dei est videre Deum et frui benignitate ejus.*
>
> Καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ὁ ἀχώρητος καὶ ἀκατάληπτος καὶ ἀόρατος ὁρώμενον ἑαυτὸν καὶ καταλαμβανόμενον καὶ χωρούμενον τοῖς πιστοῖς παρέσχεν, ἵνα ζωοποιήσῃ τοὺς χωροῦντας καὶ βλέποντας αὐτὸν διὰ πίστεως. Ὡς γὰρ τὸ μέγεθος αὐτοῦ ἀνεξιχνίαστον, οὕτως καὶ ἡ ἀγαθότης αὐτοῦ ἀνεξήγητος, δι' ἧς βλεπόμενος ζωὴν ἐνδίδωσι τοῖς ὁρῶσιν αὐτόν. Ἐπεὶ ζῆσαι ἄνευ ζωῆς οὐχ οἷόν τε ἦν, ἡ δὲ ὕπαρξις τῆς ζωῆς ἐκ τῆς τοῦ Θεοῦ περιγίνεται μετοχῆς, μετοχὴ[56] δὲ Θεοῦ ἐστι τὸ γινώσκειν Θεὸν καὶ ἀπολαύειν τῆς χρηστότητος αὐτοῦ.[57]

Michael Slusser does not explore this second half of *haer.* 4.20.5. In it, both God's greatness and goodness are described as beyond human comprehension and expression. Based on his "transcendence versus immanence" lens, here both God's greatness and goodness are being described in terms of God's transcendence, which would, in turn, contrast God's love against God's goodness.

In this passage, transcendence and immanence are interwoven. The impossible is made possible. The incomprehensible and uncontained God is comprehensible and contained in Christ. Though God is invisible, God willed for himself to be seen. Through the lens of the

[55] According to LS, *investigabilis* can mean either searchable or unsearchable. My argument would be strengthened if it meant "searchable," but the Greek and Armenian make this unlikely. The Greek uses ἀνεξιχνίαστον. Both Rousseau and Harvey simply mark the Armenian as following the Latin with the inclusion of "est," and according to Reynders, the Armenian word is անքննելի, which translated means "inscrutable." Reynders, *Lexique comparé*, 2.168; Harvey, *Santi Irenaei Episcopi Lugdunensis Libros Quinque Adversus Haereses*, 270, n. 4; Rousseau, SC 100, 640.
[56] The verb and noun translation of μετέχω and μετοχή are translated as *percipio* and *participationem* respectively. For discussion of these terms as they relate the question of knowledge versus opinion, particularly in Plutarch, see Long, The Hellenistic Philosophers, 256.
[57] *haer.* 4.20.5 (SC 100.638-42).

principle of divine simplicity, God is not concealed in his greatness and revealed in his love, but rather, love, goodness, and greatness are both revealing and indescribable because humans and their experiences are still insufficient.[58] This sense of tension can be supported in Irenaeus's description of the revealing work of the Word:

> Therefore, the Word is made the dispenser of paternal grace for the usefulness of humanity, he made so many arrangements for them, indeed showing God to humans, presenting humans to God, thus preserving the invisibility of the Father,
>
> Et propterea Verbum dispensator paternae gratiae factus est ad utilitatem hominum, propter quos fecit tantas dispositiones, hominibus quidem ostendens Deum, Deo autem exhibens hominem; et invisibilitatem quidem Patris custodiens,[59]

The tension between God's transcendence and God's immanence should not be separated into God's greatness and love. Any mutually exclusive separation should be attributed to the difference between God and his creation, reflecting human incapacity rather than parts in God. Orbe's conclusion, though dated, sums it up. God's economy 'according to love' calls humanity to knowledge of God through the revealed divine perfections made known through the Son, and those who see God are called to know God 'according to his greatness.'[60] God's love and greatness entail one another, and in the human process of knowing God, they are both revealing and beyond comprehension.

3.2 God Creating Without Instruments

It has been rightly noted that Irenaeus shares many theological propensities with Theophilus of Antioch, and the hands of God metaphor is one of the most distinctive features they share.[61] Briggman claims that *haer.* 3.8.3 is the first place where a clear knowledge of

[58] Irenaeus later claims that God's power, wisdom, goodness and kindness are mutually entailing in creation (*haer.* 4.38.3). See discussion in Chapter 6 section 2.2.
[59] *haer.* 4.20.7 (SC 100.646-48)
[60] Orbe, "San Ireneo y el conocimiento natural de Dios, Parte II," 735-47, especially 38-39.
[61] Loof's work applied source criticism to his work and attempted to reconstruct a lost work of Theophilus. He claims that Irenaeus cited the work literally without acknowledging it, which in the end leaves little original in Irenaeus. His conclusions were quickly challenged, though they continue to shape modern scholarship. See Loofs, *Theophilus von Antiochen Adversus Marcionem und die anderen theologischen Quellen bei Irenaeus*;

Theophilus's *ad Autolycum* can be demonstrated, and that Book 4 in particular demonstrates Irenaeus's dependence on Theophilus, where the hands of God metaphor is clearly attributed to both the Word and Wisdom as Son and Spirit.[62] I have suggested that the theological parts of the hands of God metaphor which come together in *haer.* 4.20 were already present in *haer.* 2.30.9, and starting in Book 2, Irenaeus differentiates himself from certain descriptions of God's Word and Wisdom used by Theophilus.

Irenaeus does not describe the "Hands of God" as God's Word and Wisdom until Book 4, or the "Hand of God" as God's Word prior *haer.* 3.21.10, so Briggman has argued that one cannot definitively assert that the hands of God metaphor was present before Book 4, and certainly not before Book 3.[63] However, in my estimation, Briggman's differentiation between the singular hand and plural hands of God seems too strong, as both Theophilus and Irenaeus regularly refer to both. Theophilus refers to the Hand of God four times in the singular, and only twice in the plural. *Ad Autolycum* 2.18 is the most famous, and only, example where Theophilus of Antioch refers to the hands of God as his *Logos* and *Sophia*, which is certainly significant, but he also cites Psalm 94:4 to describe the hand of God (*Autol.* 1.4), he twice speaks of the hand of God enclosing creation (in *Autol.* 1.5) and he cites both Hosea 13:4 and Isaiah 45:12, the first which refers to the hands of God displaying the heavens, while the second shows that the heavens were made firm by the hand of God (*Autol.* 2.35).

Although Irenaeus does not describe God's Word and Wisdom as the hands of God in Book 2, this is not a conclusive way to establish a dependence on Theophilus starting after Book 3 or Book 4. Back in *haer.* 2.30, in the context of an argument for creation, Irenaeus describes the God who created and "holds the world in his hand" (citing Is 40:22 in *haer.*

Hitchcock, "Loof's Theory of Theophilus of Antioch as a Source of Irenaeus Part 1."; "Loof's Theory of Theophilus of Antioch as a Source of Irenaeus Part 2."

[62] Briggman, *Irenaeus of Lyons and the Theology of the Holy Spirit*, see ch. 5.

[63] Ibid., see excursus, pp. 97-103.

2.30.1), which is the same verse used by Theophilus to argue for the way God created through his *Logos* (*Autol.* 2.13). As part of the same argument, Irenaeus illustrates God as the creator with language that includes the hands of the *artifex* (*haer.* 2.30.5), and then he describes God creating through the Word of his Power and his Wisdom. There is not sufficient evidence to prove definitively that Irenaeus was influenced by Theophilus before Book 3, nor is the evidence strong enough to rule out his influence in Book 2.

In Book 2, these same sections reject the language of "tool" or "instrument" to describe divine activity, an emphasis repeated in *haer.* 4.20 to differentiate God's activity through His Hands.[64] In *haer.* 2.2.3-5, through the metaphor of the king/architect/craftsman, Irenaeus argues that the first cause was responsible for planning each outcome, and with the craftsman in particular, the tool/demiurge cannot be blamed for what is made. After the illustration, Irenaeus insists that God did not need angels or tools (*organum*; գործի) to create, but based on scripture (appealing to Jn 1:3; Ps 32/3:9; Gen 1, and Eph 4:6), he argues using the same three terminological markers highlighted above. (1) God "himself with himself" (*ipse in semetipso*) created; and (2) he contains all; (3) just as he willed through his Word. For him, the Word through which God created; cannot be described as a tool. This rejection of tools or instruments continues in *haer.* 2.28.4, in an argument about the generation of the *logos.* Irenaeus argues against a divided *logos* where one remains within while the other is emitted (the first as the principle of thought and the other as the instrument [*organum*] of expression), which he claims the Valentinians got from Greek philosophical thought.[65] Instead of dividing God like a human, with divisions and affections, God should be

[64] Antonio Orbe claims that, for Irenaeus, the Father created through his instrument, the *logos,* but I think he misunderstands Irenaeus on this point. For examples, see Antonio Orbe, "S. Ireneo y la Creación de la Materia," *Gregorianum* 59 (1978); *Teologia de San Ireneo*, 275, n. 7; and 81.

[65] For an argument that this is describing λόγος ἐνδιάθετος and λόγος προφορικός, see Rousseau, SC 293, 320-21. See *haer.* 2.15.5 for another possible reference to ἐνδιάθετος and προφορικός. Rousseau believes that the distinction between these two types of λόγος make this passage incomprehensible, but he also argues that "*pricinpale*" here should be understood as "τὸ ἡγεμονικόν" as it is in *haer.* 2.13.1.

understood as "all Mind, all Thought, all active Spirit, all Light, and always existing one and the same," the same phrasing used for divine simplicity (in *haer.* 2.13).[66] Similarly, in *haer.* 2.30.5 he illustrates that, in the system of his opponents, the demiurge should be honoured more that the Father. He uses a metaphor of an artist with two tools or instruments (*ferramenta… vel organa*), arguing that the unused tool should not be honoured more than the tool which was continually in the artists hands. The inactive Pleroma should not be honoured more than actual creator. However, when outlining his own position, rather using the language of a tool, Irenaeus argues that God created according to his will, with the Father founding and forming (*condens et faciens*) by the Word of his power (*Verbo virtutis suae* citing Heb 1:3) and everything was fitted and arranged by his Wisdom (*omnia aptavit et disposuit Sapientia sua*).[67] This one God, who created through his Word and Wisdom, was not separated from his Word, that is his Son (*Verbum suum, qui est Filius eius*), for his Son was eternally coexisting with the Father (*semper autem coexsistens Filius Patri*).[68] Thus, before *haer.* 4.20, Irenaeus has already rejected the language of God's Word as a tool or instrument.[69] There is no separation between God's will and activity, there is no a

[66] *haer.* 2.28.5 (SC 294.280).
[67] *haer.* 2.30.9 (294.318-20).
[68] *haer.* 2.30.9 (SC 294.320-22).
[69] He only uses this language to describe the prophets. In *haer.* 2.33.4-5, after disagreeing with Plato's view of the soul, he calls the body the instrument of the soul. He the shows discontinuity (of time and purpose) between the artist's mental conception and what is actually drawn/painted/sculpted, showing that the instrument is slow and imperfect, precisely the kind of artistic metaphor he was arguing against when speaking about God. In *haer.* 4.11.2, humans are described as the instrument of God's glory, in a passage that maintains the difference between creator and creature. Apart from *haer.* 4.34.4 (where exegesis of Isaiah 2 and Malachi 4 results in instruments of peace when swords become ploughshares), the only other instance is in *haer.* 5.26.2, where the Gnostics are described as agents/instruments of Satan. In *Dem.* 11, Irenaeus calls angels underservants. This section is problematic, and some have argued for an association of the Word and Wisdom (*Dem.* 10) with the Cherubim and Seraphim mentioned, which would, but generally, scholars have rejected this proposal. For a full discussion, see Lashier, *Irenaeus on the Trinity*, 205, n. 55; Anthony Briggman, "Re-evaluating Angelmorphism in Irenaeus: The Case of *Proof* 10," *JTS* 61, no. 2 (2010). Since, according to Reynders, *organis* and *instrumentum* share a common Armenian root (գործի), it is worth mentioning that in the famous Rule of Faith passage of *haer.* 1.10.3, Irenaeus pairs *Instrumentum* (πραγματείαν; գործ) with God's economy (*dispositionem*; οἰκονομίαν), linking both to creation and salvation. Like its usage in Athenagoras and Theophilus of Antioch (see *leg.* 7.3, 16.3 and *Autol.* 2.9), in *haer.* 4.35.1 Irenaeus uses *instrumentum* to describe God speaking through scripture. See Reynders, *Lexique comparé*, 2:164, 223; 1:127.

chronological hierarchy between the Father and Son, and he does not use the language of instruments to describe the roles of Word and Wisdom.

However, to say that God created "through" or "by" His Hands requires clarification.[70] When Philo explains the way God created through his *logos*, he argues that God "made use" (προσχράομαι) of the *logos* as a tool (ὄργανον).[71] Elsewhere, alongside a metaphor of a craftsman building a city or house, he differentiates between God as first cause and his instruments (ὄργανον), specifically naming the Word of God as the instrument of creation (ὄργανον δὲ λόγον θεοῦ δι' οὗ κατεσκευάσθη).[72] This terminology of the *logos* as an instrument of God is picked up in some Christian texts, such as Clement of Alexandria.[73] Theophilus is closer to Irenaeus's position, for he only describes the prophets as the instruments of God, but he described the generated *logos* as an assistant (ὑπουργὸν) of the God that created all things.[74] I agree with Richard Norris, who argues that this description is not compatible with Irenaeus's account, for these descriptions from Philo and Theophilus have more in common with Irenaeus's opponents than Irenaeus.[75] While Theophilus was able

[70] Fantino has argued that Irenaeus's usage of Ephesians 4:6 attributes certain prepositions to Father, Word, and probably Spirit. Fantino, *La théologie d'Irénée*, 298-99. The "metaphysics of prepositions" was already firmly established in Middle Platonist thought. See Dillon, *The Middle Platonists: 80 B.C. To A.D. 220*, 137-38.
[71] Philo used the "metaphysics of prepositions" as seen in *Prov.* 1.23 and *Cher.* 125ff. Citations from *The Middle Platonists: 80 B.C. To A.D. 220*, 138. See *Leg. All.* 3.96 (LCL 226.364). σκιὰ θεοῦ δὲ ὁ λόγος αὐτοῦ ἐστιν, ᾧ καθάπερ ὀργάνῳ προσχρησάμενος ἐκοσμοποίει.
[72] *De Cher.* 125-127 (LCL 227.82-85). Translation from F. H. and G. H. Whitaker Colson, ed. *Philo: On the Cherubim. The Sacrifices of Abel and Cain. The Worse Attacks the Better. On the Posterity and Exile of Cain. On the Giants*, LCL 227 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1929).
[73] For an example, see *Protrepticus*, 1.5-6. This description of the *Logos* as an instrument can also be found in the Greek of the *Corpus Hermetica* 9.6 and in the Latin of Asclepius. See Copenhaver, Hermetica, 28, 76.
[74] *Autol.* 2.9-10. R. M. Grant, ed. *Theophilus of Antioch ad Autolychum: Text and Translation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), 38-41. Athenagoras also only uses instruments for the prophets, though he speaks of creation (*leg.* 7.3 and 16.3). Justin only uses ὄργανον in reference to musical instruments and actual human tools (*dial.* 22, 110).
[75] "The notion, then, that God made use of an intermediary or intermediaries in the act of creation was not confined to Irenaeus' 'heretics.' Theophilus of Antioch, for example, who was a favourite of Irenaeus', asserted that God had the Logos as his 'assistant' or 'under-worker' (ὑπουργός) in creation; and Philo had referred to the divine Logos as God's 'instrument' (τό δί οὗ) in creation, God himself being 'cause' (αἴτιον)." See Norris, "Who Is the Demiurge?," 31. Elsewhere, he states, "the divine 'hands' is here set over against the image of 'instruments': what God's hands do, God does, without extraneous instruments. Irenaeus, then, would have been worried by Theophilus' portrayal of God's Logos as an 'assistant' or 'under-worker,' even though he takes from Theophilus the distinction between Logos and Wisdom and then, more or less on his own book, identifies these two as Son and Spirit respectively. For Irenaeus, it seems, Logos and Spirit are not to be too casually differentiated from God. Otherwise his emphasis on the intimacy of the transcendent God's relation to the

to use the language of assistant alongside the language of hands, Irenaeus's language is much more intimate, rejecting the language of intermediaries.[76] In *haer.* 4.20.1, rather than creation through angels, other gods, or distant powers, God creates through his Hands, a description of divine activity that rejects parts. Because Irenaeus's argument does not adopt the language of "ὑπουργὸν" and rejects "ὄργανον," in this case, Irenaeus adjusted, rather than simply adopted, the language of Theophilus in a way that is consistent with his concept of divine simplicity.

4. Conclusion

Scriptural exegesis and theological terminology from Book 2 are used in *haer.* 4.19-20 to describe divine activity in a way that is compatible with divine simplicity. The books of Genesis and Revelation are read together, the activity of creation and revelation are described together, and distinct roles of Father, Son, and Spirit are described through the theological terminology of a God who is "containing, not contained" and of hands that are "himself in/through himself" rather than as separable powers. Though divine activity is temporally separated within the human experience or descriptions of history, it is not separated in God. Though descriptions of divine activity require different scriptural terms to describe the distinct work and roles (there is at least analytic distinction in divine unity), again, they are not separate. Though separated temporally and linguistically for humans, I believe that for Irenaeus, this activity is not to be ontologically separated. Book 4 is already rooted in the terminology of divine simplicity, since Irenaeus has described God "himself in himself" creating and revealing, because God is "himself equal and similar to himself" and "all light,

created order could not be sustained." Ibid., 35. In *haer.* 4.38.3, Irenaeus once describes the Son serving (ὑπουργοῦντος), but the context does not support a view that allows for any hierarchical difference between the Father and Son.

[76] This intimacy is noted by Lawson. "'The *two hands of God'* is an expression of the immediacy of creation, not of its mediacy." Lawson, *The Biblical Theology of Saint Irenaeus*, 125.

all mind, all substance, and the source of all good."[77] Because this argument is rooted in the exegesis and theological terminology from Book 2 that depends on the principle of divine simplicity, and because the argument here does not contradict this principle, but rather develops it in ways that further emphasises absolute unity of God despite the constraints of temporal and experiential language, I argue that the metaphor of the hands of God should be read through the lens of divine simplicity.

[77] *haer*. 4.11.2 (SC 100.500). Et Deus quidem perfectus in omnibus, ipse sibi aequalis et similis, totus cum sit lumen et totus mens et totus substantia et fons omnium bonorum.

Chapter 6: Divine Powers and Divine Titles

In this chapter I return to Irenaeus's claim (highlighted in Chapter 2, section 2.2), that because God is simple, the many scriptural names and powers of God are "heard together" (*coobaudiuntur*), that is, they are mutually entailing. I argue that Irenaeus deploys this way of speaking about God's names and powers throughout *Against Heresies*, particularly when describing God's power in creation or the scriptural names of the Father and Son. This chapter has three sections: the first examines God's powers and names together, and the second and third focus on God's powers and names separately. In the first section, I argue that Irenaeus deploys this way of speaking about God's names and powers in exegesis of the Septuagint. The scriptural names of God do not describe a God composed of individual divine powers, but in accordance with the concept of divine simplicity, they entail "one and the same" God, the creator. In the second section I focus on the ways Irenaeus describes God's power in creation. In some arguments, the emphasis is temporal, and God's power simultaneously fulfills God's will. In others, power is applied to Son and Spirit, and God's will is fulfilled, not by separated power, but by His Word and Wisdom. In still others, power is described alongside God's other attributes, so he claims that God's power, wisdom and goodness are "seen together." Irenaeus is arguing that God's power entails God will, God's Hands, and God's wisdom and goodness, claims which should be understood as guided by the concept of divine simplicity. Finally, I focus on God's names and titles. For Irenaeus, the God who creates in the Septuagint is not different from the God who reveals himself in the Gospels. I argue that, in accordance with the concept of divine simplicity, these scriptural names and titles entail both the Father and Son.

1. Powers, Names, and Titles of "one and the same" God in *haer.* 2.35.3-4

For Irenaeus, the many names of God that may be found in the Septuagint do not identify a God whose substance is composed of separate powers or gods (since God is not composite), but these names entail "one and the same" God (since God is simple). Irenaeus has already stated that because God is simple (2.13.3), God's names and powers are mutually entailing (2.13.8-9). His reference to God's names, powers, and substance in *haer.* 2.35 is very brief, but his argument is consistent with divine simplicity. God's names cannot entail separate powers or a composite substance in God. At different moments, his argument engages different streams of thought. Irenaeus's argument regarding God's names parallels the Jewish midrash,[1] and his association of God's power with God's names and substance is comparable to later Christian appropriations of Plato.[2] His exploration of God's names and powers, once again, took part of a wider conversation.

Irenaeus argues that the many names of God in the Septuagint are not evidence of a God whose substance (*substantiam*) is composed of various powers (*Virtutibus*) or gods (*haer.* 2.35.4). Instead, there is one and the same (*unum eundemque*) God; these titles are of one and the same (*unius et ipsius*) God; and all things are from one and the same (*ex uno et eodem*) Father. Though the names of God have distinct meanings, they entail "one and the same" God. As he puts it:

> But if indeed they would lay out the different words given in scripture, such as *Sabaoth* and *Eloae* and *Adonae* and others like these according to the Hebrew language, endeavoring to argue from these for different powers or gods, let them learn that all of these are expressions and names of one and the same [God].
>
> Si autem quidam secundum hebraeam linguam diuersas dictiones positas in scripturis opponant, quale est Sabaoth et Eloae et Adonae et alia quaecumque sunt talia, ex his ostendere elaborantes diuersas Virtutes atque Deos, discant quoniam unius et ipsius significationes et nuncupationes sunt omnia huiusmodi.[3]

[1] Alan F. Segal, *Two Powers in Heaven: Early Rabbinic Reports About Christianity and Gnosticism*, Studies in Judaism and Late Antiquity (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 37-39; 44-54; 223-27. For the texts of Justin and Theophilus, see *dial.* 61ff and *Autol*. 2.10-22.
[2] Barnes, *The Power of God*, 71, 73.
[3] *haer.* 2.35.3 (SC 294.362).

The text lists transliterations of various "Hebrew" names for God (Sabaoth, Eloae, Adonae, etc.). Irenaeus highlights the subtle linguistic differences between some titles (i.e. the difference between long or short vowels, so "Sabaōth… means voluntary" but "Sabaoth refers to the first heaven").[4] After the list of God's titles—Lord of Hosts, Father of All, Almighty, the Highest, Lord of the Heavens, Creator, Builder—he claims that these names and pronouns (*nuncupationes et pronomina*) for one and the same God describe divine activities: revealing the Father, containing all, and bestowing existence. The different names of God describe distinction in God's activity, but not composite parts, powers, or gods.

In this exegesis of the Septuagint, Irenaeus has more in common with Jewish interpretation. Alan Segal has argued that Jewish interpretive traditions reacted against early Christian interpretations that defended two powers in heaven, and he traces debates between "Church Fathers" and "Gnostics" back to their different readings of "two powers in heaven" texts from the Septuagint.[5] Some Christians highlighted references to the Word in the Septuagint, while "Gnostic" Christians defended their view of multiple powers from these names. Irenaeus opposes reading the names of God from the Septuagint in a way that creates

[4] He refers to the Hebrew and Jewish language (probably Aramaic), yet it is impossible to establish his familiarity with these linguistic or interpretive traditions. I hold that one cannot make a judgment call either way based on this text because the names of God are all transliterated in the extant Latin and Armenian manuscripts, so one can only guess what letters they originally contained. Grant references this paragraph, among others, to claim that Irenaeus had a minimal acquaintance with Hebrew. He also points to Irenaeus's transliteration of Hebrew in *Dem* 43, his reference to the Ophite usage of the Hebrew names of God in *haer.* 1.30, and his reference to the Marcosian usage of Hebrew (or Aramaic or Syriac) in *haer.* 3.8.1 and 4.30.1-3. See R. M. Grant, *Irenaeus of Lyons*, The Early Church Fathers (London: Routledge, 1996), 21-22. Thankfully, for the argument of this chapter, it is unnecessary to establish Irenaeus's familiarity with Semitic languages. However, as shown in Unger's notes on *haer.* 2.35, while it is difficult to align the transliterations of the God's names with Irenaeus's explanations, there are possible explanations. See Unger, ACW 65, 167-68, n. 3-7. Daniélou shows that similar exegesis is found in Tertullian (*Praex.* 5) and Hilary (*Tract. Psalm* 2.2). See Jean Daniélou, *The Theology of Jewish Christianity*, trans. John A. Baker (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1964), 167-68.

[5] This section, and Irenaeus's description of the names of God, has garnered little attention. When examining this phenomenon in early Christianity, Marmonstein, Segal and Grant have recognised variety in early Christian interpretation of the Septuagint. See A. Marmonstein, "Zur Erklärung Der Gottesnamen bei Irenäus," *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 25 (1926); Segal, *Two Powers in Heaven*, 197-98; Grant, *Irenaeus of Lyons*, 21-22. A possible source for the lists of names of God can be found in texts like 3 Enoch 48B, though dating is difficult. For a summary of the early Christian usage of God's names from the Septuagint, see François Bovon, "Names and Numbers in Early Christianity," *New Testament Studies* 47 (2001): 268.

division within God, so at this juncture, he follows a Jewish interpretive reading more than either Christian reading.[6]

Earlier in *Against Heresies* Irenaeus used specific proof-texts to defend his view on the Hebrew names of God, but on this occasion, he appeals only to the harmony of scripture to support his claim regarding God's power.[7] He promises further scriptural evidence in the forthcoming book (*haer.* 2.35.2 and 2.35.4), but for now, the harmony of scripture provides the thrust of his evidence.[8]

> the preaching of the apostles, the teaching of the Lord, the announcement of the prophets, the dictation of the apostles, and the service of the Law harmonise the praise of one and the same God and Father of all, not this and that other [God], nor [a God] having his substance from various gods or powers, but all things are from one and the same Father …
>
> consonat praedicatio apostolorum et Domini magisterium et prophetarum adnuntiatio et apostolorum dictatio et legislationis ministratio unum eundemque omnium Deum Patrem laudantium et non alium atque alium, neque ex diuersis Diis aut Virtutibus substantiam habentem, sed ex uno et eodem Patre omnia.[9]

He uses this harmony of scripture to substantiate his claims: (1) that God's substance is not composed of various Gods or powers (*ex diuersis Diis aut Virtutibus substantiam habentem*); and, (2) that God creates directly, not through Angels or some other power (*neque ab Angelis*

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[6] Segal's argument is developed by Adiel Schremer, who demonstrates that Midrash writers of the first and second centuries used Exodus 20:2, which has two names simultaneously ("I am the *Lord* your *God*"), to argue against multiple divinities and for one and the same God, despite God's various names. See Schremer, "Midrash, Theology, and History: Two Powers in Heaven Revisited." At this juncture, he engages Segal, *Two Powers in Heaven*, 38. Later (in *haer.* 3.6), Irenaeus will claim that "Lord" and "God" entail both Father and Son (see section 3 of this chapter).

[7] The first time Irenaeus examined the Hebrew names of God (*haer.* 1.30), he opposed the Ophite cosmology by referring to Ephesians 1:21, a central passage to his later description of God's powers that opposes a creation separated from God. In *haer.* 1.30.4-5, Irenaeus described Ophite exegesis, which used Hebrew names of God to delineate a whole cosmological story with six distinct sons or angels/powers/dominions of God. He subtly differentiates this story from scripture. First, by citing the former part of Ephesians 1:21, he shows that in the Ophite system, one power acted outside the permission of the angels, archangels, virtues, powers, and dominions, and based on this verse, he argues that Christ is above every angel, power, and dominion. Then, by citing Isaiah 45:5-6 (cf. 46:9), he argues that this power declared himself to be the Father above all. For discussion of this passage, see Presley, *The Intertextual Reception of Genesis 1-3 in Irenaeus of Lyons*, 64-65. Eph 1:21 appears in *haer.* 3.7.1, in the context of the names and titles of God being attributed to Father and Son, in *haer.* 4.19.2, just before arguing that God created through His Hands. See also *haer.* 4.24.2 and 4.33.13.

[8] This is the same kind of appeal to the harmony of scripture used to introduce other key theological claims, such as the mosaic of the king (*haer.* 1.8), the introduction to the exegesis of creation (*haer.* 2.2), and the introduction to divine simplicity (*haer.* 2.12-13).

[9] *haer.* 2.35.4 (SC 294.364-66).

neque ab alia quadam Virtute).[10] To some extent, this dependence on the harmony of scripture and this argument regarding God's power echoes the language of the Rule of Truth,[11] but it also includes language that later became central to Christian appropriations of Socratic descriptions of power. The proximity of God's substance, power, and titles in this second-century Christian text prefigures third-century discussions of God's power that adapted Plato in claims that: (1) activity unveils powers; (2) a name that describes a power becomes equated with the thing itself; and, (3) a power imitates substance.[12] According to Michel Barnes, these three pieces were utilised differently in the Trinitarian discussions of Tertullian, Hippolytus and Origen (either opposing the division in the "Gnostics" or lack of distinction in the Monarchians, depending on the text).[13] These three pieces are echoed in Irenaeus's argument: divine activity is not carried out by separate powers, God's names in the Septuagint are of "one and the same" God, and God's substance is not made up of separate powers. Though brief, these claims about God's power counter the view that a separated power caused creation and the view that God the creator is composed of parts or powers, the very argument developed by divine simplicity in *haer.* 2.13.

2. Mutually Entailing Powers of God in Creation

In *Against Heresies,* Irenaeus describes power in relation to God in three different ways: (1) God is above every power and angel; (2) God creates through his power; and, (3) God creates, not through another power, but through His Word and Wisdom. The first does

[10] *haer.* 2.35.4 (SC 294.366).
[11] For a discussion of the importance of the harmony of scripture and its relation to the Rule of Truth, see Chapter 1 section 5.
[12] Cf. Barnes, *The Power of God*, 71-74.
[13] The causal sequence from medicine was applied to the way God is known through his capacity to act, so God's substance, powers, and activities are distinguished in sequence in Hilary, which is based on based on Tertullian's *on the soul,* where he speaks "of the soul in terms of its nature, its powers (*vires*), activities (*efficaciae*), and its works (*operae*)." See *De anima* 14.3 and 5-13. For Origen, the Son is the breath of God's power, not of God himself, and an effluence of God's glory/power, not of God Himself. Thus, "in *Commentary on John* 1.291, the understanding of power as external to God's own nature or existence serves as the conceptual support for the individual existence of the second person." For discussion in Barnes, see ibid., esp. 99, 123.

not address God's power directly, instead referring to created powers, although he will restrict them from divine activity. In the second and third, Irenaeus argues that creation did not occur beyond the power of God, but instead, that God himself is creator through his Word and Wisdom.[14] Thus, Irenaeus distinguishes between powers that are not God and the power of God (the creator/creature differentiation), with God's power entailing God's activity. Michel Barnes has argued that Tertullian's Latin texts uses *potestas* and *virtus* interchangeably to describe God's power, and it seems that Irenaeus's translator also used these terms interchangeably to convey the single Greek concept of *dynamis*.[15] Scholars have not generally identified the concept of "power" as significant in Irenaeus's thought,[16] but I argue that the terminology and concept of power is prevalent in Irenaeus's theology of creation, and he describes and labels God's powers as mutually entailing because of his commitment to divine simplicity.

[14] The concept of "power" in discourse about God was prominent in Christianity by the time of Irenaeus, including the systems of his opponents. For example, he refers to it when opposing the description of thirty Aeons, from the "followers" of Valentinus, or the description of Angels-creator, from Basilides. The importance of "power" in in the Pauline exegesis among Irenaeus's opponents is demonstrated in Pagels' book, particularly in the chapters on Ephesians and Hebrews. See E. H. Pagels, *The Gnostic Paul : Gnostic Exegesis of the Pauline Letters* (London: Bloomsbury, 1992), 115-33; 41-56. Power is also prominent in Hermetic literature. For examples, see Copenhaver, Hermetica, 184. Irenaeus seems to use "power" in these same three ways in the *Demonstration*. In particular, see *dem.* 5, 10, and 47.

[15] Barnes, *The Power of God*, 103-06.

[16] Lashier even goes so far as to argue that the usage of δύναμις, which is so prevalent in the Apologists, is absent from Irenaeus's argument. See Lashier, *Irenaeus on the Trinity*, 120. It is especially surprising that Michel Barnes, after having written a book on *dynamis*, gives little attention to the topic in his exhaustive article, Barnes, "Irenaeus's Trinitarian Theology." One exception to this is Fantino, who notes that, when Irenaeus describes God's power in creation, there is a regular description of God's will, echoing back to *haer.* 1.12. By developing his arguments, I will highlight the way God's power entails God's will in descriptions of creation. See Fantino, *La théologie d'Irénée*. Another exception is Steenberg, who claims that God's creative power is the only source for creation and is the foundation of Irenaeus's *creatio ex nihilo*, though he does not explore it. Steenberg, *Irenaeus on Creation*, 38-40.

2.1 Will and Power for Creation in *haer.* 2.30.9 and 4.20

There are numerous references to God's power in creation from Book 2[17] or Book 4,[18] but by focusing on the descriptions of God's power in *haer.* 2.30.9 and 4.20, I can demonstrate how they develop language from the Rule of Truth. In the Rule of Truth (*haer.* 1.22): (1) God is above every power; (2) God did not create through some separate power; and instead, (3) God created through His Word and Spirit.[19] In these three passages, divine activity occurs through God's own power, and when describing powers outside God, God is above every power. Scholars such as Steenberg and Fantino have noted the importance of God's power in Irenaeus's theology of creation, both for his *creatio ex nihilo*[20] and his description of God's will and power.[21] Fantino even labels them as the origin and summary of

[17] For example, in *haer.* 2.2.3-6, when introducing the key scriptural passages for his theology of creation (Gen 1; Ps 32/33; Jn 1:3; Eph 4:6; *Mand.* 1.1), Irenaeus argues that God did not need Angels or some sort of weaker power (*Virtute aliqua ualde inferiori*), but rather he himself created the world through his Word. *haer.* 2.2.4 (SC 294.38). This is comparable to *dem.* 5. For discussion, see Fantino, *La théologie d'Irénée*, 318; Barnes, "Irenaeus's Trinitarian Theology," 97-9. Another example is *haer.* 2.1.2-4, and Norris argues that Irenaeus's reference to "Almighty" is highlighting God's power, though Briggman disagrees. See Norris, "Who Is the Demiurge?," 19; Briggman, *God and Christ in Irenaeus*, 74 n. 17. Note that, according to the LLT, *omnipotens* appears alongside *potentia, potestatis,* or *virtus* nine separate times (1.22.1; 2.6.1-2; 2.30.9; 2.35.3; 3.3.3; 3.11.1; 4.36.2; 5.1.1), some of which are examined in this chapter. I think that, in this case, the burden of proof is on Briggman. For further discussion on this passage, see Chapter 1, section 3 and Chapter 5, section 1. Similarly, in *haer.* 2.10 2-4, he twice affirms that God's will and power (*sua voluntate et virtute; virtutis et vuluntati eius*) are responsible for the substance of created things. *haer.* 2.10.2-4 (SC 294.88-90). Fantino uses this passage to engage May's argument of Irenaeus's place in the Christian teaching of creation *ex nihilo*, arguing that this development was not only a philosophical one, but also scriptural (Irenaeus echoes 2 Mac. 7:28 and Wisd. 1:14) and theological. See Jacques Fantino, "L'Origine de la Doctrine de la Création *Ex Nihilo*," *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 80 (1996); May, *Creatio Ex Nihilo*, 164-78. Both authors highlight the importance of Theophilus. For further discussion in the context of Irenaeus's theology of creation, see Fantino, *La théologie d'Irénée*, 314. Here, Fantino joins *haer.* 2.2 and 2.10, and while he does not make much of the "power of God" language, he does show the tension in Irenaeus's language, of attributing creation to the Father alone, but showing that it occurs through His Word and Wisdom.

[18] Another example is *haer.* 4.32.1, where Irenaeus argues that both the many voices of scripture (Moses, the Gospel, and Paul from Gen 1:3; Jn 1:3; Eph 4:5-6) and the two covenants proclaim one and the same God who did not create the world through angels of "some other kind of power (*virtutem*)."

[19] In the Rule of Truth (*haer.* 1.22.1), God does not create through angels or *powers* but through the Word and Spirit, where there is not another God or *power* above the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and where God's *power* can raise the dead.

[20] Steenberg, *Irenaeus on Creation*, 38-40. For *creatio ex nihilo* in Irenaeus, see Fantino, and for its importance for ensuing Christian usage, see May. Fantino, "L'Origine de la Doctrine de la Création *Ex Nihilo*."; May, *Creatio Ex Nihilo*, 164-78.

[21] He notes the relationship between God's will and power in the system of Irenaeus's opponents and in the Irenaeus's view on the creation of the substance of matter, undergirding his account of *creatio ex nihilo.* Fantino, *La théologie d'Irénée*, see 198-202, 309-12, 83-86 for respective parts of the argument.

Irenaeus's Trinitarian thought.[22] While the terminology "Trinitarian" may have anachronistic implications, I do think *haer.* 1.22, 2.30.9 and 4.20 sequentially develop a core argument regarding God's power. I have already argued that divine simplicity develops the language from the Rule of Truth (see Chapter 1, section 2), that, because of divine simplicity, God's will entails God's activity (see Chapter 3), and that God's powers are mutually entailing (see Chapter 2, section 2.2). I now bring these pieces together. The concept of divine simplicity means that God's will entails God's power. Divine simplicity also guides how Irenaeus speaks about the distinct roles of Word and Wisdom. As God's power, they are specified, but not separated. Because of simplicity, there is unity in distinction without separation. In this section, I trace the development in descriptions of God's power entailing God's will from *haer.* 2.30.9 to *haer.* 4.20. Divine simplicity specified the language of one God creating through his powers, first seen in the rule, and these two passages develop a more precise description of God's distinct, but unseparated, powers. In *haer.* 2.30.9 he specifies that the Word is God's power, and in *haer.* 4.20, he outlines specific roles of the Word and Wisdom as God's own power.

Irenaeus uses the language of power to refute the creation accounts of his opponents and to advance his own view of creation throughout *haer.* 2.30.[23] At *haer.* 2.30.9, his argument has two parts. In these two parts, Irenaeus uses the terminology of power in the three different ways outlined above, one of which refers to something outside of God ("God above every power") and two which refer to God himself ("God creates through his Power" and "Word and Wisdom as His power"). For both, no power separated from God caused

[22] Ibid., 283-85.

[23] He illustrates his opposition to certain creation accounts through the metaphor of an artisan, for just as a used tool deserves more credit than an unused tool, so too, the Demiurge in his opponents' system that actually creates deserves more credit than the inactive spiritual realm (*haer*. 2.30.5). He also challenges his opponents' understanding of Paul's ascent to a third heaven to hear unutterable words, arguing that 2 Corinthians 12 does not substantiate a spiritual realm beyond the creator, but rather, Paul was permitted to see spiritual mysteries (*sacramenta perspicere spiritalia*), which are the "activities of God (*Dei operationes*) who made heavens and earth and fashioned and placed him in paradise" (*haer*. 2.30.7).

creation, but God himself created. In the first part of *haer.* 2.30.9, Irenaeus uses two scriptural citations to support his claim for creation through God's will and power:

> …he himself with himself made freely and through his own power, he arranged and completed everything, and his will is the substance of everything. Only this God is found, who made everything, the only Almighty and only Father establishing and making everything, whether visible or invisible or perceptible or imperceptible, in heaven or on earth, through the Word of his power (Heb 1:3), and who adjusted and arranged everything by his Wisdom (cf. Prov 8:1; Ps 103[104]:4; Jer 51:15, and *Mand.* 1.1), containing everything and the only one who cannot be contained by anyone (Herm, *Mand* 1.1).
>
> …ipse a semetipso fecit libere et ex sua potestate et disposuit et perfecit omnia et est substantia[24] omnium uoluntas eius, solus hic Deus inuenitur, qui omnia fecit, solus Omnipotens et solus Pater, condens et faciens omnia, et uisibilia et inuisibilia et sensibilia et insensata et caelestia et terrena, *Verbo uirtutis suae*, et omnia aptauit et disposuit Sapientia sua, et omnia capiens, solus autem a nemine capi potest.[25]

As already argued, Hermas *Mandate* 1.1 is central to Irenaeus's theology of creation (alongside Gen 1-2; Ps 32[3]; Jn 1:1-3; and Eph 4:6), but in this passage Irenaeus adapts it to show that the God who created through his own power, created (*fecit*) through his Word and ordered (*aptauit et disposuit*) through his Wisdom.[26] God's Word and Wisdom are described through the same verbs used of God creating in the *Mand.* 1.1, so God's will for creation is fulfilled through God's own power. Further along, he describes God creating through his power, this time in relation to the Word. By citing Hebrews 1:3, he claims that "the Word of His power" created and ordered through God's wisdom.[27] Irenaeus highlights God's will in this activity of creation: God created "freely" (*libere*) and "his will (*uoluntas*) is the substance

[24] Harvey believes that the translator read οὐσία for αἰτία, suggesting that *substantia* was written in the translation instead of *causa*: see Hv 2.47.2 (1.368). While this would make the reading much neater, this seems unlikely, particularly since a central thread in Irenaeus's argument is for God as the source for the substance of creation (see *haer.* 2.2.4). However, the presence of *substantia* or *causa* does not affect my argument.
[25] *haer.* 2.30.9 (SC 294.318-20).
[26] Rousseau back-translates these latter Latin verbs as a doublets for a single Greek verb, and argues that Irenaeus is applying *Mandate* 1.1 to God's Word and Wisdom. Rousseau, SC 210, 333-34. Irenaeus seems to be using the description that the One God created and ordered (κτίσας καὶ καταρτίσας) *ex nihilo.* For discussion on the exegetical basis for Irenaeus's theology of creation, see Chapter 1, section 3.
[27] For Irenaeus's use of Hebrews 1 in *haer.* 2.30.9, see Bingham, "Irenaeus and Hebrews," 69-71.

of all things."[28] For Irenaeus, God's will is the cause and foundation of the world, with the Almighty God (*Omnipotens*) creating everything through his own power (*ex sua potestate*), and the Father creating through the Word of his power (*uirtutis suae*) and perfecting by his Wisdom.[29] Already, I have argued that because of divine simplicity, God's will entails and is simultaneous with God's power in creation (see Chapter 3). Here, God's will for creation is perfectly fulfilled by his power, specifically the Word. In the search for God, only the creator will be found.

Irenaeus returns to the language of divine power in the second part of *haer.* 2.30.9, this time describing God above every power in the activity of creating and revealing, and specifying that the Word is the Son. After opposing multiplicity,[30] Irenaeus argues that the many titles of scripture refer to the creator as one and the same God.[31] He cites Ephesians 1:21 to support his claim for the one creator God who is above "every Principality and Authority and Dominion and Power," a citation which he repeats at the end of the paragraph to claim that the Word, who is the Son, is eternally coexisting with the Father and eternally reveals the Father, "to Angels and Archangels and Dominions and Powers and all to whom God wants to be revealed."[32] Creation and revelation are linked through the activity of the Word, which he has already described as God's power. Though he does not directly refer to the power of God in this second part, he does specify that the Word of God's power is the

[28] Steenberg notes this link between God's will and "the Word of his Power" citation of Hebrews 1:3, claiming that the actualisation of the Father's will occurs through the creative activity of the Son. See Steenberg, *Irenaeus on Creation*, 79-80.
[29] Wisdom 7:25 refers to Wisdom, power, and omnipotent God together, but their order in *haer.* 2.30.9 seems insufficient to substantiate a claim for dependence.
[30] Sandwiched between the two parts of this claim, Irenaeus names the God of Marcion, and refers to the Pleroma of 30 Aeons from the followers of Ptolemy and Valentinus (Western Valentinians, according to Thomassen's division), and the virginal light from the followers of Barbelo, Irenaeus argues that the many titles of God as creator refer to one and the same God, further linking God's titles and powers. See Thomassen, *The Spiritual Seed*, 9-27.
[31] *haer.* 2.30.9 (SC 294.320). "Himself the Framer, himself the Creator, himself the Originator, himself the Maker, himself Lord of All," and "the one and only God, the Framer… he is Father, he is God, he is Creator, he is Maker, he is Framer."
[32] Also cited in *haer.* 1.30 for his argument regarding the Hebrew names of God.

Son through whom He creates and reveals, and this Son is differentiated from every other created power.

As already argued, *haer.* 4.20 and the metaphor of God's Hands retains and develops several themes from *haer.* 2.30.9 (see Chapter 5), including God's will entailing God's power in the activity of creation and revelation. He again uses the same the three uses of "power": (1) God is over every power, (2) God did not create through other powers but through his own power, and (3) God's Word is his power, though in *haer.* 2.30.9 it is stated directly, while it must be surmised from the phrasing "not another power" in *haer.* 4.20. He includes Ephesians 1:21 for describing God's power alongside the other passages used to support his claims regarding creation (Gen 1-2; Jn 1:3; Eph 4:6. *Mand.* 1.1).[33]. He introduces God's Hands by again opposing the view that God creating through another power:

> Thus, the angels did not make nor form us, nor were the angels able to make in the image of God, nor was there another [creator] beyond the Word of the Lord, nor was there a power very distant from the Father of the universe. Nor did God lack those things for making which he himself had predetermined to be made for himself, as if he did not have his own hands. For he is always with his Word and Wisdom, Son and Spirit, through whom and in whom he made everything (cf. Heb 2:10) freely and of his own accord, about whom it was written, "Let us make human(s) according to our image and likeness" (Gen 1:26).
>
> Non ergo angeli fecerunt nos neque plasmaverunt nos, neque enim angeli poterant imaginem facere Dei, neque alius quis praeter Verbum Domini,[34] neque virtus longe absistens a Patre universorum. Neque enim indigebat horum Deus ad faciendum quae ipse apud se praefinierat fieri, quasi ipse suas non haberet manus. Adest enim ei semper Verbum et Sapientia, Filius et Spiritus, per quos et in quibus omnia libere et sponte fecit, ad quos et loquitur, dicens: *Faciamus hominem ad imaginem et similitudinem nostram*.[35]

Between two citations of Genesis and the creation of humanity, Irenaeus opposes an angel or a distant power creating the world, and instead argues that God creates through his Word and

[33] He also cites Daniel 7 and Isaiah 6, which were considered dangerous passages in the Jewish responses to the "two powers in heave" heresy, and while the former only appears in *haer.* 4.20.11, the latter appears in both of the other two discussions (*haer.* 4.20.8 and 4.33.) See Segal, *Two Powers in Heaven*, 34, 146-55.
[34] *Verbum Domini* is in most Latin manuscripts, and followed by Hv 4.34.1 (2.213), but Rousseau (SC 264.626) replaces is with *verum Deum* from the Armenian.
[35] *haer.* 4.20.1 (SC 100.624-26).

by his Wisdom. God's will is fulfilled "through" his Son and "by" the Spirit, for God created what he predetermined (*praefinierat*), and God made freely and of his own accord (*libere et sponte*).[36] In the way that God created according to his will as predetermined (*haer.* 4.20.1), in that same way he revealed himself (*haer.* 4.20.5). The Almighty (*omnipotens*) God, who cannot be seen (alluding to Ex 33:20), "will be seen by humans, if he wants (*volens*), by whomever he wants (*quibus vult*), and whenever he wants (*quando vult*), and in whatever way he wants (*quemadmodum vult*)" through the Son (4.20.5; cf. Jn 1:18).[37] By reading *haer.* 2.30.9 and 4.20 together, "through" and "in" the Son and Spirit, God's power fulfills God's will in the activity of creating and revealing. As I have argued above (see Chapter 3), the concept of divine simplicity leads Irenaeus to argue that God's simultaneous will and activity cannot be separated (*haer.* 1.12), and God's will entails God's activity in the containment metaphor (*haer.* 2.1-6). Irenaeus's argument in Book 2 depended on the claim that God is simple, and now he uses the same exegesis and terminology to show a similar unity between God's will and power. Here, despite the distinct roles of Son and Spirit, there is no sense of separation between God's will and God's powers. In both *haer.* 2.30.9 and 4.20, because God is simple, God's will entails God's power. Irenaeus's argument provides further clarity to the descriptions of God's power from the Rule of Truth, and he argues in a way that is consistent with the principle of divine simplicity.

2.2 Power, Wisdom, and Goodness "displayed together" in *haer.* 4.38

Later in Book 4, Irenaeus describes God's power, wisdom and goodness as "displayed together" (*coobaudiuntur*). Irenaeus labels God's power, wisdom and goodness as mutually entailing, and he distinguishes these attributes from what is created. Both of these follow the

[36] This phrasing opposes a creation caused by fate in *haer.* 2.5.4.
[37] *haer.* 4.20.5 (SC 100.638)

two parameters on language about God that Irenaeus develops in line with his account of divine simplicity (see Chapter 2, section 2).[38] In this passage, God's power, wisdom and goodness are displayed in God's activity of creation, and God's power is contrasted with humanity's impotence. However, he also develops one of his parameters on language about God, for while God cannot be described through language that derives its meaning from composite humans, Irenaeus describes humans through qualified language about the divine.

The differentiation between creator and creature lies at the core of the argument of *haer.* 4.38. Irenaeus answers the question, "Why didn't God make humanity perfect (τέλειον; *perfectum*) from the beginning?" by claiming that humanity was infantile and therefore incapable of receiving, containing, and retaining perfection (τέλειον; *perfectum*) and immortality (ἀφθαρσίας; *incorruptelae*).[39] It was not impotence or deficiency in God that caused imperfection in humanity, but a deficiency in humans, who are necessarily created and changing. God had the power to give humanity perfection, but humans did not yet have the power to retain it, though they did have the power of choice or freewill.[40] Underlying this discussion is his claim that God's power, wisdom, and goodness are mutually entailing:

> But regarding God, power is simultaneously displayed, as are wisdom and goodness, indeed power and goodness in that he voluntarily established and made what was not yet [existing], wisdom in this, that he made it harmonious, suitable, and elaborate,[41] which, according to his immense kindness, will carry the glory of the unmade [One], increasing and enduring for a long time, as God gives the good without envy.
>
> Circa Deum autem virtus simul et sapientia et bonitas ostenditur, virtus quidem et bonitas in eo quod ea quae nondum erant voluntarie constituerit et fecerit, sapientia vero in eo quod apta et consonantia quae sunt fecerit, quae quidem propter immensam ejus benignitatem augmentum accipientia et in multum temporis perseverantia infecti gloriam referunt, Deo sine invidia donante quod est bonum.

[38] Kunze also reads *haer.* 2.13.9 and 4.38.4 together. See Kunze, *Die Gotteslehre de Irenaeus*, 30-31.
[39] *haer.* 4.38.1 (100.942-44).
[40] Choice and freewill are central to Irenaeus's argument, opposing the claim that some humans were made with an evil nature and others with a good nature. In *haer.* 4.37-39 form a subsection that highlight the power of choice in human beings (*potestatem electionis; quae liberum et suae potestatis; suae potestatis arbitrium*). Behr, Donovan, and Bacq all note this subdivision. See Bacq, *De l'ancienne à la nouvelle alliance selon S. Irénée*, 363-88; Donovan, *One Right Reading?*, 131-35; Behr, *Irenaeus of Lyons*, 98. For discussion on the link between divine will and human freewill, see Meijering, "Some Observations on Irenaeus' Polemic Against the Gnostics."
[41] In the Latin, it reads more like, "wisdom truly in that he made the things that exist suitable and harmonious."

> Περὶ τὸν Θεὸν δύναμις ὁμοῦ καὶ σοφία καὶ ἀγαθότης δείκνυται· δύναμις μὲν καὶ ἀγαθότης ἐν τῷ τὰ μηδέπω ὄντα ἐκουσίως κτίζειν τε καὶ ποιεῖν, σοφία δὲ ἐν τῷ εὔρυθμα καὶ ἐμμελῆ καὶ ἐγκατάσκευα τὰ γεγονότα πεποιηκέναι, ἅτινα διὰ τὴν ὑπερβάλλουσαν αὐτοῦ ἀγαθότητα αὔξησιν προσλαβόντα καὶ ἐπὶ πλεῖον ἐπιμένοντα ἀγενήτου δόξαν ἀποίσεται, τοῦ Θεοῦ ἀφθόνως χαριζομένου τὸ καλόν.[42]

In the work of creation, God's power, wisdom and goodness (and later God's immense kindness) are displayed simultaneously or together (*simul… ostenditur;* ὁμοῦ… δείκνυται). This echoes the labelling in *haer.* 2.13.8-9, where God's names and powers are "heard together" (*coobaudiuntur*). God is simple, therefore, although God's power and names are heard distinctly in scripture, and although God's power, wisdom, and goodness are displayed distinctly in creation, they are simultaneously displayed and entail one another. Irenaeus states that God's power and wisdom are shown in that he "established" and "made" voluntarily, and God's goodness in that he "made" harmoniously, verbs of creation that had previously been linked to activity through His Word and by His Wisdom.[43] God's power entails God's wisdom and goodness in divine activity. When Irenaeus describes God's own power, whether as Word and Wisdom or as God's power in creation, he consistently argues that God's power entails God's will or activity, and is entirely different from *created* powers.[44]

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[42] *haer.* 4.38.3 (SC 100.952).

[43] Later in this passage, these verbs for creating are connected to Father, Son and Spirit, contrasting the constant growth/increase of humanity. *haer.* 4.38.3: "Through this arrangement and such proportions (*convenientiam*; ῥυθμῶν) and such movement/construction (*ductu*; ἀγωγῆς), made and formed humanity came to be according to the image and likeness (cf. Gen 1:26) of the unmade God (*infecti Dei*; τοῦ ἀγενήτου Θεοῦ): indeed, with the Father perceiving well and ordering (*sentiente et jubente*; εὐδοκοῦντος καὶ κελεύοντος) well, with the Son serving an forming (*ministrante et formante*; ὑπουργοῦντος καὶ πράσσοντος) rightly, and with the Spirit nurturing and increasing (*nutriente et augente*; τρέφοντος καὶ αὔξοντος) rightly, with humans gradually approaching and reaching (*proficiente et perveniente*; προκόπτοντος καὶ ἀνερχομένου) toward perfection. This is becoming close to being unmade/ungenerated (*infecto*; τοῦ ἀγενήτου)."

[44] Initially, this description of God's "impersonal" powers (i.e. wisdom and goodness) may seem incomparable to God's "personal" powers (i.e. Word and Wisdom), but I would argue that this distinction is not made clear in the text. While Irenaeus does have a conception of God's Word and Wisdom as the Son and Spirit in a different sense as God's goodness, as it relates to the terminology of powers, Irenaeus does not distinguish between "personal" and "impersonal" powers of God, but between the power of the creator and the powers of the created. As a result, I focus on this latter distinction. For an example of a discussion that centres on differentiation between "impersonal" and "personal" descriptions of Spirit, including the point at which one can claim that Irenaeus had a conception of the Holy Spirit, see Briggman, *Irenaeus of Lyons and the Theology of the Holy Spirit*, 190-94. A further example of this disagreement occurs in *haer.* 3.6, where Rousseau, Orbe, and Briggman disagree on whether "Spirit" should be interpreted in a trinitarian sense (personal Spirit) or Christological sense (impersonal spirit/power). Rousseau, SC 211; Antonio Orbe, *La Uncion del Verbo* (Rome:

God's power, wisdom, and goodness are identified with God in the strongest of terms, since they carry the glory of the unmade and they establish what had not yet existed.[45] In this way, they are differentiated from what is made.

> Indeed, it follows that things which are made are not unmade, and it follows that what is enduring for many ages will share in the power of the unmade [One], with God freely giving to them sempiternal endurance.
>
> Secundum enim id quod facta sunt, non sunt infecta; secundum id vero quod perseverant longis aeonibus, virtutem infecti assument Deo gratuito donante eis sempiternam perseverationem.
>
> Κατὰ μὲν γὰρ τὸ γεγενῆσθαι αὐτά, οὐκ ἀγένητα· κατὰ δὲ τὸ παραμένειν αὐτὰ μακροῖς αἰῶσι, δύναμιν ἀγενήτου προσλήψεται, τοῦ Θεοῦ προῖκα δωρουμένου τὴν εἰς ἀεὶ παραμονὴν αὐτοῖς.[46]

Divinity is differentiated from created nature, for only God is unmade, perfect, and eternal.

> Indeed, the unmade [One] is perfect, and this is God.
>
> perfectus enim est infectus, hic autem est Deus
>
> τέλος γὰρ ὁ ἀγένητος, οὗτος δέ ἐστι Θεός[47]

And yet, while humanity is begotten, and therefore distinct, some of the very things that distinguish divinity (i.e. eternity and perfection) are provided to humanity, though to a lesser degree: rather than eternity, humanity is provided with sempiternality (a beginning with no

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Libreria Editrice dell'Universita Gregoriana, 1961); ibid.; Anthony Briggman, "The Holy Spirit as the Unction of Christ in Irenaeus," *JTS* 61, no. 1 (2010).

[45] In *haer.* 5.17.1, Irenaeus describes particular divine titles, wherein "The Creator, who according to his love is Father, but according to his power is Lord, and according to his wisdom is our Former and Maker…". Widdicombe uses this passage to argue that Irenaeus assigns particular attributes to particular divine titles, "Father" being distinct from the other divine titles. See Widdicombe, "Irenaeus and the Knowledge of God as Father," 145.

[46] *haer.* 4.38.3 (SC 100.952).

[47] *haer.* 4.38.3 (SC 100.956).

end), and rather than perfection, humanity is provided with a constant approach toward perfection.[48] Humanity is described through qualified language of divinity.[49]

This passage uses a similar labelling of God's power as in the definition of divine simplicity. It differentiates God's power, wisdom and goodness from things that are created, and instead, only compares God with himself, as in the definition of divine simplicity. However, this passage also develops his parameters for language about God, particularly the difference between language about humanity and language about divinity. Initially, God's power, wisdom, and goodness are differentiated from language about humanity. When describing God's power, wisdom and goodness, they are not understood through an anthropomorphic lens. Instead, they display the glory of the unmade and are compared and described in terms of each other, so God's power, wisdom and goodness are mutually entailing in the activity of creation. In his definition of divine simplicity, the human process of thinking could not be applied to God, since God cannot be measured by external things, and so lies beyond comparison. Instead, God could only be compared with himself, since God is only "similar and equal to himself" (*haer.* 2.13.3). There is a similar argument made for language about God in *haer.* 4.38.3, for God's wisdom, power and goodness are clearly distinguished from what is created and compared with other descriptions of God. However, all comparison between God and humanity is not erased. Instead, one direction of comparison

[48] In *haer.* 4.38.3, it describes this constant approach. "Indeed it is necessary that humanity first be made (*fieri*; γενέσθαι), and the made to be increased (*augeri*; αὐξῆσαι; cf. Gen 1:28), and the increased to be matured (*corroborari*; ἀνδρωθῆναι), and the matured to be multiplied (*multiplicari*; πληθυνθῆναι cf. Gen 1:28), and the multiplied to be strengthened (*convalescere*; ἐνισχῦσαι), and the strengthened to be glorified (*glorificari*; δοξασθῆναι), and the glorified to see/behold their Lord (*videre*; ἰδεῖν), for God can be seen (*videri*; ὁρᾶσθαι), indeed vision of God is effective for imperishability (*incorruptelae*; ἀφθαρσίας), [and] "imperishability is truly able to bring one near to God" (Wisd 6:19; cf. 1 Cor 15:50-54)."

[49] There are some parallels between this argument, and the concept of *oikeiosis* as described by Klein and Striker. See Jacob Klein, "The Stoic Argument from Oikeiosis," in *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*, ed. Victor Caston (Oxford: OUP, 2016); Gisela Striker, "The Role of Oikeiōsis in Stoic Ethics," in *Essays on Hellenistic Epistemology and Ethics*, ed. Gisela Striker (Cambridge: CUP, 1996). Irenaeus's argument here might be part of a Christian appropriation of the Stoic concept of *oikeiosis.* In particular, his argument parallels the writings of Clement and Origen, which Ramelli has labelled as applying *oikeiosis* to human-divine relations. See Ilaria Ramelli, "The Stoic Doctrine of Oikeiosis and its Transformation in Christian Platonism," *Apeiron* 47, no. 1 (2014).

is permitted: from creator to creature. Irenaeus uses the language of divinity to describe something created, though the differentiation between creator and creatures remains (i.e. eternal vs. sempiternal). This direction of comparison makes discourse about God obliquely possible.

3. Mutually Entailing Titles and Names of God in Scripture

The concept of divine simplicity also guides exegesis and interpretation of scriptural names and titles of God in the latter parts of *Against Heresies.* In particular, the concept regulates meaning of divine names and titles so that they are understood as mutually entailing.[50] Irenaeus argues that the names and titles associated with the Father ("Lord" or "God") also entail the Son, and names and titles associated with the Son ("Christ") also entail the activity of the Father. These names and titles are not identical. Rather, they are distinct but they entail each other when describing a simple God.[51] Some scholars have concluded that Irenaeus does not address the relationship between the names of God and the activities they entail.[52] I attempt to demonstrate that he does address God's names, and I argue that Irenaeus's commitment to the concept of divine simplicity differentiates his treatment of divine names and titles from the Apologists.

[50] Irenaeus's translator uses *nomina* and *appellationes* interchangeably, so while I lean toward the English translation "title," because Irenaeus's arguments regularly oscillate between both terms without clarifying a sense of a personal "name" or an established "title," I will do the same.
[51] This is, again, pushing against the terminology of "identical" used of God's names and powers in *haer.* 2.13 by Stead and Briggman. For discussion, see Chapter 2, section 2.2.
[52] According to Widdicombe, "Irenaeus, however, never makes either the indescribability of, or the grounds for assigning titles to, the divine nature a matter of analysis, nor does he address the question of the relationship between them." This view is shared by Brian Daley, who states, "The continuing theme of [Irenaeus's] work is the unity of *God*, a title which includes—in a way Irenaeus never fully articulates—both the unknown Father of Jesus, who is the God of the Old Testament, and God's two "hands," who work his will in history: his Son, or Word, and his Holy Spirit, or Wisdom." To Irenaeus's argument on names and titles is certainly not developed in the context of the two hands, nor is it applied directly to the Holy Spirit. But, I think these criticisms are based on the expectation that Irenaeus will answer fourth-century questions. Widdicombe, "Irenaeus and the Knowledge of God as Father," 143; Daley, *God Visible: Patristic Christology Reconsidered*, 69. Many scholars have examined *haer.* 3.18.3, but the focus is not on Irenaeus's usage of God's names, but rather, on the adoptionist implications of the titles of Christ (see section 3.2 below).

In second-century texts that Irenaeus accessed, describing God as ineffable was common. In the letter of the martyrs of Vienne and Lyons, which may have been carried by Irenaeus himself, Attalus affirms that God does not have a name like a human does.[53] Irenaeus's opponents claim God is nameless.[54] Justin and Theophilus also briefly examine scriptural titles and names for God in tension with God's ineffability. Theophilus of Antioch describes God as ineffable and indescribable, [55] but then lists thirteen "titles" alongside a brief explanation of each. He argues that God is revealed through his activity, but he does not examine the relationship these names have with one another, nor their relation to God's Hands.[56] Justin also claims God is ineffable, and he differentiates the titles of God from the names of Christ.[57] First, Justin describes God as ineffable, while requiring baptism in the name of God (*1 apol.* 61).[58] Later he again claims God is ineffable, but claims that the *titles* of "Father" or "God" are differentiated from the *names* of "Jesus" and "Christ" (*2 apol.* 6).[59] Osborn concludes that, according Justin, one cannot speak of God but only to him. In

[53] *HE* 5.1 (SC 41.20) According to the text, Attalus responded in Latin, but Eusebius records it in Greek. ὁ θεὸς ὄνομα οὐκ ἔχει ὡς ἄνθρωπος. *Gustave Bardy, ed. Eusèbe de Césarée: Histoire Ecclésiastique, Livres V-VII, SC 41 (Paris: du Cerf, 1955).* For discussion, see Emmanuel Lanne, "Le nom de Jésus-Christ et son invocation chez saint Irénée de Lyon," *Irénikon* 48 (1975).

[54] Irenaeus references many terms that, he claims, his opponents used to describe God as ineffable. For some of Irenaeus's opponents, God is beyond thought (προανεννόητος translated *proanennoetos* in *haer.* 1.11.3), beyond conception (ἀνεννόητος translated *incognoscibile* in *haer.* 1.15.5, 2.2.4 and *inexcogitabilis* in *haer.* 1.14.1), beyond expression (ἄρρητός translated *inenarrabilis* in *haer.* 1.11.3; 1.14.1; 1.15.5; 2.2.4; 2.13.4), or beyond name (ἀνονόμαστος translated *innominabilis* in *haer.* 1.11.3; 1.15.5; and ἀκατονόμαστος translated *inenarrabilis* in *haer.* 1.1.1). For a brief examination on the Valentinian descriptions of the names of the ineffable God, see Thomassen, *The Spiritual Seed*, 442, 67-73.

[55] ἄρρητον καὶ ἀνέκφραστόν, though, ironically, he does refer to himself as "carrying the name of God" in *Autol.* 1.1.

[56] For example, (a) "he is called God" (b) "on account of his putting everything in his own safety/stability…" *Autol.* 1.3-4. θεὸς δὲ λέγεται διὰ τὸ τεθεικέναι τὰ πάντα ἐπὶ τῇ ἑαυτοῦ ἀσφαλείᾳ. For Greek and translation, see Grant, Theophilus of Antioch *ad Autolychum*: Text and Translation, 4-7.

[57] Eric Osborn claims Justin's argument regarding God's names "grows more obscure." Osborn, *The Beginning of Christian Philosophy*, 50.

[58] In 1 *apol.* 61, while discussing baptism, Justin explores the tension of being baptised in the name of God the Father despite God being ineffable. Note that, in *Dem.* 3, Irenaeus refers to Christians being baptised in the name of God the Father, and the name of Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Spirit.

[59] In 2 *apol.* 6, Justin affirms that God has no name (Ὄνομα), since names are given by the elder and God has no elder, therefore, "Father, and God, and Creator, and Lord, and Master are not names, but titles derived from his benefits and works" (οὐκ ὀνόματά ἐστιν, ἀλλ' ἐκ τῶν εὐποιῶν καὶ τῶν ἔργων προσρήσεις). Translation from Osborn, *The Beginning of Christian Philosophy*, 36. See also 2 *apol.* 5.1-2. The Greek for 2 *apol.* 5-6 taken from Minns, Justin, Philospher and Martyr: Apologies, 285-96. In 2 *Apology*, Justin does not apply the use of "name" to baptism, but rather to its effectiveness in casting out demons.

contrast, Irenaeus does describe the relationship between the names of God, and he does not reject a relationship between the title "God" and the names of "Christ" and Jesus."[60] I argue that this difference in his view regarding God's names and titles stems from his adherence to the principle of divine simplicity.

Although his argument is very different from the apologists, it has much in common with the later writings of Clement of Alexandria, who may have known of Irenaeus's text and who also used the principle of divine simplicity in his exploration of God's names. While exploring Paul's discourse on the unknown God (Acts 17), Clement describes God as ineffable, but then goes on to clarify that, while certain names (the One, or the Good, or Mind, or Absolute Being, or Father, or God, or Creator, or Lord) cannot describe God wholly, "each by itself does not declare God, but all of them, collectively, indicate the power of the Almighty."[61] In his examination of this passage, Osborn has claimed that Clement's argument about God's names is based on the concept of divine simplicity.[62] This is, in my opinion, the one passage where Clement's otherwise strict apophatic view of simplicity provides something close to a positive statement about God. Irenaeus marks the shift, for he developed his argument for the names of God beyond the positions held by the Apologists, and he depends on divine simplicity to understand the names of God as mutually entailing in a way that has more in common with his readers than his predecessors.

[60] In *haer.* 3.6, he argues that the names and titles of the Old Testament refer to both Father and Son, in *haer.* 3.18.3 he describes the activity of the Father, Son and Spirit through the title "Christ," and in *haer.* 4.17.6 he argues that the name of Christ in the Eucharist also implies the work of the Father.
[61] Translation from Osborn, *The Beginning of Christian Philosophy*, 49. *str.* 5.12.82.1-2 (GSC 2.381). οὐ γὰρ τὸ καθ' ἕκαστον μηνυτικὸν τοῦ θεοῦ, ἀλλὰ ἀθρόως ἅπαντα ἐνδεικτικὰ τῆς τοῦ παντοκράτορος δυνάμεως
[62] Osborn, *The Beginning of Christian Philosophy*, 49

3.1 Titles of "God" and "Lord" Applied to Father and Son in *haer*. 3.6.1

As we saw in the first section of this chapter, at the end of Book 2, Irenaeus promises further scriptural evidence for his argument that the names of God point to one creator. Irenaeus fulfils this promise at the beginning of Book 3, where he claims that the titles "God" and "Lord" in scripture refer to Father and Son (*haer.* 3.6).[63] In this passage, Irenaeus argues almost entirely from the Septuagint,[64] with six citations from the Psalms, one from Isaiah, and one from Genesis, with a single exception (an allusion to Romans). However, it seems that he is emulating Hebrews 1 and John 10 in their usage of these same passages from the Septuagint to support his claim that the titles "Lord" and "God" entail both Father and Son.[65] This provides a lens into the kind of exegesis used to develop the implications of divine simplicity.

According to Irenaeus, the "naming" of God in scripture occurred only by God's power, for neither the Lord, the Spirit, nor the apostles teach that there is another God. The Holy Spirit and apostles neither titled nor named (from *nominare* and *appellare*) something else as "God" and "Lord," but the Holy Spirit designated (*signauit*) the titles "God" and "Lord" in scripture.[66] The text opens:

> Therefore, neither the Lord, nor the Holy Spirit, nor the apostles would precisely and absolutely ever have named one who is not God, unless He truly was God. Nor would they, from their own power, have called anyone Lord except God the Father who had

[63] Throughout *haer.* 3.6-8, the argument retains a continuous thread referring to God's names. He references proper reading techniques for understanding Paul and the Hebrew meaning of "mammon" for understanding Matthew 6:24, but in both he argues that the appearance of "power" or the title "God" does not prove another creator (*haer.* 3.7). Irenaeus also argues that the God who established and made is distinct from creation because he is self-sufficient, and therefore different titles/language (*vocabulum*) used for God should be unique to Him who made everything through his Word, and nothing created can share the same titles/language (*eiusdem vobauli*) of God, Lord, or Creator (*haer.* 3.8.3). \

[64] Donavan notes that, apart from the allusion to Romans 8:15 at the end of *haer.* 3.6.1, all the scriptural citations from *haer.* 3.6.1-3 are from the OT. Donovan, *One Right Reading?*, 69.

[65] God's names and powers are also explored by Philo, who argues that the powers on the right and left of the Father, which scripture calls *ho on*, are his senior powers "God" and "Lord," the first of which made and ordered the universe, and the second by which he rules and controls what was brought into being. See *QE* 2.68 and discussion in Dillon, *The Middle Platonists: 80 B.C. To A.D. 220*, 162, 65.

[66] As noted above, Rousseau, Orbe, and Briggman disagree on whether this reference to the Spirit should be interpreted in a trinitarian sense (personal Spirit) or Christological sense (impersonal spirit/power). Rousseau, SC 211; Orbe, *La Uncion del Verbo*; ibid.; Briggman, "The Holy Spirit as the Unction of Christ in Irenaeus."

> dominion over all things, and His Son who received from His Father power over all creation, as is expressed in this passage: *The Lord said to my Lord, sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.* This shows the Father speaking to the Son, who gave to Him the inheritance of the Gentiles and subjected to Him all enemies.[67]
>
> Neque igitur Dominus neque Spiritus sanctus neque apostoli eum qui non esset Deus definitive et absolute Deum nominassent aliquando nisi esset uere Deus; neque Dominum appellassent aliquem ex sua persona nisi qui dominatur omnium Deum Patrem, et Filium eius qui dominium accepit a Patre suo omnis conditionis, quemadmodum habet illud : *Dixit Dominus Domino meo: Sede ad dexteram meam, quousque ponam inimicos tuos suppedaneum pedum tuorum* (Ps 109[110]:1).[68] Patrem enim Filio collocutum ostendit, qui et dedit ei hereditatem gentium et subiecit ei omnes inimicos.[69]

According to Irenaeus, the Lord, the Holy Spirit, and the apostles (1) would not have named (*nominassent*) someone "God" who was not, and (2) they would not have named (*appellassent*) anyone "Lord" merely on their own account (*ex sua persona*), which Unger translates "from their own power."[70] Irenaeus opposes the view that God is revealed by a separated power, much like his earlier argument against a creation from a separated power, since God is simple (*haer.* 2.1-13). Instead, the Holy Spirit designated (*signauit*) the title of "Lord" and "God" according to the authority and will of Father and Son, who have authority (*dominium*) over all things, and by this authority the title "Lord" entails both the Father and Son. The Spirit, through the power of God, described both Father and Son with titles "Lord" and "God."

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[67] Translation from Unger (ACW 64.38), with some changes.
[68] Harvey notes that this same passage is used similarly in Matt 22:44 and Justin's *Dialogue with Trypho.* See Hv 3.6.1 (2.21)
[69] *haer.* 3.6.1 (SC 211.64).
[70] I agree with Unger, against Rousseau, that the subjunctive mood in the Latin does not need to be corrected to simple fact, for the subjunctive in this passage makes good sense. See D. J. Unger, rev M. C. Steenberg, ed. *St. Irenaeus of Lyons Against Heresies, Book 3*, ACW 64 (New York: Paulist Press, 2012), 134, n. 2; Rousseau, SC 210, 65, n. 1.1. Unger notes that *ex* (or *a*) *persona sua* appears six times in Book 3 (6.1, 3, 5; 9.1; 10.1, 5), and twice in Book 5 (in 25.2). Options range from "ohne Vorbehalt" to "in their own persons." He prefers Sagnard, who shows that the Greek term αὐτοπροσώπως is used of actors who do not wear a mask or impersonate someone else, but spoke in their own name. See Unger, ACW 64, 133-34, n. 1; F. Sagnard, ed. *Irénée de Lyon: Contre les Hérésies, Livre III*, SC 34 (Paris: du Cerf, 1952), 129. This can be compared to *haer.* 4.38.4, where Irenaeus speaks of freewill as *suae potestatis homines.*

Although this argument for God's titles depends heavily on the Septuagint, I argue that Hebrews 1 and John 10 are guiding his exegesis in order to reinforce his theological point that the names and titles of "Lord" and "God" entail both Father and Son. Because this exegesis develops his assertion that God's titles are mutually entailing (*haer.* 2.13.9), this passage provides another exegetical reference point for the principle of divine simplicity:

> Since, therefore, the Father is truly Lord, and the Son truly Lord, the Holy Spirit deservedly designated them by the title "Lord." Again, in regard to the destruction of the Sodomites, scripture says, *Then the Lord rained on Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven.* Here He points out that the Son, who also spoke to Abraham, had received power from the Father to condemn the Sodomites because of their wickedness. The same is contained in this passage: *Your throne,* O *God, is forever; the scepter of Your kingdom is a scepter of equity. You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore, God your God, has anointed you.*
> The Spirit designates both of them by the title "God": the Son who is anointed and the Father who anoints. Again, *God has taken His place in the council of the gods, and in the midst of the gods He holds judgment.* He is speaking of the Father and Son, and of those who received the filial adoption; these, however, are the Church *[Ecclesia],* for she is God's assembly, which God, that is, the Son, assembled by Himself. Of Him [the Spirit] also says, *The God of gods, the Lord has spoken, and He has summoned* the earth. Which God? The one of whom He said, *God will come manifestly, yea our God, and He will not keep silence.* This is the Son, who came to men by a manifestation of Himself. He it is who said, *I have shown myself to those who did not seek for me.* Of what gods [is He God]? Of those of whom He said, *I have said, "You are gods, sons of the Most High."* Of those, namely, who have received the grace of filial adoption, by virtue of which we cry, *Abba, Father.*[71]
>
> Vere igitur cum Pater sit Dominus et Filius uere sit Dominus, merito Spiritus sanctus Domini appellatione signauit[72] eos. Et iterum in euersione Sodomitarum Scriptura ait : *Et pluit Dominus super Sodomam et Gomorram ignem et sulfur a Domino de caelo.*[73](Gen 19:24) Filium enim hic significat, qui et Abraham collocutus sit, a Patre accepisse potestatem adiudicandi Sodomitas propter iniquitatem eorum. Similiter habet illud: *Sedes tua, Deus, in aeternum ; uirga directionis uirga regni tui. Dilexisti iustitiam, et odisti iniquitatem; propterea unxit te, Deus, Deus tuus.*(Ps 44[45]:7,8) Vtrosque enim Dei appellatione signauit Spiritus, et eum qui ungitur Filium et eum qui unguit, id est Patrem. Et iterum: *Deus stetit in synagoga deorum, in medio autem*

[71] Translation from Unger (ACW 64.38-39).
[72] According to LS I.B, this can refer to the imprint of a stamp or seal, but also "to designate."
[73] In applying the "no one has seen the father" principle from Jn 1:18, Harvey argues that Irenaeus and Tertullian (*Praesr.* 13), show the Son as revealer. See Hv 3.6 (2.21), n. 2.

> *deos discernit*.(Ps 81[82]:1)[74] De Patre et Filio et de his qui adoptionem perceperunt[75] dicit; hi autem sunt Ecclesia : haec enim est synagoga Dei, quam Deus, hoc est Filius, ipse per semetipsum collegit. De quo iterum dicit : *Deus deorum Dominus locutus est et uocauit terram.* (Ps 49[50]:1) Quis Deus? De quo dixit : *Deus manifeste ueniet, Deus noster, et non silebit*, (Ps 49[50]:3) hoc est Filius, qui secundum manifestationem hominibus aduenit, qui dicit : *Palam apparui his qui me non quaerunt* (Is 65 :1 ; Rom 10 :20) Quorum autem deorum? Quibus dicit : *Ego dixi: Dii estis et filii Altissimi omnes* (Ps 81[82] :6 ; Jn 10 :34), his scilicet qui adoptionis gratiam adepti sunt, per quam *clamamus: Abba Pater* (Rom 8 :15 ; Gal 4 :5,6).[76][77]

The first exegetical move to note is the pairing together of Psalm 109[110]:1 and Psalm 44[45]:7,8, which also occurs in Hebrews 1:8-13.[78] Jeffrey Bingham claims that Irenaeus's argument parallels Hebrews 1-3 in the way it applies the titles "Son" and "God" only to Jesus, and not to angels.[79] Because these Psalms appear together and because he closes out *haer.* 3.6.5 with a citation from Hebrews 3:5, I agree that he is using the argument from Hebrews regarding the Son. Psalm 109[110]:1 was often applied to Christ in the early Church,[80] and Irenaeus has already used it to support his principle of divine simplicity. His first citation of Psalm 109[110]:1 occurs after a reference to God as "all Mind and all Logos" (*haer.* 2.28.5) and against a separation between God's Word and Understanding, (*haer.* 2.28.6), two key elements for the principle of divine simplicity. Since he has already read Psalm 109[110]:1 to describe the powers of a simple God, and since he has described titles of

[74] Rousseau defends a reading of "assembly of God" rather than "assembly of the gods", while Unger follows the textual reading ("of the gods") and calls upon Behr's defense of this reading based on a literal reading of Ps 81[82]:1 which provides the implication that humans can be genuinely established as sons of God. See Rousseau, SC 210, 252-53; Unger, ACW 64, 39 and 134, n. 8; Behr, *Asceticism and Anthropology in Irenaeus and Clement*, 69-71.

[75] Harvey points to a similar interpretation of this Psalm by Tertullian in *Praex.* 13, and in parallel with Jn 3:2-3, he points to Hippolytus. See Hv 3.6.1 (2.21-22), n. 1.

[76] Both Unger and Rousseau note that Irenaeus unequivocally calls the Son "God," unlike Justin's language in 1 *apol.* 13.3 and *dial.* 56. See Rousseau, SC 210, 254; Unger, ACW 64, 134, n. 14.

[77] *haer.* 3.6.1 (SC 211.64-68).

[78] Theodoret also uses Ps 44[45] to support his interpretation of Ps 109[110]:1 without citing Hebrews 1. See *comm. Ps* 110.2.

[79] Bingham, "Irenaeus and Hebrews," 70-71.

[80] Predrag Dragutinović traces the Christo-centric interpretation of this passage in Clement of Rome, Polycarp, *Epistle of Barnabas,* and Justin. See Predrag Dragutinović, "Psalm 110 im Neuen Testament und in der frühen Kirche ein Stück Frühchristlicher Theologiegeschichte," *Sacra Scripta* 11, no. 1 (2013): 105-11. Furthermore, according to *Biblia Patristica*, this single verse is quoted by Irenaeus ten times, and just around the second century, Justin, Tertullian, *Ascension of Isaiah*, *Epistula Apostolorum*, *Epistle of Barnabas,* and Clement of Alexandria cite it. See *Biblia Patristica: Index de citations et allusions bibliques dans la littérature patristique*, 197-98.

a simple God as mutually entailing (*haer.* 2.13.8-9), a reading of Hebrews 1-3 through the lens of divine simplicity provides him with the language to argue that the title "Lord" entails both Father and Son.

The second exegetical move to note is Irenaeus's use of Psalm 81[82]. Though a bit more speculative, it appears to echo John 10 and its argument that Christ ("the anointed") is God and is doing the works of the Father. First, Irenaeus needs to explain the different references to "God" in scripture. While explaining how the title "God" applies to both the anointing Father and the anointed Son, but "gods" refers to the church, Irenaeus uses two Psalms (81[82]:6 and 49[50]:1, 3), culminating in a citation of the same verse used in John 10:34. In John 10, after asking if he was the Christ ("anointed"), the people are ready to stone Jesus for calling himself "God" in a passage where, among other things, he describes himself as the Good Shepherd,[81] as in the Father (referenced in *haer.* 3.6.2), and as doing works in the *name* of the Father. Jesus answers their accusation, that he calls himself "God," with a citation of Psalm 81[82]:6.[82] Irenaeus seems to follow a Johannine reading of these Psalms to differentiate the meaning of the title "God" from "gods." He also seems to follow its reading of the Christ doing the united work of the Father, since, for him, the work of both the anointing Father and the anointed Son are entailed in the title "Christ." This is compatible with the argument made by Anthony Briggman, who examines the passages following *haer.* 3.6.1 to argue that Irenaeus is using John 14:9-10 to describe "reciprocal eminence" of the Son in the Father.[83] While Irenaeus never directly cites either Hebrews 1-3 or John 10, his

[81] Ps 49[50]:14 describes death itself as a shepherd of the sheep.
[82] Irenaeus's interpretation of Ps 81[82]:1 and the "assembly of the gods" being the church is linked to his citation from Is 65 (since it does not refer to "God" or "gods") as a description of the Church, and follows the text of Jn 10:22-39 and the theme of Christ's sheep recognising his voice and following him. Rousseau defends a reading of "assembly of God" rather than "assembly of the gods," while Unger follows the textual reading ("of the gods") and calls upon Behr's defense of this reading based on a literal reading of Ps 81[82]:1, which provides the implication that humans can be genuinely established as sons of God. See Rousseau, SC 210, 252-53; Unger, ACW 64, 39 and 134, n. 8; Behr, *Asceticism and Anthropology in Irenaeus and Clement*, 69-71.
[83] Briggman, *God and Christ in Irenaeus*, 107-15. Briggman's focus is *haer.* 3.6.2 onward, and he argues that it is not clear how reciprocal immanence and divine simplicity fit together, nor how Irenaeus uses the rest of John 14:10, "the Father in the Son," based on Book 3. For this latter part of this verse, he goes to *haer.* 2.17. My

similar citations of the Septuagint and the similarity in arguments about the Father and Son suggest they were informing his argument regarding God's names.[84] His claim, that the names of God entail both Father and Son, explicitly depends on the Septuagint, but implicitly depends on arguments from John 10 and Hebrews 1-3.

This first section allows some preliminary conclusions. Irenaeus's exegesis develops his claims for divine simplicity as it relates to God's titles. This exegesis is mutli-layered. It depends on his view of scriptural harmony, with diverse passages from the Septuagint, particularly the Psalms, being read together with John and Hebrews. It also depends on the Rule of Truth and its claim for the one God of scripture. Already, Irenaeus is very different from Justin. Rather than differentiating between the titles exclusively referring to Father or Son as Justin does, for Irenaeus, the titles "Lord" and "God" entail both Father and Son. Because of divine simplicity, the many names and titles of the one God of scripture entail both the Father and Son. Furthermore, he has stated that the title "Christ" describes the work of both Father and Son, with, "the Son who is anointed and the Father who anoints." These titles are mutually entailing and are used in two directions of comparison: from Father to Son, and from Son to Father, as further demonstrated in the next section.

3.2 Title "Christ" and the Divine Activity of Anointing in *haer.* 3.18.3

Irenaeus develops the statement "The Spirit designates…by the title 'God' the Son who is anointed and the Father who anoints" from *haer.* 3.6.1 in *haer.* 3.18.3 to include and

exploration of *haer.* 3.6.1 seeks to make a more direct connection between divine simplicity and the argument concerning Father and Son, but I agree with Briggman's larger claim regarding the reciprocal immanence Father and Son.

[84] In this passage, Irenaeus also cites Exodus 3 twice, a chapter that has been referenced as the basis for divine simplicity. See Platter, "Divine Simplicity and Reading Scripture: Exodus 3:14 and God as Being-Itself." Irenaeus's exegesis may provide further proof. For example, Gen 19:24, which is cited between Ps 109[110]:1 and Ps 44[45]:7,8, is also cited by Tertullian (*Praesr.* 13) to support his exegesis of Jn 1:18, and the "no one has seen the father" principle. See Hv 3.6 (2.21), n. 2.

explain the anointing activity of Father, Son and Spirit. Irenaeus includes the baptism of Christ, the event of Pentecost, and baptism in the church. Scholars agree that starting in *haer.* 3.16, there is a shift in Irenaeus's argument,[85] but they disagree on its theological implications.[86] I argue that Irenaeus is again using his mutually entailing view of God's titles. This in turn shines new light on Christological readings of this passage, thereby supporting the claim made by Anthony Briggman, that the unity of Christ is imperative for understanding *haer.* 3.18.3.[87]

There are two modern readings of Irenaeus's opposition to an adoptionist view of Christ, and each reading hinges on *haer.* 3.18.3. Antonio Orbe focuses on the different titles for the Son, arguing that "Son of God" is Irenaeus's title for the Son's divine nature, while "Son of Man" is the title for his human nature, and "Son of the Father" refers to the adoption which occurred at the baptism at the Jordan.[88] In his reading, Jesus came to be Jesus Christ at his baptism, which is when he was anointed.[89] Orbe concludes that when Irenaeus states that when "he became a Son of God" (*fiat filius Dei;* γένηται υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ) in the context of

[85] Rousseau, Donovan, and Behr each show *haer.* 3.16 as a shift in argument. See Rousseau, SC 211, 494; Donovan, *One Right Reading?*, 79-84; Behr, *Irenaeus of Lyons*, 94.
[86] To some extent, the field of secondary scholarship on *haer.* 3.17-18 is a theological minefield, where God's names and titles have been peripheral in specifically Christological or soteriological arguments. As an example, see the exchange between McDonnell and Smith. Daniel A. Smith, "Irenaeus and the Baptism of Jesus," *Theological Studies* 58, no. 4 (1997); Kilian McDonnell, "*Quaestatio Disputata*: Irenaeus on the Baptism of Jesus," ibid.59 (1998); Daniel A. Smith, "A Response to Kilian Mcdonnell," ibid. For a recent summary of scholarship, see Briggman, "The Holy Spirit as the Unction of Christ in Irenaeus," n. 1. For example, both Eric Osborn (2001) and Denis Minns (2010) highlight this shift of Irenaeus's argument in *haer.* 3.17, emphasizing the soteriological implication that a person cannot be made one with Christ without the Spirit. See Minns, *Irenaeus*, 129-30; Osborn, *Irenaeus of Lyons*, 132-34. Both read this passage sacramentally, with the Spirit as the water from heaven, and later linked to the Eucharist in *haer.* 3.24. This is similar to Behr, who traces the links between the baptism of Christ, the anointing at Pentecost, and the person who is baptised. See Behr, *Irenaeus of Lyons*, 175-79. While these emphases are distinct, they are not mutually exclusive, unlike the debates on Irenaeus's Christology.
[87] Briggman, "The Holy Spirit as the Unction of Christ in Irenaeus," 171-93.
[88] Orbe, *La Uncion del Verbo*, 501-11; "¿San Ireneo Adopcionista? En Torno a *Adv. Haer.* III,19,1," *Gregorianum* 65, no. 1 (1984); Smith, "Irenaeus and the Baptism of Jesus." Smith develops this argument by claiming that the anointing by the Spirit led to the deification of Christ's humanity, both scholars arguing for a qualitative change of Christ at the baptism. Orbe, "¿San Ireneo Adopcionista? En Torno a *Adv. Haer.* III,19,1," 46-47, 50. His entire argument hinges on the ways the titles of son are given. Ibid., 13. The categories are: (a) son by nature ("son of so-and-so"), (b) son by act (although by nature son of Joe, he is adopted by Fred and becomes son of Fred), and this second category is divided into (ba) a son by creation, which includes humans and angels as sons of God and (bb) a son by pronouncement, such as a disciple who is made a son of the teacher.
[89] *La Uncion del Verbo*, 504. He also holds to this position in *Teologia de San Ireneo*, 4.238, n. 39.

baptism and adoption, this applies to Christ.[90] By this reading, at his baptism, Jesus became the Christ, the Son of God. Two points allow for a different reading. First, when this argument for anointing was introduced, Irenaeus interpreted this same Psalm 81[82]:6-7 to refer to the Church, which was adopted and became a son of God (in *haer.* 3.6.1). Second, the texts that describe Jesus as the Son of God also describe the Son of God as born (see *haer.* 3.19.2 where Son of God and Son of Man are equated at his birth). It therefore seems more likely that "becoming Son of God" is describing the Church. This second reading, most recently defended by Anthony Briggman, argues that Irenaeus does not present a qualitative change at Christ's baptism, for this would jeopardise the very unity of the incarnation which Irenaeus affirms.[91] I agree with Briggman, and suggest that the mutually entailing principle for God's names and titles further bolsters his argument. Many of Orbe's complex theological discussions hinge on Irenaeus's usage of titles, but if one reads *haer.* 3.16-19 continuously, Irenaeus's employment of the titles Son of God, Son of Man, Emmanuel, Jesus, and Christ continually return to his claim that these different titles entail the same, unseparated, Jesus Christ. They do not mark different ontological states across periods of time. Since Irenaeus has already used the principle of mutually entailing names and titles of God to argue that the texts from the Septuagint describe the Son, it stands to reason that these different scriptural titles of Christ function similarly. They inform one another rather than differentiating natures at different periods.

In *haer.* 3.18.3, rather than parse out different historical references for Christ, Jesus, or Emmanuel, the title of "Christ" entails the activity of Father, Son and Spirit. Earlier, when

[90] *haer.* 3.19.1 (SC 211.374). This is certainly an interpretive option for *conmixtus…filius Dei*, and Orbe lays out the three options found in different manuscripts: (a) Christ as man, read by Theodoret and Erasmus, (b) Christ to those who believe, read by Feuardent, and (c) humanity, read by Massuet and Petua. See "¿San Ireneo Adopcionista? En Torno a *Adv. Haer.* III,19,1," 35-38.

[91] Briggman, "The Holy Spirit as the Unction of Christ in Irenaeus," 171-93. By adopting Houssiau (1955), he argues against Smith and Orbe's specific wording that this baptism account was a qualitative empowerment, and Briggman concludes that the anointing of the Holy Spirit was a "non-qualitative empowerment" that did not change Christ's humanity.

exploring the different titles and names of God, Irenaeus introduced the way "Christ" implied the activity of Father and Son. Now the activity of Father, Son, and Spirit at a point in history (Christ's baptism) and through history (for those baptised into the Church) is implied (*subauditur*) in the title "Christ."[92]

> Thus, he points out that it was not an impassible Christ who descended on Jesus, but, Jesus himself, since he was the Christ, suffered for us, who lay in the tomb and rose again, descended and ascended, the Son of God having been made Son of man, just as the very name indicates. Indeed, by the name of Christ is implied He who anointed and He who was anointed and the very unction with which He was anointed. And indeed, the Father anointed, the Son was truly anointed in the Spirit, who is the unction. Just as the Word says through Isaiah, "The Spirit of God is upon me, because He anointed me" (Is 61 :1; Lk 4 :18),[93] signifying the anointing Father, the anointed Son, and the unction, who is the Spirit.
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> significans quoniam non Christus impassibilis descendit in Iesum, sed ipse Iesus, Christus cum esset, passus est pro nobis, qui decubuit et resurrexit* (cf. Ps 3 :6), qui descendit et ascendit (cf. Eph 4 :10), Filius Dei Filius hominis factus, quemadmodum et ipsum nomen significat : in Christi enim nomine subauditur qui unxit et ipse qui unctus est et ipsa unctio in qua unctus est; et unxit quidem Pater, unctus est uero Filius, in Spiritu qui est unctio; quemadmodum per Esaiam ait Sermo : *Spiritus Dei super me, propter quod unxit me,* significans et ungentem Patrem et unctum Filium et unctionem qui est Spiritus.[94]

Just as scripture uses the titles "God" and "Lord" to describe both Father and Son (*haer.* 3.6), so too, the title "Christ" does not refer only to the Son, because the names of God are mutually entailing. The Son is distinguishable from the Father and Spirit, but his titles entail the activity of the Father and Spirit. Furthermore, this activity of baptism is carried into the experience of the Church. As noted by Behr, the anointing of the apostles at Pentecost and the baptism of a Christian are dependent on the anointing of Christ.[95] The descent of the Spirit at the baptism of Christ and at Pentecost are proof that the Christian receives the seal of the Spirit (2 Cor 1:22) at the laver, and "through the Spirit, we receive the image and inscription

[92] This same verb (*subauditur*) appears in *haer.* 1.9.1 in the introduction to the Rule of Faith and *haer.* 2.1.3, showing that in his opponents' system, Pleroma and First God are "heard together" or "implied." In both contexts, Irenaeus argues that the activity or name cannot be conceived without God himself or God's other powers.
[93] See *Dem.* 47.
[94] *haer.* 3.18.3 (SC 211.350-52).
[95] Behr, *Irenaeus of Lyons*, 175-76.

of the Father and Son."[96] The mutually entailing activity of God through history for the Church is founded on the title "Christ." This reference to the title of Christ is not describing a qualitative change in the nature of Christ at baptism. In just this passage, the same Jesus Christ who was born, and who was baptised, who died, who was buried, and who rose again is the anointed one.[97] The same passage used to support a description of Christ's anointing (Isaiah 61:1) is also used to describe his pre-Incarnate appearance and activity, when exploring the titles "God" and "Lord" in various passages from the Septuagint (*haer.*3.6.1). The mutually entailing work of Father, Son and Spirit in the title of "Christ" refers not only to the unseparated divine activity in the Incarnation, but also to the unseparated divine activity for the Church.[98]

3.3 The Son's Name Entails the Father's Activity in *haer.* 4.17.6

In this final section I argue that Irenaeus applies the principle of divine simplicity to the names of God used in the church's worship. In *haer.* 4.17.6, Irenaeus employs a metaphor of a painting king to argue that the work of Father and Son are entailed in the name "Jesus Christ" at the Eucharist. Irenaeus has already utilised the metaphor of God as *Artifex* and as King.[99] Here in *haer.* 4.17.6, he employs both, with a king painting an image (or making a

[96] *haer.* 3.17.3

[97] He argues that Emmanuel (*God* with us) born of a Virgin (from Is 7 :14-15) is the same *man* foretold by the prophet (Jer 17 :9), who is the Christ announced by Paul who was born, suffered, died, and was buried (1 Cor 15 :3-4, 12, 21), this is Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

[98] A more speculative connection could be made with *haer.* 3.20.1-2. Throughout *haer.* 3.6ff, Irenaeus argues that Christ actually suffered, because, for example, the martyrs actually suffered (see *haer.* 3.16.4). Then, in *haer.* 3.20, Irenaeus begins to argue for the long-suffering of God (*magnanimitas* in the Latin, but likely μακροθυμία in the Greek). Far from being a patripassionist argument, this would show the only way in which the suffering of the Christ was not entirely separated from God. Note that, in *haer.* 3.20.2, because of the long-suffering of God, humanity is able to participate in immortality, and by this, humanity comes to understand "all the rest of God's powers" (*reliquas virtutes Dei omnes*) and how great God is (SC 211.388).

[99] In *haer.* 1.8.1, God is described as the σοφὸς τεχνίτης or *sapiens artifex*, and Osborn attributes this theme to Irenaeus's preference for aesthetic fitness. Osborn, *Irenaeus of Lyons*, 173. During the second century, Gaul had a boom in mosaics, resulting in, "the 'Viennese school' of mosaics." Here, Irenaeus describes a portrait, either painting or mosaic, of the king's son. This portrait mosaic reflects the art scene of Gaul in the second-century. For example, in a villa halfway between Lyons and Vienne, scholars have found one of the oldest polychromatic mosaic portrait, dated to around the first-century, which has been described as exemplary of Gallo-Roman artists

mosaic) of his Son.[100] In the metaphor, the image is called the king's, both because it is an image of his son and because he painted the image. Thus, the image of the Son is also the Father's because it is his begotten Son and because he planned the activity of salvation for humanity. In this way, the name glorified in the sacrifice entails both the Son, who carried out the plan of salvation, and the Father, who planned it.

This metaphor illustrates the point of a large portion of Irenaeus's argument in Book 4, that the old and new sacrifices from the old and new covenants were not contradictory, but the new fulfilled the old. This metaphor marks a transition in the argument of Book 4 (spanning *haer.* 4.12-19). Irenaeus has argued that the Gospel is the fulfilment of the Old Testament Law (*haer.* 4.12-16) and he will argue that the Eucharist is the fulfilment of the Old Testament sacrifices (*haer.* 4.17-19), but precisely in *haer.* 4.17.5-6 there is a shift in focus from covenant to sacrifice.[101] After a series of scriptural citations on Old Testament sacrifice, this metaphor of the painting king illustrates how the sacrifice of Christ fulfills the Old Testament promise that the temple sacrifices would cease (in Mal 1:10-11):[102]

> Which is the name, that is glorified among the people?[103] Indeed, this is our Lord, through whom the Father is glorified and humanity is glorified. For since he is his

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and which demonstrates a shift in Gallic adaptation of Hellenistic iconography. See Catherine Balmelle and Jean-Pierre Darmon, *La mosaïque dans les gaules romaines* (Paris: Picard, 2017), 89-91; 101-02. The prevalence of artistic imagery in *Against Heresies* has also been noted by Grant, who theorizes on the relevance of art and music in *haer.* 1.31.2-32.2. Grant examines the list of subjects given by Irenaeus (which includes music, painting, sculpture of brass and marble, and similar arts) with lists of Aristotle (*met.* 1025b20), Galen (*Protrepticus* 5, 14), and Philostratus (*Gymn.* 1; *Vita Apoll.* 8.7.3) and shows them to be comparable, and concludes that Irenaeus' assessment of the Carpocratians is at least partially true. See R. M. Grant, "Carpocratians and Curriculum: Irenaeus' Reply," *Harvard Theological Review* 79, no. 1 (1986). The imagery of the king is used in *haer.* 1.8.1, where the proper arrangement of the mosaic gives an image of the king illustrates how the proper arrangement of scripture gives an understanding of God, and also in *haer.* 2.2.3, where the King who plans the building of a city is one of three metaphors used to show that God himself planned and created the world.

[100] The Latin *pingere* and the Greek *graphein* were the same technical terms used for the work of making Mosaics in Gaul. See Darmon, *La mosaïque dans les gaules romaines*, 51-52.

[101] This is primarily based on the organization of Book 4 by Bacq, but both Behr and Donovan also separate *haer.* 4.17-19 as its own subsection on the Eucharist fulfilling the sacrifices of the Old Testament. Bacq, *De l'ancienne à la nouvelle alliance selon S. Irénée*, 131-47; Donovan, *One Right Reading?*, 109-11; Behr, *Irenaeus of Lyons*, 98.

[102] Through these citations, mostly from the Psalms and Prophets, Irenaeus argues that God wants obedience rather than sacrifice. Bacq claims these are specifically anti-Marcionite. Bacq, *De l'ancienne à la nouvelle alliance selon S. Irénée*, 135-37.

[103] According to Bacq, this allusion to Acts 4:12 is paralleled in *Dem.* 96. Note, however, that Acts 4:12 is not explicitly cited in this entire section. See ibid., 139, n. 2.

> special Son and by him humanity was made, he is called this [name] himself.[104] In the same way, if a king himself paints an image of his son, he may justly say that the image is his, both because it is of his son and because he himself made it.[105] So also, the Father acknowledges that the name of Jesus Christ, which is glorified in the church throughout the world, is his own, both because it is [the name] of his son, and also because he himself gave the writing/painting (*scribens*) for the salvation of humanity. Therefore, since the proper name of the Son is of the Father, and the church sacrifices to the Almighty God through Jesus Christ, he rightly said, "And in all places incense is offered in my name, and pure sacrifice." (Mal 1:11).[106] Indeed, in Revelation John says incense is the prayers of the saints (Rev. 5:8).
>
> Quod est autem nomen quod in gentibus glorificatur, quam quod est Domini nostri, per quem glorificatur Pater et glorificatur homo? Et quoniam proprii Filii ejus est et ab eo factus est (cf. Matt 1 :21 ; Lk 1 :31) homo, suum illum vocat. Quemadmodum si quis rex ipse filii sui pingat imaginem, juste suam illam dicit imaginem secundum utrumque, quoniam et filii ejus est et quoniam ipse fecit eam : sic et Jesu Christi nomen, quod per universum mundum glorificatur in Ecclesia, suum esse confitetur Pater, et quoniam Filii ejus est et quoniam ipse scribens id ad salutem dedit hominum (cf. Acts 4 :12). Quoniam ergo nomen Filii proprium Patris est et in Deo omnipotente per Jesum Christum offert Ecclesia, bene ait secundum utraque : *Et in omni loco incensum offertur nomini meo et sacrificium purum* (Mal 1 :11). Incensa autem Johannes in Apocalypsi orationes ait esse sanctorum (cf. Rev 5 :8).[107]

This passage is generally about worship, since it refers to incense and prayer, but it is specifically about the Eucharist. After an argument on the sacrifices of the old covenant, Irenaeus cites the *hoc est meum corpus* (Matt 26:26; Mar 14:22; Lk 22:19; and 1 Cor 11:24) and describes the Eucharist as the fulfillment of the prophets (*haer.* 4.17.5). Citations of Malachi 1:10-11 are the bookends and the key to this metaphor of the painting king. It is the last passage cited in *haer.* 4.17.5, it is echoed in the question that introduces the metaphor, it is the reason Christ's "name" in the Eucharist is explored, and it is cited again after the metaphor. "Name" is repeated three times in the first citation of Malachi 1:10-11, so Irenaeus

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[104] Orbe believes Irenaeus is also basing his argument on Rom 8:32 and Lk 1:31. He also calls attention to the similarity between this passage, *haer.* 5.1.3 and *Dem.* 53, in both of which the Father is the author of the Incarnation. See Orbe, *Teologia de San Ireneo,* 4.238, n. 39 and 1.96. See also 1 *apol.* 33.5.

[105] Here, Orbe and Coxe follow the Latin, but the Syriac suggests this should read, "both because it is his son and because he himself made it." Translations generally provide a word for the genitive to modify: "because it is [the likeness] of his son" as in ANF 1: 484; or "por ser el (retrato) de su hijo" in ibid., 238. My translation follows Rousseau (SC 100.595), "que c'est celui de sons fils," and is open to the possibility that this is referring to the son, but still follows the Latin by incorporating "image".

[106] Mal 1:10-11 is also quoted by Clement of Alexandria in *str.* 5.14, also in the context of an argument for God as the universal king. See *didache* 14.3, Justin's *dial*. 28.5, 41.2-3, 116.3, 117.1, 4, 120.4 and Tertullian's *adv. iud* 5.4, 5.7, *adv. marc*. 3.22.6, 4.1.8 from *Biblia Patristica* 178-79.

[107] *haer.* 4.17.6 (SC 100.594).

explains what this means. In his edition, Harvey claims that Irenaeus is here referring to the Hebrew origins for Jesus's name (YHWH is salvation) because, he claims, "the appellative Christ can in no sense pertain to the Father."[108] This is symptomatic of the general scholarly perspective, but it misses Irenaeus's regular references back to the names and titles of God, and particularly, of Christ. Here in *haer.* 4.17.5, the name of the Son in the Eucharist does entail the Father because (1) it is the name of *His* Son and (2) because he is writing/drawing the process of salvation. In this passage, the Father and Son are distinguished, for the Father is never identified as the Son, yet the church's worship includes both Father and Son. His discussion of God's titles in the Eucharist is an outlier within second-century Christian discourse,[109] but I believe that his commitment to the view that God is simple causes him to reiterate that the Father many scriptural names and titles of God are mutually entailing, including those often considered unique to Father or Son.

4. Conclusion

In this chapter, I further developed my claim that Irenaeus adheres to divine simplicity beyond *haer.* 2.13, specifically his claim that, because God is simple, God's names and titles are mutually entailing. I argued that Irenaeus continues to describe and label God's powers and names as mutually entailing. First, I highlighted another argument where God's titles and powers from the Septuagint are mutually entailing. Irenaeus argues that the different names of God do not describe a God whose substance is composed of separated powers, but rather, they each identify "one and the same" God and creator. His argument complements and develops his earlier claim that God is simple despite the many names found in scripture.

[108] See Hv 4.30.1 (2.200), n. 2.
[109] Daniélou points out that, while Christ was designated as the "Name of God" quite regularly in Early Christianity, there are only two cases where this relationship between God's name the title "Christ" is applied to Eucharistic prayer. Daniélou points to *Barn.* 10.2-3 and *exc. Thdot.* 82.1, and highlights that in the *Excerpta ex Theodoto*, the bread and oil are sanctified by the name, echoing James 5:14. See Daniélou, *The Theology of Jewish Christianity*, 147-63, but especially 55-56.

Then, I focused on God's powers. Irenaeus remains consistent with the three uses of power as found in the Rule of Truth, but he develops his usage of power by applying it to the Word and Wisdom. Because God is simple, God's will entails God's power in the activity of creating and revealing through God's Word and Wisdom. This develops the argument made in Chapter 3, that the concept of divine simplicity grounds Irenaeus's claim that God's will entails God's activity. Irenaeus's commitment to divine simplicity also means that God's power, wisdom and goodness are labelled as mutually entailing (*simul… ostenditur;* ὁμοῦ… δείκνυται) in the activity of creation. God's power entails God's will and activity, and this entailment differentiates it from all created powers, in line with Irenaeus's concern to clearly differentiate creator from creature. Lastly, I focused on God's names and titles. I argued that divine simplicity is the conceptual foundation for Irenaeus's argument that the titles "God" and "Lord" entail both the Father and the Son. The activity of Father, Son, and Spirit is entailed by (*subauditur*) the title "Christ," and the name of the Son in the Eucharist entails the activity of both Father and Son. Divine simplicity underlies Irenaeus's descriptions of divine titles and names, even in the Church's worship.

At different moments of this chapter, I have paralleled Irenaeus's arguments with other religious discourses of his day. His discussion of God's titles initially echoed Midrashic interpretation of the Septuagint, but his argument regarding the power of God was more comparable to third-century Christian appropriations of the Platonic concept of power. Most importantly, the principle of divine simplicity helps Irenaeus press second-century arguments on God's names beyond the Apologists in an argument that looks more like later writers that also depend on the principle of divine simplicity. Throughout Irenaeus's arguments, divine simplicity remains central when discussing God's power and names, and he participates in an early Christian shift in discourse about God.

Conclusion and Historical Implications

Due to the recent wave of interest, I have not asked "if" Irenaeus is utilising divine simplicity, but "how." I built on the helpful work of recent scholarship by reading Irenaeus's divine simplicity as an interweaving of philosophical and scriptural language that engages Christian debates among his contemporaries. I have argued that for Irenaeus, God's powers are not identical but are mutually entailing, since they are distinct in unity. It seems to me that the difficulties of this tension between unity and distinction are not explicitly resolved though they are retained. I also have traced ways in which this concept of divine simplicity plays a regulating and generative role in Irenaeus' thought, setting parameters on appropriate discourse about God. In an effort to place Irenaeus's theology in its historical context, I have also argued that his view of divine simplicity is part of a larger Christian appropriation of the principle, because particular terms and arguments reflect the intersection of philosophical and scriptural discourses in Christian debates.

According to my reading of Irenaeus, divine simplicity further clarifies claims made about God in the Rule of Truth. In challenging his opponents' description of God, he adheres to linguistic parameters that result from the claim that God is simple, restricting variant interpretations of scriptural language about God's powers, will, activity, and names. Irenaeus's explanation of divine simplicity has immediate implications for his views on divine generation, the divine activity of creation, and the divine names and powers of God, and these are further developed in his wider discussions of these themes. The concept of divine simplicity means that God's will cannot be separated from the activity of creation in the providential meaning of the metaphor of containment. The language of divine simplicity preserves a sense of distinction between God and his created powers in divine generation in an argument primarily about unity. The concept of divine simplicity also continues to operate in Irenaeus' metaphor of God's hands because the metaphor is employed to argue that the

activity of creation entails the activity of revelation, God's will entails God's activity, and the distinct roles of Father, Son and Spirit entail one another. Lastly, Irenaeus consistently argues that because God is simple, God's names and powers are "heard together," so God's power entails God's will, wisdom, and goodness, and titles like "Lord," "God," and "Christ" entail the activity of the Father and Son (and once, the Spirit). In *Against Heresies,* Irenaeus adheres to the principle of divine simplicity when exploring the language from scripture and the Rule of Truth, providing a way to negotiate the tension between the claim that God is one and the many scriptural descriptions of God's will, activity, names, and powers. The concept of divine simplicity is foundational to Irenaeus's descriptions of divine generation, names, and activity, in relation to Father, Son and Spirit, but it also undergirds his argument regarding the descriptions or "attributes" of God *in se.*

How does Irenaeus's view of divine simplicity fit within the development of Christian doctrine, and did it influence later developments in the Christian appropriation of this principle? Irenaeus does not provide answers to many of questions raised by later generations of Christian thinkers, but I would like to provide some speculative reflections on how he may have influenced these discussions. Based on manuscript evidence alone, *Against Heresies* found its way as far as Egypt within twenty years of being written,[1] and near the opening of the third century, it was certainly cited by Tertullian in Carthage and was probably used by Clement in Alexandria.[2] It has been argued that Origen had access to *Against Heresies*,[3] and

[1] Oxy. 405, the famous citation of Matt 3:16-17, is from *haer.* 3.9.2-3. For discussion, see Hill, "Irenaeus, the Scribes, and the Scriptures: Papyrological and Theological Observations from P. Oxy. 405."; Roberts, *Manuscript, Society and Belief in Early Christian Egypt*, 53.

[2] *adv. Val.* 5. and *strm.* 7.18. There is no doubt that Tertullian cites *Against Heresies,* and scholarship has generally agreed with the original suggestion by Hort, who used a philological examination of the two to argue that Tertullian used a Greek version of Irenaeus. For the view that Tertullian had access to a Latin version of *Against Heresies*, see Unger's introduction. See Hort, "Did Tertullian Use the Latin Irenaeus?."; Unger, ACW 55, 14-15. Clement does not cite Irenaeus explicitly, and though Rousseau points out six different places where Clement's text parallels Irenaeus, some with the same wording, he concludes that they are not sufficiently similar to warrant being included in the manuscript list. See Rousseau, SC 152, 245-46.

[3] Harnack attributed parts of the Scholia on Revelation to Origen, but Rousseau argues, rightly, that this 38th scholia is actually taken from *Against Heresies* Book 5. See SC 152, 111-12. However, other scholars have

confirmed that Augustine quotes the Latin version.[4] Thus, in Africa, up through the fourth century, there are some probable and some confirmed cases of citations of *Against Heresies* in both Greek and Latin. Beyond this specific geographic timeline of reception, it was cited by heresiologists like the author of the *Refutation* in the third century and Epiphanius in the fourth century.[5] Both Eusebius and Basil knew the title of Irenaeus's work and they cite portions of it, other theologians in the fourth century cite from *Against Heresies*, and portions specifically from his argument on divine simplicity were cited by Evagrius, as seen in Armenian translations of his text.[6] Extant manuscript evidence alone suggests that *Against Heresies* had a widespread influence. While such questions of influence lie beyond the scope of this thesis, some similarities between Irenaeus and later descriptions of divine simplicity, particularly in the development of certain questions, suggests that this could be a fertile avenue for future research.

Scholars have also argued that Irenaeus's theology influenced later authors. For example, Eric Osborn and John Behr have examined Irenaeus and Clement of Alexandria together, though Osborn concludes, "Clement does not draw on Irenaeus verbally… [but] he thinks the same gospel in a different intellectual environment."[7] Others have noted that Irenaeus and Origen oppose some of the same systems and describe their theology in the

argued that Origen had access to Irenaeus, based on similar readings of Revelation. See Stephen Carlson, "Origen's Use of Papias," *Origeniana Duodecima* 12 (2019): 536-38.

[4] Augustine cites Irenaeus and attributes the citation to him by name in *C.Jul.* 1.7.32, written in 421/22. Steenberg argues that Augustine cites him elsewhere, including *Doctr. Christ.* 2.40.60, which was written chiefly between 396-97. See Matthew Steenberg, "Tracing the Irenaeus Legacy," in *Irenaeus: Life, Scripture, and Legacy*, ed. Sara Parvis and Paul Foster (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012), 205-07.

[5] Rousseau, SC 293, 61-77.

[6] The title is cited in *HE* 2.13.5; 3.28.6; *spir.* 29.72. Basil cites from Book 5 in *spir.* 29.72. Eusebius cites sections throughout *Against Heresies.* For Evagrius's citations of Irenaeus in the Armenian translation, see ibid., 102-07. Steenberg also considers the possibility of citations by Cyril of Jerusalem and Theodoret. See Steenberg, "Tracing the Irenaeus Legacy," 205.

[7] Osborn compares the two regularly, but a comprehensive summary can be found in the appendix to his book on Clement. Osborn, *Clement of Alexandria*, 282-92; Behr, *Asceticism and Anthropology in Irenaeus and Clement*.

same kinds ways.[8] However, as noted in anti-Origenist compilations, Irenaeus and Origen also differ significantly at times, and so other scholars have traced the influence of Irenaeus in the theology that would be described as anti-Origenist, including Methodius or Eustathius of Antioch.[9] The theology of Irenaeus undoubtedly had an influence on later theological developments, but in many cases, whether because of the present state of the Irenaeus's text or because of ancient practices of citation, it is notably difficult for scholars to establish a definitive dependence on Irenaeus's theology.

Irenaeus's concept of divine simplicity influenced several theological themes that remained linked with the development of the doctrine of divine simplicity throughout the fourth century, and perhaps beyond. Clement has a conception of divine names that echoes Irenaeus's description of God's mutually entailing names, and he too uses a more cautious citation of the same passage of Xenophanes.[10] However, as Radde-Gallwitz has shown, Clement concludes with an apophatic view of the simple God, where only the Word is knowable.[11] Irenaeus's usage is not apophatic, as he remains committed to a knowable God.

Portions of Irenaeus's argument on unity are ambiguous, so some have read sections, including references to the simple God, as proto-Monarchian.[12] His text may have been used by individuals who have been labelled as Monarchians in forming their views and structuring

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[8] For a study that compares Irenaeus's and Origen's Christology, see Daley, *God Visible: Patristic Christology Reconsidered*, 65-93. Similar attempts have been made to trace the influence of Irenaeus on Athanasius. See Khaled Anatolios, "The Influence of Irenaeus on Athanasius," *Studia Patristica* 36 (2001).

[9] For discussion on the eighth-ninth century anti-Origenist compilation, see Rousseau, SC 293, 91-100. For studies on the influence of Irenaeus on anti-Origenists, see Sophie Cartwright, *The Theological Anthropology of Eustathius of Antioch* (Oxford: OUP, 2015). Methodius's anthropology and Christology have even been classified as "basically Irenaean." Herbert Musurillo, ed. *St. Methodius: The Symposium, a Tratise on Chastity*, ACW 27 (New York: Newman Press, 1958), 22.

[10] Osborn claims that Clement's view on names is depending on divine simplicity. Osborn, *The Beginning of Christian Philosophy*, 49; Annewies van den Hoek, "God Beyond Knowing: Clement of Alexandria and Discourse on God," in *God in Early Christian Thought: Essays in Memory of Lloyd G. Patterson*, ed. Andrew B. McGowan (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 38-45; 50-56.

[11] Radde-Gallwitz, *Transformation of Divine Simplicity*, 40-59.

[12] Some scholars have argued that Irenaeus is Monarchian. Hübner, "Heis theos Jesous Christos. Zum christluchen Gottesglauben im 2. Jahrhundert - ein Versuch," 343. Vogt, "Monarchianismus im 2. Jahrhundert," 254. Stuart Hall even suggests that Tertullian's *Adversus Praxeas* might be aimed against Irenaeus's usage of "Monarchian language." Stuart George Hall, *Doctrine and Practice in the Early Church* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 1991), 170.

terminology about God.[13] In tracing the history of divine simplicity up to Origen, Ip notes that key exegetical and terminological elements that would differentiate Irenaeus from Monarchianism are absent from his text.[14] Because of its ambiguity, Irenaeus's text was likely useful both to authors labelled "Monarchian" and "anti-Monarchians." With the concept of divine simplicity, Irenaeus introduces unresolved or unidentified theological tensions that are explored by later generations.

There are some crucial points of intersection between Irenaeus and Origen relating to the concept of divine simplicity. On the one hand, Irenaeus and Origen both use Hebrews 1:3,[15] they both claim that God's power has eternal existence, they both oppose the "Gnostic" attempt to split up the divine essence by applying the principle of divine simplicity to descriptions of God's powers and will.[16] On the other hand, Origen maintains the Son's

[13] Minns has argued that the "fact that Irenaeus could be cited as early testimony for contradictory views on the number of natures in Christ suggests one reason for his diminishing influence on the development of theology. For although he had played a major role in the early general shaping of Christian theology, precisely because he stands so early in the theological tradition his views are, in comparison with that later tradition, so inchoate and themselves potentially contradictory that he ceases to be a useful guide on disputed questions." Denis Minns, "Irenaeus of Lyons," in *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Patristics*, ed. Ken Parry (London: Wiley and Sons, 2015), 75.

[14] For example, in Tertullian's reaction to Monarchianism, he differentiates between dividing and distinguishing the Father and Son (*divisio* vs. *distinctio*). Irenaeus does use *distinctio* in relation to God, but it is to argue that scripture distinguished and separated between the true God, and those who are only called gods but are not (cf. *haer.* 3.6.5 or 4.1.2), not to distinguish between Father and Son. According to Irenaeus, Paul distinguished and separated (*distinxit… separauit*) those who are called gods but are not, from the one God the Father and he who, in his own name, is acknowledge as the one Lord Jesus Christ. (SC 211.78). However, this does not conclusively prove that Irenaeus thought of a *distinctio* between Father and Son. Ip is right to point out that this marker, which would differentiate him from Monarchianism, is not present in text of Irenaeus. Put another way, Stephen Waers has argued that some authors barely distinguished between Father and Son (i.e. Polycarp, *Didache,* Melito), others were ambiguous (i.e. Irenaeus, Clement) and still others made too hard a distinction (Justin), and writers like Tertullian and Origen traced the exegetical and terminological lines to differentiate them. Stephen Waers, "Monarchianism and Origen's Early Trinitarian Theology" (PhD, Marquette University, 2016), 29-92.

[15] According to Barnes, early Christian appropriation of "power" supported their arguments through different scriptural citations (1 Cor 1:24 and Lk 1:35 for Tertullian and 1 Cor 1:24; Heb 1:3, and Wisd 7:25 for Origen). Wisdom 7:25 refers to Wisdom, power, and omnipotent God together, all of which appear in this passage, but Irenaeus's argument in *haer.* 2.30.9 seems insufficient to substantiate a clear dependence on this passage. See Chapter 3 of Barnes, *The Power of God*. Unlike Irenaeus, Tertullian's *Against Praxeus* never affirms that the Son is the power of God and co-existent. See *Praex.* 2 from ibid., 103-05. While Origen and Irenaeus are comparable, two differences would be (1) in the *Jo.* 1.291, the Son is the breath of God's power, not of God himself, and an effluence of God's glory/power, not of God Himself; and, (2) elsewhere, Irenaeus notes the composite elements in human generation (*haer.* 2.17), but Barnes shows that Origen uses the story of Seth and Adam to describe the divine production of the first power. Ibid., 116-18, 23. See *prin.* 1.2.

[16] Ip, *Origen of Alexandria and the Emergence of Divine Simplicity before Nicaea*, 156-64.

distinction more clearly in his usage of divine simplicity. For Origen, only the Father is simple, and the Son is multiple,[17] while Irenaeus does not specifically differentiate Father and Son in regards to divine simplicity, but he does describe both "Father" and "God" as simple. While Origen accuses Monarchians of rejecting a distinction between Father and Son in regards to hypostasis, property, substrate, and essence,[18] Irenaeus specifically states that whatever is generated of the Father must be of the same substance, rejecting a generation of a different substance, though he never specifically applies this to the Son (*haer.* 2.17). Furthermore, Irenaeus emphasises unity in divine titles, so titles usually attributed to either Father or Son entail the activity of the other, but for Origen, titles of Father are different from sonship titles. While Irenaeus describes God's power, wisdom and goodness as mutually entailing (*haer.* 4.38.3), Origen describes goodness as a title of the Father, and power and wisdom as a title of the Son.[19]

It becomes even more difficult to draw lines of comparison the further one wanders into the fourth century. While Irenaeus does not match the philosophical complexity of the Cappadocians, his account at times displays similarities with Basil's usage of the concept of simplicity as interpreted by Radde-Gallwitz. In this account, qualities of dryness of earth or heat of fire are compared to life, goodness and righteousness of God, not unlike Irenaeus's argument (*haer.* 2.12 and 2.18.5),[20] and the goodness and perfection of the simple God come to be something in which humanity participates.[21] Furthermore, Rousseau has argued that Irenaeus's engagement with Stoic psychology (*haer.* 2.12-2.13.2), which is used to introduce his definition of divine simplicity, became influential in the writings of Maximus the

[17] Ibid., 112.
[18] Ibid., 115-21.
[19] Ibid., 121-42. Anti-Origenists, like Methodius, may be echoing Irenaeus's theology since he too describes the creative action of the Father and Logos as simultaneous because the Father is simple. Rowan Williams, *Arius: Heresy and Tradition* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1987; repr., 2001), 189-91.
[20] Radde-Gallwitz, *Transformation of Divine Simplicity*, 162-69.
[21] See ibid., 170-220.

Confessor and John of Damascus, but this is only evident through the preservation of Irenaeus in the Armenian.[22]

While many of these accounts carry many similar themes and language, they raise many questions Irenaeus did not answer. Irenaeus's concept of divine simplicity does reject the contradiction introduced by Ptolemy's version of divine simplicity, but it does not adopt a strict apophaticism like his reader, Clement. Although Irenaeus retains a sense of distinction in his description of the Father and Son, his argument of divine generation does not have the hard language of distinction as Origen's opposition to Monarchianism, nor the full specificity of substance language in relation to the Son which comes after Nicaea. Although some parts of Irenaeus are ambiguous enough to be read in support of the "identity thesis," which came to characterise readings of Eunomius and Augustine,[23] I have argued that Irenaeus does not identify God with his powers, but he retains language of distinction. Although Irenaeus does not fully explain how distinction aligns with simplicity, he is a key first step in the development of the Christian appropriation of the concept of divine simplicity by adhering to language of simplicity and distinction in his wider theological description of God's will, activity, powers and names.

[22] The preservation of portions of this text in Armenian suggests that early Christian readers prioritised this section of text, and if one follows Rousseau's back-translation and argument, these mental movements came to be quoted in the theology of Maximus the Confessor and John of Damascus. Rousseau then dedicates the entirety of his Appendix 2 (SC 293.366-70) to these 5 movements, showing that Maximus the Confessor in *Ad Marinum presbyterum* 91.9-37 and John of Damascus in *Epositio fidei* 2.22 have these same movements in the same order (with only one absent). He points to the similarity between John of Damascus and Nemesius (*de natura hominis* 14). For an introductory discussion of divine simplicity in Maximus and John of Damascus, which certainly parallels aspects of Irenaeus's view, see Brian Daley, "Contemplating the Monad Who Saves Us: Maximus the Confessor and John of Damascus on Divine Simplicity," *Modern Theology* 35, no. 3 (2019).
[23] This would apply Briggman and Ip's later arguments regarding Irenaeus to early arguments on Eunomius and Augustine. Ayres, *Nicaea and its Legacy*, 372-81; Radde-Gallwitz, *Transformation of Divine Simplicity*, 87-112; Jordan P. Barrett, *Divine Simplicity* (Ausburg: Fortress Publishers, 2017), 35-70; Briggman, *God and Christ in Irenaeus*, 90-98; Ip, *Origen of Alexandria and the Emergence of Divine Simplicity before Nicaea*, 50-68.

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